

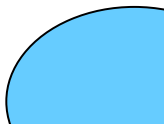
BIOLOGY
Bioinformatics 1

Systems Biology
an Introduction

16.11.2023 – 10:15 to 11:45

Eberhard Korsching

complex-systems.uni-muenster.de



How to become a theoretical biologist ?

Studies in i.a. chemistry / biochemistry / biology

interests in physics / applied mathematics / statistics

grow

PhD in a wet-lab situation

e.g. biochemistry / immunohistochemistry /
cell biology / behavioral biology etc.

with the thoughtful application of theoretical methods

wet lab

Get associated with a life science topic,

be part of scientific networks,
gather work experience and get a broad overview
in theoretical sciences ...

postdoc

Extend promising concepts ...

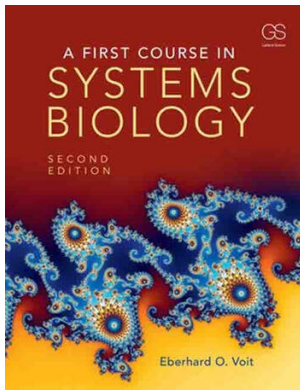
theory lab

in close cooperation with a

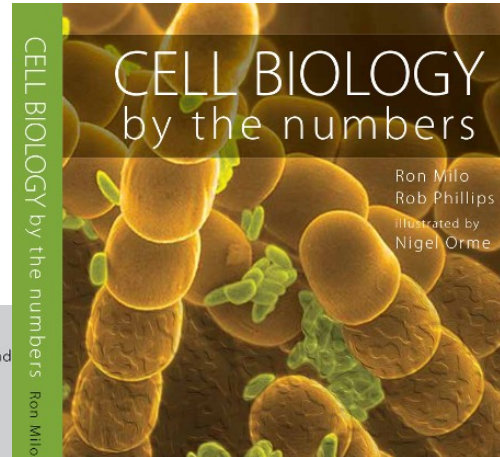
wet lab

Resources

Internet resources : no science area is better represented on the web than the theoretical sciences



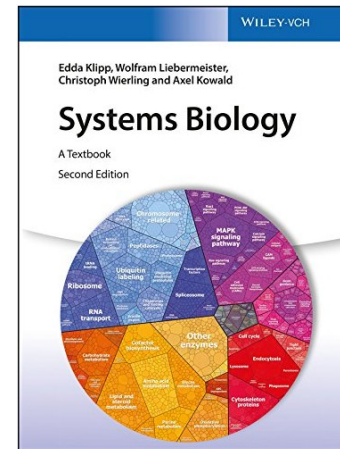
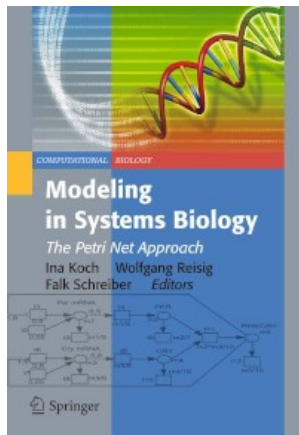
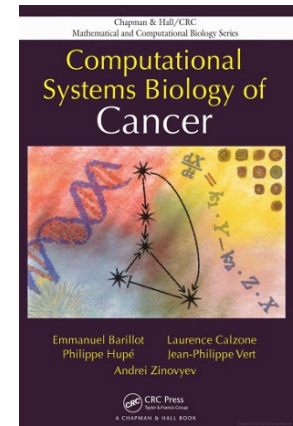
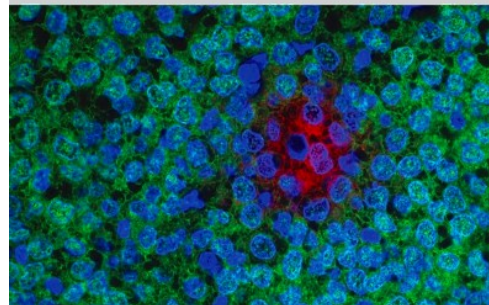
get inspired



Brian Munsky, William S. Hlavacek, and

QUANTITATIVE BIOLOGY

Theory, Computational Methods, and Models



discover topics



even more ...

What are we going to talk about?

- **T**erm definitions & some first orientation
- **W**hat is a **biological network**? - and how we might use it...
- **A**pplication example
from experimental data to results...
- **I**mportant technologies
and spotlights
on how **systems biology** is applied...

Introduction

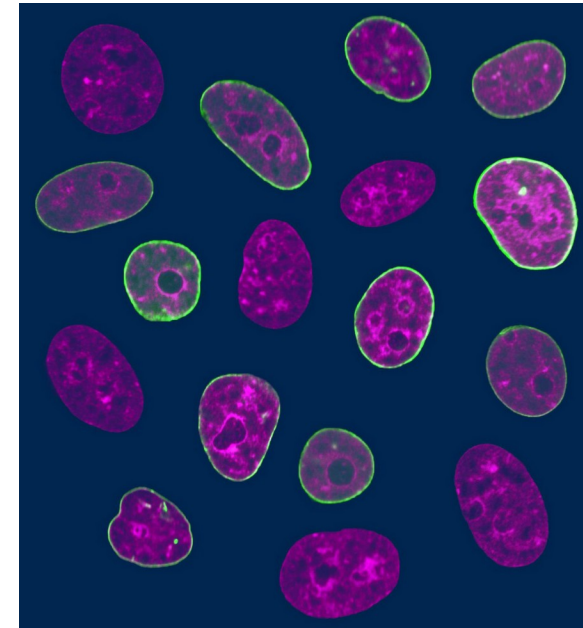
Definitions

&

Overview

What is systems biology?

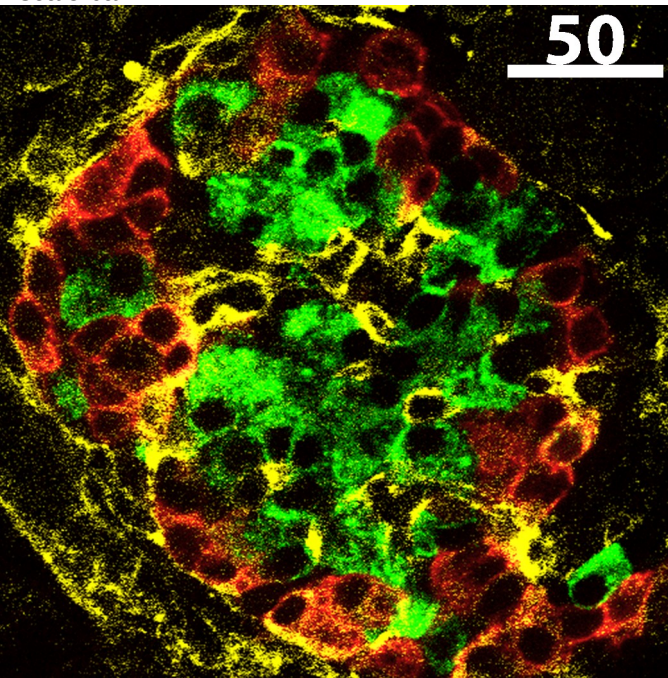
Mainly focusing on **one cell** and their cellular states, sometimes on parts of a cell, and sometimes on **all the cells** forming tissues/organs ...



Human cell nuclei with fluorescently labeled chromatin (purple) and nuclear envelope (green). Image credit: Fang-Yi Chu & Alexandra Zidovska, N.Y. University.

... tries to explain the **interaction** (mechanisms) of all molecules forming and maintaining a cell and their self developed micro environment ...

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0007739.g004>
 Neonatal pancreas, mice: Endocrine-cells coated with a layer of extracellular matrix. Immunohistochemical staining for Insulin (green), glucagon (red) and collagen IV (yellow) - 50 μ m scale bar.

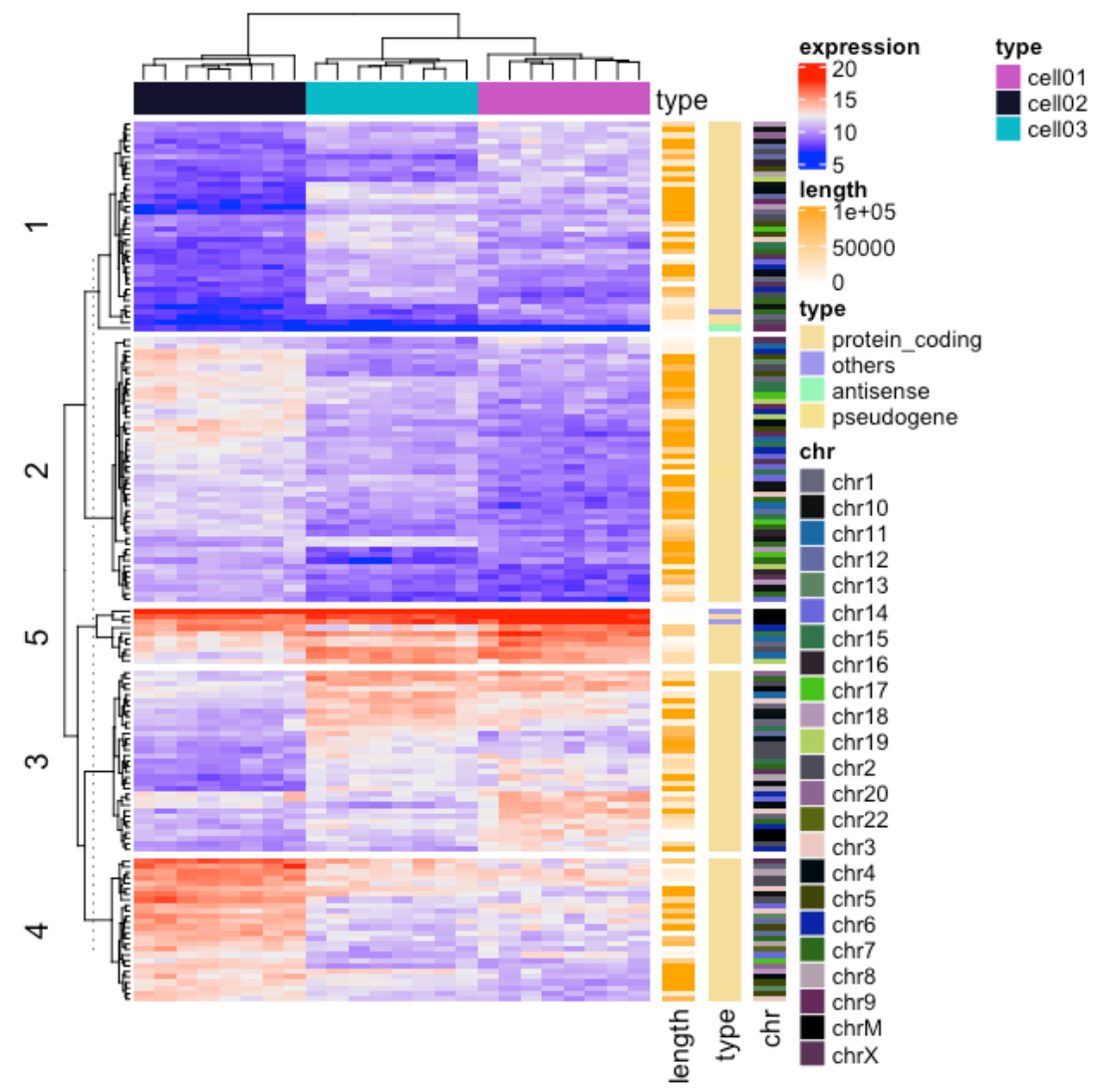


Our focus : molecule quantities

Even more specific:
gene expression
protein expression

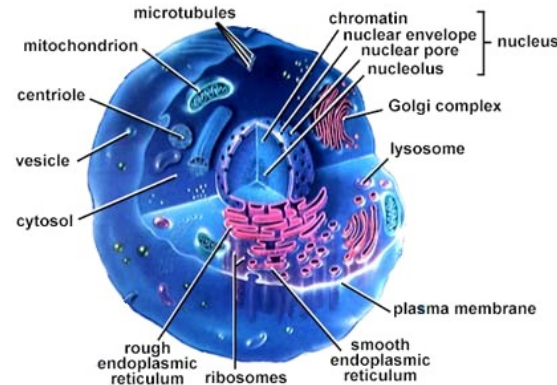
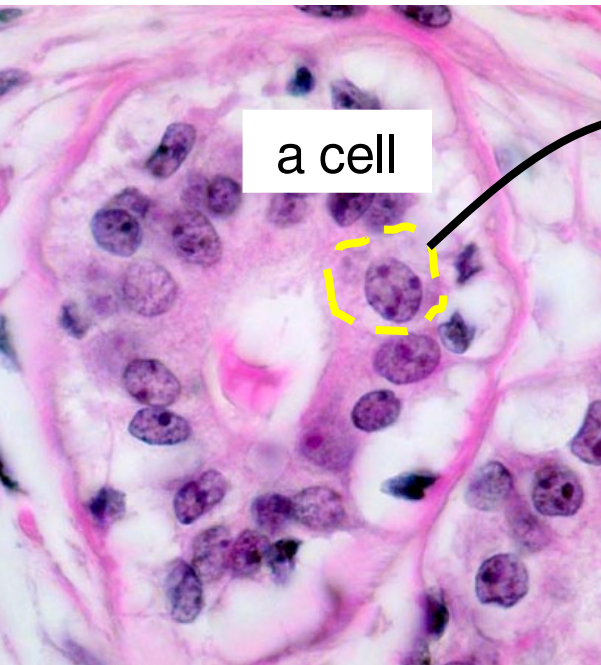
no (larger) complexes,
 no (smaller) fragments,
 and no atoms

so, many objects
 are excluded



gene expression

Systems biology is highly complex



a model

The human cell has a diameter of app.
 $10\text{-}40\ \mu\text{m}$ - the human body app. 10^{13} cells.

ESTIMATES for the complexity of a *human* cell

About $25 * 10^9$ human hemoglobin macromolecules
 (64 kDa or ku) fit in the volume of a human cell

Likely $>10^5$ basic types of macromolecules
 DNA, RNAs, proteins, glycans, fragments, ...

More details on models

Biological objects can be described by a logical notation of properties, rules and states, often in a mathematical way forming a **model** of observations.

consider additionally

- A biological object can be investigated by means of **different experimental methods** which might or might not **conform** with a certain model
- Each biological object/process can be described by various **models**
- The **choice of a model** depends on the problem, the purpose, and the intention of the investigator
- The process of **modeling** has to reflect **essential properties of the system**

Model development

What is important to consider?

- Review of the existing **publications** associated with a certain topic
- What types of **data** are available for this research question?
- What type of **confidence** is associated with the data :

this means, fetch **additional information** on the creation and limitations of the experimental data (**really important**)

Working with models - have a concept

- Identify the **specific questions** that shall be answered
- Build a stringent **hypothesis** before you start

Implementation of a model

- Select the level of abstraction
(molecular, cellular, physiological, phenotypical, disease related, ...)
- Methodological approaches: e.g. deterministic or stochastic
- Variable types: discrete or continuous

Establish controls for the model, e.g. :

- Robustness / sensitivity analysis
e.g. test the probability to be able to distinguish two different model groups
- Data randomization should show different results

Section summary

You got some insight on

- what kind of idea is behind **systems biology**
- what might be meant by using the term **model**

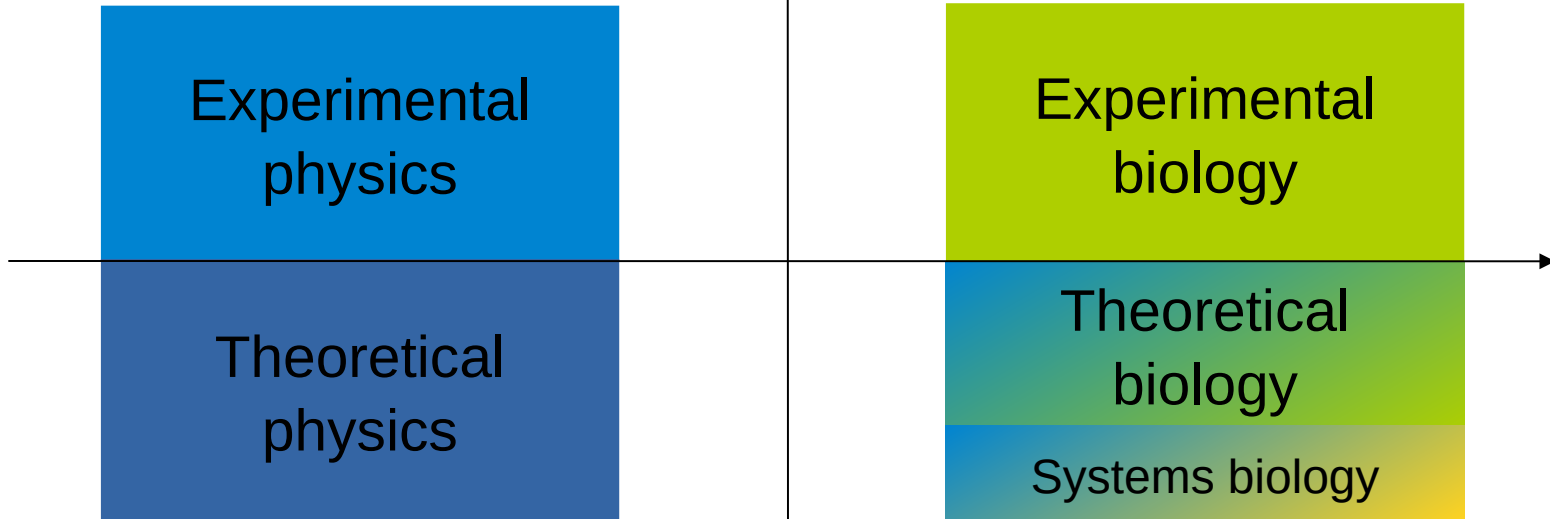
Have in mind

- > A model is the **basis** of every research question
and
indispensable for doing systems biology

