

IGIB launches bioinformatic software`

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The GN Ramachandran Knowledge Center of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) has indigenously developed a bioinformatics software called PLHost. The software makes a protein-wise comparison of several organisms simultaneously and assigns functions to the proteins in a short period of time. According to Prof. Samir K Brahmachari, director of IGIB, the software has already been utilized to screen the SARS-virus sequence and has managed to assign functions to about six out of the 11 proteins.

Dr RA Mashelkar, director general, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) who launched the software said that the software could help in the identification of potential drug targets. Priced at \$1,000 for academic institutions, the software "empowers the small machine" and runs on a Linux-server. He pointed out that it was a sign of the times that the new bioinformatics product has put some of its knowledge out into the public domain while keeping some of its as proprietary information.

According to Bramachari discovering functions of proteins based on various tools of comparative genomics is still a challenge in bioinformatics. The indigenously developed software has been patented abroad and has helped to identify 69 new bacterial targets. IGIB has utilized the expertise of Ernst and Young to develop and market the software.