

Sequence Comparisons

- Homology searches
 - Usually "one-against-one": BLAST, FASTA
 - Allows for comparison of individual sequences against databases comprised of individual sequences
- Profile searches

- Uses collective characteristics of a family of proteins
- Search can be "one-against-many": Pfam, CDD or "many-against-one": PSI-BLAST, DELTA-BLAST

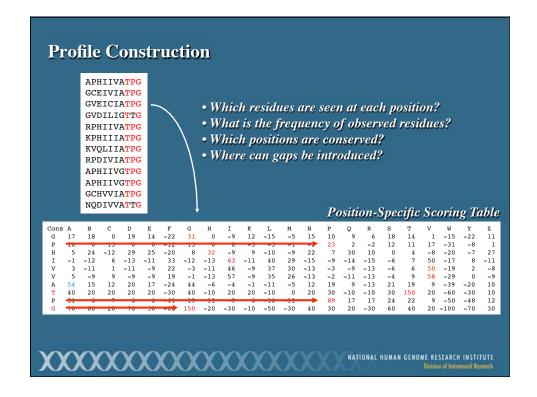
Profiles, Patterns, Motifs, and Domains

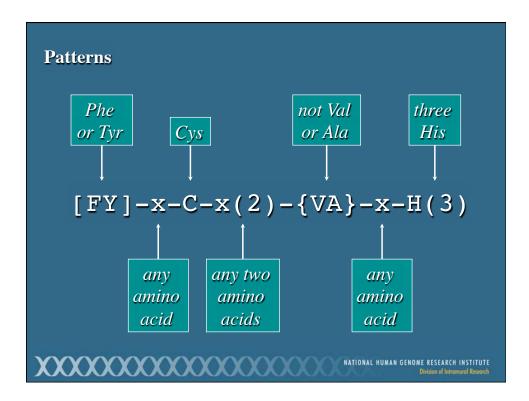
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Profiles

- Numerical representations of multiple sequence alignments
- Depend upon *patterns* or *motifs* containing conserved residues
- Represent the common characteristics of a protein family
- Can find similarities between sequences with little or no sequence identity
- Allow for the analysis of distantly related proteins

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Pfam

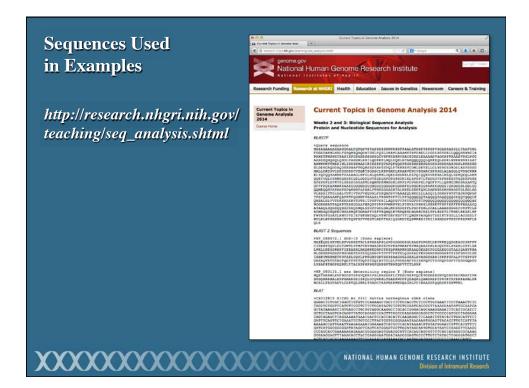
- Collection of multiple alignments of protein domains and conserved protein regions that probably have structural or functional importance
- Each Pfam entry contains:
 - Multiple sequence alignment of family members
 - Protein domain architectures
 - Species distribution of family members
 - Information on known protein structures
 - Links to other protein family databases

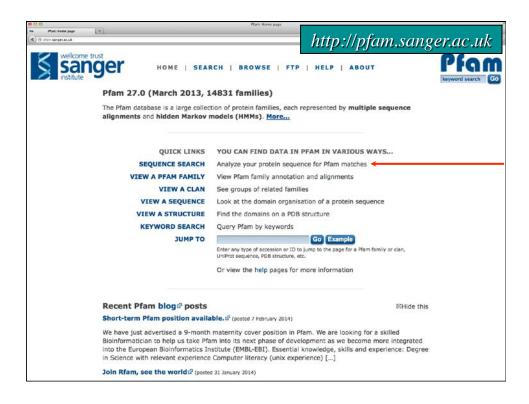
Finn et al., Nucleic Acids Res. 42: D222-D230, 2014

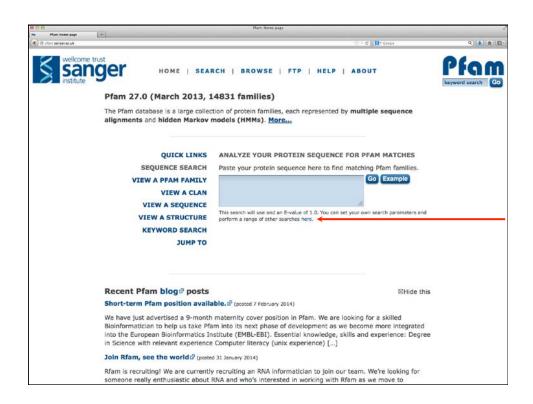
Pfam

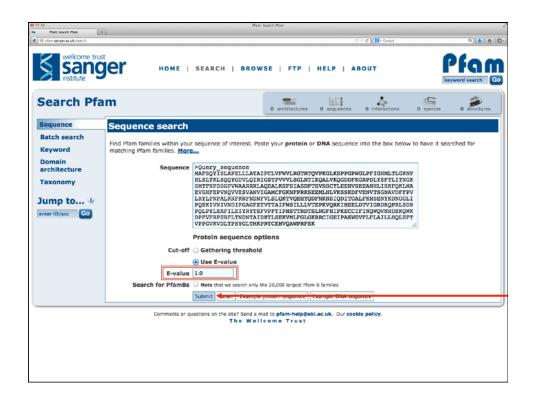
- Pfam A
 - Based on *curated* multiple alignments ("seed alignment")
 - HMMER used to find all detectable protein sequences belonging to the family (*Eddy*, 2011)
 - Given the method used to construct the alignments, hits are highly likely to be true positives
- Pfam B
 - Automatically generated from database searches

