

Program helps in designing artificial DNA

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Johns Hopkins University scientists say they've developed a Web-based, automated computer program that assists in designing artificial pieces of DNA.

The program, called GeneDesign, guides the design of blueprints for DNA segments to the exacting specifications required for studying gene function and genetically engineering cells. The blueprints are then used by companies or other investigators to synthesize the gene.

"GeneDesign not only guides the user in designing the gene, but also automatically diagnoses design flaws in the sequence of bases making up the gene," said Jef Boeke, professor of molecular biology and genetics and director of the university's High Throughput Biology Center.

A report on the program will appear in the April 2006 issue of *Genome Research* and is currently available online.

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