

Digital BioCuration: A Question of Balance

James Ostell

Curation of biomedical data has come to encompass a broad range of activities and considerations, which include the building of digital archives, making decisions on the relative value and longevity of one dataset vs another, editing data records manually, performing or assessing computational processes over very large sets of data, and grappling with issues of web usability and data standards. People who consider themselves biological curators may range from a single domain expert, who develops a collection which reflects their personal judgments and priorities, to groups of people supporting large, long term public resources such as GenBank, RefSeq, or PubMed, and everything in between. Finding the right balance between objective measures of quality and personal judgment, between computational measures and manual curation, between published results in journals and active curation of databases varies by project but some common themes and considerations recur in our experiences of the past two decades at NCBI.