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Bioresources information is available at the following URL:

- NBRP (<http://www.nbrp.jp/index.jsp>)
- SHIGEN (<http://www.shigen.nig.ac.jp/indexja.htm>)
- WGR (<http://shigen.lab.nig.ac.jp/wgr/>)
- JGR (<http://shigen.lab.nig.ac.jp/wgr/jgr/jgrUrlList.jsp>)

## Information on Resource-related Events



**"Alga Genome: Biological Resources and Research Resources"**

Schedule: October 15

Venue: The International Conference Hall, Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry building

- Title: "Technical Training for the Transformation and Preservation of Plant Cultured Cells"  
Schedule: November 7 - 9  
Venue: BioResource Building, Tsukuba Institute of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (Tsukuba, Ibaraki)
- Title: "International Symposium on Standardization of Genetic Resources of *Oryzias latipes*"  
Schedule: November 14 - 15  
Venue: The Noyori Memorial Conference Hall, Nagoya University
- "Technical Training for the Analysis of Intestinal Flora by the Terminal RFLP Method"  
Schedule: December 13 - 15  
Venue: Japan Collection of Microorganisms Building, Wako Institute of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (Wako, Saitama)



## Special Project: User Survey

A database is the collaborative effort of information donors, database developers and its users. Although the aim of this newsletter is to communicate information to database users, the lack of feedback from our users cannot be disregarded. Therefore, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted to facilitate interactive information exchange. A questionnaire was posted on our website and also distributed at conferences. Although the questionnaire was posted on our website for several months, there was no response at all. Then, upon hearing a remark made at a conference, "Even if there is a problem with a website, it will usually be forgotten or not be considered serious once it is solved. Thus no one bothers to write anything on the feedback page", I designed a simpler questionnaire and posted it on as many web pages as possible. This simple questionnaire allows our users to express their anger or dissatisfaction with just a click of the mouse when a problem occurred. As a result, many users began responding immediately, and

All questionnaires that have been answered thus far were analyzed and the result is reported here. Approximately 100 questionnaires were collected at the Breeding Science Society and Genetic Society conference, and approximately 130 mini questionnaires were collected from the website. We were surprised and encouraged, and also grateful that many users cooperated with us in such a short period of time.

The result shows that 86% respondents use biological materials (bioresources), and researchers obtain the information concerning the resources from other senior scientists and journal articles. Approximately 30% respondents stated that they could not obtain sufficient information on the resources. Respondents were also encouraged to write comments and we received a proposal concerning a system for the disclosure of information on biomaterials, a request for a comprehensive site, etc. There was an indication that the database information is not in accordance with the actual status and that correct explanation should be provided for that which we have to consider seriously.

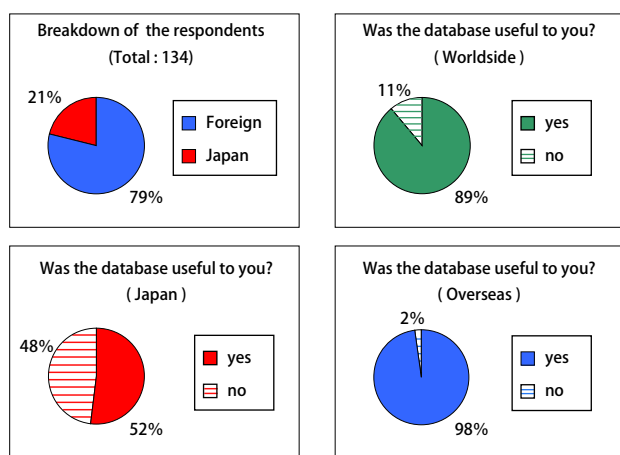
## Mini questionnaire on the website

Table 2 shows the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire posted on the website of the database. Only the following three questions were included in the mini questionnaire.

1. Did you find the information you required?
2. Did you feel frustrated while accessing this website?
3. Any comments ?

It was revealed that the number of users did not always correspond to the number of respondents. Unexpectedly, 79% respondents were overseas users. An interesting fact was that Japanese users tend to respond when they were dissatisfied, while overseas users tend to respond willingly even when they were satisfied with the database. All the comments regarding the databases are helpful, and we will immediately modify each database according to these comments. The result of the survey will be presented on the website.

Table 2



We are also trying to understand the usage of the database via the access log. We have started counting the numbers of users and access to the entire database, and also to different types of information. We found that users tend to view sites with original information and sites for novice researchers. It was observed that the users were definitely dissatisfied when there was a flaw in the construction of the database.

This database is the result of the "Comprehensive Research on Nano Devices to Elucidate the Structure and Function of Chromosomes Project" which was funded by a grant from the Promotion Subsidy for Science and Technology. Dr. Kenji Taniguchi of the Department of Science, Hiroshima University constructed this database. CInet comprises five systems: Chromosome Image Library that collects the chromosome images of various animals and plants; Chromosome Techniques, a chromosome observation manual; Chromosome & Gene Link, a chromosome-gene link; Personal Home Page, chromosome image databases of users; and Chromosome Letters, an online journal. Image data of 5000 taxa of animal and plant have already been collected, and it will be released publicly after the project is completed in April 2006. Until then, the Chromosome Image Library is released as a trial version and is available from the link stated below. It is a really impressive collection!

(Presenter: Yukiko Yamazaki of Genetic Information Laboratory).

**Temporary URL:** <http://cilibrary.sci.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/hiroshima>

Mail address for inquiries: [imagefac@hiroshima-u.ac.jp](mailto:imagefac@hiroshima-u.ac.jp)

**Editor's note:** We are developing databases with funds provided from the national budget. General researchers (including students who are potential researchers and ordinary people who are interested in scientific knowledge) are presumed to be the users. If the number of users is small, the national budget will be wasted. In general, everybody recognizes the need for the disclosure of information regarding bioresources. However, the type of database that is actually required is uncertain. Therefore, we must grasp the needs of our users and provide an extremely useful database. Please cooperate with us to answer the questionnaire on the website or when you are asked at conferences.



## Recommended Database No. 1

### Chromosome Image Network (CInet)

In the mini symposium of the Genetics Society of Japan, I learned about an interesting database. It is a new kind of database of chromosome images and is called Chromosome Information Network.

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