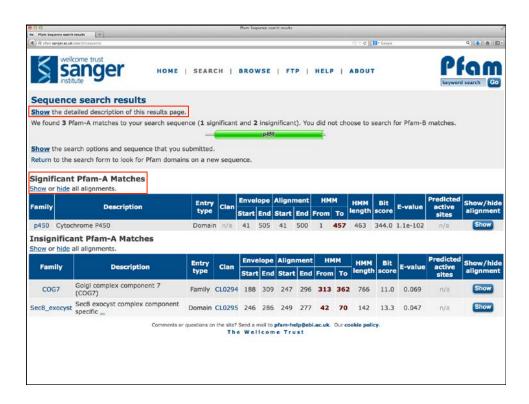
• Deemed "lower quality", but can be useful when no Pfam A family is identified

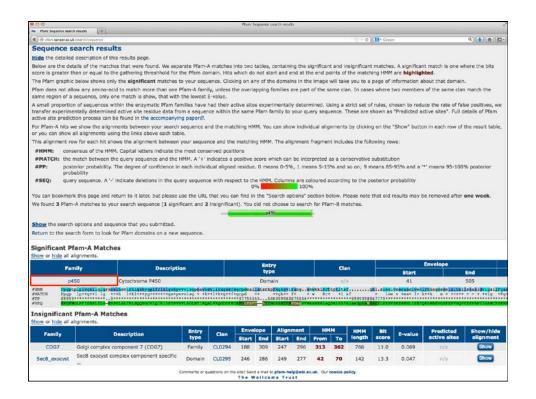


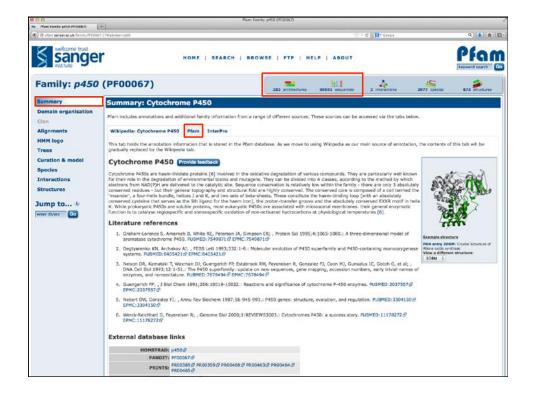


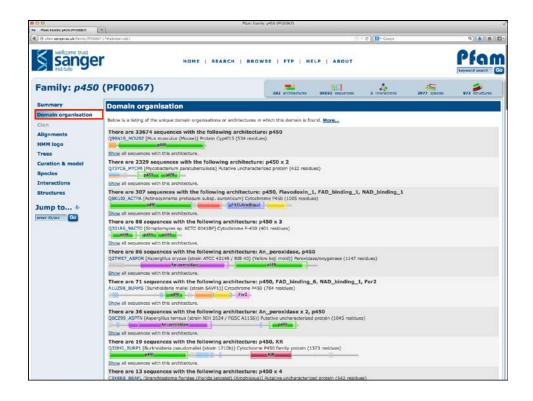


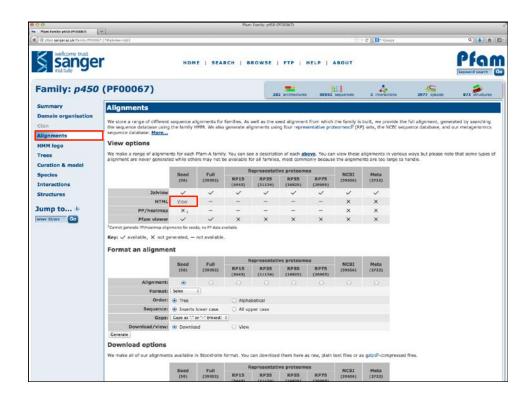


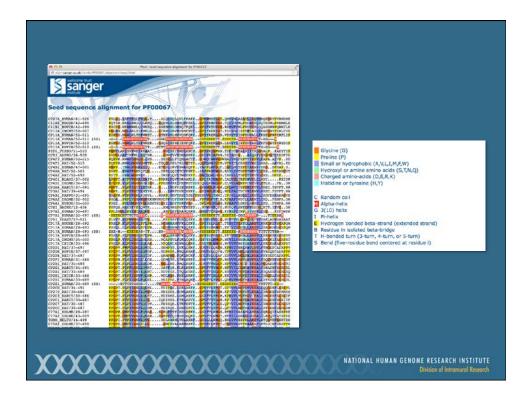


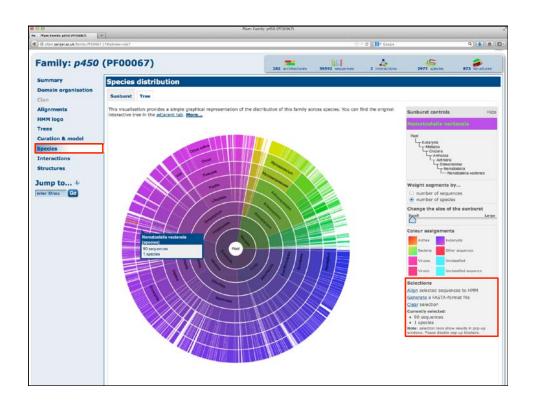


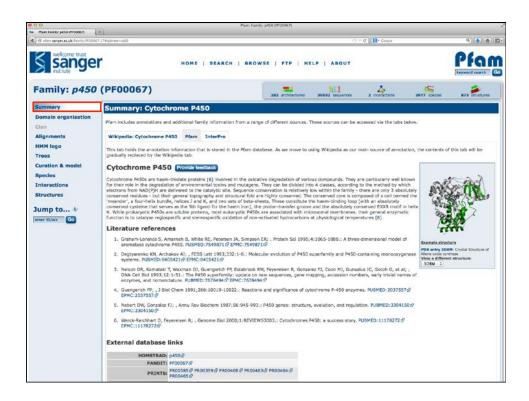




