

# GenomeWeb: Information for the Genomics Community

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The early 2000s was clearly the time when genomics-based research exploded. Advances in genomic sequencing had progressed quickly, to the point that the human genome was published in 2001, opening the floodgates for researchers to pore over and devise all manner of unprecedented genomics data and technologies.

At the same time, a news and information company called GenomeWeb LLC was created to help those working in the then-fledgling niche sector of the life sciences industry. Founded by Dennis Waters, a serial publishing entrepreneur, GenomeWeb was launched in 1997 with its first two newsletters, *BioInform* and *Agricultural Genomics*. In quick succes-

research. "Our core focus has been to stay very close to tools and technologies that enable genomic research, particularly the high-throughput technologies that go along with genomic analysis, like sequencing, microarrays, and informatics," explains Bernadette Toner, Editorial Director, GenomeWeb newsletters. The company has continued to follow the tools market as it has grown as well as including coverage of proteomics, pharmacogenomics, and related technologies. "That has helped us ensure that we're running content that is of interest to industry readers as well as researchers who are using the tools and technologies," adds Toner.

*Pharmacogenomics Reporter*, and *ProteoMonitor*.

If blogs suit your reading style, GenomeWeb maintains several, including *Daily Scan*, *Cancer Minute*, *Informatics Iron*, and *The Sample*. And if you're looking for a new job or working on developing your career in genomics, check out the GenomeWeb careers site, which lists available positions throughout the industry.

GenomeWeb offers free content and premium content through a pay wall. However, anyone working at an academic research center or a not-for-profit institute can register with their .edu or .org email address and, once their email is validated, they will gain free access to all content.

You can also find GenomeWeb's content through social media via Twitter and its newly launched Facebook page.

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sion, the organization launched the rest of its newsletters, magazine, blogs, and website. Today, NYC-based GenomeWeb offers eight newsletters, the online newswire *GenomeWeb Daily News*, a number of blogs, and its only print publication, *Genome Technology* magazine.

"We like to think of ourselves as a connector to the spokes of the life sciences community, particularly those engaged in genomics-based investigation, bringing together all of the disparate disciplines and technologies used by today's genomics and proteomics researchers," says Meredith Salisbury, Editor in Chief. "The entire company is based on this idea that all of the science is going to come out of having the human genome sequence. We think it will all be traced back to the genome and that is how we guide what we cover."

## Broad Coverage Plus Niche Investigation

GenomeWeb offers something for virtually anyone interested in genomics-based

Readers interested in business news and more broadly applicable or big picture trend pieces can tap into GenomeWeb's *Daily News*, *Daily Scan* blog, or the monthly *Genome Technology* magazine. As an example, the current cover story in *Genome Technology* is its annual salary survey. The magazine is also a good source of hands-on information on how to do better science. Every few months, it runs a feature called "Tech Guide," which comprises Q&As with people in the field on specific protocols and methodologies—those tips and tricks they've learned and are willing to share regarding a particular technology or method. Previous examples have included short hairpin RNA design and next-generation sequencing sample preparation.

For those who want to plumb the depths of a particular topic or technology, eight highly specific newsletters are available: *BioArray News*, *BioInform*, *Clinical Sequencing News*, *Gene Silencing News*, *In Sequence*, *PCR Insider*,

## Heavy Editorial Presence

For a company of just about 30 people, nearly 20 of its employees are reporters or otherwise engaged in sourcing and validating the news offered by the company. About half have a science background, with the rest coming from the journalism industry.

News comes to GenomeWeb in the form of press releases, the scientific literature, investor calls, conferences, and publicly available documentation such as SEC filings and lawsuits. About a third of the news comes from traditional beat reporting based on reporters tracking down a piece of information, validating with reliable sources, adding commentary and insight from external sources, and otherwise providing additional context to provide value to readers.

"We're plugged in at all levels of organizations related to genomics, often based on years of developing relationships and beats," says Greg Anderson, Publisher. "The newsroom travels a lot. They are out in the field all of the time at meetings, presentations, along with company or lab

visits...whatever they need to do to cultivate relationships with sources and be the first on to the news.”

“You can have all the alerts and internet and mobile news services you want,” adds Salisbury. “You still need incredibly dedicated connected journalists to make the difference, and that is why our content is so usable and valued.” Anderson is quick to point out that the organization is a stickler for high editorial standards. “Unless we can get independent and reliable verification about a news item, we won’t run it,” he says. “A newswire will pick it up and feed it to you, but you won’t know if it is really true or not.”

#### Global Readership

Though the company does not release subscription or readership figures, it services a global readership, with a predominant presence in the US. “We are reaching industry (biotech and pharma) and research scientists in NIH-funded institutes and other academic research institutes globally,” adds Anderson.

The company has a local European reporter and has contracted with institutions for select foreign language translation, primarily in Asia. “Going forward, we will continue to address the need for foreign language versions of our content,” says Anderson.

#### Feedback, Please

GenomeWeb seeks to better its products continually. In such a niche environment as the one served by GenomeWeb, users are all highly experienced and knowledgeable. “We really encourage our readers to give us their feedback,” says Salisbury. “Whether it is through the feedback options on the website, dropping an email, or calling, we encourage people to tell us what we’re doing wrong, right, and how we can better help them. Our product is only as good as it helps those who use it.”

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