Nature Publishing Group unveils groundbreaking protocol resource – Nature Protocols

Online database of scientific protocols launches as first major resource to combine high-quality, peer-reviewed articles alongside the enabling technology of Web 2.0

Scientific publisher Nature Publishing Group (NPG) today announced the launch of Nature Protocols (www.natureprotocols.com), an online database of commissioned, peer-reviewed Nature Protocols combined with a forum, Protocols Network, where scientists can comment on existing protocols and post their own lab protocols. Nature Protocols combines NPG’s editorial and production values with the principles of ‘Web 2.0’ to create a unique, dynamic protocols resource.

The background to the launch is explained by Katharine Barnes, Chief Editor of Nature Protocols:

“Experimental protocols are constantly evolving and becoming increasingly complex, making it difficult for publishers to keep pace in traditional journal or book formats. Moreover, the tips and shortcuts that researchers devise to improve a protocol rarely appear in print. Nature Protocols address these important problems by providing a dynamic, online resource that allows the scientific community to comment on and refine existing protocols and upload lab protocols for everyone to use.

In addition to peer-reviewing Nature Protocols we are encouraging our readers to comment directly so that the process of refining and improving protocols is much more dynamic. Opening up protocols for further feedback in this way will allow researchers to point out modifications that will make the process even more efficient and reliable.

By commissioning protocols of the highest quality and incorporating researchers’ comments and troubleshooting tips we aim to create a collection of protocols that our readers will value for being cutting-edge and highly effective.”

The site has two protocol streams: Nature Protocols are high impact, commissioned, peer-reviewed protocols, which are selected on the basis of their relevance to outstanding biological and biomedical research questions. Nature Protocols are presented in an easy to follow, step-by-step format with highlighted critical steps, troubleshooting guides and useful pause points. They are available in both html and PDF format so that they can be printed out and used directly at the bench. A total of 400 up-to-date Nature Protocols are planned for publication in 2006.

The Protocols Network consists of protocols uploaded to the site by scientists in the community and are not commissioned or peer-reviewed. This part of the site provides an opportunity for scientists to share the experimental protocols they have developed in the course of their research. Any scientist can upload their protocols to the site, and authors of articles published in Nature and Nature research journals have already contributed.

Scientists are encouraged to add comments, tips and advice to protocols within Nature Protocols and Protocols Network to continually refine and update this resource. Access to the full content presented in Nature Protocols is available through an institutional site license. Protocols and comments published in Protocols Network will remain publicly viewable without charge.
Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is a division of Macmillan Publishers Ltd, dedicated to serving the academic, professional scientific and medical communities. NPG's flagship title, Nature, was first published in 1869. Other publications include Nature research journals, Nature Reviews, Nature Clinical Practice and a range of prestigious academic journals including society-owned publications. NPG also provides news content through news@nature.com and scientific career information through Naturejobs.

NPG is a global company with headquarters in London and offices in New York, San Francisco, Washington DC, Boston, Tokyo, Paris, Munich, Hong Kong, Melbourne, Delhi, Mexico City and Basingstoke. For more information, please go to www.nature.com.

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