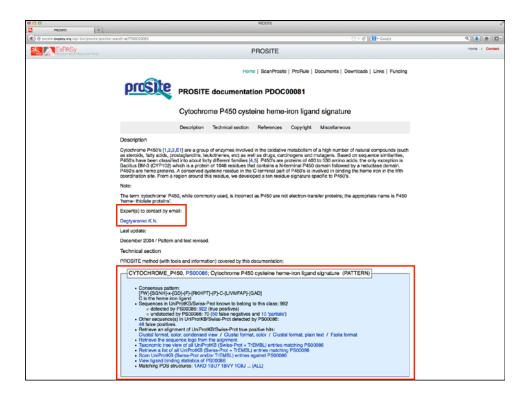


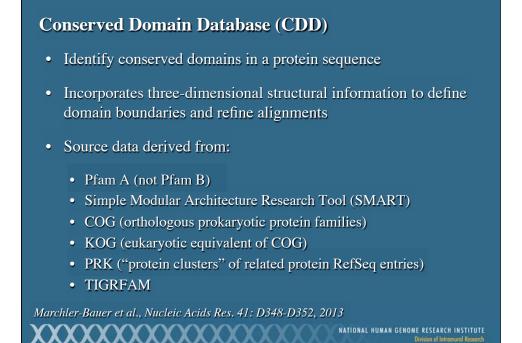








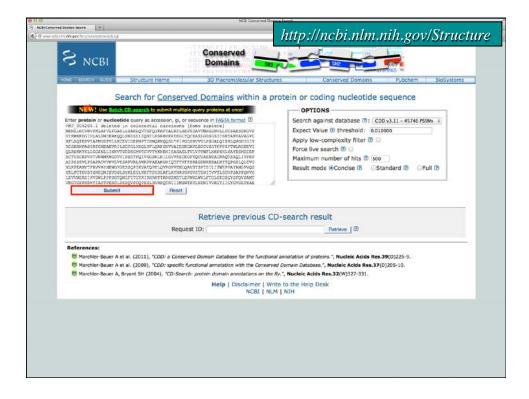


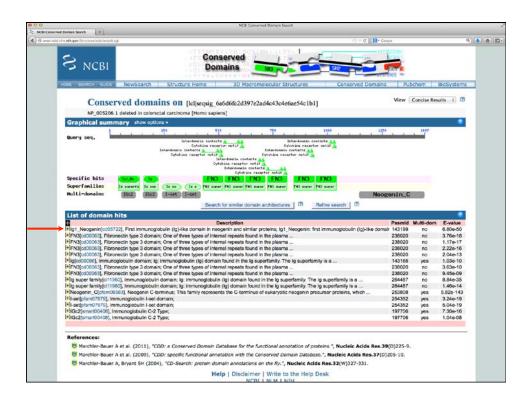


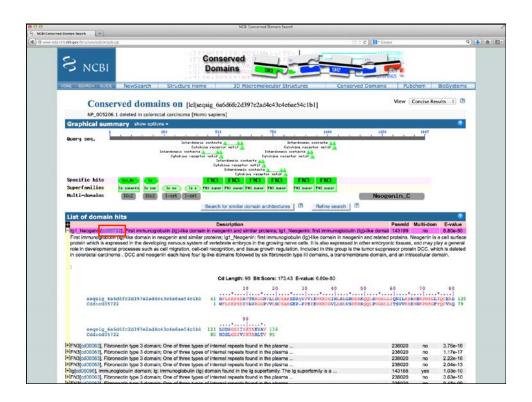
Conserved Domain Database (CDD)

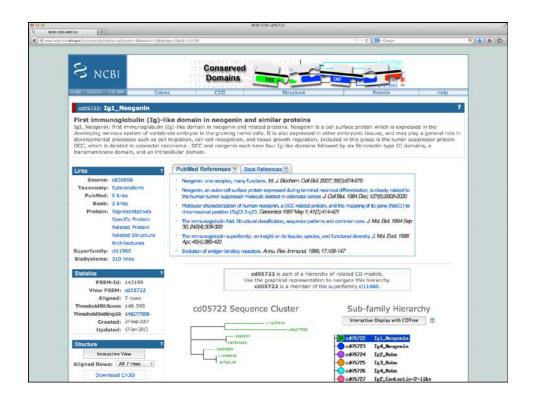
- CD-Search performed using RPS-BLAST
- Query sequence is used to search a database of precalculated position-specific scoring matrices
- Not the same method used by Pfam