some more notes on
systems biology

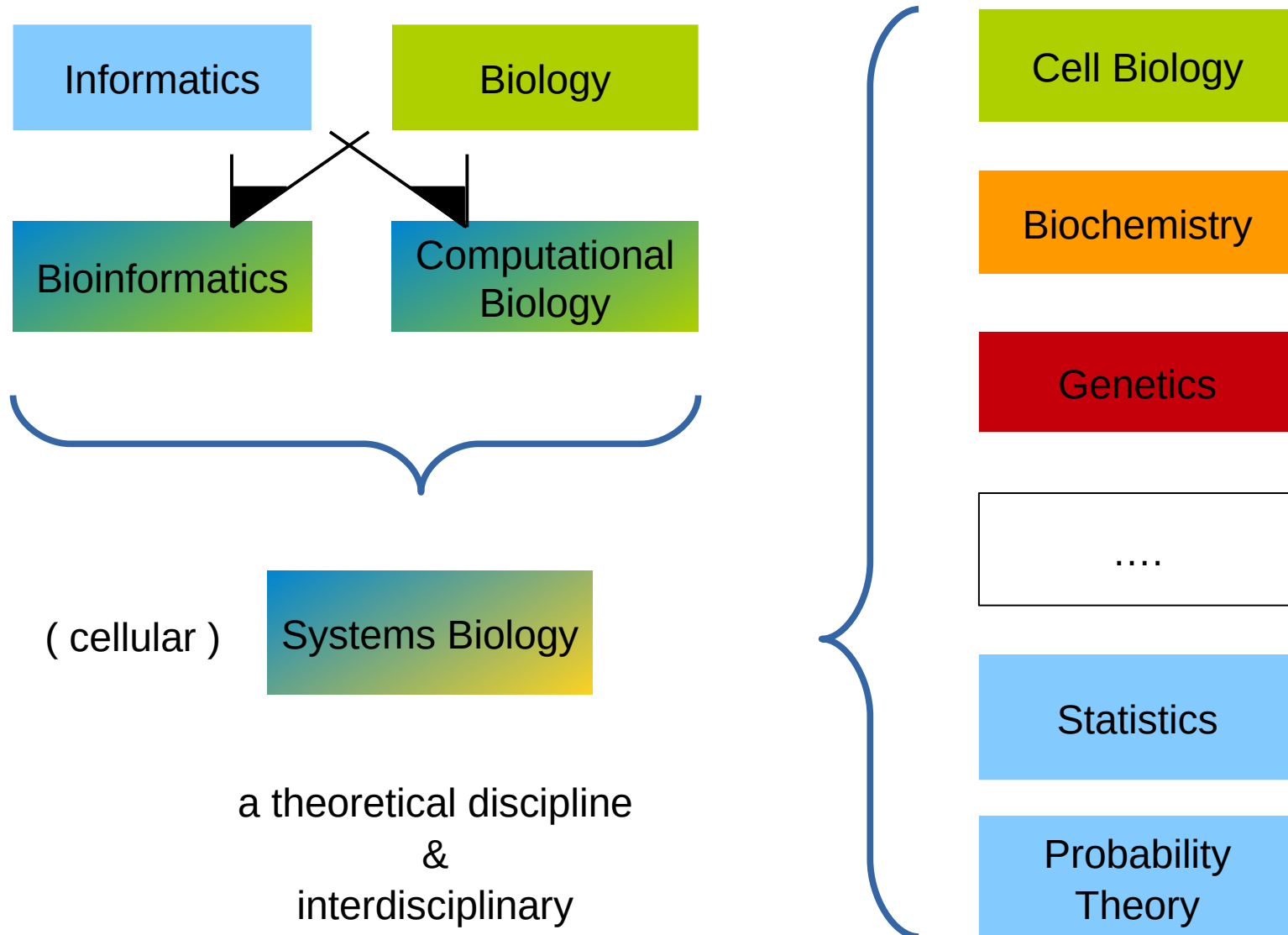
The evolution of systems biology

physics has a long tradition in having an experimental and theoretical branch



in biology since the 19th century the theoretical fields develop more rapidly

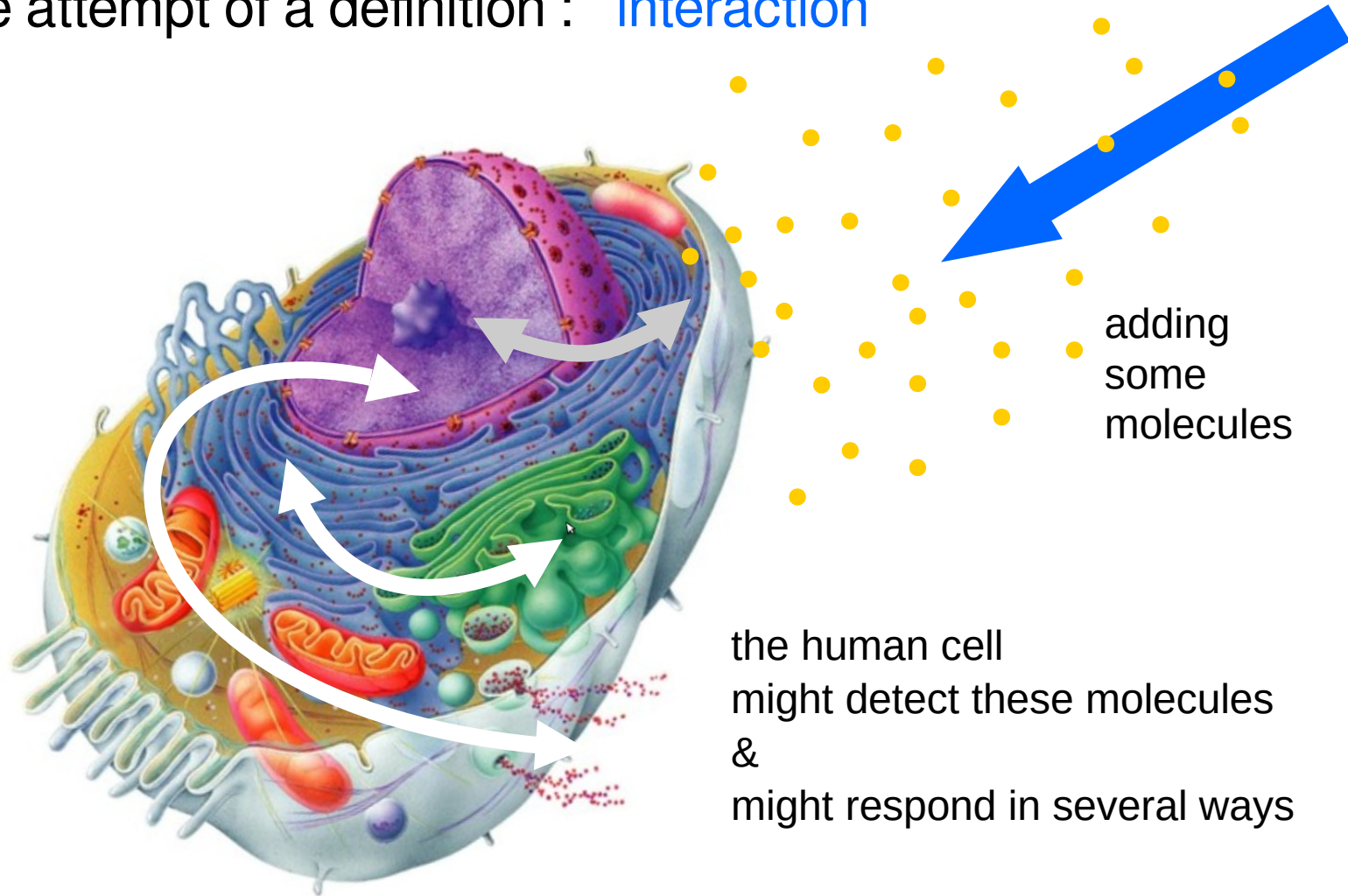
Systems biology - scientific fields



Systems biology

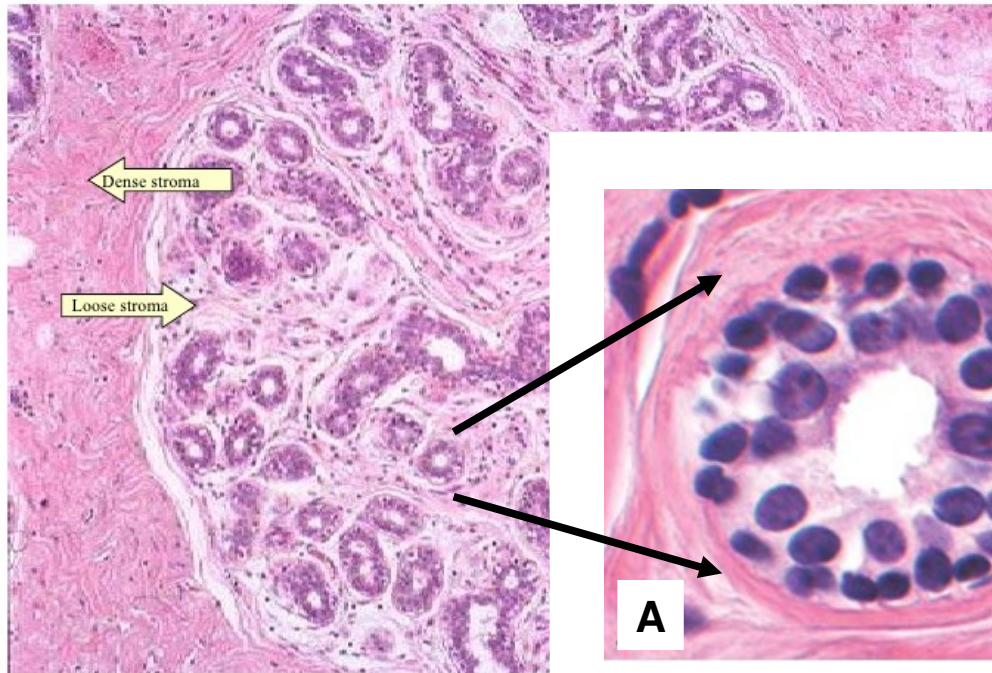
a schematic view

One attempt of a definition : **interaction**

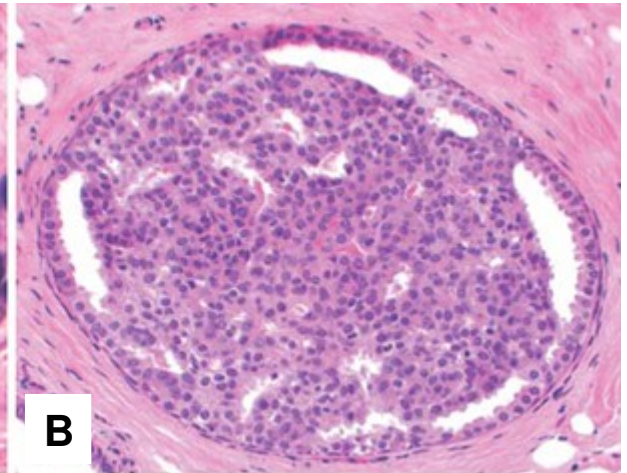


A microscopic view

Normal Breast – glands & stroma



[human tissue]



A --> B : **systemic change**

A – Normal

A normal duct has a myoepithelial cell layer and a single luminal cell layer

B - Epithelial hyperplasia

The lumen is filled with a heterogeneous population of cells of slightly different morphology

A molecular view

again schematic

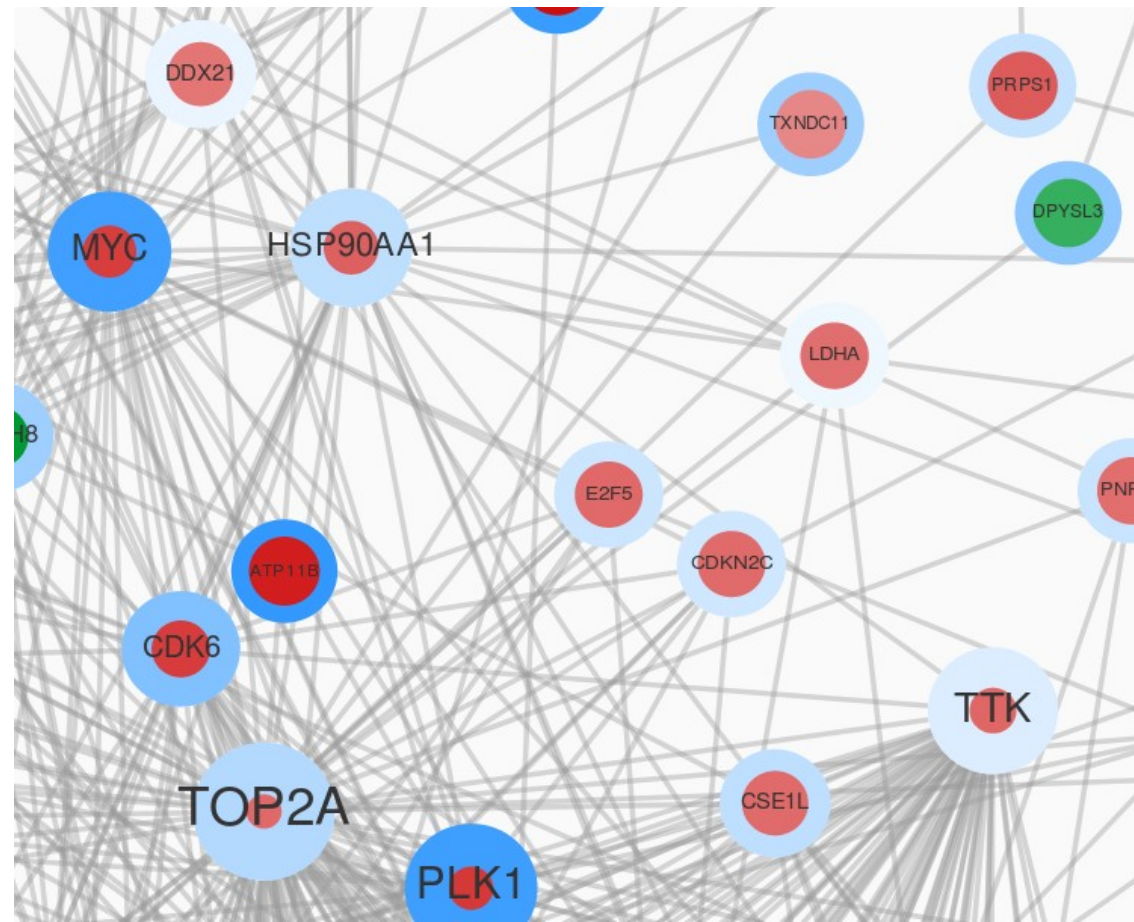
by a **graph** (c.f. --> 'graph theory')

composed of **nodes / vertices** and **edges / arcs**

which visualize

relations

between
parts
of the system

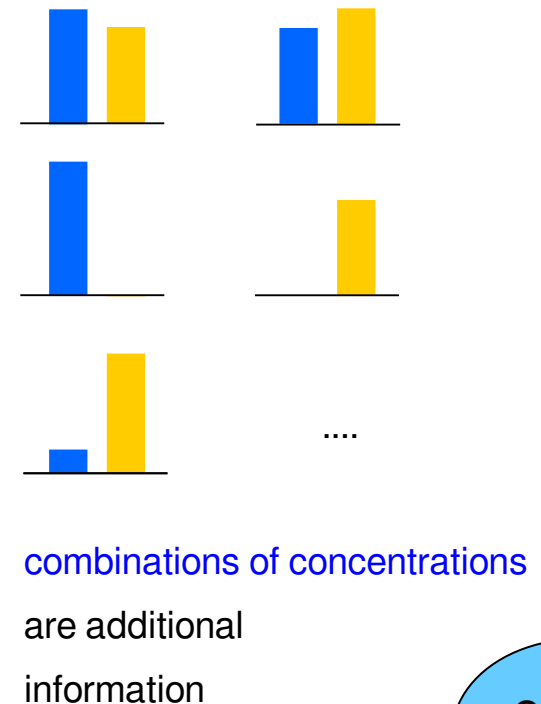
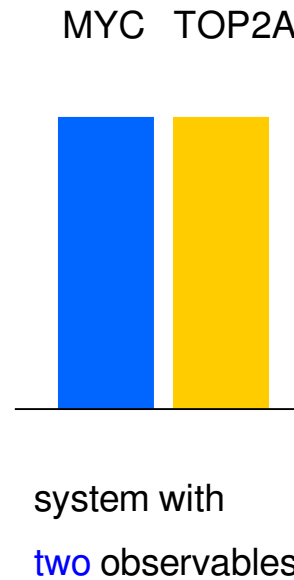
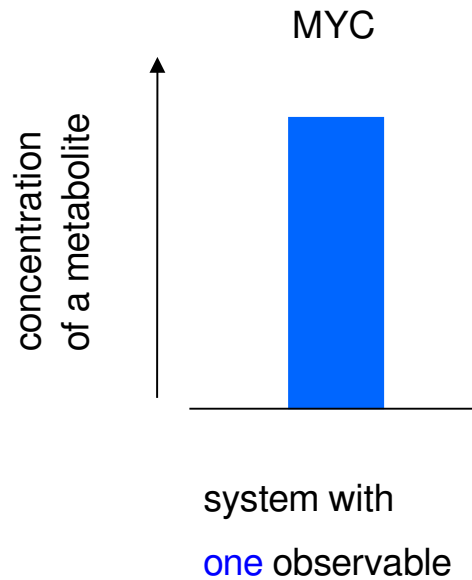


This is leads to a different definition

for systems biology

“The whole is more than the sum of the parts”

gene expression example:



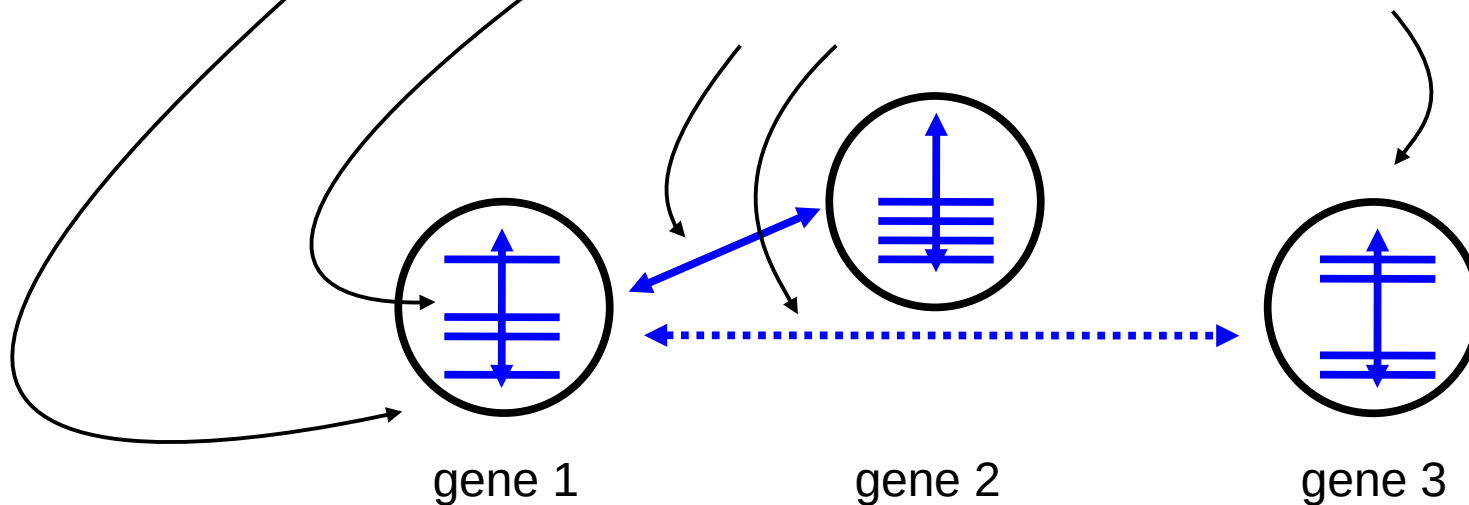
Section summary

Systems biology tries primarily to model the dynamic parts of a cell :
the cellular **mechanisms**

So mechanisms can be **represented**
by **nodes** (with states)

and **transitions** between **states**

and **interaction** between **nodes**



further methods useful

in

systems biology

Lingua franca

an elaborated handling of complex systems needs

modeling/ computing platforms

the **language** of the life science community is often **R**

scientists who come from engineering disciplines
tend to use e.g. **Julia**

and those in the physics community
may be more familiar with e.g. **SAGE**

from the perspective of biology

Systems biology

... deals with the **analysis** of all (known/relevant) **interactions between the components of a cellular system**

... tries to **explain** and to **predict** cellular **behavior**

... emerged with the appearance of the **high-throughput technologies**



massive parallel measurements of molecular observables

High-throughput technologies

- Genome-, transcriptome-, **sequencing**, ...

