



**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2007 AT 16H00 CET

**Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics and University of Geneva Announce Collaborative
Research Agreement with Microsoft Research**

Geneva – November 23, 2007 – The Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics (SIB), the University of Geneva and Microsoft Research launched a two-year collaborative project that will use mass spectrometry to systematically screen patients' blood samples for toxic biomarkers. The project will study the molecular effects of drugs on blood proteins to identify possible conflicts with other prescribed drugs, and in a later stage to predict such effects prior to prescribing drugs, in particular for cancer patients. The project, funded by Microsoft, will use the talents and existing competencies of all three organizations in their respective fields to create a platform that can be used on a global basis.

Microsoft will assist the SIB's and University of Geneva's Proteome Informatics Group of Dr. Frédérique Lisacek in the design and implementation of an efficient bioinformatics platform (software and database) that can automatically detect the effect(s) of the variable presence of drug chemical fragments obtained from patients' blood samples on circulating peptides in numerous mass spectra.

A key factor in the successful execution of this project is the long-lasting collaboration between the Proteome Informatics Group and two partners: (1) the Biomedical Proteomics Research Group (BPRG) at the University of Geneva under Prof. Denis Hochstrasser, vice-dean of the Medical School, that has been pioneering proteomics research for more than 20 years and is now carrying research in new methodologies for clinical proteomics as well as the discovery of disease markers in pathologies such as stroke, diabetes and renal diseases. (2) Geneva Bioinformatics (GeneBio) SA (Nasri G. Nahas, CEO), a private company founded in 1997 to provide the SIB with a commercial arm. Besides its distribution activities of SIB products, GeneBio develops and commercialises its own products such as Phenyx, its leading platform for mass spectrometry identification of proteins, and a software based on the Phenyx algorithms and developed in the context of a toxicology projet (Clinical-MS).

The joint project has been officially launched today in Geneva by Prof. Tony Hey, Microsoft Research Corporate Vice President for External Research and Prof. Ron Appel, Executive Director of the SIB, in front of many distinguished guests, including Prof. Jean-Dominique Vassalli, Rector of the University of Geneva and Prof. Jean-Louis Carpentier, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Geneva, as well as the representatives of the collaborating partners Prof. Hochstrasser, Drs. Lisacek, Gagliardi, Murphy and Nahas.

“Microsoft Research is pleased to join the SIB and the University of Geneva in this important project,” said Prof. Hey. “With this collaborative approach, we bring together the expertise to accelerate the research and discovery to help address one of the most urgent issues facing the world today.”

“The multi-disciplinary expertise in medicine, proteomics and bioinformatics of the three Geneva teams at the SIB, the University of Geneva and GeneBio combined with Microsoft Research’s technology will allow us to move faster in unravelling a currently major problem in prescribing drugs to patients”, confirmed Ron Appel.

About the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics (SIB)

The SIB is an academic not-for-profit foundation established on March 30, 1998 whose mission is to promote research, the development of databases and computer technologies, teaching and service activities in the field of bioinformatics, in Switzerland with international collaborations. For more information about the SIB, please visit: www.isb-sib.ch.

The Proteome Informatics Group is part of SIB and focuses its activities on the development of software tools and databases for proteomics. This work involves research and services and was undertaken at Proteome Informatics Group since the creation of the SIB. Some of these activities have been ongoing since 1984. The Proteome Informatics Group has also created ExPASy (www.expasy.org), the world’s first Web site for life sciences.

About the University of Geneva

Founded in 1559 by Jean Calvin, the Academy of Geneva became the University of Geneva in 1873 with the creation of a medical school. Composed of seven faculties, the university is the second largest university in Switzerland with about 14,000 students, of whom more than 38% are foreigners, enrolled in the various programs from the bachelor to the doctorate. The University of Geneva enjoys worldwide recognition for fundamental and applied research. Many international rating bodies have ranked Geneva as a leader in scientific research, in particular in the fields of molecular biology, astrophysics, social sciences and economics. As an example, the University of Geneva heads three National Centres of Competence in Research: Frontiers in Genetics, MaNEP - Materials with Novel Electronic Properties and Affective sciences. Scientists from the University are also active participants in four other selected projects: Quantum Photonics, Computer Aided and Image Guided Medical Interventions (CIMINT), Climate Variability, Predictability and Climate Risks and lastly, the Interactive Multimodal Information Management Programme.

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