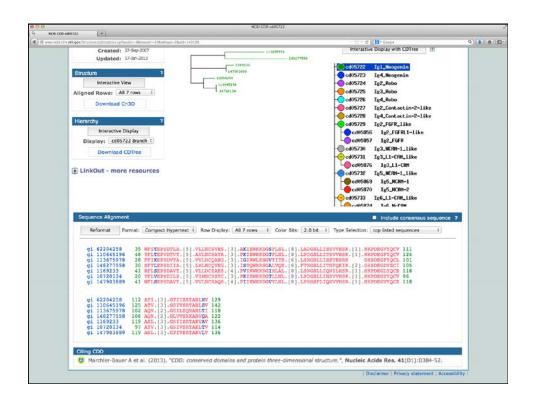












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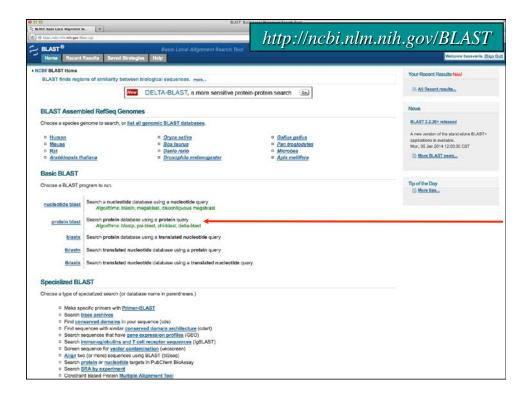
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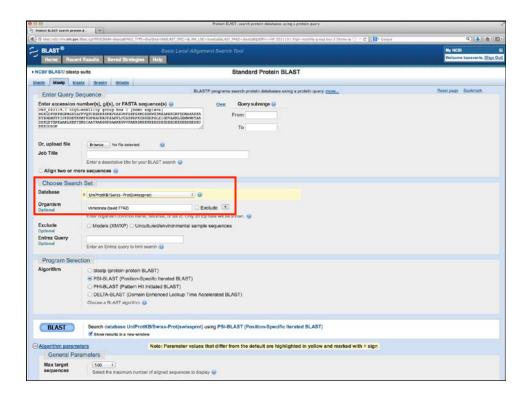
PSI-BLAST

• Position-Specific Iterated BLAST search

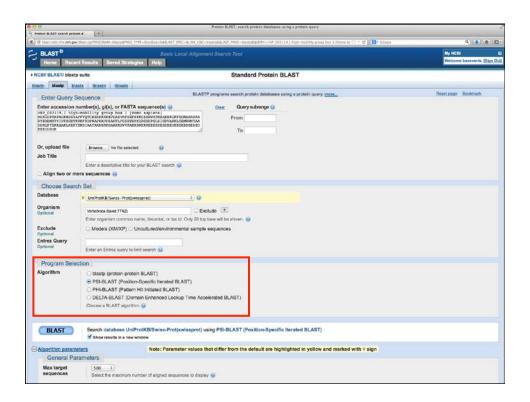
- Used to identify distantly related sequences that are possibly missed during a standard BLAST search
- Easy-to-use version of a profile-based search
 - Perform BLAST search against protein database
 - Use results to calculate a position-specific scoring matrix
 - PSSM replaces query for next round of searches
 - May be iterated until no new significant alignments are found

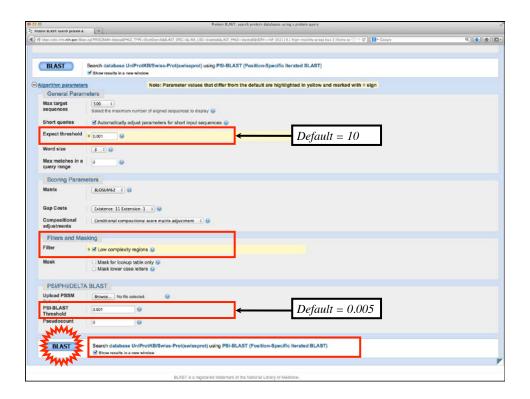
Altschul et al., Nucleic Acids Res. 25: 3389-3402, 1997

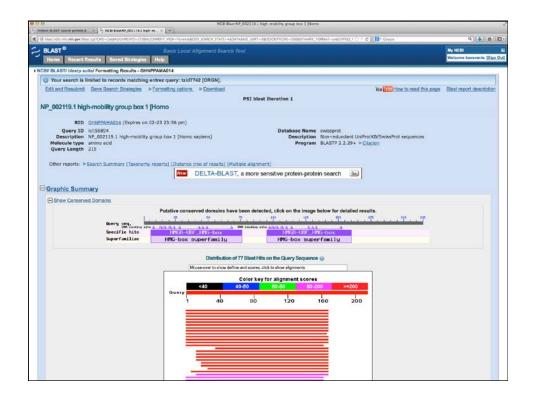


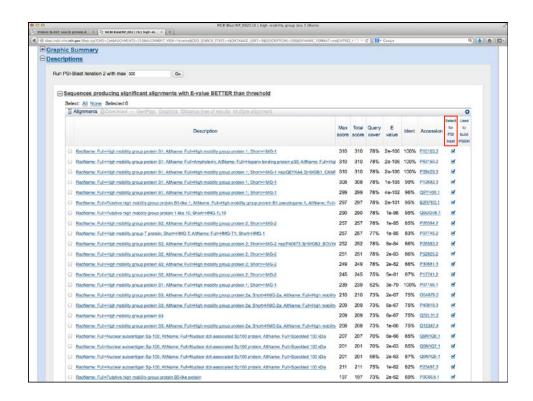


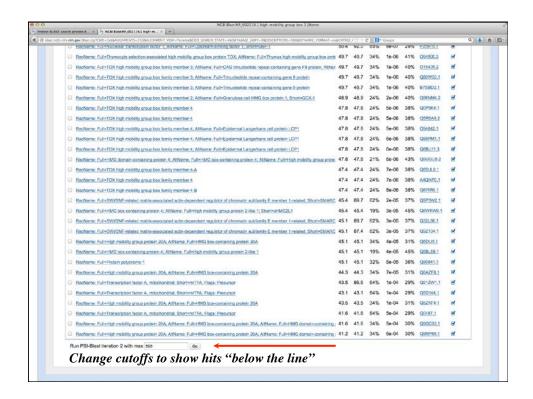
Swiss-Prot • Goal: Provide a single reference sequence for each protein sequence • Distinguishing Features • Non-redundancy • Ongoing curation by EBI staff and external experts • Expert annotation includes editing/updates of Keyword lines KW CC Comment lines (the "executive summary") Feature table • Distinct accession series [OPQ]12345 NATIONAL HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH INSTITUTE

