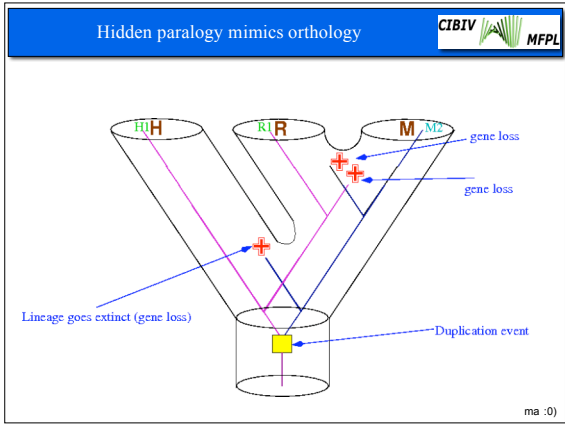
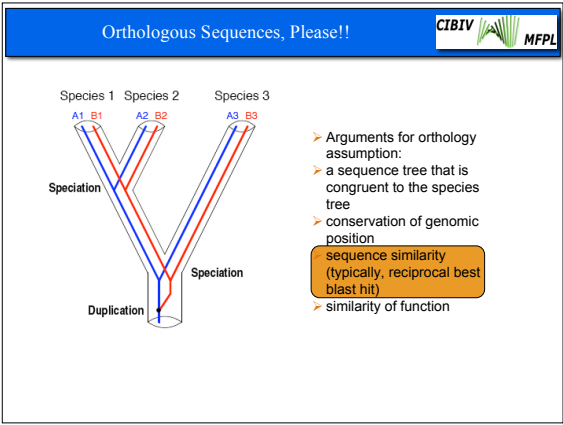
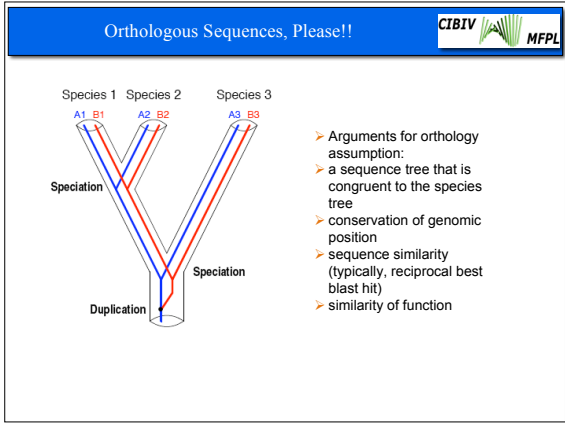
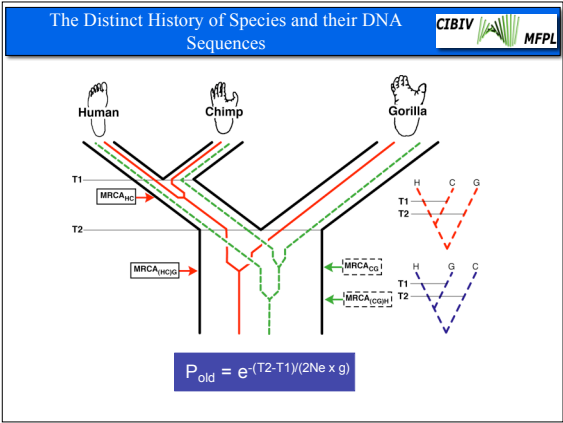
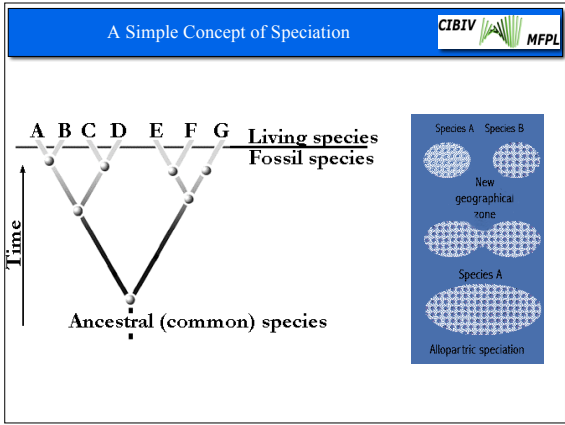