*you already heard about that
in the last lessons ...*

- Tissue-, peptide-, protein **microarrays** ...

Characterized by a highly parallel measurement of **concentrations** or **numbers** of system compounds

appearing or **disappearing** or **changing** due to different physiological conditions ...

Section summary

So, high-throughput technologies
are measuring **states** of the system

and this data will be analyzed

by a computing platform & language

More details on interactions

- **Biochemical reactions** between molecular factors
- **Physical binding** (without chemical reactions)
to establish a molecular complex, - a membrane, etc.

Those interactions are forming a **biological network**
which can be analyzed by different **network models**,

e.g. :

reaction networks (Petri nets ...)

looking on properties like reaction kinetics, stoichiometry, ...

co-expression networks

comparing expression trends over time and between genes

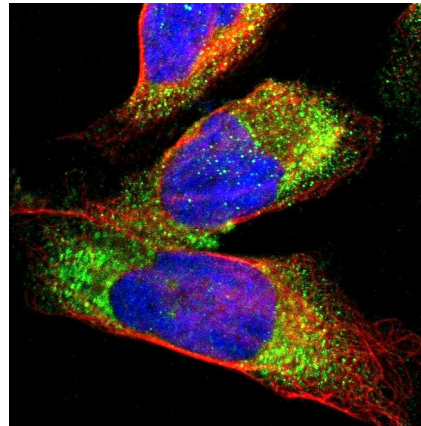
Mid-term summary

Disassembling a system into components

Components Biology

HT analytical chemistry:

- genomics
- transcriptomics
- proteomics etc.

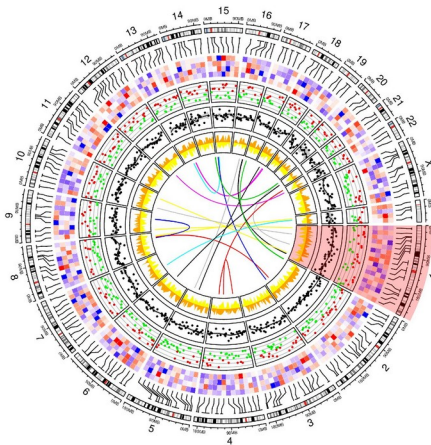


Assembling components to a model system

Systems Biology

Integrative analysis:

- bioinformatics
- computer simulation



--> both approaches are necessary for a mechanistic understanding

Main section

Introducing some basic **graph theoretical** ideas
discussing **measurement** options
pointing to some **limitations**
showing a **real world experiment**

Presenting an expression analysis:
protein co-expression

More methods

- single cell sequencing
- microRNA - mRNA networks
- Petri nets
- gene co-expression networks

Outlook on **further topics** - systems biology is huge ...

What is a network ?



Abstract definition: interconnected nodes

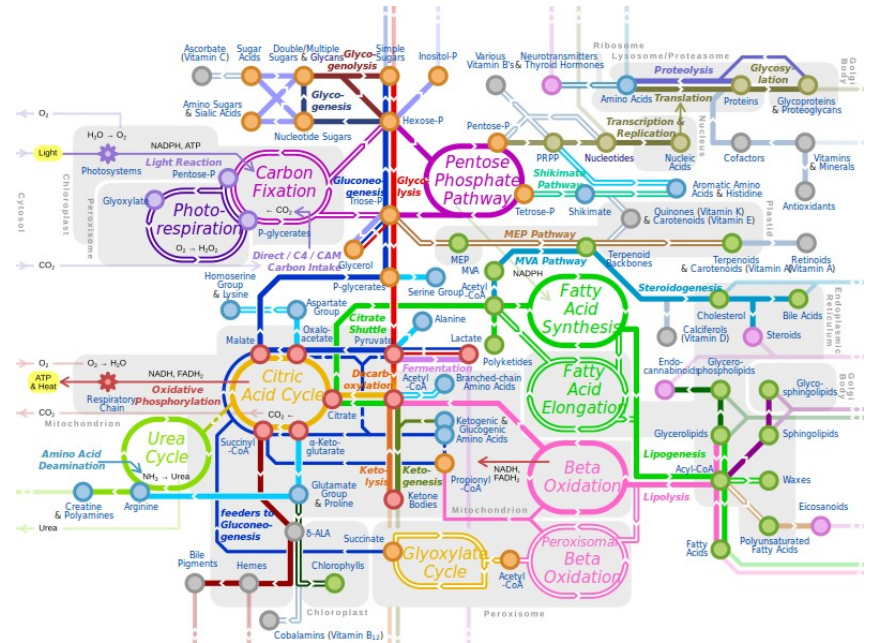
‘interconnect’ means : **sharing something**

e.g. inter-/ or changing information or physical objects

in biology, e.g.

metabolic reactions

- to transport **energy**
- to build **macromolecules**
- to degrade **macromolecules**
- to transport **information**



glycolysis
gluconeogenesis

Different networks - different perspectives

Protein-protein interaction networks (PPI, sometimes also peptide-peptide interaction)

primary network - e.g. transcription pre-initiation complex, cell structure forming, signaling

Metabolic networks

primary network - e.g. databases : KEGG (Japan), ExPASy (Swiss) Biochemical Pathways

Genetic interaction networks

meta network - e.g. observe pattern of mutations and associate with disease types

Gene / transcriptional regulatory networks

primary network - cellular control on structure and function, e.g. cellular differentiation, morphogenesis

Cell signaling networks

primary network - cell communication plays a role in e.g. body development, immunity

Gene / protein expression networks

meta network - observe expression pattern and associate e.g. with disease function

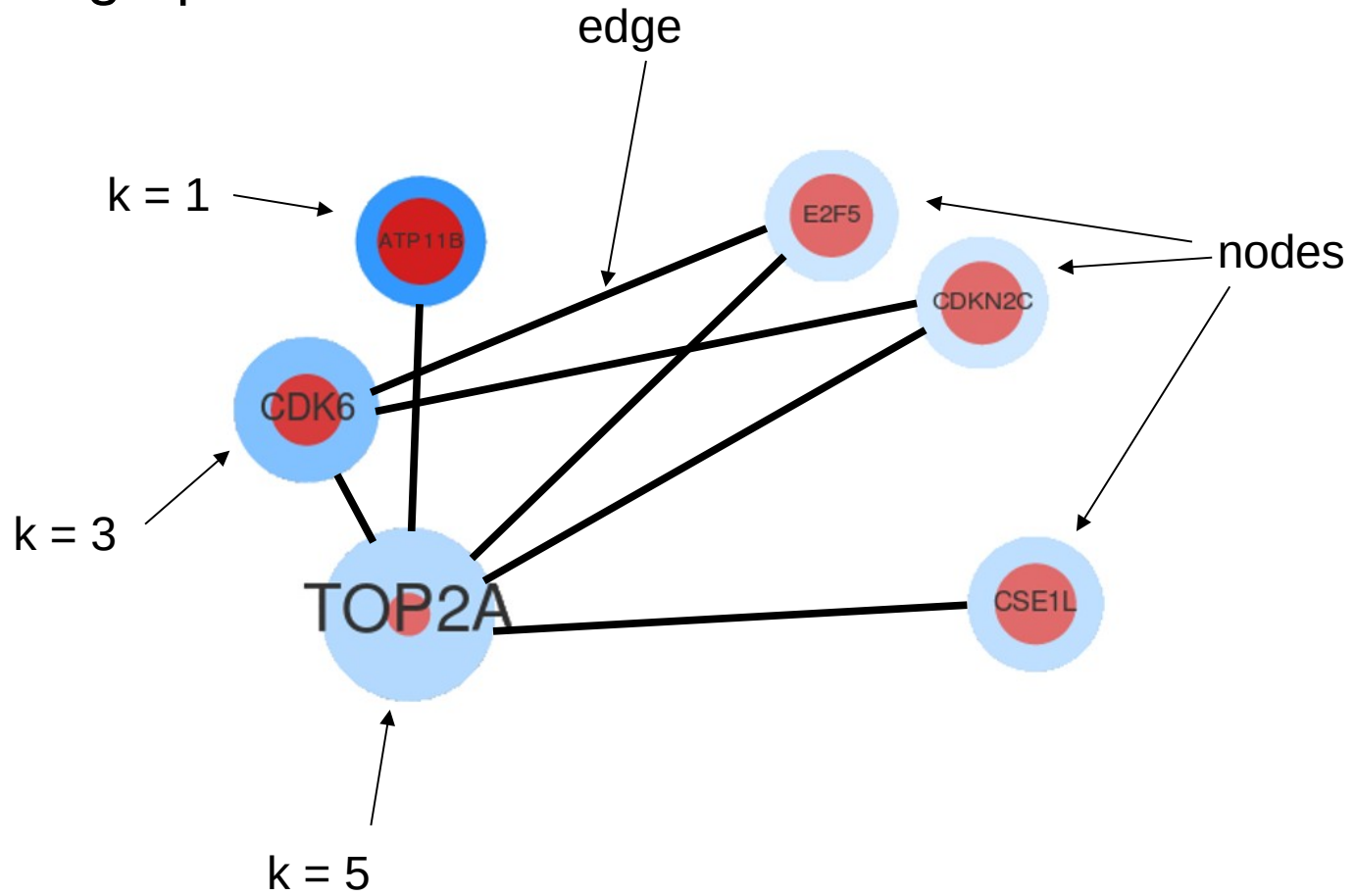
Neural networks - a primary network or in the case of AI networks a meta network

Ecological networks - meta network - e.g. ecological interactions between species

....

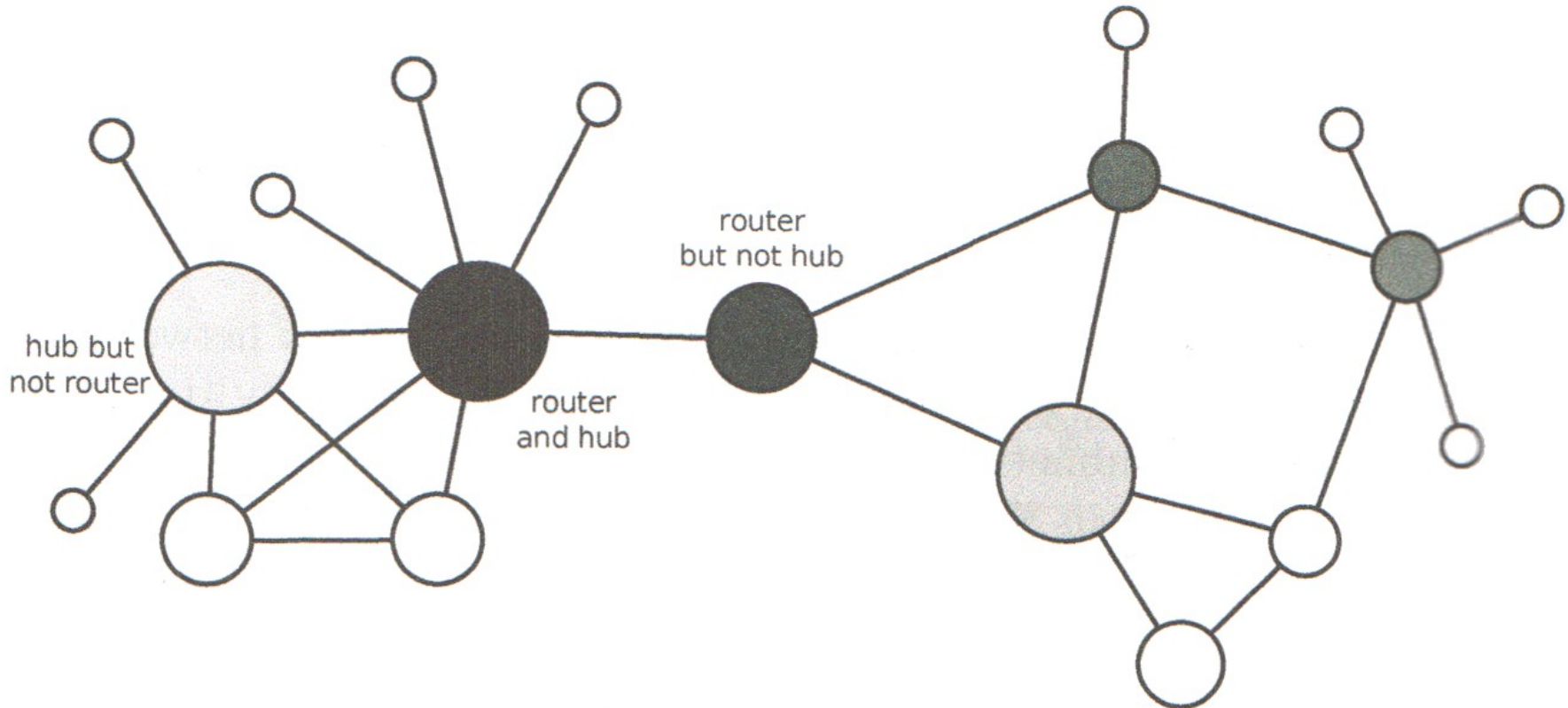
Some details on networks means some details on graphs

a simplified graph

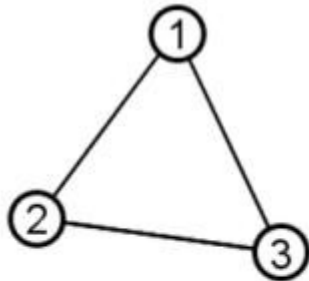


$k :=$ node degree

Hubs & Routers



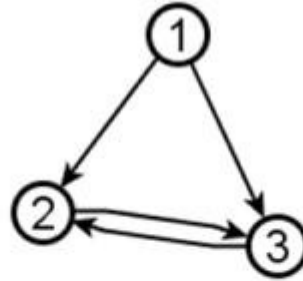
Directed versus undirected graphs



Undirected graph (V_1, E_1)

$$V_1 = \{1, 2, 3\}$$

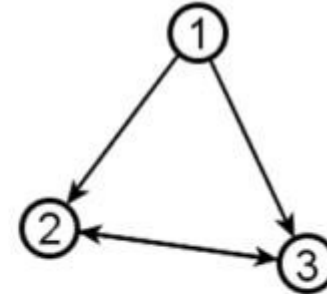
$$E_1 = \{\{1, 2\}, \{2, 3\}, \{3, 1\}\}$$



Directed graph (V_2, E_2)

$$V_2 = \{1, 2, 3\}$$

$$E_2 = \{(1, 2), (2, 3), (3, 2), (1, 3)\}$$



Easier way to draw

directed graph (V_2, E_2)

V := vertex / pl. vertices (nodes)

E := edges

Network properties

Node degree distribution

number of direct neighbors
per node

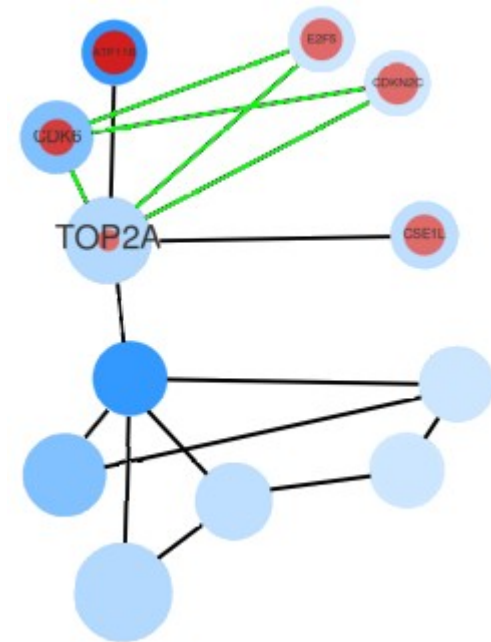
Subgraphs / motifs

Betweenness-Centrality

BC: number of shortest path
through a node (bridge function)