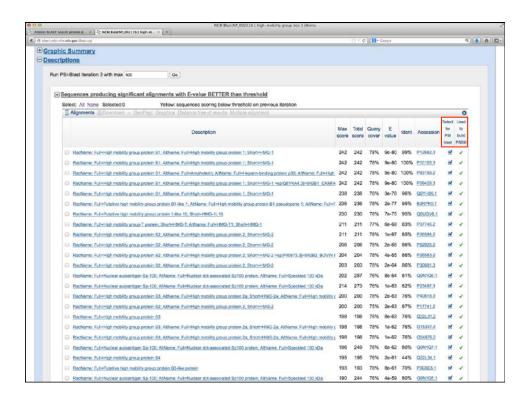


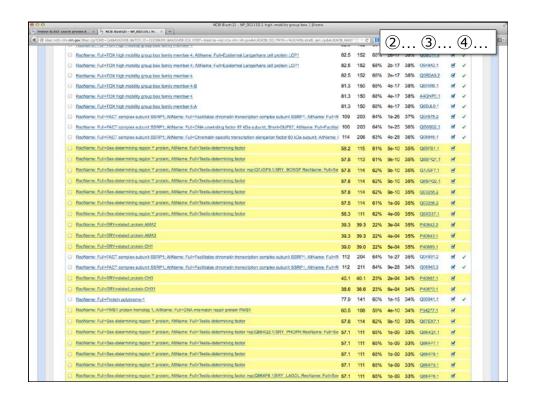


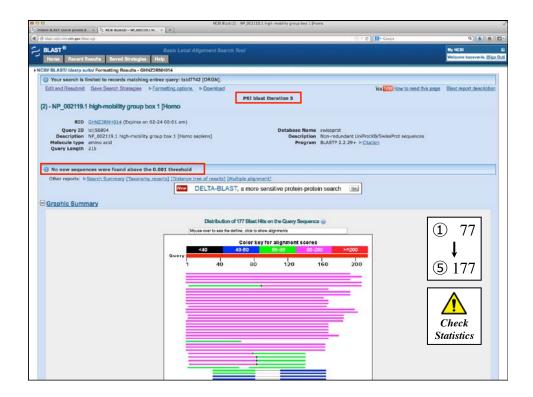


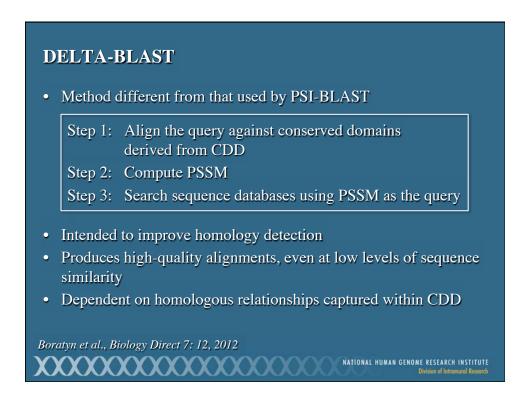












Multiple Sequence Alignment: A Quick Primer

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Why do multiple sequence alignments?

- Identify conserved regions, patterns, and domains
 - Experimental design
 - Predicting structure and function

- Identifying new members of protein families
- Provide basis for:
 - Predicting secondary structure
 - Performing phylogenetic analyses, thereby determining evolutionary relationships (inferring homology)
 - Generating position-specific scoring matrices for use with sensitive sequence search methods

Overarching Considerations

- Absolute sequence similarity

 Create the alignment by lining up as many common characters
 as possible
- Conservation

 Take into account residues that can substitute for one another and not adversely affect the function of the protein
- Structural similarity

 Knowledge of the secondary or tertiary structure of the proteins
 being aligned can be used to fine-tune the alignment

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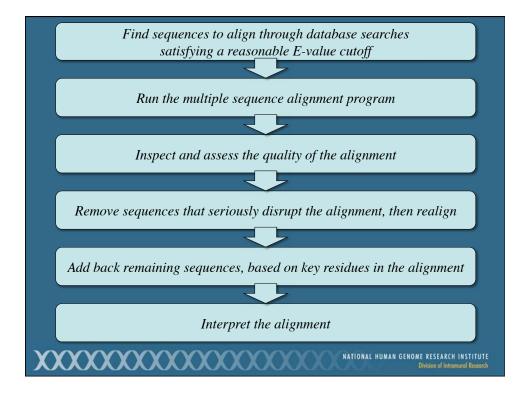
Protein vs. Nucleotide Multiple Sequence Alignments

- Concentrate on the protein level rather than on the nucleotide level
- Protein alignments tend to be more informative
- Less prone to inaccurate alignment ("20 vs. 4")