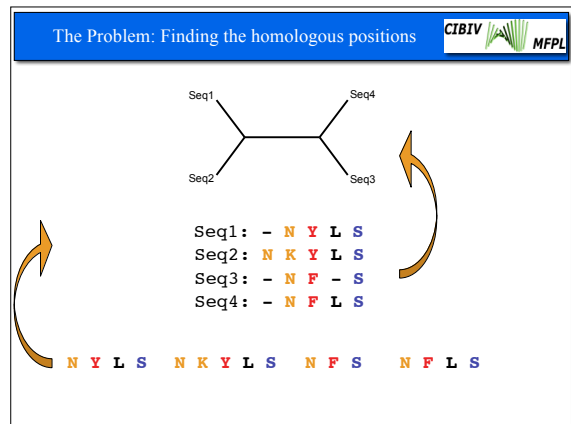
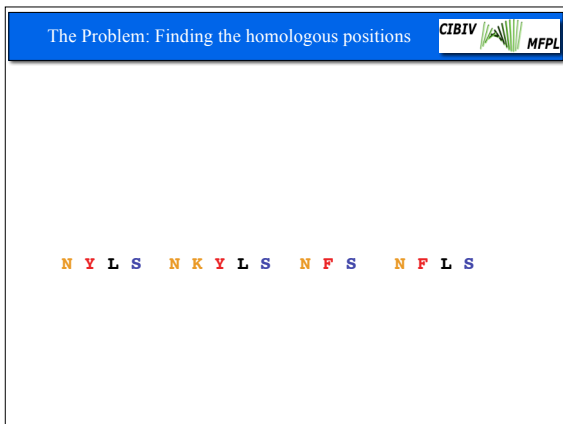
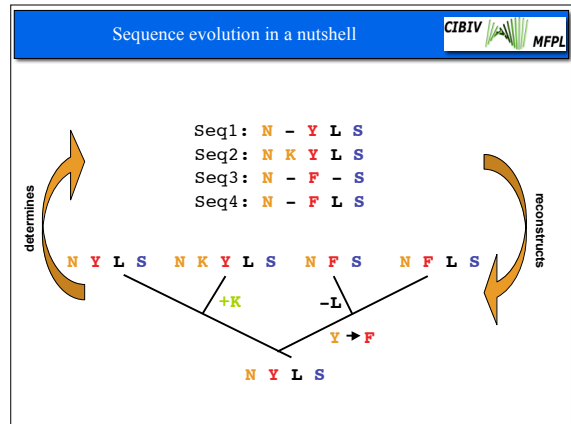
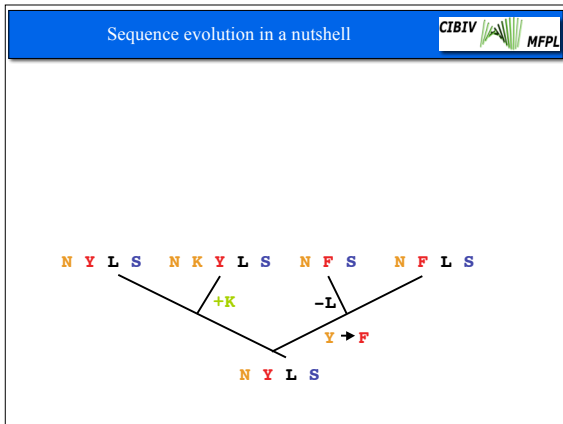


