

WWW GUIDE

Diagnostic resources on the Internet

Stuart Harbron

There is a lot of information available on the Internet relating to clinical diagnostics, ranging from sites providing lists of resources concerning particular disease states right through to individual sites from researchers specializing in just one field.

A key element of diagnostics research is finding out what components of a new assay

are already available, and in the mature field of immunoassays there are plenty of buyers' guides and similar resources identifying where you can purchase a particular antibody, antigen, or hybridoma. This is not the case for the much newer area of molecular diagnostics; some companies have a simple search engine to look through their catalog, but very few supply specific probes or primers. There are several molecular biology sites that allow you to search for primers or probes that have already been used and to let you design your own primers.

The World Wide Web is an excellent source for the latest press releases, and a number of sites list recent ones of interest to the diagnostics researcher, particularly in terms of what is going on in commercial areas. Site-specific search engines also allow you to search for information on a particular diagnostic target and to retrieve articles of interest, patent information, and scientific comment.

The sites listed below cover resources on antibodies, primers and probes, suppliers, and news.

Stuart Harbron is principal consultant at The Enzyme Technology Consultancy (s.harbron@experts.co.uk; <http://www.experts.co.uk>).

A sampler of products and service sites related to diagnostics

Antibodies		
Hybridoma databases	http://www.atcc.org/hdb/catalogs.html	This site, from ATCC, is useful for finding whether a particular hybridoma has been deposited, who deposited it, and its availability.
MSRS website	http://www.ANTIBODIES-PROBES.com/	Searchable database with 10 fields including antibody, host, antigen species, label, form, clone number, unit size, product number, and specifications.
SeqHuntll	http://immuno.bme.nwu.edu/antibody_spec.html	Search for an antibody specificity using the Kabat database.
Probes and primers		
Primer selection	http://alces.med.umn.edu/webprimers.html	This page provides an interface to a PCR primer selection program based on xprimer. Type in your target sequence and get a map of primer locations, with the locations of internal, simple sequence, and complex repeats marked. The primers are listed at bottom. The repeat databases HR and BR3X contain human repeated sequences. Human, yeast, and nematode genome models are available.
PCR primers database	http://www-srs.caos.kun.nl/srs/srsc?-id+829325927_193.62.198.6+-info+PRIMERS	The PCR primers database is a new database of primers for various applications involving PCR protocol. The database focuses on primers used in general purpose basic research and does not include primers that originated from the various megabase sequencing projects.
Molecular Probe Data Base	http://www.embl-heidelberg.de/srs/srsc?-idll777855676_129.186.4.14ll-infollMOLPROBE	The Molecular Probe Data Base (MPDB) provides on-line information on synthetic oligonucleotides.
Suppliers		
Antibodies suppliers	http://chemscope.com/MANUFCTR/antibo.htm	Comprehensive list of antibodies with links to suppliers.
SciQuest suppliers	http://www.sciquest.com/pse-cgi/acc/login.cgi	Searchable database of a comprehensive, time-saving, scientific "buyer's guide".
News		
LabFocus industry news	http://www.labfocus.com/cgi-bin/news	Lists recent press releases and other news—very useful for keeping abreast of what's going on commercially.
SciWeb search page	http://www.sciweb.com/search.html	Search a database containing news articles, patent information, and scientific reports.
Literature/US Patents briefing	http://www.experts.co.uk/nbrief.htm	These two pages provide tabulated, categorized digests of recent scientific literature and US patents of interest to the diagnostics researcher.