

**VizX Labs launches Web-based microarray analysis software,
GeneSifter.Net™, and signs international distribution agreement
with Japanese trading company**

Seattle, WA -- October 2, 2002 -- Responding to research scientists who've expressed a desire to gain direct and timely control over volumes of data emerging from their microarray experiments, VizX Labs LLC today introduced GeneSifter.Net™, a platform-independent Web-based microarray analytical software system that is customizable for data collection and management.

GeneSifter.Net was designed *de novo* using Web-based "thin-client" architecture. The product enables a laboratory scientist to load data from microarray image files, scanners or sensors into a VizX-developed database. Each database is backed up automatically, kept secure and made accessible from any Web-enabled computer system worldwide. The supporting software architecture makes for simple and straightforward utilization, installation, maintenance, and database management, resulting in convenient operations and lower overhead costs.

GeneSifter.Net's user-friendly layout provides power for high productivity and includes many features previously available only in enterprise software:

- ❑ An intuitive interface that can be customized to individual laboratories
- ❑ User preferences for organizing, archiving and annotating biological research data
- ❑ Remote collaboration, including password-protected user access and system administration

GeneSifter.Net is available at significantly lower cost than comparable enterprise-level installations.

VizX Labs negotiates international distribution agreement for Japan

Concurrent with the launch of GeneSifter.Net, VizX Labs has signed a three-year exclusive international distribution agreement with Marubun Corporation, Tokyo, Japan, to distribute GeneSifter.Net to molecular biology laboratories in Japan. The agreement with Marubun, a major Japanese trading company with annual revenues of approximately US \$1.1 billion, opens the door to one of the fastest growing biotechnology centers in the world and provides international commercial validation for VizX's new approach to bioinformatics. GeneSifter.Net is the first product to be distributed under this agreement.

Product introduction follows extensive user testing

Industry observers, beta testers and initial customers have reported GeneSifter.Net facilitates time-consuming routine laboratory tasks, allowing them to focus on information emerging from their experiments. It accelerates their efforts to pull comprehensive analyses together for drug development programs, life science research and the associated tasks of collaboration and publishing data.

A leading authority in gene expression, biochemistry, and genomics, Mark Schena, PhD, believes that GeneSifter.Net addresses the task of microarray analysis and data management in an elegantly straightforward and accessible manner. He reports that it quickly sorts microarray data and addresses the needs of microarray scientists by providing novel Internet-based solutions. "The browser-driven idea is a sound one because it affords researchers the most current gene and protein databases, and world-wide access to tools and past queries," he said.

"Instead of drowning users in a sea of information, GeneSifter.Net provides users with targeted abilities, making the data manageable," Dr. Schena said. "All truly great tools are simple. People may hesitate to adopt them because they misconstrue design elegance as being too simplistic. However, overbuilt software can make analyzing microarray data excruciating and not provide the gene expression correlations that are most relevant biologically."

Dr. Schena with colleagues at Stanford University published the first paper on microarrays in *Science* in 1995, (Schena, M., Shalon, D., Davis, R.W. and Brown, P.O., *Quantitative monitoring of gene expression patterns with a complementary DNA microarray. Science* 270, 467-470, 1995), and was considered to be a catalyzing force in the explosive proliferation of microarray technology at academic and commercial centers. Now a Visiting Scholar at Silicon Valley-based TeleChem/arrayit.com, a leading microarray technology company, Dr. Schena is currently applying his expertise consulting with academic and commercial laboratories. His third textbook, *Microarray Analysis: Mining the Human Genome*, John Wiley and Sons, will be published in October 2002.

Beta users and early adopters report a broad spectrum of improvements in their research operations:

"I've worked with microarrays for years, but our department had never adopted any specific software for analysis," said Eileen Mulvihill, PhD, Research Assistant Professor of Pathology at the University of Washington. "We always did it ourselves using Excel, contracted with a software programmer for a specific project, or we found ourselves pulling together a number of software packages. GeneSifter performs the same functions in a way that is really quite easy to use," she said. "Perhaps more importantly, as I've been working from Seattle with three

research groups in England, Toronto and Houston, we've been able to look at data with them in real time. That heightened collaboration has been particularly valuable," she said.

"With GeneSifter, the information really is at our fingertips. Time-consuming tasks are now routine," said Stephen Schmechel, MD, PhD, Research Fellow in Laboratory Medicine at the University of Washington, and consultant to Rational Diagnostics, a Seattle-based clinical genomics company. Dr. Schmechel and his laboratory staff began using GeneSifter.Net almost a year ago as beta testers of the package. The Rational Diagnostics team has employed GeneSifter.Net to identify genes associated with cancer, and presented its first findings, a study using GeneSifter.Net to investigate expression patterns that distinguish Lymphoma subtypes, last month at the Third Annual Northwest Microarray Conference in Seattle.

"As we correlate genes with their function, one of our challenges has been to stay current with the most recent data about genes of interest," he added. "GeneSifter.Net has provided us with a means to do that without adding yet another task to our to-do lists."

Gary Vanasse, MD, Instructor of Medicine at the University of Washington, who is researching the molecular genetics underlying lymphomas, is using GeneSifter.Net to manage vast amounts of data from an ever-expanding number of microarray experiments, data that needs to be leveraged for a variety of purposes.

"Many labs, including my own, have not found an easy-to-use analytical tool that can assist them to simply mine, access and manage data," he said. "Using GeneSifter, what would have taken weeks was accomplished in days."

Product demonstration

To arrange for a product demo, please contact N. Eric Olson, PhD, Director of Science at VizX Labs, or his assistant, Sharon Schierle, at 206.336.5606.

VizX Labs LLC

VizX Labs develops Web-based software systems for the acquisition, management and analysis of molecular biology data and information. These products enable life scientists to readily incorporate sophisticated data management and computational analysis into their research efforts resulting in improved quality and productivity in experiment design and decision-making processes.

Editor's note:

- ❑ GeneSifter.Net product overview, benefits and features reside at: www.genesifter.net/product-info_features.php
- ❑ GeneSifter.Net Web page resides at: www.genesifter.net
- ❑ Downloadable graphics, including screenshots of GeneSifter.Net may be viewed online at: www.vizlabs.com/downloadable_images.html

- The VizX Labs LLC newsroom is archived at: www.vizlabs.com/newsroom.html

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