CIBIV MFPL

## PHYLOGENY RECONSTRUCTION: THE BASICS





The objective function


An mathematical function able to measure the biological quality of an alignment...

The objective function

An mathematical function able to measure the biological quality of an alignment...

**Related questions:**


- >What should a biologically correct alignment look like?
- >To what extent can we define and formalize its properties?

The objective function 

An mathematical function able to measure the biological quality of an alignment...

**Related questions:**  
 >What should a biologically correct alignment look like?  
 >To what extent can we define and formalize its properties?


Mathematical Optimal Alignment  $\xleftrightarrow{\text{minimize}}$  Biologically Optimal Alignment

The objective function 

A mathematical function ment to measure the biological quality of an alignment...

$$\sigma(\alpha) = \sum_{i=1}^n S(a_i, b_i)$$


$\sigma(\alpha)$ : the score of the pairwise alignment  $\alpha$   
 $n$  : length of  $\alpha$   
 $a_i$  : letter of sequence A at position  $i$  in  $\alpha$   
 $b_i$  : letter of sequence B at position  $i$  in  $\alpha$

The objective function 

A mathematical function ment to measure the biological quality of an alignment...

$$\sigma(\alpha) = \sum_{i=1}^n S(a_i, b_i)$$


Objective: find  $\alpha$  that maximizes  $\sigma(\alpha)$ !

The scoring function  $S$ , an example 

Given two sequences  $A = \{a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n\}$  and  $B = \{b_1, b_2, \dots, b_m\}$  and a scoring function  $S$  such that

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

then we look for that alignment, that gives us the highest score by summing up the column scores  $S(a_i, b_j)$  for all columns of the alignment.

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then we look for that alignment, that gives us the highest score by summing up the column scores  $S(a_i, b_j)$  for all columns of the alignment.

For example:

T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
T	-	-	T	C	A	T	A
+5	-6	-6	+5	+5	-2	+5	+5

= 11

Why not just scoring all alignments? 

**A1:**

T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
T	-	-	T	C	A	T	A
+5	-6	-6	+5	+5	-2	+5	+5


= 11

**A2:**


T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
T	-	T	-	C	A	T	A
+5	-6	-2	-6	+5	-2	+5	+5

= 4

etc...


Why not just scoring all alignments? 

- There are far too many
  - number of possible pairwise alignments:  $\binom{2n}{n}$
  - for two sequences of length N there are  $10^{179}$  possibilities

Why not just scoring all alignments? 

- There are far too many
  - number of possible pairwise alignments:  $\binom{2n}{n}$
  - for two sequences of length N there are  $10^{179}$  possibilities

Hence, we need a smart way to cut the computation short, like the **dynamic programming** approach for pairwise alignments by *Needleman and Wunsch* (1970).

Re-use of previous results 

A1: 

T	G	C	T
T	-	-	T
+5	-6	-6	+5

C	G	T	A
C	A	T	A
+5	-2	+5	+5

 $= 11$


A2: 

T	G	C	T
T	-	T	-
+5	-6	-2	-6

C	G	T	A
C	A	T	A
+5	-2	+5	+5


 $= 4$

etc...

Dynamic Programming 

A **dynamic programming** approach usually includes:

- A mathematical description of the (biological) quality of an solution, i.e. an recursive objective function
- The computation of all intermediate values needed to obtain the globally optimal solution, thereby avoiding double-computations
- The reconstruction of the globally optimal solution from the values obtained in the previous step (backtracking)

The Needleman-Wunsch pair-wise alignment 


	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
1	T								
2	T								
3	C								
4	A								
5	T								
6	A								

**Scoring function**

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

**Objective function**

$$\sigma(i, j) = \max \begin{cases} \sigma(i-1, j-1) + S(a_i, b_j) \\ \sigma(i, j-1) + S(gap, b_j) \\ \sigma(i-1, j) + S(a_i, gap) \end{cases}$$

The Needleman-Wunsch algorithm 

$\sigma(i-1, j-1)$	$\sigma(i-1, j)$
$\sigma(i, j-1)$	$\sigma(i, j) = \max \begin{cases} \sigma(i-1, j-1) + S(a_i, b_j) \\ \sigma(i, j-1) + S(gap, b_j) \\ \sigma(i-1, j) + S(a_i, gap) \end{cases}$