• Can "translate back" to nucleotide sequences *after* doing the alignment

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Selecting the Sequences

- 1. Use a reasonable number of sequences to avoid technical difficulties
 - *Global* alignment method: compute time increases exponentially as sequences are added to the set
 - Most alignment algorithms are ineffective on huge data sets (and may yield inaccurate alignments)
 - Phylogenetic studies resulting from inordinately large data sets are almost impossible
 - Good starting point: 10-15 sequences

• Ballpark upper limit: 50-100 sequences

Selecting the Sequences

- 2. Sequences should be of about the same length
- 3. Trim sequences down, so as to only use regions that have been deemed similar by either:
 - Pairwise search methods (e.g., BLAST)
 - Profile-based search methods (*e.g.*, PSI-BLAST)

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Selecting the Sequences

- 4. Consider the degree of similarity in the sequence set, depending on what question is being asked
 - Use closely-related sequences to determine "required" (highly conserved) amino acids
 - Use more divergent sequences to study evolutionary relationships
 - Good starting point: use sequences that are 30-70% similar to most of the other sequences in the data set
 - The most informative alignments result when the sequences in the data set are not "too similar", but also not "too dissimilar"

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Inspection: An Iterative Process

- Perform alignment on small set of sequences
- Examine the quality of the alignment, looking for:
 - Conservation of residues across alignment
 - Conservation of physicochemical properties
 - Relatively neat block-type structure
 - Excessive numbers of gaps
- If alignment is good, can add new sequences to data set, then realign
- If alignment is not good, remove any sequences that result in the inclusion of long gaps, then realign

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Inspection: An Iterative Process

- Use visualization tools to identify "key residues" and "problem regions" (e.g., JalView)
- Cross-check against "expertly created" multiple sequence alignments available online
- Use any available information from solved X-ray or NMR structures to nail down structurally important regions and to assess where gaps can (or cannot) be tolerated

Interpretation

- Absolutely-conserved positions are *required* for proper structure and function
- Relatively well-conserved positions are able to tolerate limited amounts of change and not adversely affect the structure or function of the protein
- Non-conserved positions may "mutate freely," and these mutations can possibly give rise to proteins with new functions
- Gap-free blocks probably correspond to regions of secondary structure, while gap-rich blocks probably correspond to unstructured or loop regions

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Clustal Omega

- Allows for automatic multiple alignment of nucleotide or amino acid sequences
- Can align data sets quickly and easily
- Can bias the location of gaps, based on known structural information
- Works with Jalview, Java applet for viewing and manipulating results

Sievers et al., Mol. Syst. Biol. 7: 539, 2011

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Progressive Alignment

- Align two sequences at a time, starting with the two most related sequences
- Gradually build up the multiple sequence alignment by adding additional (less-related) sequences to the alignment
- Uses protein scoring matrices and gap penalties to calculate alignments having the best score
- Major advantages of method
 - · Generally fast
 - Alignments generally of high quality

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Progressive Alignment

>sequence A

 ${\tt VHLTPEEKSAVTALWGKVNVDEVGGEALGRLLVVYPWTQRFFESFGDLST}$

>sequence B

VQLSGEEKAAVLALWDKVNEEEVGGEALGRLLVVYPWTQRFFDSFGDSLN >sequence C

VLSPADKTNVKAAWGKVGAHAGEYGAEALERMFLSFPTTKTYFPHFDLSH

VLSAADKTNVKAAWSKVGGHAGEYGAEALERMFLGFPTTKTYFPHFDLSH

Progressive Alignment

1. Calculate a similarity score (percent identity) between every pair of sequences to drive the alignment

For N sequences, this requires the calculation of $[N \times (N-1)]/2$ pairwise alignments

Sequences	Alignments
4	6
10	45
25	300
50	1,225
100	4,950

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Progressive Alignment

>sequence A

 $\tt VHLTPEEKSAVTALWGKVNVDEVGGEALGRLLVVYPWTQRFFESFGDLST$

>sequence B

 $\begin{array}{l} {\tt VQLSGEEKAAVLALWDKVNEEEVGGEALGRLLVVYPWTQRFFDSFGDSLN} \\ {\tt >sequence} \ \ {\tt C} \end{array}$

VLSPADKTNVKAAWGKVGAHAGEYGAEALERMFLSFPTTKTYFPHFDLSH >sequence D

VLSAADKTNVKAAWSKVGGHAGEYGAEALERMFLGFPTTKTYFPHFDLSH

%ID	A	В	C	D
A	100			
В	80	100		
C	44	40	100	
D	40	40	92	100

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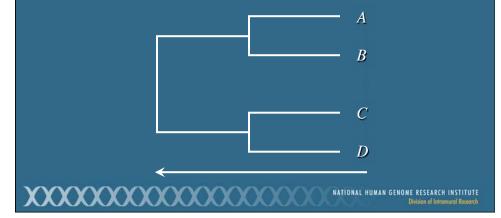
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Progressive Alignment 2. Derive a guide tree based on the pairwise comparisons Can infer from tree that A and B share greater similarity with each other than with C or D A B C D MATIONAL HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH INSTITUTE Division of Informatic Research Informatic Research Informatic Research Informatic Research Informat

Progressive Alignment
 Align A with B → alignment AB (fixed) Align C with D → alignment CD (fixed) Represent alignments AB and CD as single sequences
$\begin{array}{ c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c$
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Progressive Alignment

- Align "sequence" AB with "sequence" CD
- Continue following the branching order of the tree, from the tips to the root, merging each new pair of "sequences"



Progressive Alignment: Advantages

- Do "easier" alignments between highly-related sequences first
- Use information regarding conservation at each position to help with more difficult alignments between more distantly related sequences later on in process

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Progressive Alignment: Disadvantages

