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***Letting the Genes out of the bottle: Making the most of free bioinformatics information***

Bioinformatics databases have made a wealth of genetics information available to anyone with an internet connection and are vital to understanding life sciences. Understanding these databases so that we can incorporate them in our library services is key to remaining relevant in an information rich society and to disseminating knowledge globally. As librarians, we need to retool and broaden our knowledge beyond bibliographic resources. The resources highlighted in this presentation allow the librarian to add considerable depth to information services at no additional cost.

This session will place bioinformatics databases such as OMIM (Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man) and BLAST (Basic Local Alignment Search Tool) within the context of library reference and instruction. Critical aspects of each resource and the joys and pitfalls of learning and using them will be outlined. Through a case study, the presenter will illustrate how to teach the use of these resources to biology students effectively, with techniques that can be adapted for use in workshops with researchers, library staff, or academic faculty. Participants will be invited to discuss their own experiences with these and similar resources, and to generate ideas for introducing them to their own users.

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*Don MacMillan (BSc. MLS) is the Liaison Librarian for Biological Sciences, Math, Physics and Astronomy at the University of Calgary Library. He provides program-integrated information literacy instruction and advanced reference and training services to students and faculty in those disciplines and carries out research on student learning, information literacy and the incorporation of tools and technology in information literacy instruction.*