

I presented the article:

Rocco, Daniel and Critchlow, Terence. "Automatic discovery and classification of bioinformatics Web sources." *Bioinformatics* (2003) 19: 1927-1933.

on November 18, 2003. Attending were Dr. Bradley Hemminger, doctoral students Nancy Baker, John MacMullen, and masters student Mao Ni.

Initially we discussed the utility and history of Web wrappers, and how crawlers can be attached to these wrappers to aid in the automatic detection of resources that require a certain kind of input in their forms to return results. While the article does discuss the possible use of these wrappers to run, essentially, meta-BLAST searches, there are no practical examples of this. This article focused on the detection factor, not the results parsing, which was filed under further research.

Dr. Hemminger had an idea where, instead of Web wrappers, some standardization could be imposed on different interfaces to automatically detect their features through the eventual semantic Web structure. Then when a researcher connected to the Web to run a BLAST search, all sites capable of running that search would be automatically detected from information broadcast from their server, and gathered for the researcher to pick and choose, or to choose all and run a similar meta-BLAST search as the one describe above.

Some objections were raised; since the semantic Web does not exist yet, and the initial investment of creating and maintaining a standard for the metadata about these sites and search engines would require perhaps more effort than someone who develops Web wrappers. The main conclusion is that there are many ways of approaching this problem, and that this is one of many possibly viable ways to run a meta-BLAST search.