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Welcoming protocols.io

Springer Nature recently acquired protocols.io, an open-access platform for developing and sharing protocols, which will replace the Protocol Exchange from June 2024.

Springer Nature has a longstanding history of publishing methods articles and protocols, establishing the book series Methods in Molecular Biology in 1983, *Nature Methods* in 2004, *Nature Protocols* and the Protocol Exchange (open-access protocols repository, previously called the Protocols Network) in 2006, and *Nature Reviews Methods Primers* in 2021. Together, we host the world's largest collection of scientific protocols and methods (more than 85,000), which can be accessed from a single database called Springer Nature Experiments.

In 2023, we announced the acquisition of protocols.io, following a year-long pilot partnership. protocols.io was founded in 2012 and provides a secure cloud-based platform for scientists to develop, share and collaboratively optimize their protocols. Key features include version control, forking (using the original protocol as a template and adapting it), the option to compare forks and versions, private sharing, and interactive commenting with replies from the authors of the protocols. The dynamic run functionality allows scientists to run through a protocol step-by-step (with options to tweak individual steps, take notes, and scale amounts and/or volumes) and save a record of exactly what was done during the run. These features offer important advantages over our previous protocol-sharing platform, the Protocol Exchange, so we have decided to migrate this content to protocols.io and close the Protocol Exchange platform for new submissions.

The key attributes of both platforms are largely the same. Like the Protocol Exchange, protocols shared on protocols.io are not peer reviewed or vetted (the platform acts as a preprint server), so sharing a protocol should not preclude its publication in a methods or protocols journal, such as *Nature Protocols*. In fact, editors at Springer Nature actively encourage authors to deposit their protocols into repositories such as protocols.io to improve the reproducibility of the research we publish. Some journals (*Nature*, *Nature Methods* and *Nature Cell Biology*) insist upon deposition for specific fields in which detailed protocols are particularly important, such as stem cell research. Also like the Protocol Exchange, protocols on protocols.io are assigned a digital object identifier (DOI), which can be cited in research articles. This means that the methods sections of research papers can be kept up to date by citing the protocols.io DOI and then publishing new versions on the protocols.io platform whenever the method is optimized. DOIs for existing (already published) Protocol Exchange protocols will remain the same and will be linked to new DOIs on the protocols.io platform once the content has been migrated across. For more information, see https://www.protocols.io/protocolexchange.

This transition marks a key step in Springer Nature's continued commitment to open research and leadership in open-access initiatives relating to research, data, code and protocols. We hope that you will join us in this endeavor by making use of the protocols.io platform.

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