

Class 03: Programming Bioinformatics

Held: Thursday, 1 September 2011

Summary: We continue our exploration of the basics of bioinformatics by doing a bit of programming.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Due: Write up of Web exploration 1.

Notes:

- About the papers.
- We have posted answers to your questions on the introductory survey.
- We will soon post answers to your more administrative questions.
- A note on Piazza.
- For the next class, read Chapter 2 of *Exploring Bioinformatics* and bring questions. (You don't need to do the chapter 2 Web exploration yet, and you certainly don't need to understand all of the code.)
- As you may have noted, we will use a different language in class than they use in the book. We will explore the differences in the lab and reflection.
- EC: CS Extra today at 4:30 - HCI for Peace.
- EC: Bio Grad School seminar Friday at noon.
- Chase will hold a mentor session ____ and will have office hours ____.

Overview:

- Reflections on the web exploration.
- About algorithm design.
- A sample algorithm.
- More Python basics.
- Lab: Project 1.4.
- Reflection.

Reflection on the Web Exploration

- What did you learn from the Web exploration?
- Some things you might have noted:
 - There's a lot of information on each page. Often, you have to spend some effort to find the key info you want.
 - There's a lot of information in the databases, you just need to know how to find it.
 - Talking things out is a good idea.
 - You may need to rely on colleagues for help.

- Conversely, when you notice something particularly interesting, you should share it.

Algorithms and Programming

- So, what did St. Clair and Visick teach you about algorithms and programming?

A Sample Algorithm: Sorting Students

- Suppose we have a small group of students and want to put them in order by the distance of their home from Grinnell.
- Write instructions that a relatively clueless faculty member could follow.
 - Biology students should write the instructions.
 - CS students should ask questions to help the Biology students write better instructions.
- And yes, I'll try to follow them.

More Python Basics

What you've learned so far

- The model we're using
 - Long-standing code goes at the top.
 - Interactive experimentation in the bottom.
- Assignment
 - We have named storage locations and can store and change the values in them.
- Functions
- Lists/Sequences
 - Used to provide an indexed collection of values.
- Strings
 - Surrounded by quotation marks.
- Getting help
 - `help(thing)`
- Organization
 - Indentation is significant Some new topics
- Conditionals

```
if test:
    consequent
else:
    alternate
```

- Adding elements to lists/sequences

```
sequence.append(value)
```

- Loops

```
for var in sequence:
    instructions
for var in range(lb,ub+1):
    instructions
```

Lab Exercise

- Labs based on the book are in the Exploring Bioinformatics with Python section of the Web site, which you can reach by clicking on **ExBioPy** at the top of any page.
- I'll try to set up our labs link to link to them (directly or indirectly).
- For today's lab, you'll look at two things in ExBioPy.
 - Start by reading a translation of Algorithm 1.3 into Python.
 - Continue with followup exercises.
- You may have to continue the lab on your own.
- You do not need to turn anything in, but you should finish it.

Followup

- What went well in the lab?
- What went poorly?
- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Rebelsky/Python approach vs. the St.Clair+Visick/Perl approach?

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