➢  $\sigma(i, j)$  is the optimal alignment score up to and including  $a_i$  and  $b_j$

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Initialization

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6							
2	T	-12							
3	C	-18							
4	A	-24							
5	T	-30							
6	A	-36							

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

The Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Recursion

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5						
2	T	-12							
3	C	-18							
4	A	-24							
5	T	-30							
6	A	-36							

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

The Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Recursion

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5	-1					
2	T	-12							
3	C	-18							
4	A	-24							
5	T	-30							
6	A	-36							

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

The Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Recursion

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5	-1	-7	-13	-19	-25	-31
2	T	-12		3	-3	-2	-8	-14	-20
3	C	-18			8	2	3	-3	-9
4	A	-24				6	0	1	-5
5	T	-30					7	4	-2
6	A	-36						5	2

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Backtrack

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5	-1	-7	-13	-19	-25	-31
2	T	-12		3	-3	-2	-8	-14	-20
3	C	-18			8	2	3	-3	-9
4	A	-24				6	0	1	-5
5	T	-30					7	4	-2
6	A	-36						5	2

\*

Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Backtrack

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		T	G	C	T	C	G	T	A
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5	-1	-7	-13	-19	-25	-31
2	T	-12		3	-3	-2	-8	-14	-20
3	C	-18			8	2	3	-3	-9
4	A	-24				6	0	1	-5
5	T	-30					7	4	-2
6	A	-36						5	2

A\*

Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Backtrack

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5	-1	-7	-13	-19	-25	-31
2	T	-12	-1	3	-3	-2	-8	-14	-20
3	C	-18	-7	-3	8	2	3	-3	-9
4	A	-24	-13	-9	2	6	0	1	-5
5	T	-30	-19	-15	-4	7	4	-2	6
6	A	-36	-25	-21	-10	1	5	2	0

TA\*  
TA\*

Needleman-Wunsch algorithm: Backtrack

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	0	-6	-12	-18	-24	-30	-36	-42	-48
1	T	-6	5	-1	-7	-13	-19	-25	-31
2	T	-12	-1	3	-3	-2	-8	-14	-20
3	C	-18	-7	-3	8	2	3	-3	-9
4	A	-24	-13	-9	2	6	0	1	-5
5	T	-30	-19	-15	-4	7	4	-2	6
6	A	-36	-25	-21	-10	1	5	2	0

\*TGCTCGTA\*  
\*T--TCATA\* Alignment Score: 11

Smith-Waterman pairwise local alignment

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	T	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	5
2	T	0	5	3	0	5	3	0	5
3	C	0	0	3	8	2	10	4	3
4	A	0	0	0	2	6	4	8	2
5	T	0	5	0	0	7	4	2	13
6	A	0	0	3	0	1	5	2	7

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

$$\sigma(i, j) = \max \begin{cases} \sigma(i-1, j-1) + S(a_i, b_j) \\ \sigma(i, j-1) + S(\text{gap}) \\ \sigma(i-1, j) + S(\text{gap}) \\ 0 \end{cases}$$

Smith-Waterman pairwise local alignment

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	T	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	5
2	T	0	5	3	0	5	3	0	5
3	C	0	0	3	8	2	10	4	3
4	A	0	0	0	2	6	4	8	2
5	T	0	5	0	0	7	4	2	13
6	A	0	0	3	0	1	5	2	7

\*TCGTA\*  
\*TCATA\* Alignment Score: 18

Affine Gap costs

$$g(l) = g_o + l * g_e$$

$$\sigma(i, j) = \max \begin{cases} \sigma(i-1, j-1) + S(a_i, b_j) \\ \sigma(i, j-1) + S(\text{gap}, b_j) \\ \sigma(i-1, j) + S(a_i, \text{gap}) \end{cases}$$

$$\sigma(i, j) = \max \begin{cases} \sigma(i-1, j-1) + S(a_i, b_j) \\ \max_{k \leq i} \{ \sigma(k, j) + g(i-k), \text{gap in B} \} \\ \max_{k \leq j} \{ \sigma(i, k) + g(j-k), \text{gap in A} \} \end{cases}$$