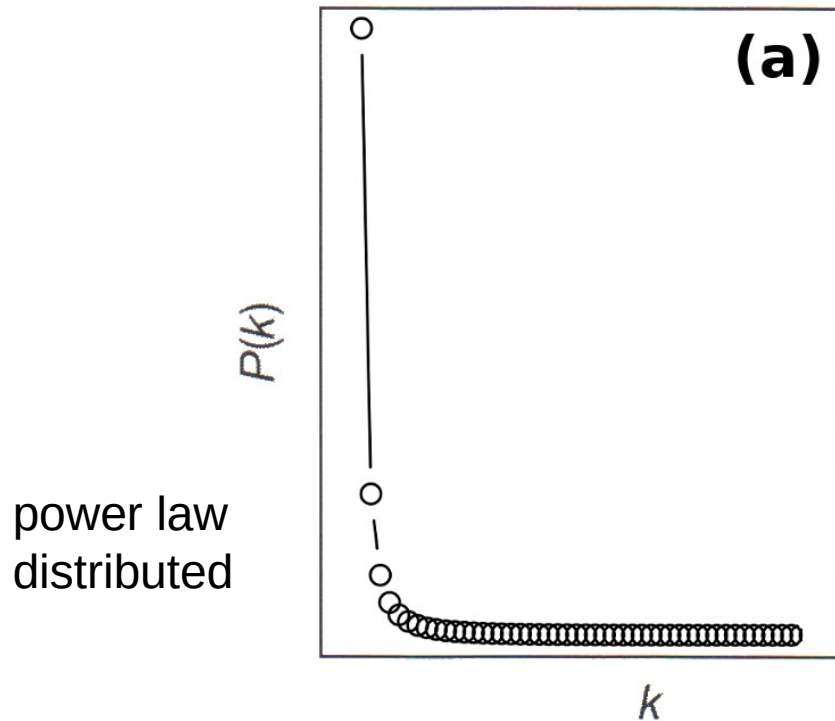
Assortativity

high degree nodes directly
connected to other
high degree nodes

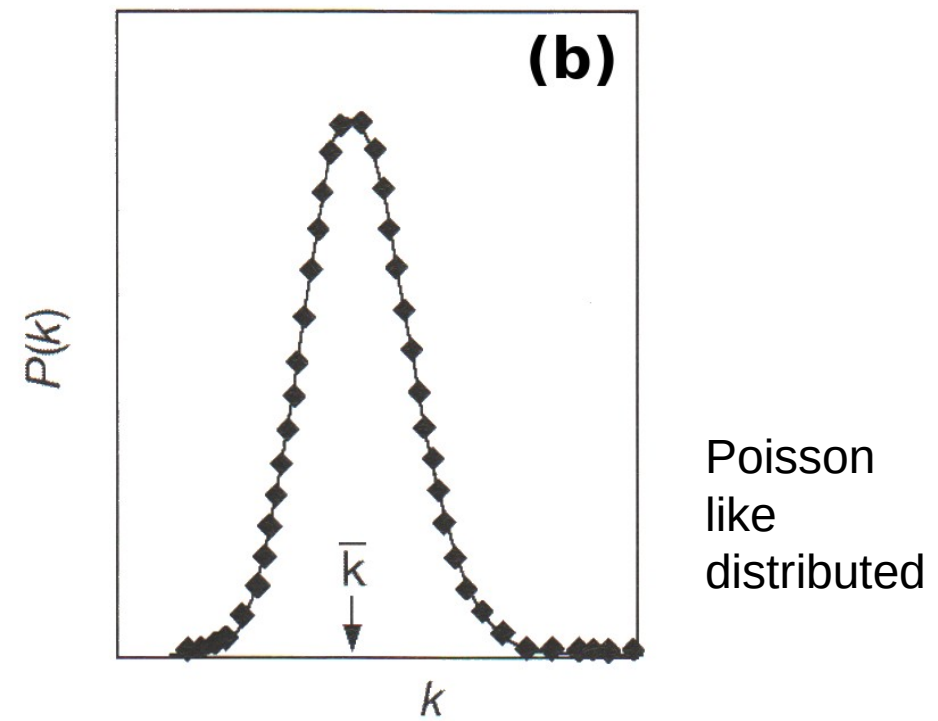


Real world 'node degree' distributions

k := observed node degrees



biological networks

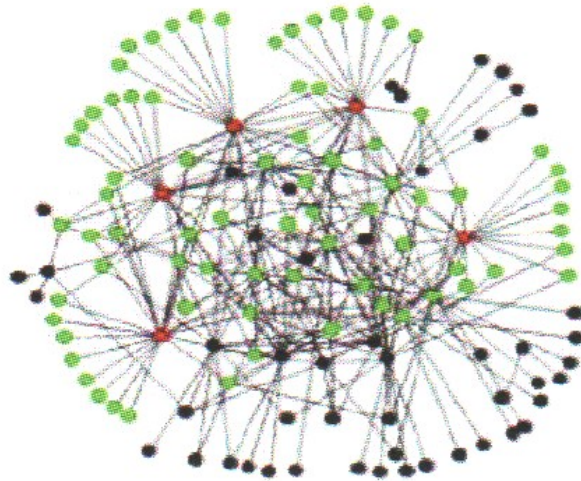


other networks

Shape of the network

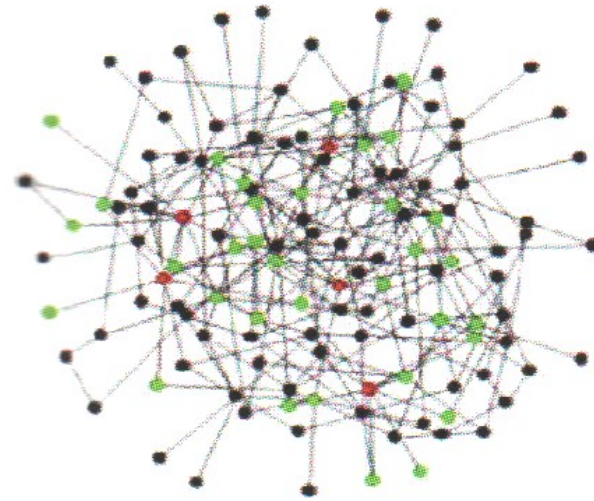
Power law or

Scale-free network



biological
networks

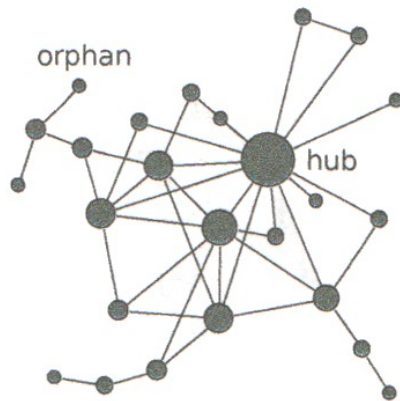
Random network



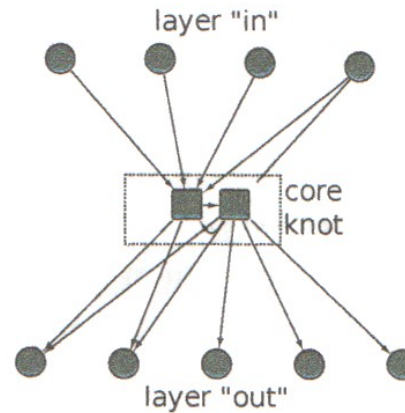
might be useful
sometimes as a
control

Network types

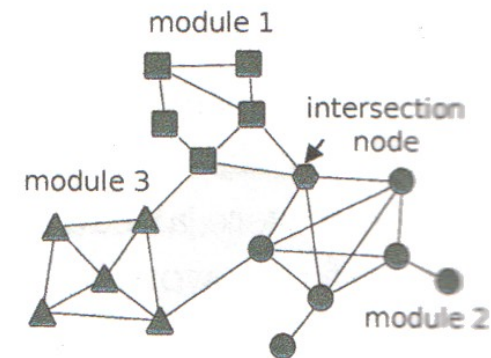
Power law or
A - scale free



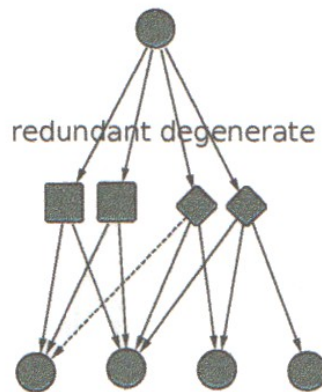
B - layered



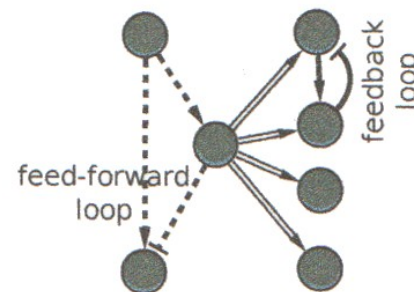
C - modularity



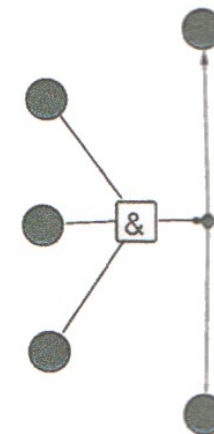
D - redundancy overlapping diversity



E - motif - subnetwork

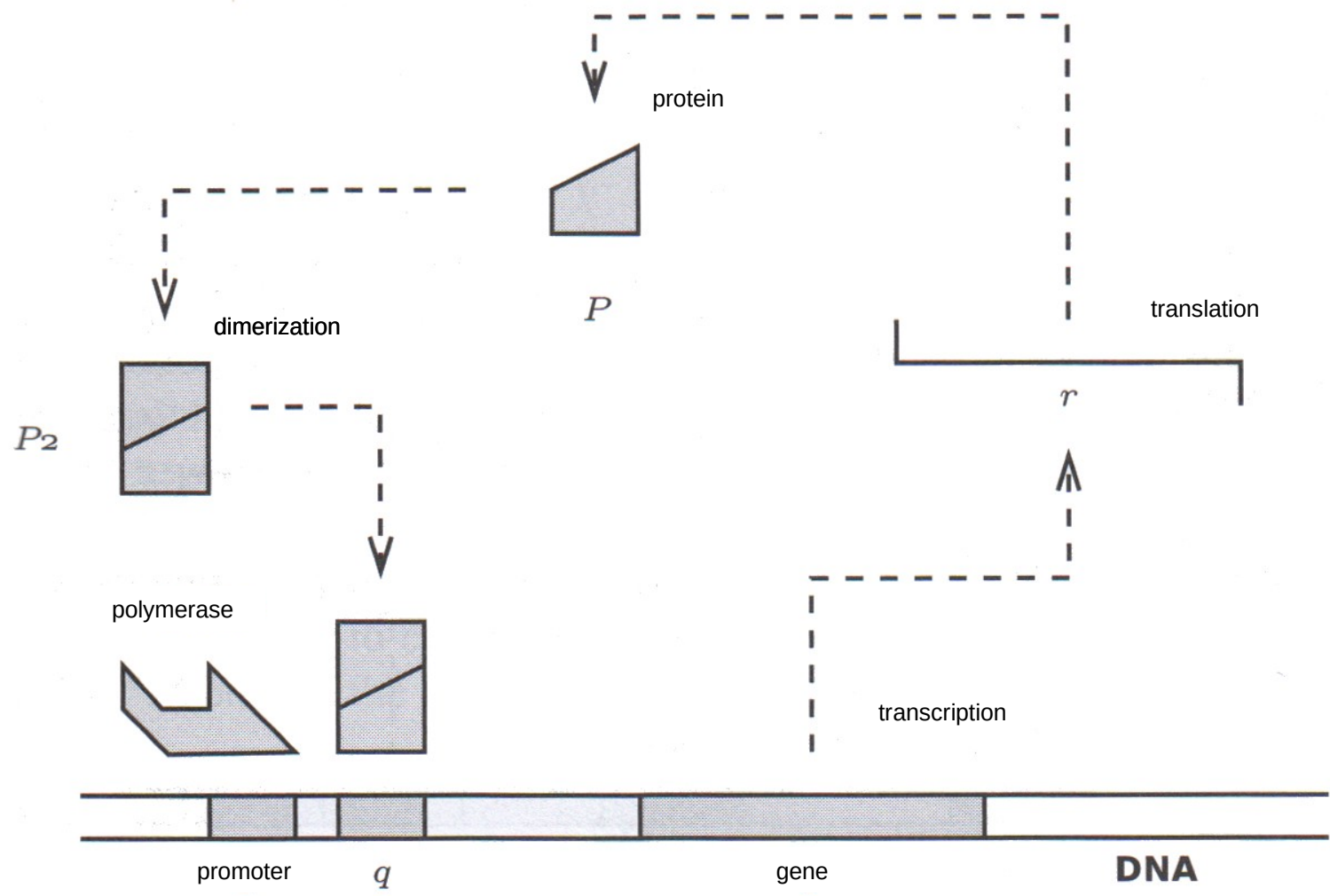


F - cooperativity

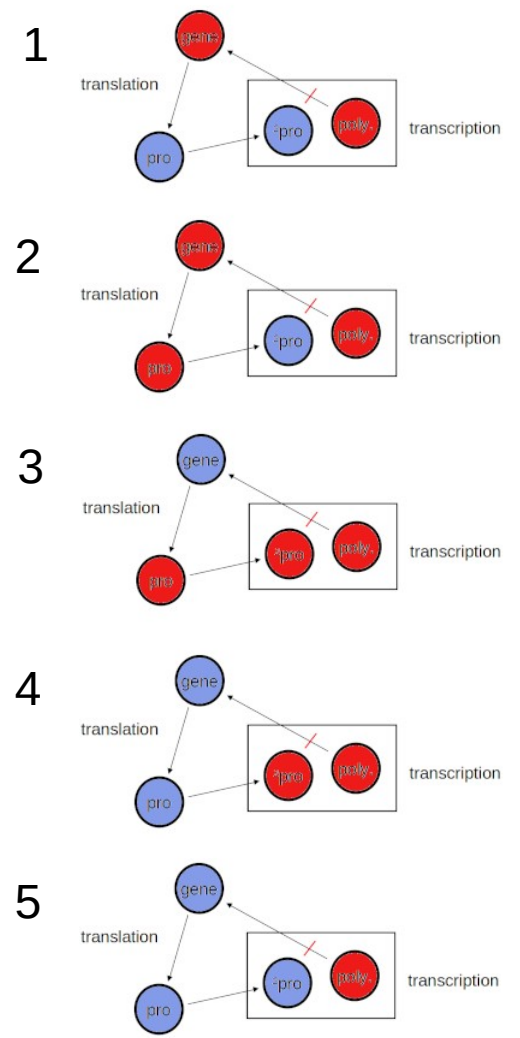
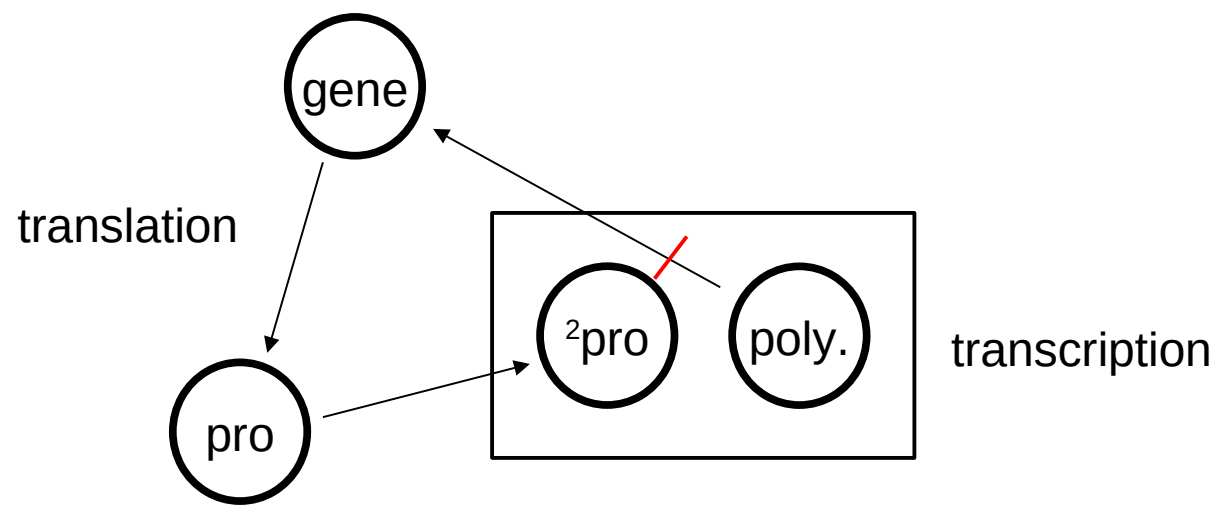


Join graph theory with biology (I)

Prokaryotic auto-regulatory feedback loop.



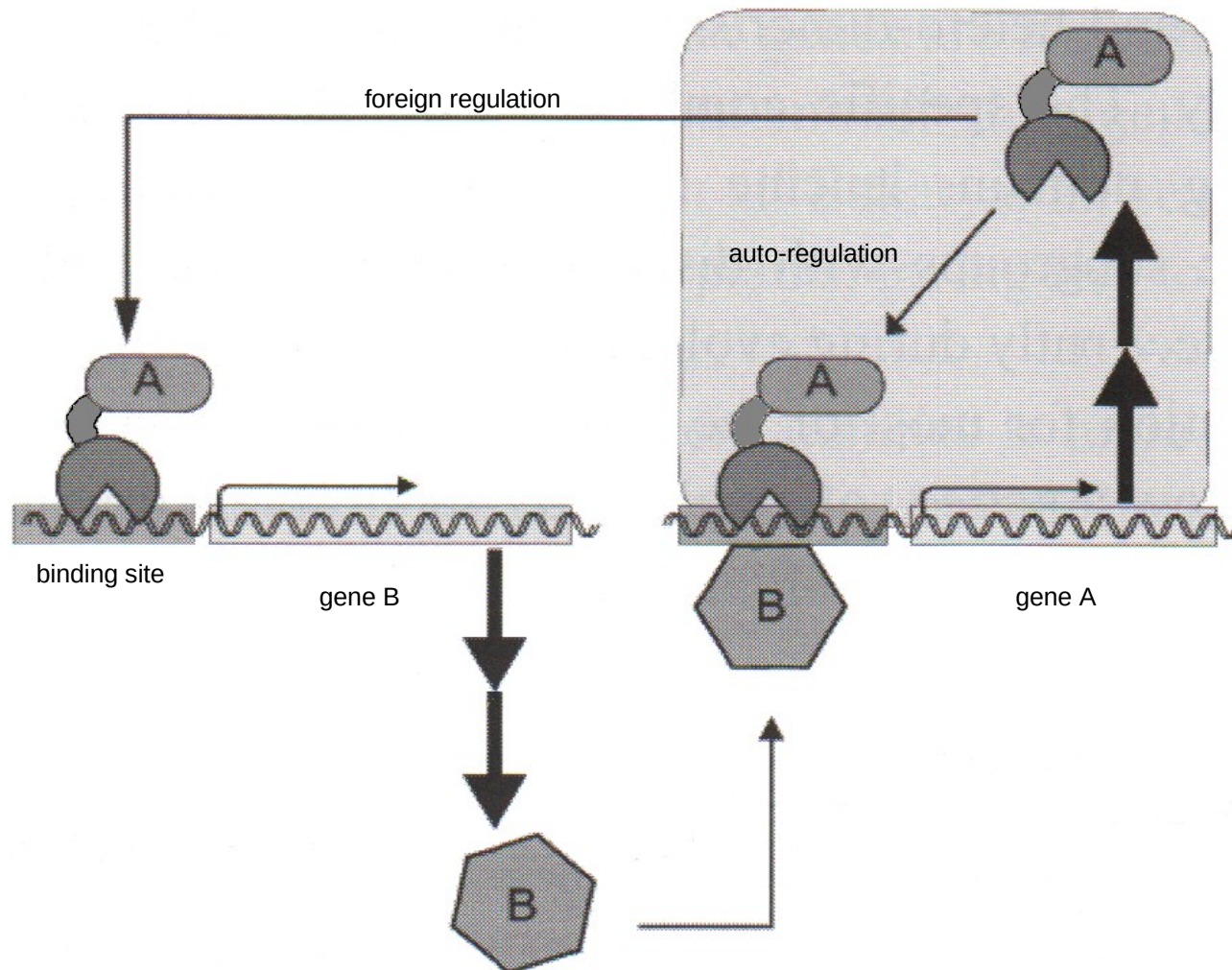
Translation into a graph



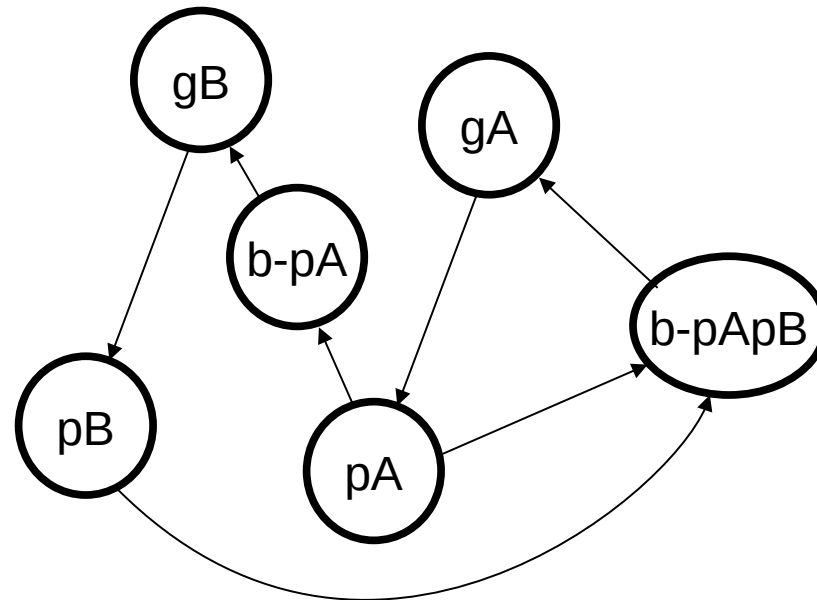
red: high expression
blue: low expression

Join graph theory with biology (II)

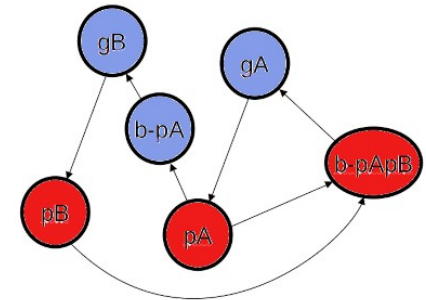
Example of an eukaryotic transcription factor activity.



