

Why CRISPR, other academia-produced technologies, should belong to everyone

Why does anybody own CRISPR?

[According to Michael Eisen, Berkeley professor and co-founder of the Public Library of Science] intellectual property in academia is a drain on the system. It's a model that was ushered in decades ago with an aim to encourage innovation. Instead, it stifles the academic process with licensing costs and intellectual secrecy. The incentives it creates, Eisen argued, run counter to the pursuit of knowledge.

One of the core problems is that the licensing fees hit early-stage research and development — the point of use, not the end product. The economic costs then reverberate throughout the industry.

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CRISPR is a timely example. While the owner of the ultimate 'ah-ha' moment is up for debate, most agree it was the product of many incremental advances by scientists around the world.

"If CRISPR had just been discovered in labs and they had just published it and nobody had patented, I think everybody would be using it," Eisen said.

Instead, he believes people are scared to adopt this new tool because of the IP disputes.

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"I've seen many examples, both in companies I'm associated with and other people, of people who could make use of CRISPR in very big and important ways, but are doing other things that are slower, more expensive, less efficient, because they are terrified of the uncertainty that comes with the current state of the intellectual property," he said.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why does anybody own CRISPR? An argument against academic IP](#)