The Genbank-Server at the University of Houston

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Houston GenBank-Server is an electronic mail facility which has been successfully in service for the last 14 months. It provides locus id and accession number access to GenBank data. In addition, it also holds the contributed-software archives previously kept at BIONET.

Description

The electronic mail server currently holds Release 60 of the GenBank Nucleotide Sequence Database(1). We anticipate daily updates of the server's contents by the end of 1989, so the latest sequences will always be available.

The server also contains the contents of the CONTRIBUTED-SOFTWARE directory, as previously maintained at the BIONET Molecular Biology Computer Facility, courtesy of Dr. David Kristofferson and Dr. Spencer Yeh at IntelliGenetics. The contributed-software archives currently consist of programs for the IBM PC and compatibles, and the Apple MacIntosh. We will shortly expand the archives to include Unix- and VAX/VMS-specific software. We will be cooperating with the EMBL File Server (2) so that software is available from both servers.

Accessing the GenBank-Server

The GenBank-Server can be accessed from the Internet, BITNET, Usenet, and most connected networks. Users on JANET and EARN would probably be faster served by the EMBL File Server (2). Users in Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan have successfully accessed the GenBank-Server in its last 14 months of operation.

Please be aware that a mail response program is not 'smart' and can only respond to a limited set of commands. GenBank entries are available by name and accession number only. The electronic mail address to use is:

genbank-server@uhnix2.uh.edu (Internet)

or

...uhnix2!genbank-server (Usenet)

or

genbank-server%uhnix2.uh.edu@CUNYVM (BITNET)

and your request can consist of one of the following:

HELP

SEND HELP

SEND LOCUS genbank-locus-name

SEND INDEX index-name

SEND ACCESSION accession-number

HELP SOFTWARE

SEND SOFTWARE software-type software-name

'HELP' will result in a small help file being sent back, and everyone should request the help message. It will contain up-to-date information about the server, access, release numbers, and policies. The help message also includes all index names, so 'SEND INDEX' no longer works. 'SEND INDEX index-name' (where 'index-name' is one of the index files listed in the HELP message) will work.

SEND LOCUS genbank-locus-name will return via e-mail the requested locus if it exists, and an error message if it does not. Use the HELP message index file to find the name of the entry, or use the accession number.

SEND ACCESSION accession-number will return the request GenBank entry. If that accession number does not exist, an error message should be returned.

HELP SOFTWARE will return a help message and index about the arrangement of the contributed-software archives.

Server Policies:

The server runs every half hour and will handle only *one* request at a time. If you want more than one entry, send in separate requests. Large GenBank entries (Lambda, EBV, tobacco and liverwort chloroplasts entries) may not make it through the thread of mailers. UUCP mailers, in particular, silently enforce a limit of 64,000 characters in a single mail message. Note also that Usenet mail is very unreliable; you should consult the 'pathalias' database to construct a mail path from your machine to uhnix2.

Questions can be sent to davison@uh.edu (Internet) or DAVISON@UHOU (BITNET). Requests to talk to a human rather than a mail response program should be sent to archive-management@uhnix2.uh.edu. By popular demand, archive-managment@uhnix2.uh.edu also works.

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Notice

Due to a lack of interest by external funding agencies, this server may be moved to a different machine within the next 12 months. All electronic mail will automatically be forwarded to the correct machine and a note returned indicating the new address.

REFERENCES

1. Bilofsky, H.S., and Burks, C. 1988. *Nucl. Acids Res.* 16(5):1861–1863.
2. Stoehr, P.J., and Omond, R.A. 1989. *Nucl. Acids Res.* 17(8):6763–6764.