Translation into a graph

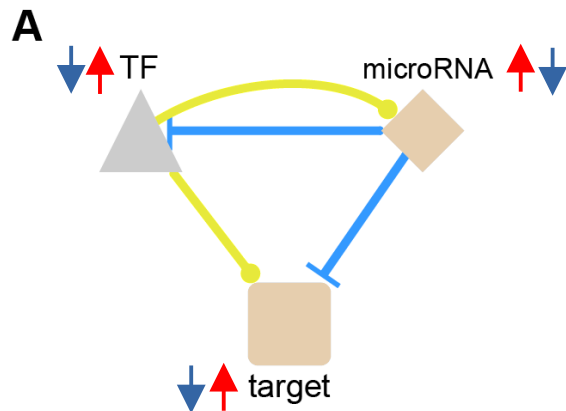


only the start situation is shown here



red: high expression
blue: low expression

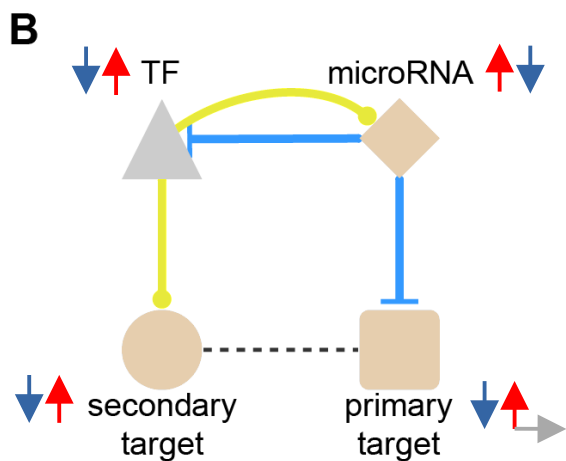
Research example



Research question:
Which motif **A** or **B**
is more relevant in
our situation of interest ?

TF : transcription factor

Target : gene



measured : mRNA + microRNA
expression

filtering with database information:
TF- + microRNA targets

Section summary

- we have learned some basics on **the cellular networks**
- we have learned some facts on **graphs, motifs** and **the visualization of models**
- we translated **biology** into **graphs** and vice versa

Measurements

The basis for calculating networks

is **qualitative** and/or **quantitative** information

on systemic properties
which are interaction information
or could be interpreted as such

so, we need **measurements** ...

Protein expression measurements

The chosen method:

Immunohistology

means, we creating ultra thin sections of a frozen
or paraffin embedded **tissue sample**

these sections will be **stained**:

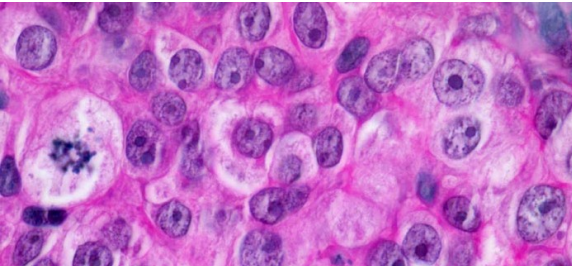
all sections:

with a stain for the tissue **structure**

each individual section:

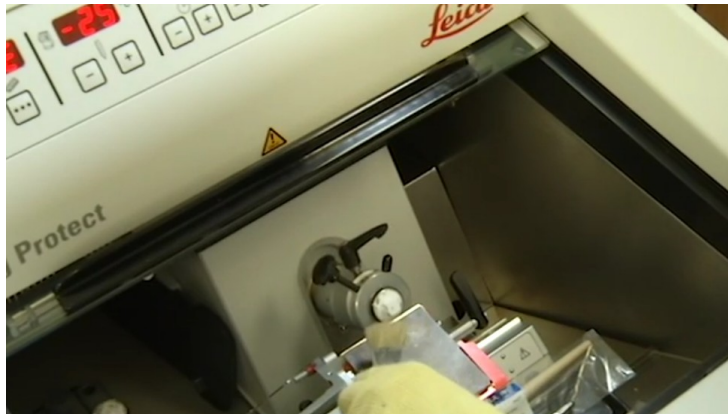
with a stain specific only for the **selected protein**

Immunohistology - create sections

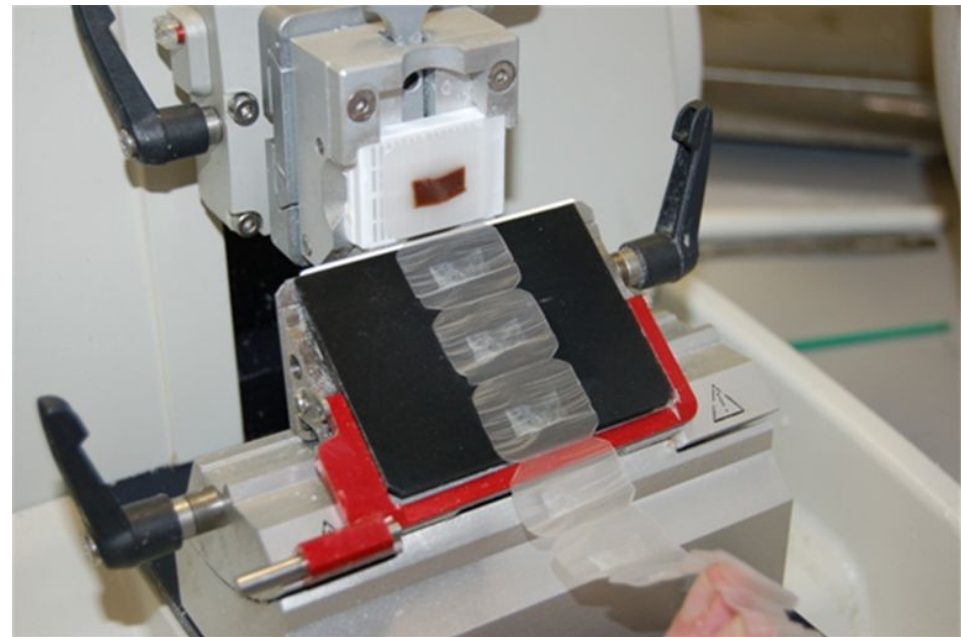


sections - approx. 4 μm thick
and an area between 1 mm^2 and 1 cm^2

Cryotome



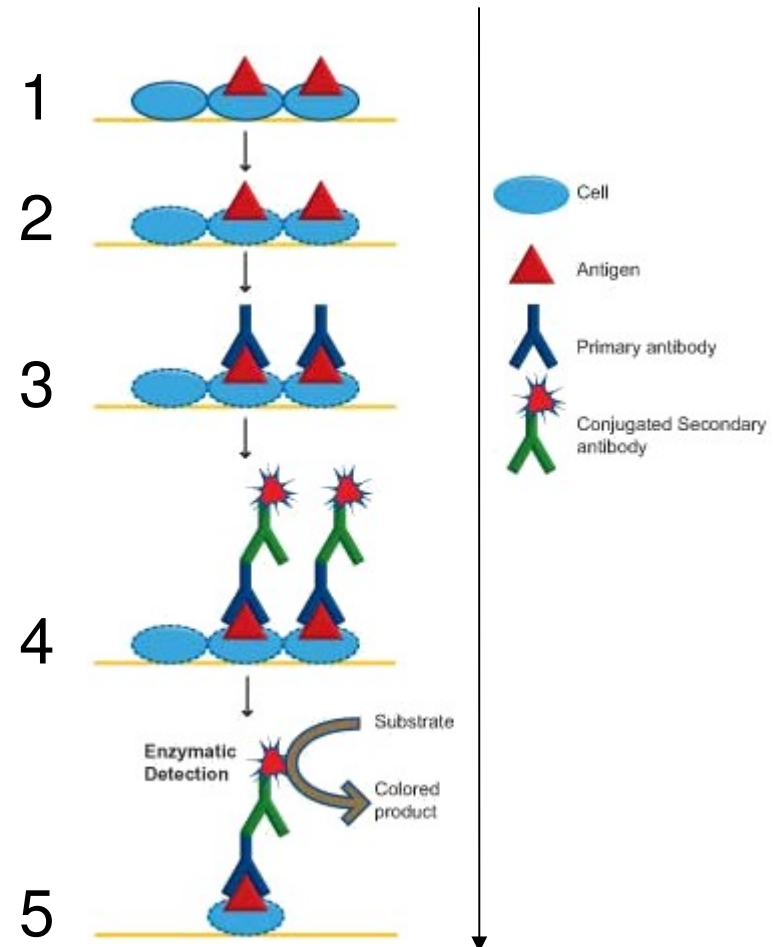
Microtome



How to stain these sections ?

- **H&E stain** is for showing tissue structure

- **Immunostaining** is to visualize specific macromolecules by using antibodies directed against these molecules

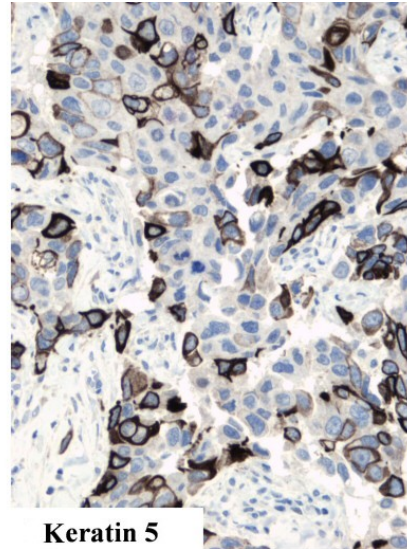
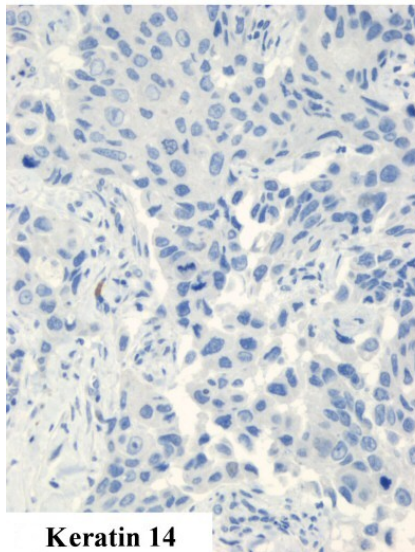


How to measure protein expression ?

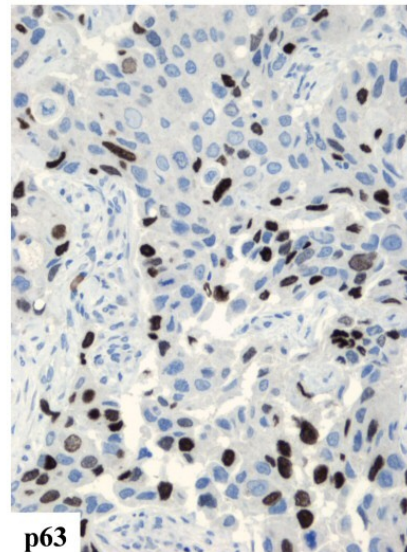
basal
breast cancer

K5/p63 positive
K14 negative

0



2



2

One way is
to count total cells
in a certain sector,

note down positivity,

note down the strength of
the staining per cell,

and calculate the final
score value

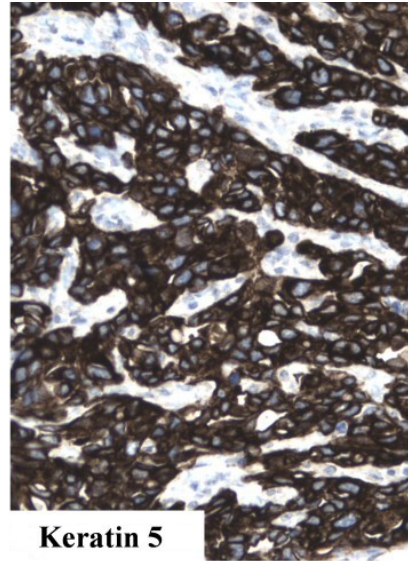
The result for each sector
is a single number ranging
e.g.

from 0 (negative)
to 3 (strongly positive)

It might look different for other sub-types

basal
breast cancer

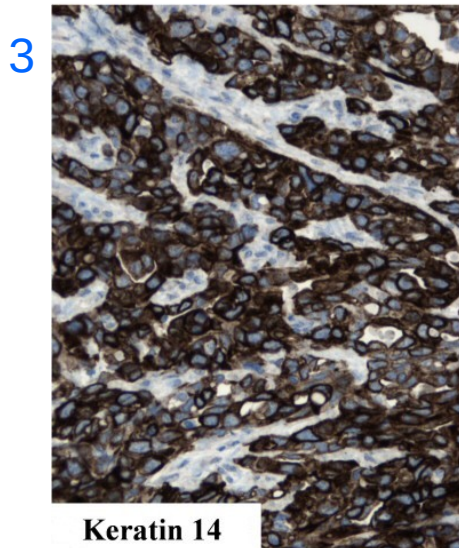
K5/K14 positive
p63 negative



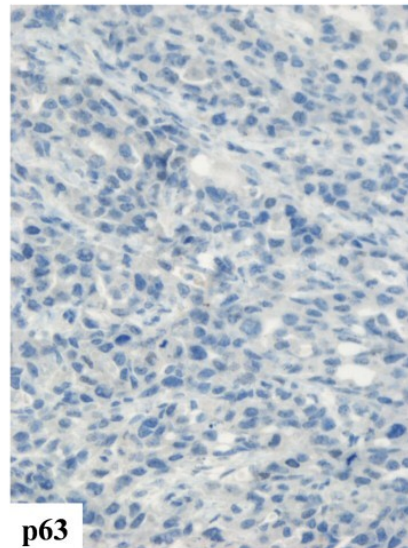
3

which represent almost 9% of
invasive ductal breast cancers

mostly aggressive
hormone receptor negative
grade III tumors



3

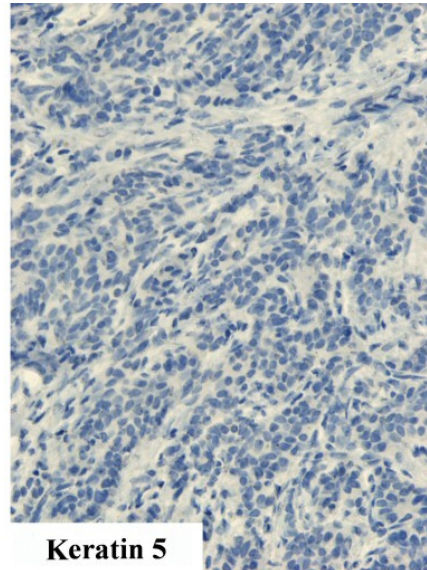


0

Another cancer subtype

basal
breast cancer

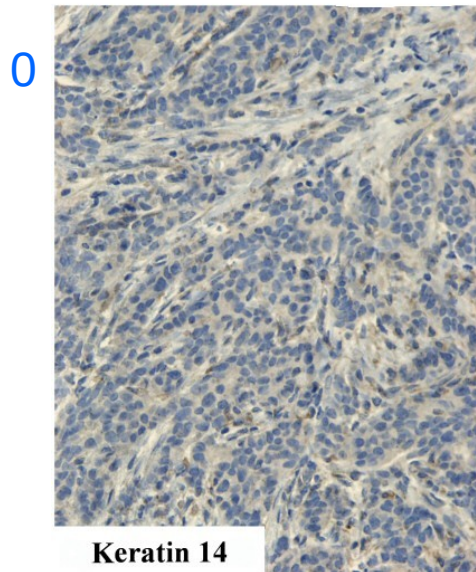
p63 positive
K5/K14 negative



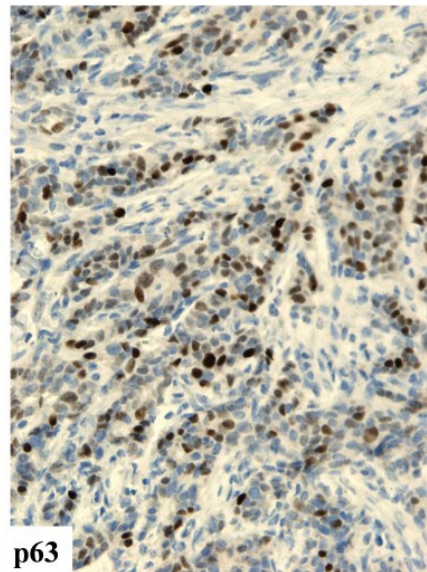
0

Transcription factor p63-
positive tumors are rare

and



0



1

showed in this case
no overlap to

K5/K14-positive tumors

Gene expression measurements

Pick a piece of tissue which owns predominantly a certain cell type of interest (cells of interest $> 70\%$)

Dissolve the tissue and separate the molecule class of interest

Take appropriate technologies (RNAseq, expression microarrays) to generate signals of expression strength

Drawback in this case:

- loss of information (spatial information, morphology)
- cell type mixture of unknown composition ...

