INQUIRY-BASED OUTREACH: 
LIBRARY RESEARCH PROJECT ON BIOSCIENCE LEADS 
TO INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS

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WHY DO THE STUDY
• RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN 
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING IS LARGE 
AND GROWING.
• NEW INFORMATION RESOURCES AND 
TOOLS THAT INTERSECT WITH THE 
LIBRARIES’ MISSION AND ACTIVITIES 
ARE PART OF THIS TRANSFORMATION.
• A TEAM OF LIBRARIANS IN 2005-06 
STUDIED THE GROWTH AND CHANGE 
OF BIOSCIENCE AND ITS PLACE AT MIT.

WHOM DID WE TALK 
TO?
• MIT RESEARCH SCIENTISTS AND 
FACULTY IN BIOSCIENCE, 
NEUROSCIENCES, CHEMISTRY, 
COMPUTER SCIENCE, MATERIALS 
AND ENGINEERING
• EXPERTS FROM OTHER 
COMMUNITIES
• RESEARCH SCIENTISTS AND 
LIBRARIANS AT OTHER 
UNIVERSITIES
• LIBRARIANS ACROSS THE COUNTRY 
WITH BIOINFORMATICS PROGRAMS

WHAT DID WE LEARN?
INTERDISCIPLINARY BIOSCIENCE IN ENGINEERING 
AND SCIENCE IS BIGGER THAN WE IMAGINED, E.G. 
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, MATERIALS, ETC.
A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY EXISTS FOR LIBRARIES TO 
develop collections and services that focus 
on the new biology

RESEARCH SCIENTISTS IN CENTERS, 
DEPARTMENTS, AND LABS WANT TO 
WORK WITH US!

COLLABORATIVE 
INSTRUCTION
LIBRARIANS PARTNERED 
WITH SCIENTISTS AT MIT 
AND HARVARD TO OFFER 
 BIOCINFOAMICS 
INSTRUCTION
CO-SPONSORED 
WORKSHOPS AND 
COURSES:
• NCBI
• European Bioinformatics 
Program
• Gene Pattern software - Broad
• Integrative Cancer Biology 
Program

CO-FUNDED 
COLLECTIONS
LIBRARIANS LED EFFORT TO 
CO-FUND THE SUBSCRIPTION COSTS OF 
BIOCINFOAMICS TOOLS 
AND DATA RESOURCES.
THE BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT, 
CANCER CENTER, BROAD 
INSTITUTE OF GENOMICS, 
AND THE WHITEHEAD 
INSTITUTE JOINED WITH 
THE LIBRARIES TO 
PURCHASE A SITE LICENSE 
FOR BIOBASE.

COOPERATIVE 
support FOR 
JOINT PROGRAMS
WE ARE DEVELOPING 
COOPERATIVE EFFORTS 
BETWEEN THE MIT AND 
HARVARD LIBRARIES TO 
IMPROVE SERVICES TO 
JOINTLY-SPOONRED 
INSTITUTES AND PROGRAMS

NLM FELLOWS 
PROGRAM
CONVERSATIONS WITH 
EXPERTS AT OTHER 
INSTITUTIONS LED TO A 
SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL TO 
PARTICIPATE IN THE NLM 
FELLOWS PROGRAM.
WE ENLISTED OUR 
PARTNERS AT MIT AND 
HARVARD TO SUPPORT THE 
PROPOSAL.

INQUIRY-BASED 
OUTREACH
• TRADITIONALLY ACADEMIC 
LIBRARIES DEVELOP AND 
PROMOTE THEIR SERVICES BASED 
ON THE PERCEIVED NEEDS OF 
THEIR USERS.
• INQUIRY-BASED OUTREACH IS 
ANOTHER STRATEGY FOR 
GETTING NEW SERVICES:
BY LEARNING FROM OUR 
USERS AND HAVING THE 
FLEXIBILITY TO TAKE 
ADVANTAGE OF 
OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY 
NEW RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS 
THE CAMPUS AND BEYOND.

WHAT DID WE GAIN?
• STRONGER WORKING PARTNERSHIPS WITH INSTITUTES 
AND RESEARCH CENTERS ENGAGED IN BIOSCIENCE
• ACCESS TO EXPERTISE TO SUPPORT THE LIBRARIES’ NEW 
BIOCINFOAMICS INSTRUCTION PROGRAM
• DEVELOPED NEW ROLES FOR THE LIBRARY TO SUPPORT 
eVOLVING INTERDISCIPLINARY BIOCHEMISTRY AND 
BIOCINFOAMICS TOOLS, IN ADDITION TO TRADITIONAL 
LIBRARY SERVICES

Why is biology so BIG?
DNA!

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