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Nature Network extends OpenSocial 'Workbench' for widgets

PRESS RELEASE FROM NATURE PUBLISHING GROUP
6 December 2010

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Nature Publishing Group (NPG) today announces the next stage in the evolution of its innovative "Workbench" development platform. NPG is inviting the community to develop customized applications ("widgets") to search, discover and share scientific information. The Workbench development platform is built on OpenSocial technology - as used by, among others, iGoogle. NPG will declare its Workbench officially 'open' for new widgets at today's OpenSocial Europe Summit in the Netherlands.

NPG launched its Workbench environment on *Nature Network* in May 2010. The Workbench is a configurable webpage on *Nature Network* that users can customize by selecting, removing and moving widgets that can be used as tools for common online research activites. Scientists and developers are now invited to develop and submit their own widgets for Workbench.

"By providing an OpenSocial environment in which developers can deploy widgets, we are empowering the scientific and web development community to experiment with exciting new applications which will enhance scientists' productivity," says Jo Stichbury, NPG's Head of Communities.

As a demonstration of the Workbench, NPG has developed some widgets of its own, and has also worked with other organizations to develop some examples. These include a search widget for the nature.com site, semantic searching (powered by the Novoseek search engine), myExperiment - for browsing and sharing scientific workflows, a video player for nature.com videos, as well as a selection of bioinformatics tools, i.e. PCR amplification and a protein to DNA converter.

NPG has also been active in promoting and delivering the use of application programming interfaces (APIs), enabling developers to add value to the process of scientific communication. These include well-established APIs to access Connotea, NPG's online bookmarking service, and OpenSearch APIs, launched in 2009. NPG's OpenSearch APIs allow remote searching of the nature.com platform, returning results in a format that can be reused and redisplayed. An API is available for nature.com blogs (http://blogs.nature.com/), NPG's community-run science blog tracking and indexing service. In addition, nature.com RSS feeds are available for use by widget developers. RSS feeds include free-to-access news and features hosted on the Nature News site (**www.nature.com/news**).

NPG encourages active collaboration and contributions from scientists and web developers alike. The Workbench can be found on *Nature Network* at **network.nature.com/workbench**. Developers interested in finding out more about developing widgets with NPG should visit the Workbench blog at **blogs.nature.com/workbench/**.

-ENDS-

Links and more information:

RSS Feeds on nature.com: **www.nature.com/webfeeds/index.html**
Nature Network Workbench: **network.nature.com/workbench**
Workbench blog: **blogs.nature.com/workbench/**
Nature.com terms & conditions: **www.nature.com/info/tandc.html**

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