

Name and brief description of initiative:

Blueprint Informatics Team (BIT)

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The NIH Blueprint for Neuroscience Research (<http://neuroscienceblueprint.nih.gov>) is a framework for systematic communication, collaboration, and coordination of neuroscience research-related activities across 15 institutes and centers of the NIH, and the office of the Director of NIH. The framework has allowed concerted consideration of best practices and other issues, and has spawned several specific funding initiatives. All efforts to date focus on tools and resources that can benefit a wide swath of the neuroscience research community in ways that cut across the mission boundaries of the participating institutes and centers.

As informatics and computational tools and resources become increasingly important to neuroscience, a Blueprint Informatics Team (BIT) was formed to: 1) accelerate the use of computational approaches by neuroscience by advancing informatics research, 2) increase the payoff of informatics research via communication, collaboration, and coordination across Blueprint institutes and centers, and 3) provide a collective neuroscience voice and leadership to informatics activities across NIH and beyond. The BIT is not focused on a particular funding initiative, but rather provides ongoing cohesion, from a neuroscience perspective, to this key cross-cutting area at NIH.

Among the activities that the BIT, and its members, have played, or are playing, major roles in, are:

- Organized and held Linking Informatics of Neuroscience Communities Workshop (March 2006) and organized and held Annual Spring Meeting of Human Brain Project (April 2006) to explore concrete steps in increasing interoperability in existing informatics tools and resources
- Participation in NIH Roadmap Implementation Work Group for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, Roadmap NCBCs, and associated activities
- Exploration of the Biomedical Informatics Research Network (BIRN) as a vehicle for advancing interoperability and adoptability of tools and resources for neuroscience
- Knowledge Environments Group of BISTIC – Organizing NIH National Conference on Knowledge Environments for Biomedical Research (August 2006) to elucidate strategies to develop community-based knowledge environments
- Database Issues Group of BISTIC – Developed systematic means of first-pass programmatic understanding of research databases
- Neuroimaging Informatics Technology Initiative – Addressing the issue of multiple, diverse data formats used for fMRI data in neuroscience research
- Blueprint Neuroimaging Informatics Clearinghouse aimed at making important tools and resources more usable and accessible by the broad research community, and providing feedback from users to the tool developers
- Blueprint Neuroscience Information Framework aimed at rigorously organizing information about tools and resources (not limited to computational) accessible and queryable by all neuroscientists
- Development of science-context, and moving forward consideration of extended policies on data and software sharing to be discussed by appropriate components of the NIH