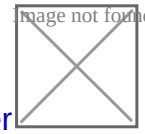
Hacking biotechnology: Do-it-yourself wonders and worries

The following is an editorial summary.

What happens when the do-it-yourself ethos of hacker culture encounters the ethically and emotionally fraught landscape of biotechnology? Well, you get glowing trees, among other things. NBC News profiles some of these upstart biotech labs. To quote:

> Fueled by crowdfunding, grants and membership fees, community labs like HiveBio are delving into what's arguably the 21st century's hottest scientific frontier. Once, projects such as DNA barcoding,biofuel-producing bacteria and glow-in-the-dark organisms were the exclusive domain of professional researchers. Now they're also the domain of amateurs — including Katriona Guthrie-Honea, a 16-year-old student at Seattle's Ingraham High School who is one of HiveBio's founders.
>
> "When you open up access to biotech and biology, people understand it more," she told NBC News. "They're also less afraid of it."

Not everyone is less afraid, however. The glowing-plants project already attracted an anti-Kickstarter (Kickstopper?) campaign in an attempt to prevent this "dangerous" technology from being pursued. And the labs profiled by NBC are under the watchful eye of the FBI. Still …



> [W]ho knows? Just as a couple of guys working in a garage accelerated the computer revolution in the 1970s, a couple of gals working in a community biolab may supercharge the biotech revolution.

Read the full story here: Biotech meets DIY hacker culture, sparking new wonders and worries