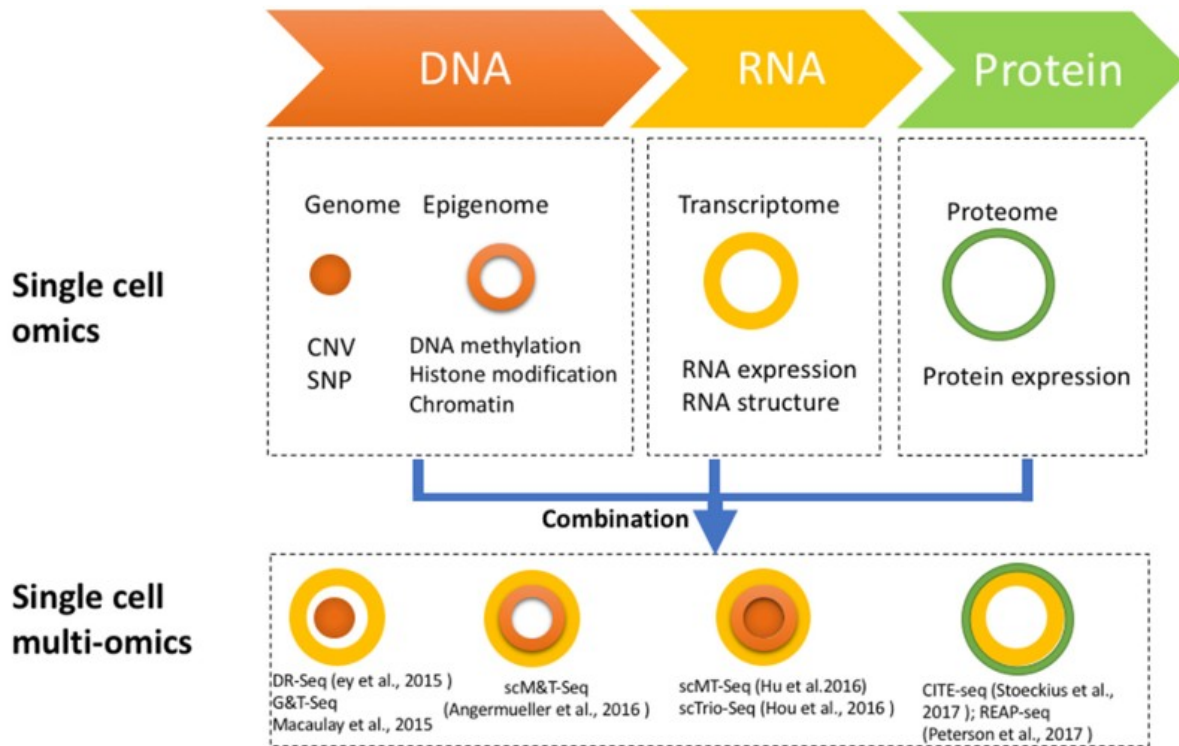
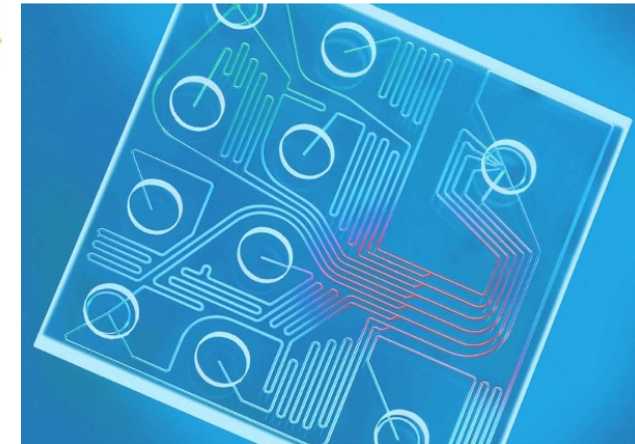
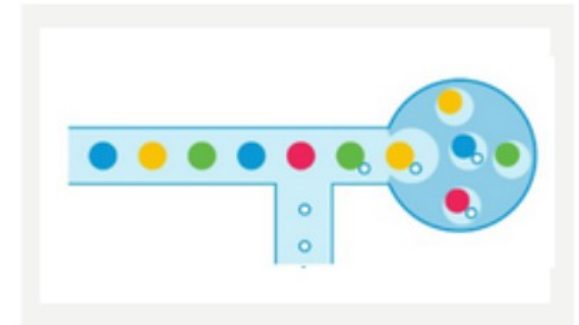
Section summary

- we have learned some basics on protein measurements (immunohistology)
- and conventional mRNA measurements

Advanced methods: Single cell omics

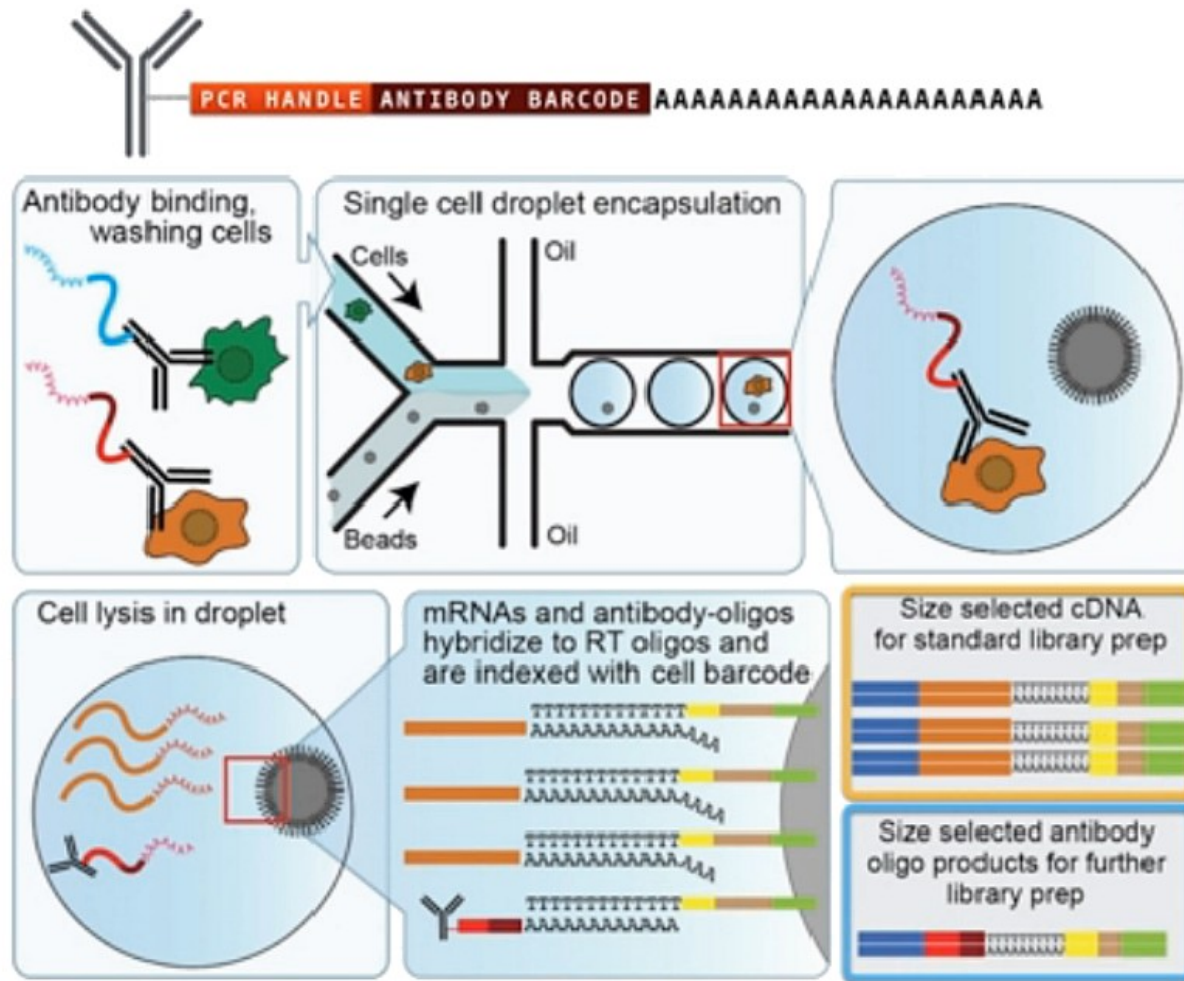
Separate cells,
and measure the expressom
and further features **by sequencing**

Microfluidic Partitioning & Barcoding

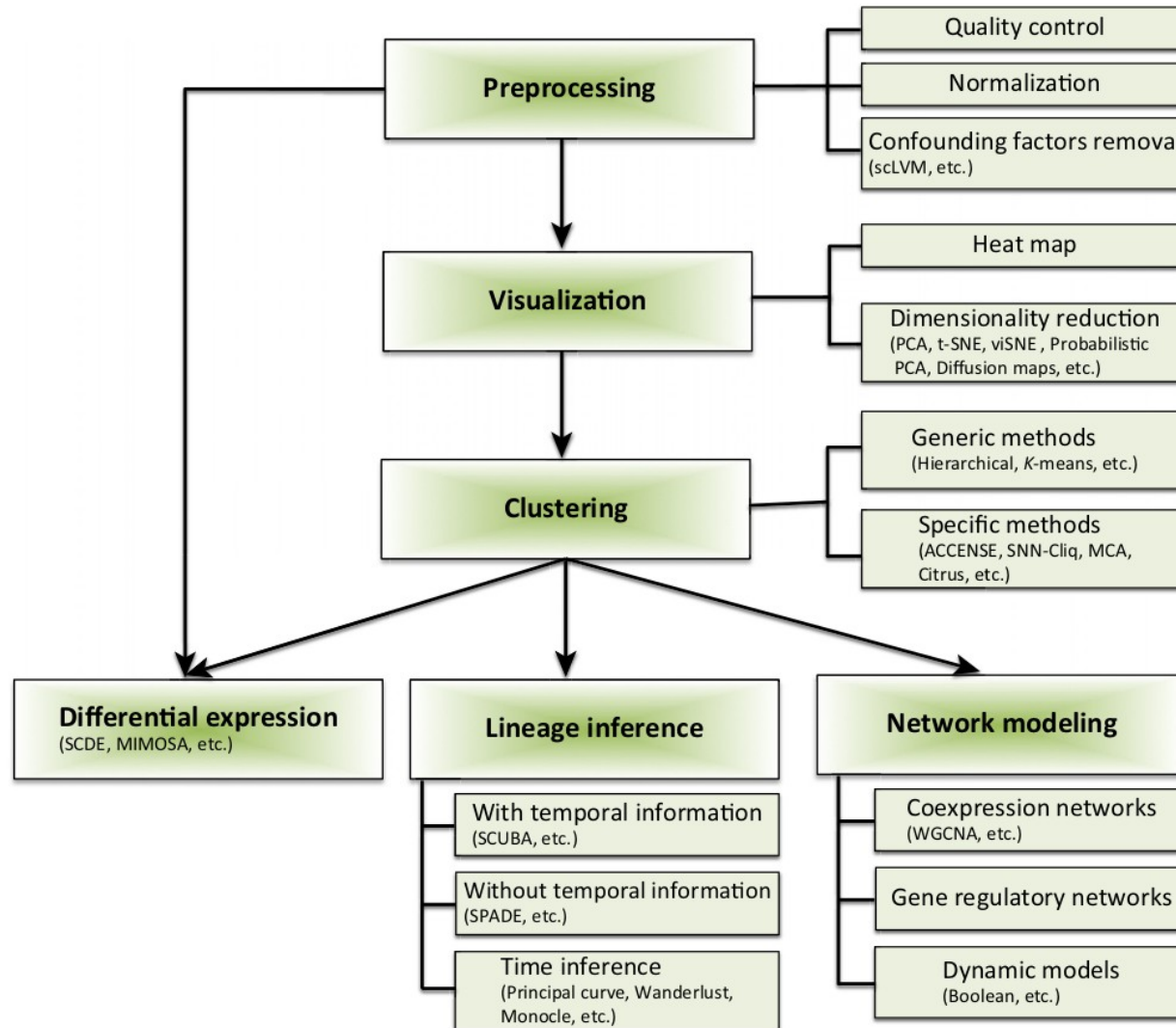


Protein detection by scRNA-seq

cellular indexing of transcriptomes and epitopes



Flowchart : Single-Cell Data Analysis



Measurement summary

Every **method** has its **limitations**

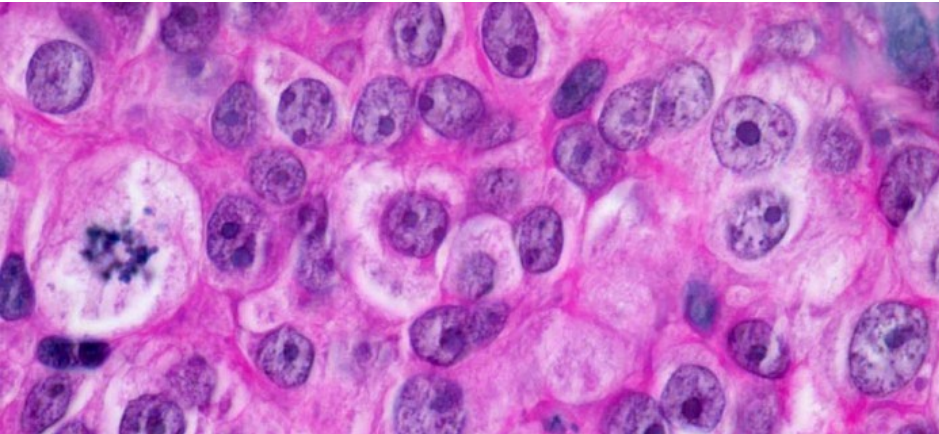
be aware of that, be critical on the quality of your lab results

Translating **measurements into data** is an **important** step
and has again a big impact on the results

NOTE: Like in *laboratory experiments* also
theoretical experiments usually termed '**analysis**'
need **controls**
to verify the stability of the generated results

**Drawing good conclusions is bound to careful considerations
and high data quality**

A co-expression example



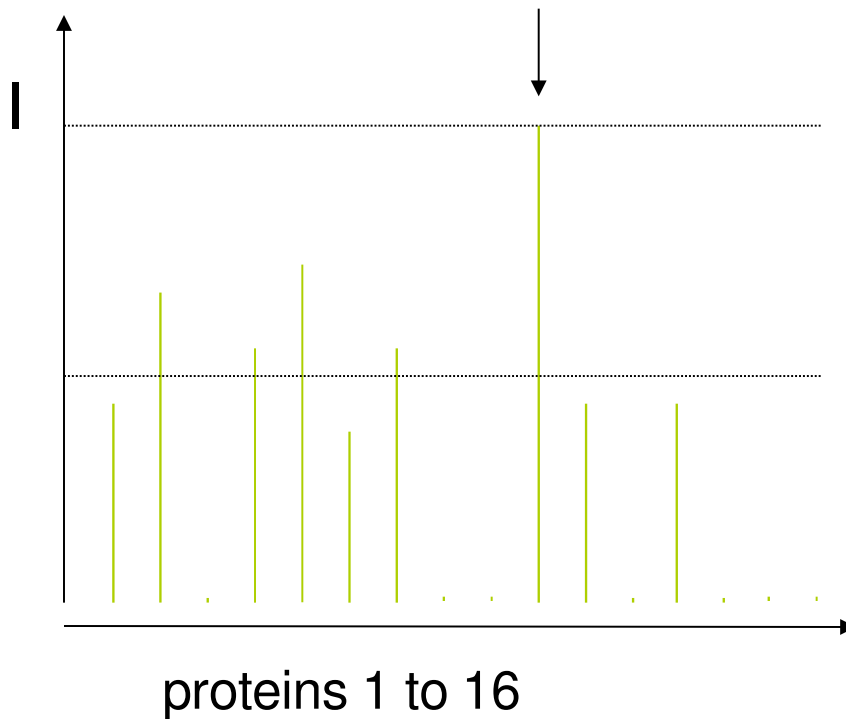
invasive ductal carcinoma
HE stained

One physiological situation

Objective analyze molecular **dependencies**
based on **one** condition

What to measure in this example ?

16 different proteins and their expression

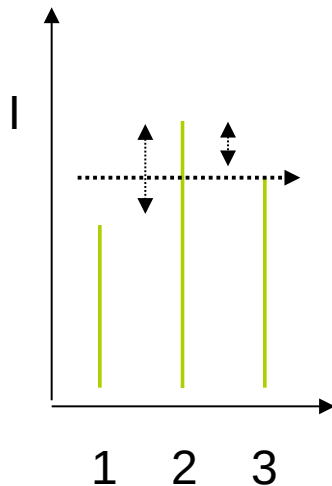


one patient sample
of a tissue with
ductal invasive carcinoma

--> we measure
a pattern of 16 protein
expression values

How stable is the measurement ?

If we have one measurement,
we own some **uncertainty**
that the next measurements is exactly equal



do at least **3-5 replicate measurements**
more is better

NOTE:

there are statistical rules
to decide how many replicates are necessary
to get a certain **precision**

How to come to dependencies ?

At this point we only measured **one** patient sample
with 16 protein expressions

this is **not sufficient** to see a **dependency**
between our 16 proteins

the term dependency
implies a further type of **information**

In our case this additional information will result from
measuring **many** patients
of the **same** disease situation
slightly **varying the basic situation**

Score data based on raw signals

16 proteins

640
patient
samples

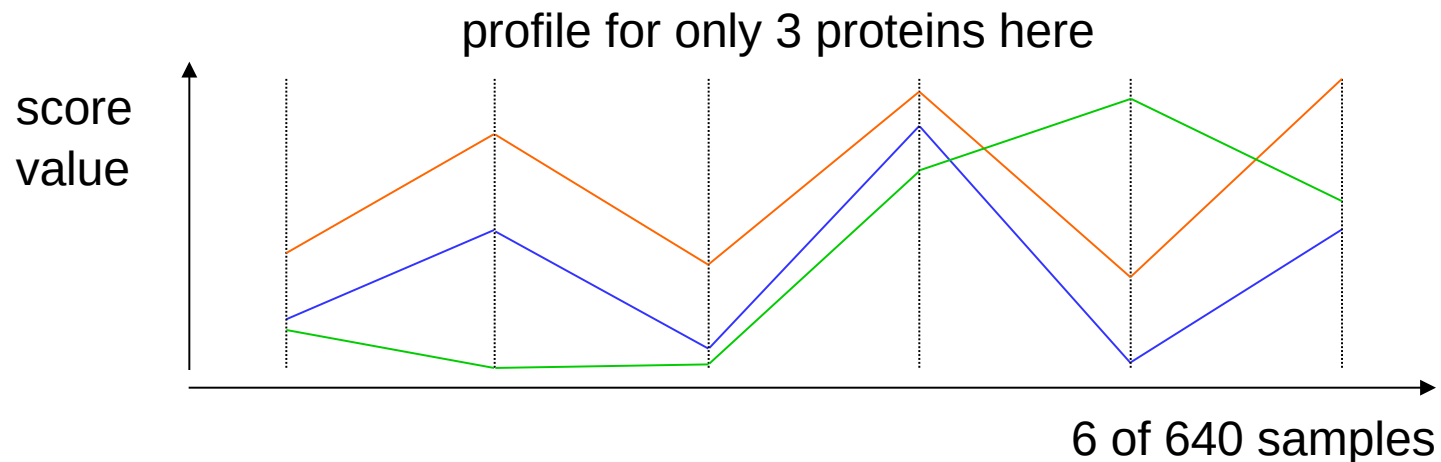
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
RowNames	K5	K8-18	K19	EGFR	K14	EMA	ERBB2	VIM	p53	BCL2	CyclinD1	K1	K10	ER	PR	KI67
1	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	4	3
2	1	4	4	1	1	4	3	1	1	2	4	1	1	4	4	1
3	1	4	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	4	4	2
4	1	4	4	1	1	4	4	1	2	1	3	1	1	4	4	3
5	1	4	4	1	1	4	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	4	4	2
6	1	4	4	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	4	4	2
7	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	4	1
8	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	4	4	2
9	1	4	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	4	3	1	1	4	4	2
10	1	4	4	1	1	4	2	1	2	2	4	1	1	4	1	2
11	1	3	3	1	1	4	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	1
12	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	4	2
13	1	2	4	2.5	1	4	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	4
14	1	4	4	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	4	4	1
15	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	2.5	2	2	3	1	1	4	4	4
16	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	4	4	4
17	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	3	4	1	1	4	4	1
18	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	4	4	1
19	1	3	3	1	1	4	3	1	2	3	3	1	1	4	1	3
20	1	4	4	1	1	4	4	1	3	2	3	1	1	4	4	3
21	1	4	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	4	4	3
22	1	4	3	1	1	4	2	1	2	2	4	1	1	4	4	2
23	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2
24	1	3	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	4	1
25	1	3	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	4	4	1
26	1	3	3	4	2	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
27	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	4	1
28	1	3	4	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	4	4	4
29	4	4	4	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	4	1
30	1	4	4	1	1	4	2	1	1	4	4	1	1	4	1	2

score sheet

Entering the first analysis step

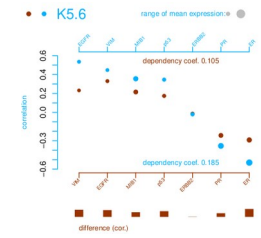
Applying a **proximity measure** between each of the protein columns

