



The Synaptic Leap

Open Source Biomedical Research

"None of us is as smart as all of us." -- J. Robert Oppenheimer

"Alchemists became chemists when they stopped keeping secrets." -- Eric Raymond, The Cathedral and the Bazar.

Introduction

Profits drive research investment and secrecy. Therefore there is no greater need and opportunity than open source research for tropical diseases.

The Synaptic Leap is a web site for open and collaborative biomedical research. We believe that effective collaborative community tools that promote transparent research and connect resources will:

1. generate ideas more quickly
2. reduce redundant work

Thus, ultimately cures will be developed more quickly and more effectively.

Get Involved!

Register and Login

Creating a user profile on our site is your connection to other scientists. Once you are logged on you can use our "members directory" to discover other scientists by:

- skills e.g. bioinformatics
- organizations e.g. Stanford
- research community e.g. malaria

Post Your Project Online

If you're already involved with a research project, go to the appropriate research community on our site and describe your project.

- List those involved with your project and get them online too. You can link to their profiles to help spread their hard-earned reputations.



- **Describe your project** in sufficient detail that others may comment on your direction. You never know when a scientist from another discipline may have a unique insight to offer.
- Create a **"Resources Needed"** page for your project describing the various resources you need e.g. people, lab, analysis... Make it actionable. I am often told, "I think it's great what you're doing, how do I help?" There is a tremendous will to develop cures for these diseases, tap into these hidden resources.
- Use our site as an **online, transparent lab meeting**, keeping status notes, comments and discussion online. This is particularly useful when you are collaborating with people from other organizations. It also provides opportunity for those not directly on your project to assist, thereby increasing your research team for free.

Assist with Other Research Projects

Read about the other projects described on our site. If an insight or idea comes to mind, pipe up! To develop cures for diseases with limited research investment, we must evolve to collective intelligence. Be fearless.

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Post comments describing your ideas, no matter how off the wall they may be.

Go to our Resources Needed page and look to see if you have skills or lab resources available that can help a particular project.

Sometimes the inspiration to collaborate can start from the volunteer. If you have certain skills or resources available to help, but don't see a project on-line yet in need of those skills, post a page describing what you have to offer.

Champion Another Research Community

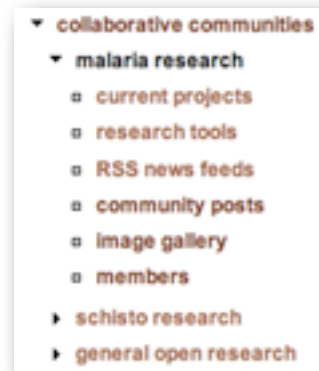
If you are passionate and specialize in another disease that you think that scientists will openly collaborate, contact gtaylor@thesynapticleap.org for more information on how you can help to open a new research community on The Synaptic Leap.

Quick Links

- **Register** to login:
<http://thesynapticleap.org/?q=user/register>
- **Getting Started** provides instructional help for how to use the site.
<http://thesynapticleap.org/?q=gettingstarted>
- **Resources Needed** provides a list of all posts categorized as resources needed.
<http://thesynapticleap.org/?q=resourcesneeded>
- **Member Directory** provides a list of all registered users on The Synaptic Leap. You must be a registered member and logged in to see this page.
<http://thesynapticleap.org/?q=all/members>
- **About** page describes who's involved and why we're doing it: <http://thesynapticleap.org/?q=about>

Research Community Tools

Additionally, each research community provides tools and links to help you be more effective while researching that particular diseases.



Additional Reading

S. M. Maurer, A. Rai and A. Sali. "Finding Cures for Tropical Diseases: Is Open Source the Answer?" *PLoS Med*, December 2004.

<http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlerv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pmed.0010056>

Clifton, Leaf. "The Law of Unintended Consequences". *Fortune*, 19 September 2005.

http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2005/09/19/8272884/index.htm

Wikipedia on:

- Metcalf's Law
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metcalf%27s_law
- Collective Intelligence
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_intelligence
- Long Tail http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_tail