- If initial alignments are made on distantly related sequences, there may be errors in the initial alignments
- Once an alignment is "fixed", it is not reconsidered, so any errors in the early alignments may propagate through subsequent alignments
- Clustal Omega does allow for guide tree iterations to hedge against errors introduced early in the alignment process (at the cost of increased compute time)

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Clustal Omega Output

- Pairwise alignment scores
- Multiple sequence alignment
- Cladogram
 - Tree that is assumed to be an *estimate* of a phylogeny
 - Branches are of equal length
 - Cladograms show common ancestry, but do not provide an indication of the amount of "evolutionary time" separating taxa
- Phylogram
 - Tree that is assumed to be an *estimate* of a phylogeny
 - Branches are *not* of equal length
 - Branch lengths proportional to the amount of inferred evolutionary change

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Clustal Omega Conservation Patterns

Conservation patterns in multiple sequence alignments usually follow the following rules:

> Aromatics [WYF]

[KRH] Basic side chains (+) [DE] Acidic side chains (–)

Ends of helices [GP] Catalytic sites [HS]

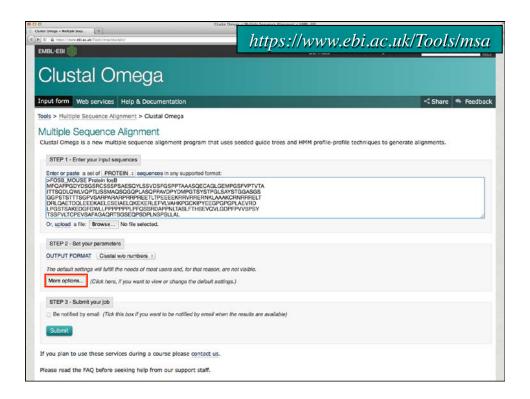
Cysteine cross-bridges [0]

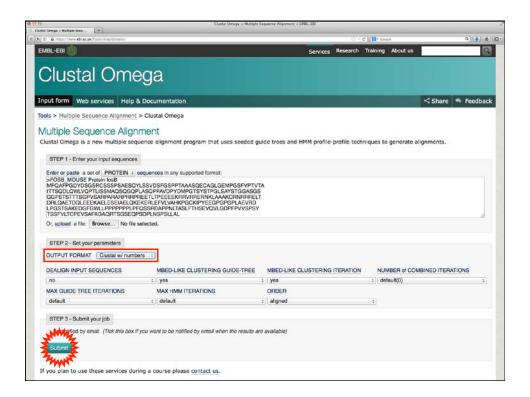
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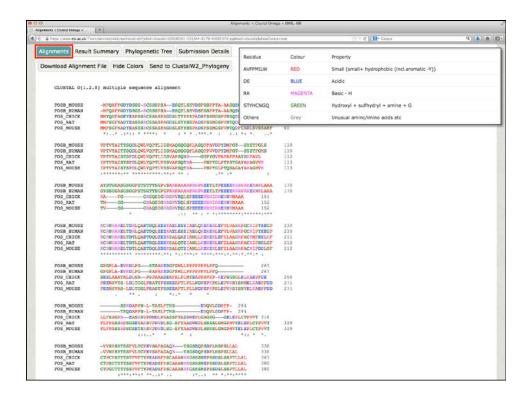
Clustal Omega Conservation Patterns

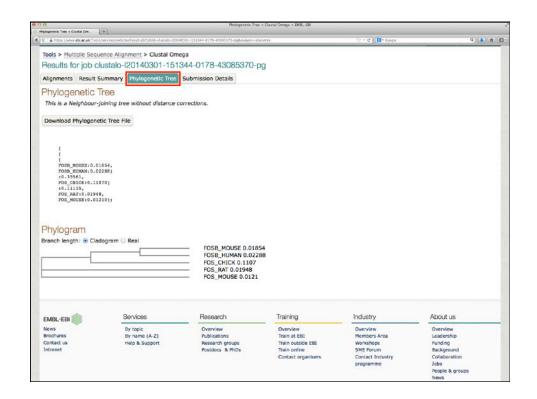
Interpretation is empirical — there is no parallel to the E-values seen in BLAST searches to assess "significance"

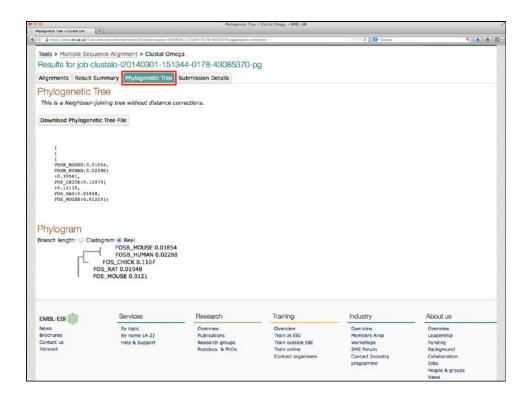
- * entirely conserved column (want in at least 10% of positions)
- "conserved" (strongly similar properties)
- "semi-conserved" (weakly similar properties)