Purpose: how similar or dissimilar is the protein expression



Result: in this example protein 'red' and 'blue' is more similar and 'green' more dissimilar to 'red/blue'

Analyze dependencies



1) splitting the factors into **partitions**

- K5-6
- K14
- K19
- K8-18
- K1
- K10

reference group

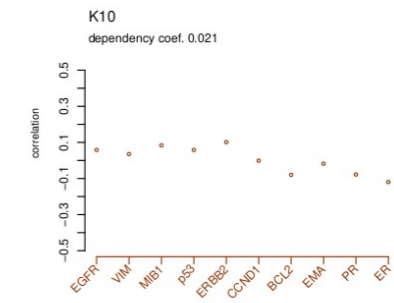
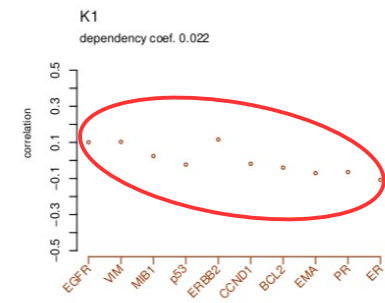
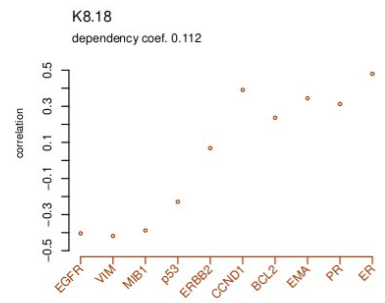
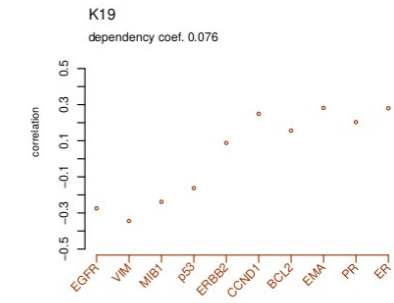
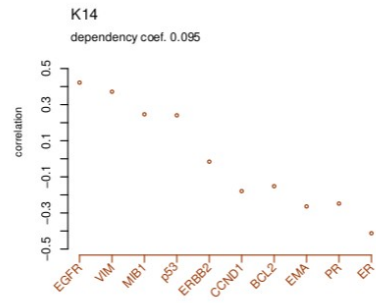
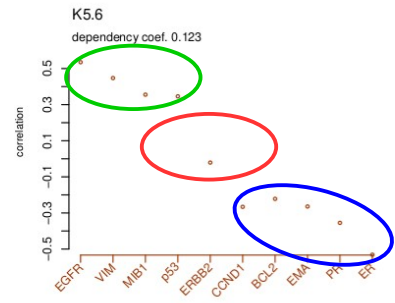
EGFR, VIM, KI-67, p53, ERBB2, Cyclin-D1, BCL-2, EMA, PR, ER

test group

2) generalized regression

3) **optimal order** of proximity values across **all** partitions denotes the dependency

- synergistic co-expression
- no (or weak) dependency
- antagonistic co-expression



B-ca - full data - h2 vs 1
ssig=832

Section summary

The basic assumption in this approach is that all molecular factors belong to a **cellular system in one physiological condition**

therefore

if one factor is tuned, many others are also tuned as a systemic consequence

Every patient owns a slightly different network

The superposition of all network variants is exposing the dependencies

Spotlights

on networks,

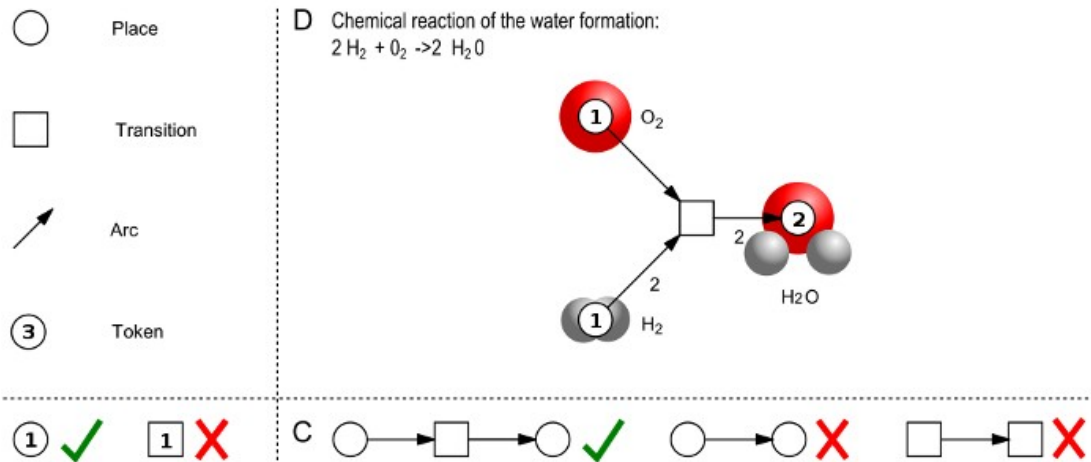
databases,

and advanced application scenarios

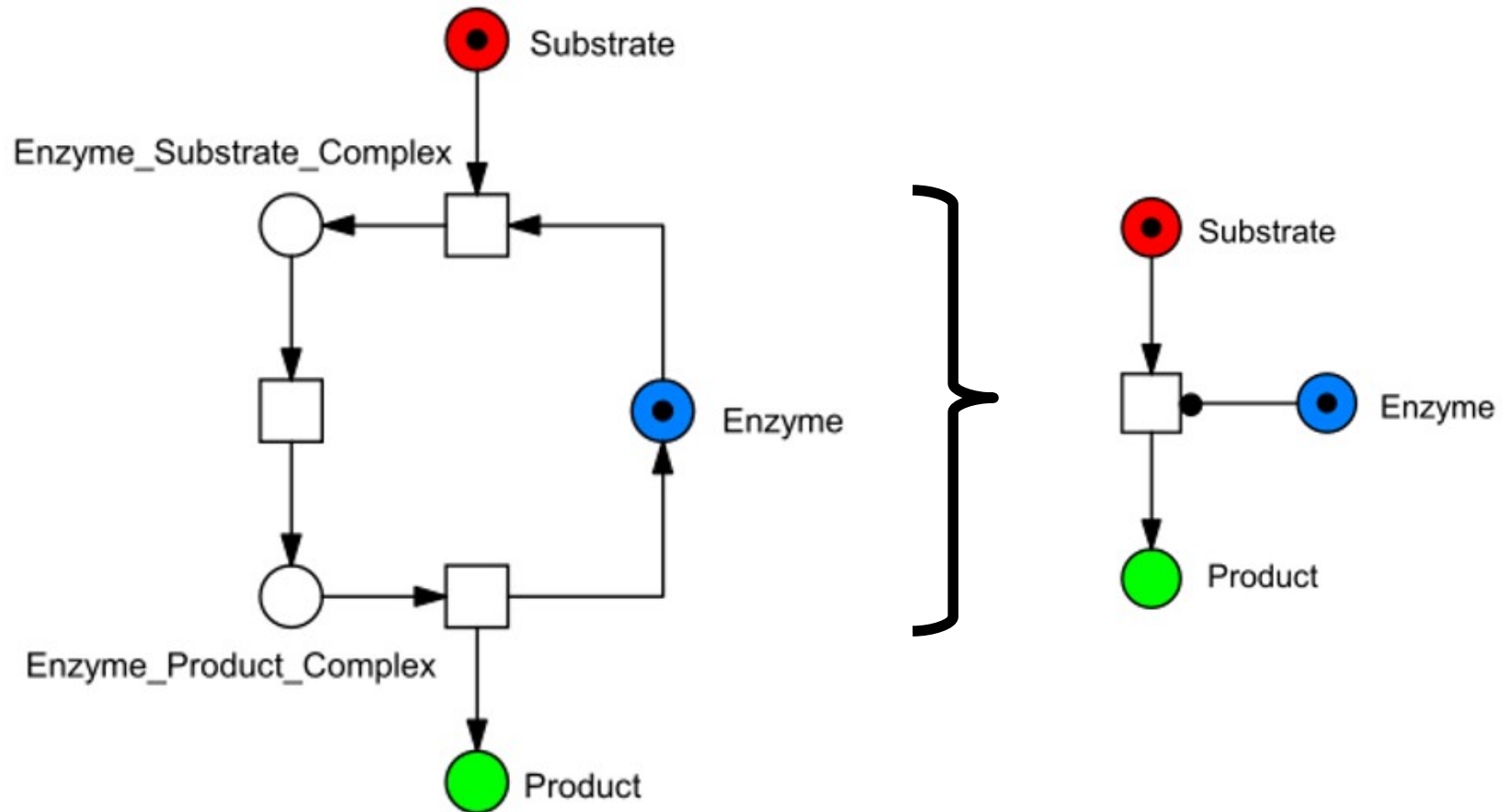
Petri net

'Petri nets' are used as a formal and graphical language for modeling systems

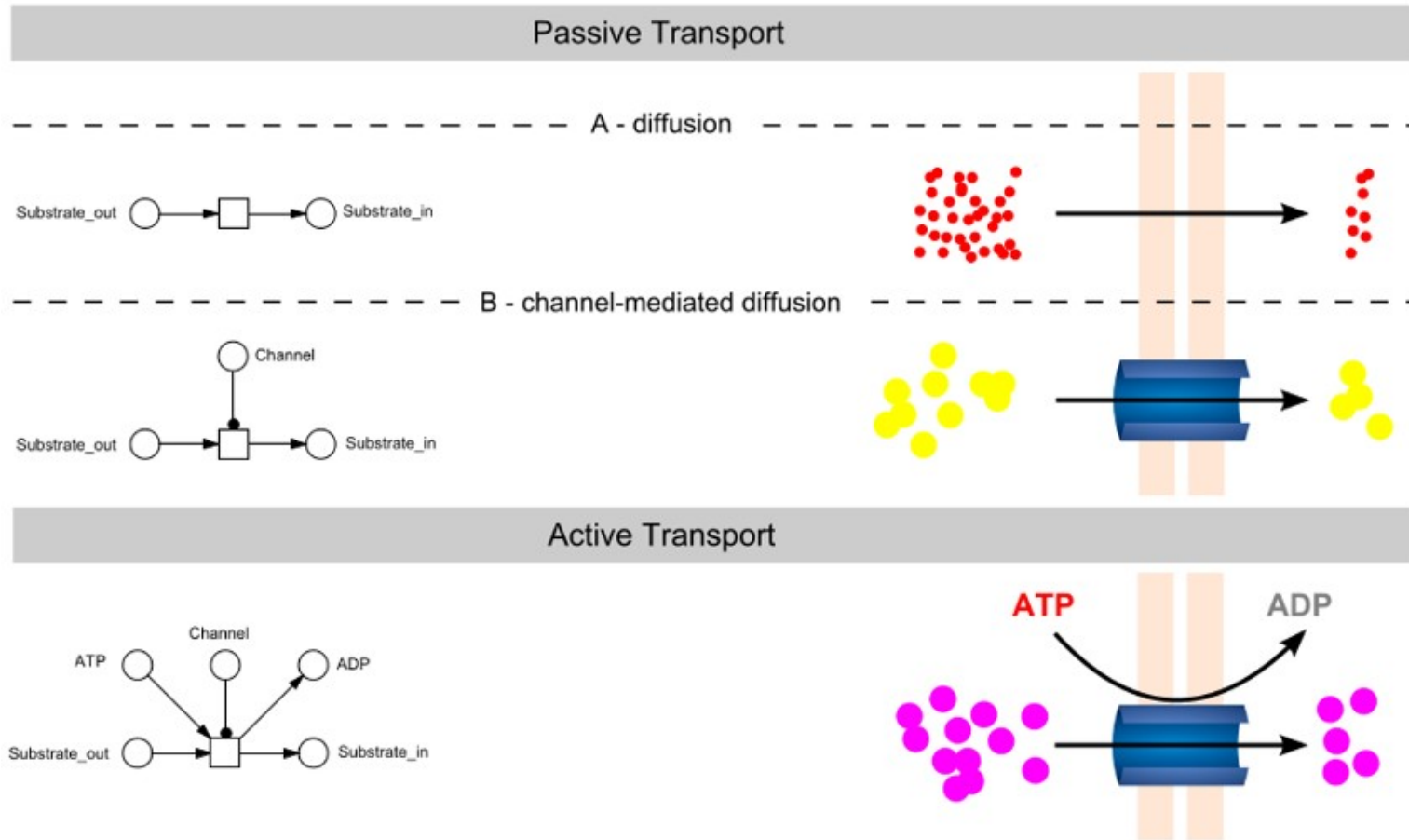
A Petri net is represented by a directed, finite, bipartite graph, typically without isolated nodes



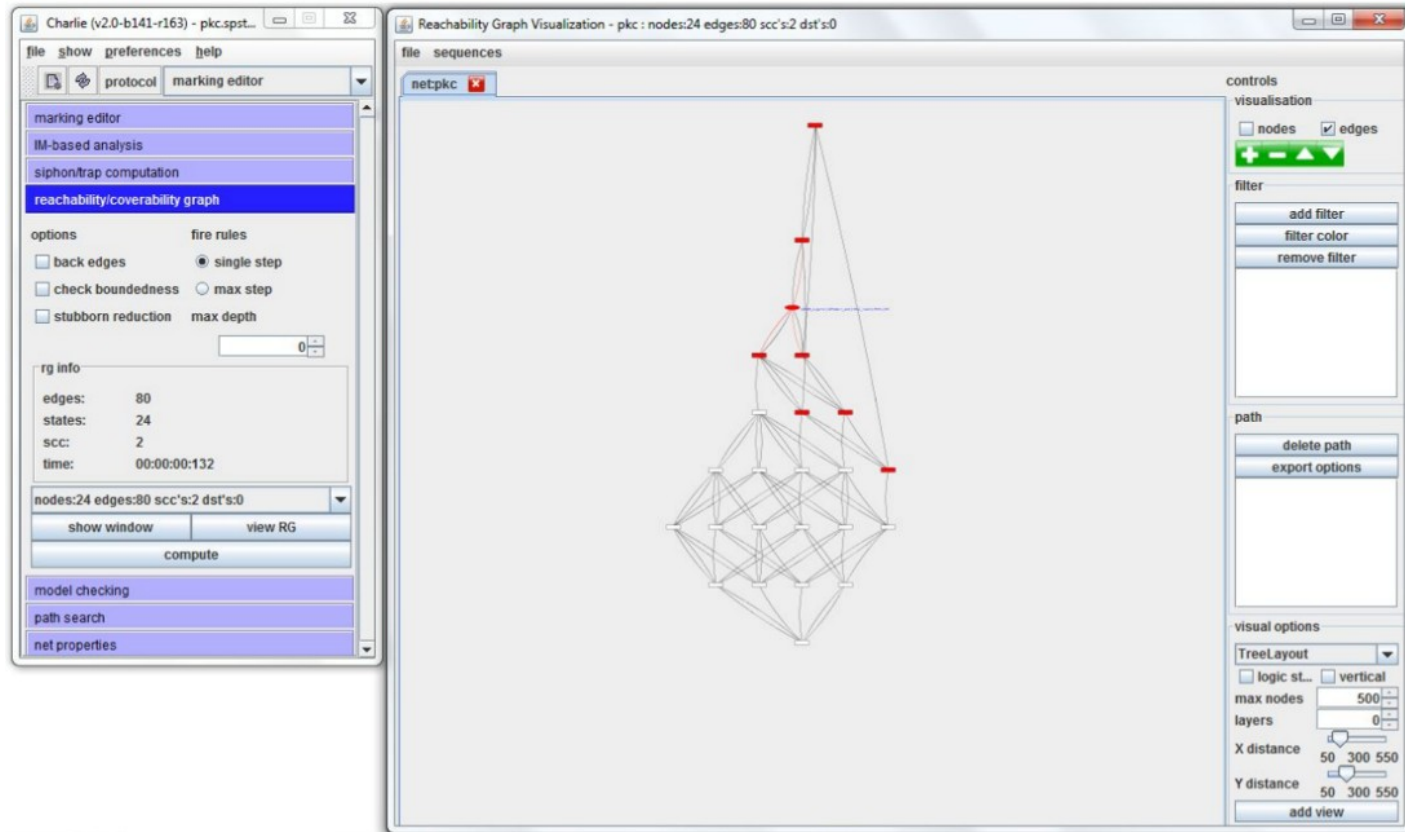
Scheme for an enzymatic reaction



Membrane transport



Tools to work with



Download & Credits

<http://www-dssz.informatik.tu-cottbus.de/DSSZ/Software/Software>

The scientific biography behind that: [Monika Heiner](#)

WGCNA - R package

Gene co-expression networks

but instead - as before - over proteins
 (many **different patients**, but of **one condition**)

here now over genes

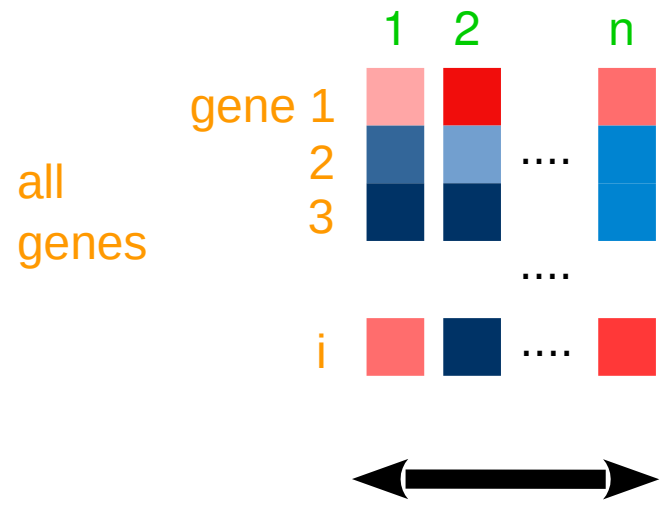
in many **different conditions**
 (e.g. a certain cell type treated with different agents)

objective : find gene modules
 that differentiate these conditions

How does it work ?

sample conditions
1 2 m

experiments per condition



Pearson correlation of gene profiles (rows)

