

Student's Research Adventure - 2008

Chris Smillie in Paris



I spent the summer working at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, France. Paris has been very enjoyable and the city is much more lively than Tucson (except on Sundays, certain holidays, and the month of August). I've had my share of the picturesque Parisian lifestyle (crepes, museums, wine, boating on the Seine) and have also explored many eccentric, out-of-the-way parts of the city. Right now I'm living in an ex-convent/ex-Napoleonic war hospital in the middle of the 10th (Paris' version of the Barrio) with a handful of artists, scientists, and writers. Our flat is enormous (an entire 40 m²) and the only reason we can afford it is because the French government subsidizes it.



I've also been doing some research. The goal of my research is to better understand bacterial genome evolution by comparing the "pan" and "core" genomes for numerous bacterial groups. The "pan-genome" is the union of genes belonging to all of the strains in a bacterial species. The "core genome" is the corresponding intersection of genes. By understanding how these collections of genes evolve, we hope to shed light on how pathogens evolve to infect new hosts and evade host defense mechanisms, among other things. One promising application of my research is the identification of novel vaccine targets, which could potentially improve millions of lives.



My lab has been very welcoming and nice. Since they left in August (like I said, Paris closes down in August) I haven't had a chance to take pictures with them. I've attached a few other pictures of the city, Eiffel Tower, Luxembourg gardens, Seine, and forest Vincennes.

[Undergraduate](#)^[1]

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Source URL (retrieved on 01/12/2013 - 6:01am): http://www.chem.arizona.edu/undergraduate/smilie_2008

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