



## **Pocketing \$550K in Financing, Intrepid Hires CEO, Rolls out Trial of Genomic Data-Management System**

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By [Uduak Grace Thomas](#)

**Intrepid Bioinformatics**, a Louisville, Kentucky-based startup, has in the last few months closed a \$550,000 Series A funding round and hired its first full-time executive, and is currently asking prospective customers to try out its software and storage system ahead of a full launch in January.

Tom McMahon was tapped to lead the company's move into the genomic data management market. Prior to joining Intrepid, McMahon was managing director of IGE Media/Medical News, president and founder of investment firm Growth Services, and executive director of Health Enterprises Network, all based in the Louisville area.

Intrepid was founded in 2006 by Ted Kalbfleisch, associate director of bioinformatics at the University of Louisville Center for Genetic and Molecular Medicine. The firm, founded in conjunction with University of Louisville incubator Metacyte Business Lab, has licensed technology developed by Kalbfleisch that allows researchers to manage their proprietary data within the context of publicly available information.

Currently McMahon is the only full-time employee of the company, working as part of a team that includes MetaCyte staff and Kalbfleisch.

The Series A round included investments from the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation, the University of Louisville Foundation, and several seed capital funds.

The company aims to use the funding to further develop its technology, as well as to hire a database support associate who will provide technical support for customers and further develop the system.

McMahon told *BioInform* that the company aims to "solve the data management problems" faced by the genetic research community by combining "the functionality, affordability, and community features they need.

"Specifically, our secure, web-based system allows genetic researchers to manage, store, curate and share their research with collaborators in any location," he said. "We also offer

the ability to view proprietary data alongside public data – effectively becoming an interactive electronic laboratory notebook."

Intrepid's flagship offering is a database and software system called GeneSentry, which includes storage for genomic data and software that lets users visualize and track their data as well as design assays, among other things. While the platform primarily stores SNP data at this time, Intrepid plans to eventually add the ability to store other types of data such as next-generation sequence data, Kalbfleisch told *BioInform*.

The database portion of GeneSentry is an Oracle-based system that Kalbfleisch designed to store genomic annotation data that researchers produce in the course of their work, as well as the results of genotyping studies. The software lets users access and visualize their stored data alongside other data sets in a genome browser.

An important feature of the GeneSentry software, Kalbfleisch said is that it preserves the "link between derived datasets and the raw datasets." As such, users who are working with other researchers' data can trace the analysis steps from the final dataset back to the original data used to call a particular variant.

He also pointed out that users aren't limited to Intrepid's software and can use the system's application programming interfaces to write their own programs to upload data to the database or to extract data from it.

Kalbfleisch said that the database uses "view-based security" to ensure data privacy. GeneSentry keeps track of which data a particular user is allowed to access. As such, users can only access data they have permission to view and can then "selectively" share the data with other researchers that subscribe to the system.

Intrepid is actively recruiting trial users to test the system, McMahon said. He encouraged potential customers to contact the company through its [website](#).

Currently users can sign up for an account to view and use public datasets within the system at no cost. Because the company is still fleshing out its pricing scheme, McMahon could not provide specific details about subscription costs but he did say that Intrepid will offer different options for academics and commercial groups and that pricing would vary depending on how much data subscribers have to upload and store.

Gina Lankswert, who serves as vice president of development for Intrepid and is the director of business analysis for MetaCyte, told *BioInform* that while the marketing team has identified a target market of about 400,000 genomic researchers, Intrepid will initially target only about half of that group by focusing on the academic and government sectors.

In terms of the competition, McMahon admits that there are companies in the data storage and management space but he pointed out that most focus on either analytics or data storage while Intrepid aims to cover both arenas.

He also said that he expects to compete with research groups that try to "cobble together" solutions for their needs but hopes that researchers find that Intrepid's tools provide more functionality at an affordable price. To that end, the group plans to have a presence at events like the [International Plant and Animal Genome](#) conference in San Diego in January.

Moving forward, Intrepid aims reach out to researchers in international markets as well, McMahon said.

Lankswert added that the company will begin another round of funding next year in order to hire additional staff, including software engineers and developers, as well as marketing and sales personnel.

In the next phase, Kalbfleisch said that Intrepid is considering operating its storage capabilities on a cloud infrastructure as well as incorporating other data types, but for now the group wants to "make certain that we [are] relatively tightly focused when we go out into the market [and] meet one very clear need."