The outcome is a number of **modules** (groups) of genes

each module with a typical expression profile

is assumed to share a specific biological context

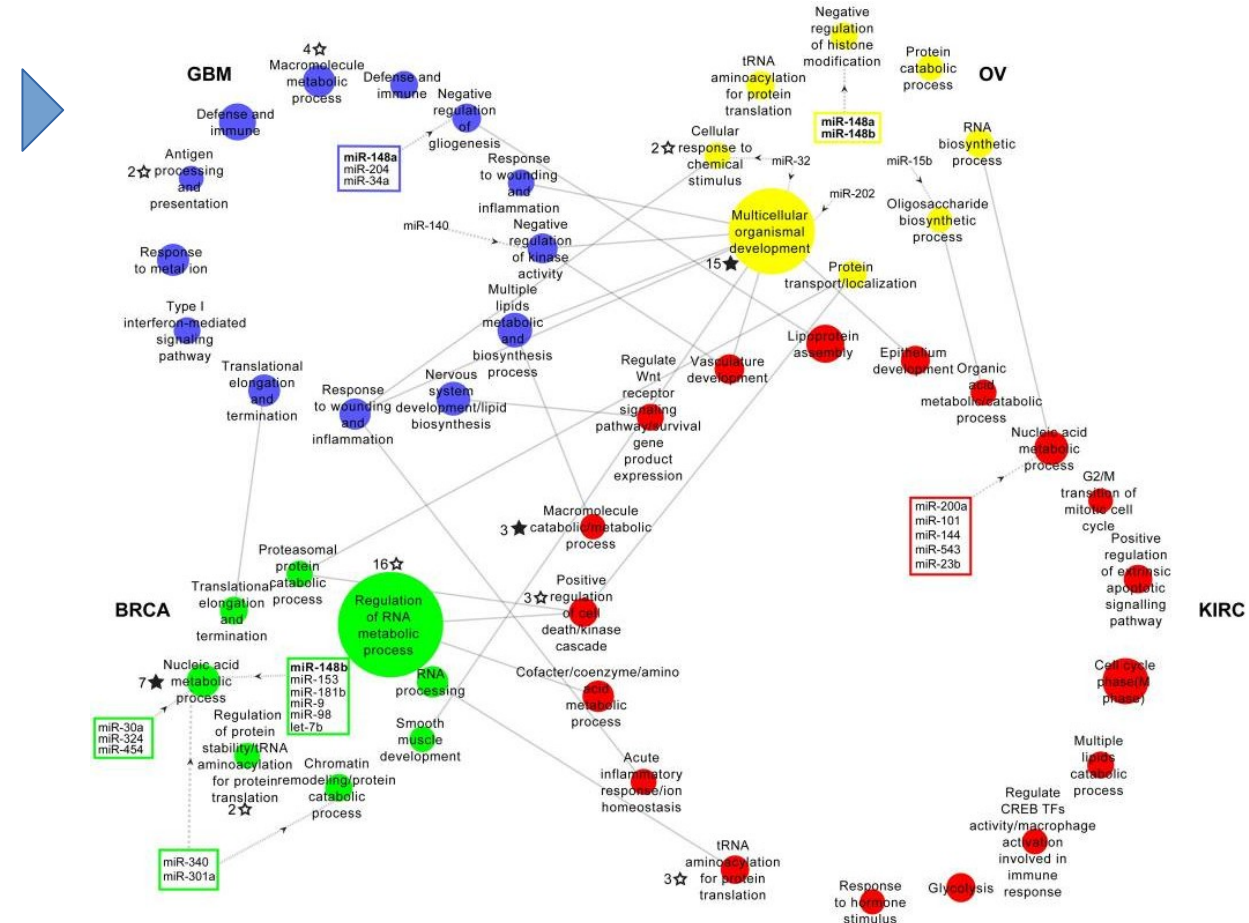
The modules **might explain** the network difference between the tested biological conditions

WGCNA - example of use

GBM - glioblastoma
OV - ovarian adenocarcinoma
BRCA - invasive breast carcinoma
KIRC - kidney carcinoma

The 47 prognostic modules are plotted in four circles, each representing one cancer type

Grey lines: conservation correspondence between different cancer types



Databases

Some core databases

Chemical reaction constants database

<http://kinetics.nist.gov/kinetics/welcome.jsp>

Biochemical reaction kinetics database

<http://sabio.villa-bosch.de/>

<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/biomodels/>

microRNA database

<http://www.mirbase.org/>

Genome database

<http://www.internationalgenome.org/>

EBI database

<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/>

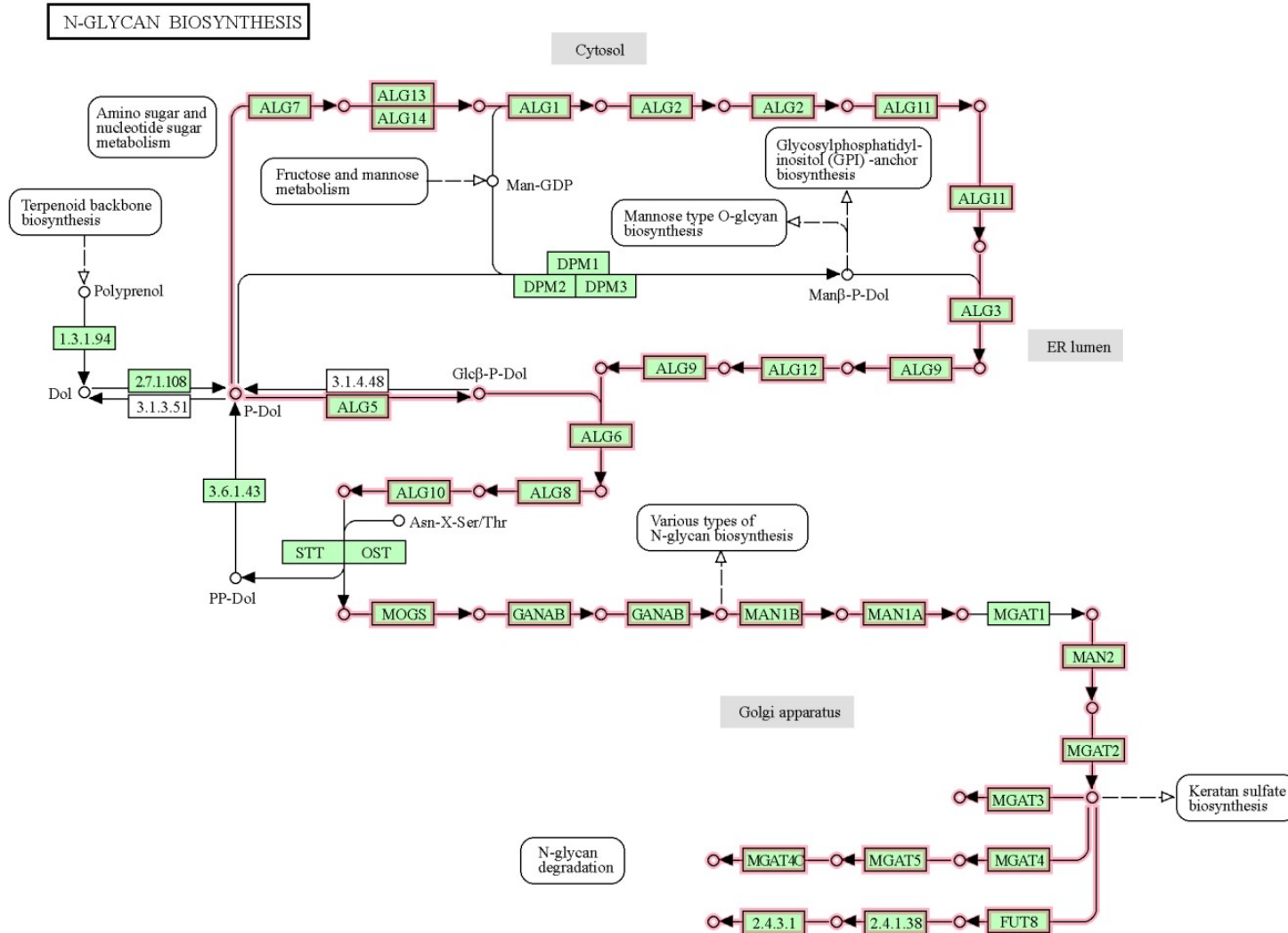
NCBI database

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

Pathway database

<http://www.genome.jp/>

Pathway database : KEGG

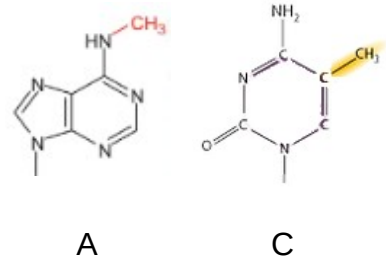


Homo sapiens (hsa)

N-glycans or asparagine-linked glycans

are major constituents of glycoproteins in eukaryotes

Epigenetics



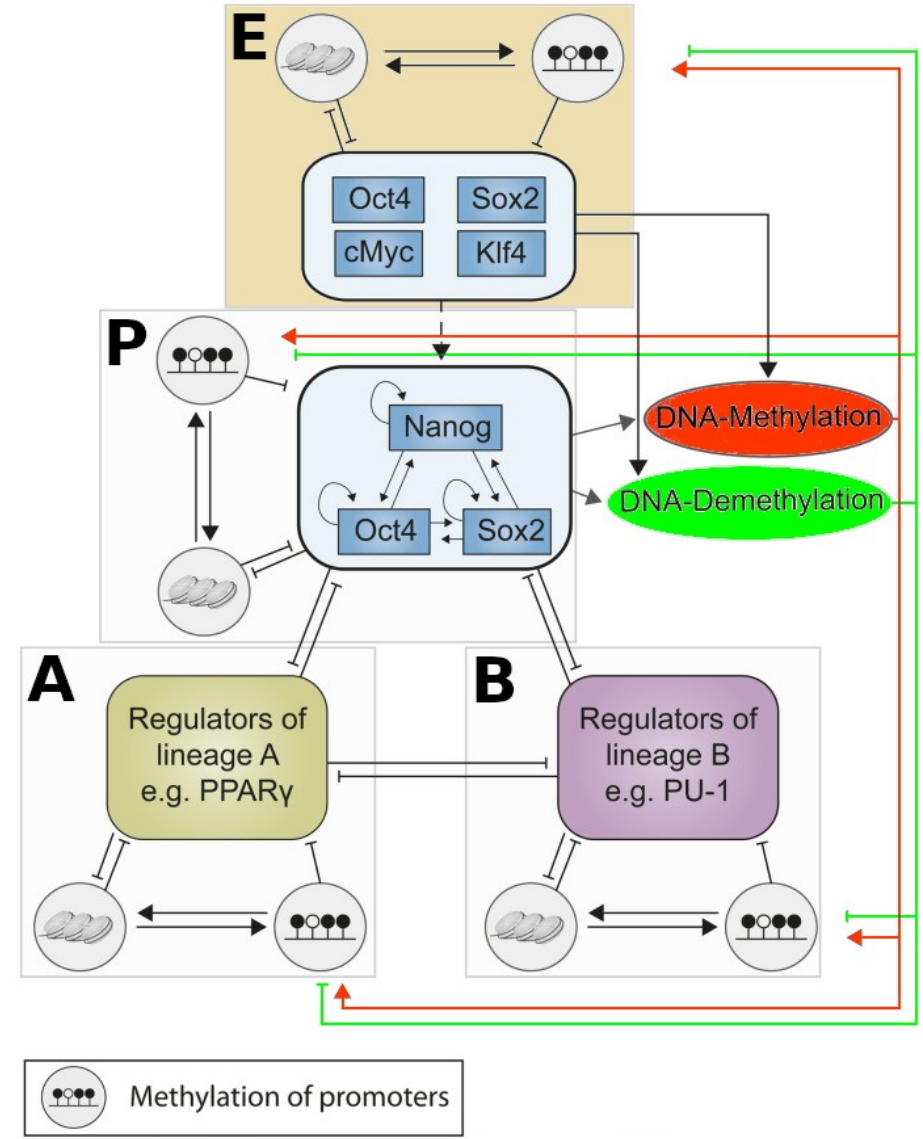
Methylation targets

Somatic Cell Reprogramming

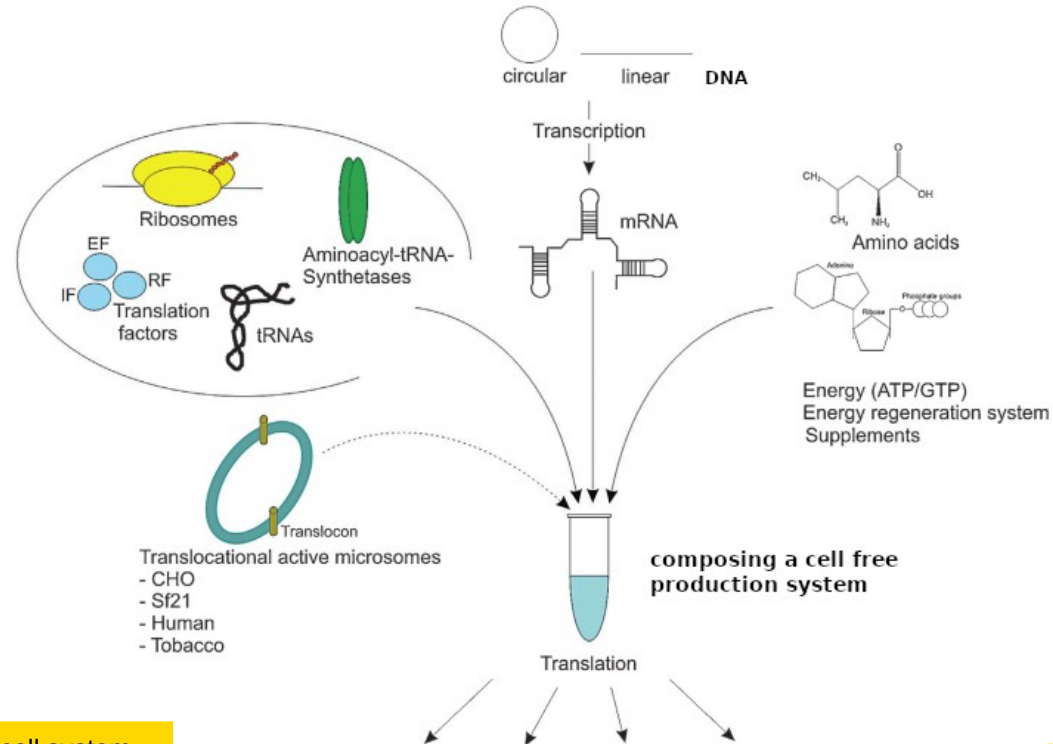
Transcriptional regulators that account for the activation of a certain cell state are combined into a module.

Four modules:
 2 different **differentiation** modules **A** and **B**,
 the **pluripotency P**,
 and the **exogenous reprogramming genes E**.

Each module is governed by the activity of the other modules as well as its epigenetic states.



Synthetic biology



cell system	Soluble proteins	Disulfide proteins	Membrane proteins	Glycoproteins
Archae / Protozoa	✓			
<i>E. coli</i>	✓	✓ Redoxsystem necessary	✓ Detergents/ liposomes/nanodiscs/ refolding processes necessary	
Wheat Germ	✓	✓ Optimized system necessary	✓ Detergents and liposomes are necessary	
Yeast	✓			✓ Addition of microsomes
Rabbit Reticulocyte	✓	✓ Addition of exogenous microsomes necessary	✓ Addition of exogenous microsomes necessary	✓ Addition of exogenous microsomes necessary
Tobacco	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insect	✓	✓ Redoxsystem necessary	✓	✓
CHO / Human	✓		✓	✓

target protein types

production feasible

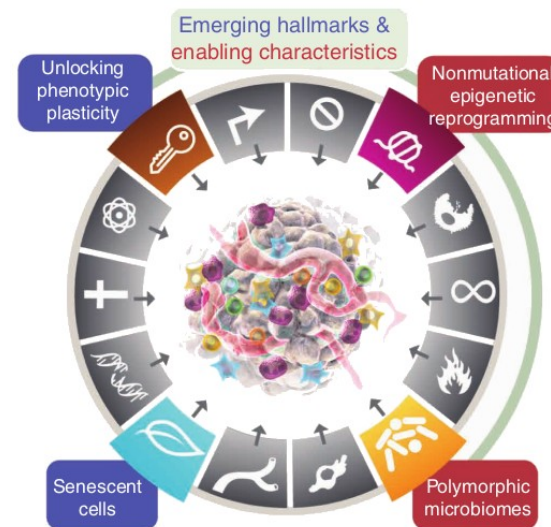
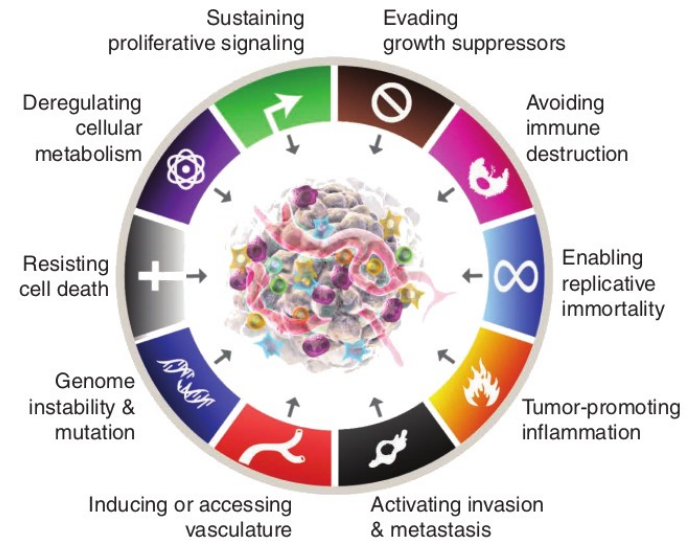
Chinese hamster ovary (CHO) cells

Cell-Free Protein Synthesis - <https://doi.org/10.1002/cbic.201500340>

Evolutionary Systems Biology

Cancer stem cells follow their own evolutionary process, which results in an escape from the multi-cellular control mechanisms.

The hallmarks of cancer are indicators on this way.



*A **teaser** for the next lecture*

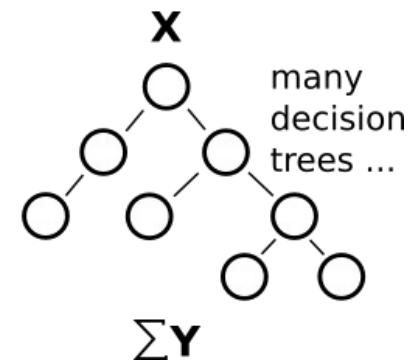
Is **artificial intelligence (AI)**
the next big thing in systems biology ?

It depends ...

AI is still based on known **ideas**.

Therefore it might be still **limited**
for detecting
new concepts in biological systems.

Random Forest



Take home message

- **Systems biology**
is mapping massive parallel measurements
into systemic models
and is trying to explain
the behavior of complex biological systems
- The **methodology** of systems biology
still needs attention
and more elaborated concepts