



First Glimpses

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Many people, the first time they see the DNA sequence for their region of interest, cannot help but gaze down the string of Gs, Cs, Ts, and As and wonder what secrets are written there. Staring at such cipher, it is difficult not to wonder if a day will come when our computer programs, our analyses, and our more global understanding of a genome will allow us to access all the secrets hidden there. That time is not here yet, and it likely may never be so straightforward. However, the DNA sequences and analytical tools currently and soon to be available are already allowing us to discover many of the mysteries hidden within this deceptively simple sequence of nucleotides. In celebration of such early findings, and to encourage active analysis of the latest data with a bent toward biological insights, we are introducing a new section to the journal called *First Glimpses*.

First Glimpses will include those papers that use the very latest sequence information available to provide novel biological findings or to improve our understanding of genomic structure and function. This section will run for 18 months, as it is meant to encourage individuals to analyze the data that are available now — before all the genomes are complete — to glean the earliest biological information available at these incipient stages. There will be two types of *First Glimpses* articles: (1) *First Glimpses Comments* will be short commentary articles that are more opinion-type pieces and provide general discussion about what can be inferred

from genome sequences coming available; and (2) *First Glimpses Reports* will be short research reports that focus on analysis of a particular new sequence or cover general features seen in new sequences, such as simple sequence repeats. Certainly newly available sequences can be (and should be) compared to sequences already available, but the point of these articles is to provide a focus on the biological stories that come from the latest available sequence.

At this stage in the Genome Project, new sequence information for a variety of organisms is reaching an all time high. The genome sequences for numerous bacteria and archaea, as well as model organisms such as *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and *Caenorhabditis elegans* are complete; the entire information for *Drosophila melanogaster* is expected any day; *Arabidopsis thaliana* will be available before the end of the year; and the human genome appears to be well on track for completion in 2003. The mouse genome sequence should be finished soon after. Other organisms, regardless of whether they are official “model organisms,” also have their own amount of sequence data available and growing. Complete or not, the biological information that can be gleaned from these new sequence data is immeasurable. *First Glimpses* is meant to provide our readers with early, up-to-date information on biological discoveries from the very latest sequence information.

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