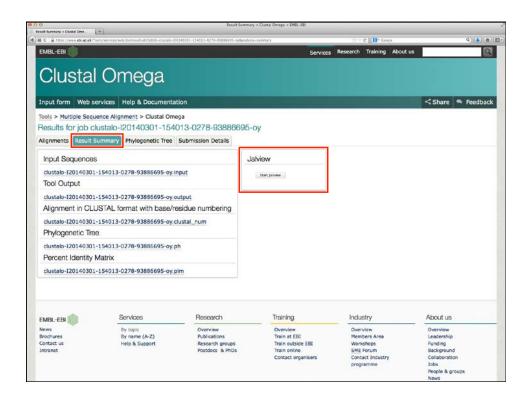








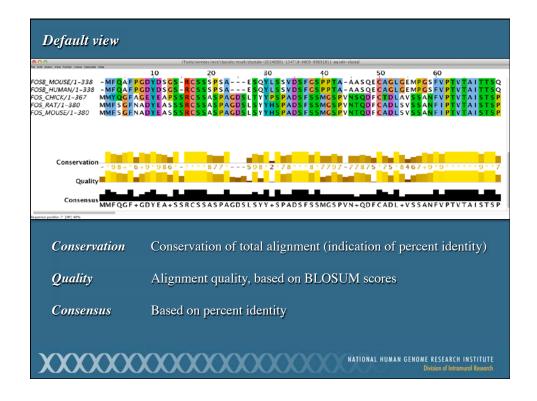


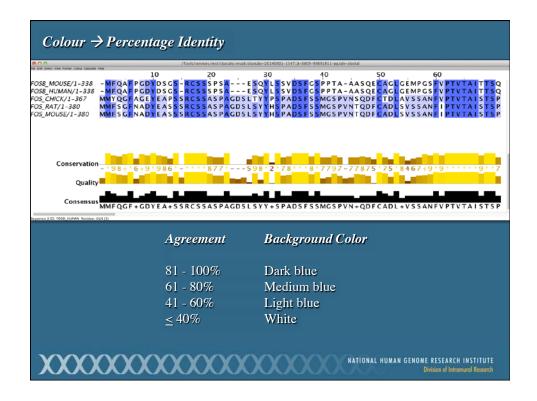


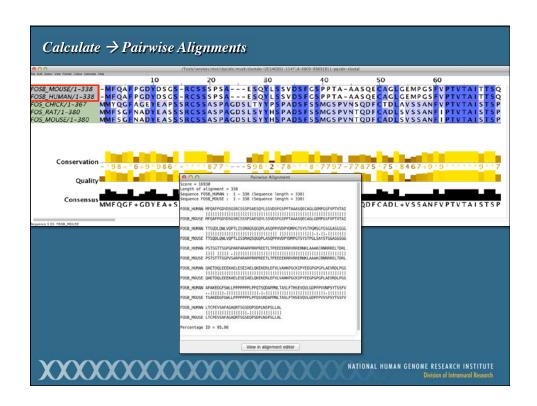
Jalview

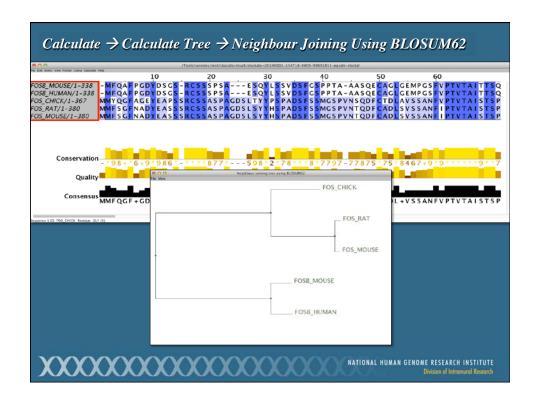
- Java applet available within Clustal Omega results
- Used to manually edit Clustal Omega alignments
- Color residues based on various properties
- Pairwise alignment of selected sequences
- Consensus sequence calculations
- Removal of redundant sequences
- Calculation of phylogenetic trees







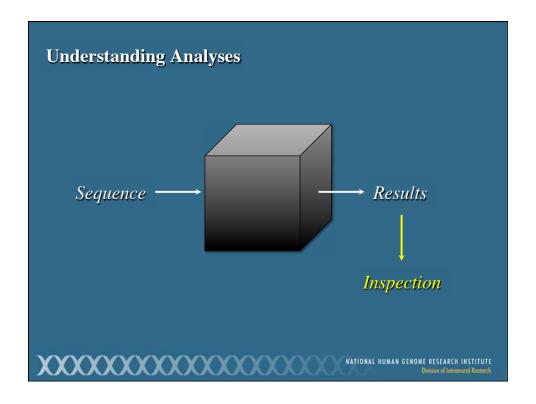


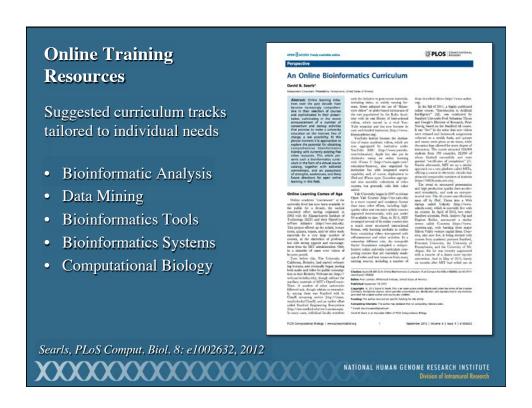


T-COFFEE

- Combines sequence, profile, and structural information
 - Protein structures
 - RNA secondary structures
- Specialized algorithm for aligning transmembrane proteins, non-coding RNAs, and homologous promoter regions
- Can combine output from other methods into a single "master alignment"
- Freely available at http://tcoffee.org

Magis et al., Methods Mol. Biol. 1079: 117-129 (2014)





Current Topics in Genome Analysis 2014

Next Lecture March 19, 2014

Genome-Scale Sequence Analysis

Tyra Wolfsberg, Ph.D.

National Human Genome Research Institute

National Institutes of Health