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0									
1	T								
2	T								
3	C								
4	A								
5	T								
6	A								

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0									
1	T								
2	T								
3	C								
4	A								
5	T								
6	A								

Alternative Scoring Functions

Blosum62:


	C	E	T	A	G	N	D	K	R	Q	K	M	L	V	F	Y	W
C	4	-1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E	-1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
V	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Y	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
W	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

PAM250:


	C	E	T	A	G	N	D	K	R	Q	K	M	L	V	F	Y	W
C	10	-1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E	-1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	1	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0
L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
V	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Y	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
W	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10

Many others...

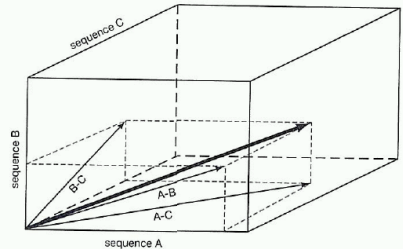



How to construct Multiple Sequence Alignments? 

**Optimal Solution:**  
 Extend Needleman-Wunsch or Smith-Waterman to multiple sequences

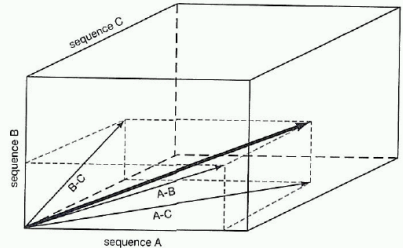
How to construct Multiple Sequence Alignments? 

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How to construct Multiple Sequence Alignments? 


**Optimal Solution:**  
 Extend Needleman-Wunsch or Smith-Waterman to multiple sequences



**But  $O(n^m)$  in time and memory:**  
 Computationally not feasible... 4 sequences of length 1000 -> 1TB RAM

A new objective function: Sum of Pairs 

Seq1: AGA--CTA  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT  
 Seq3: AGAAACTT


A new objective function: Sum of Pairs 

Seq1: AGA--CTA  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT  
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Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq2: G-A--CTT  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq2: G-A--CTT  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT  
**Score: +5**            **Score: +11**            **Score: 0**

A new objective function: Sum of Pairs 

Seq1: AGA--CTA  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT  
 Seq3: AGAAACTT

Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq2: G-A--CTT  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT

$$S(a_i, b_j) = \begin{cases} +5, & \text{if } a_i = b_j \\ -2, & \text{if } a_i \neq b_j \\ -6, & \text{for introduction of a gap} \end{cases}$$

Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq1: AGA--CTA    Seq2: G-A--CTT  
 Seq2: G-A--CTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT    Seq3: AGAAACTT  
**Score: +5**            **Score: +11**            **Score: 0**

**SUM OF PAIRS SCORE: 16**



A typical variant: Weighted Sum of Pairs CIBIV MFPL

Seq1: AGA--CTA  
Seq2: AGA--CTA  
Seq3: G-A--CTT  
Seq4: AGAAACTT

Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq3: G-A--CTT  
Seq2: AGA--CTA   Seq3: G-A--CTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT

Seq2: AGA--CTA   Seq2: AGA--CTA  
Seq3: G-A--CTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT

Score: +30   Score: 2\*(+5)   Score: 2\*(+11)   Score: 0

**SUM OF PAIRS SCORE: 62**

A typical variant: Weighted Sum of Pairs CIBIV MFPL

Seq1: AGA--CTA  
Seq2: AGA--CTA  
Seq3: G-A--CTT  
Seq4: AGAAACTT

Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq3: G-A--CTT  
Seq2: AGA--CTA   Seq3: G-A--CTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT

Seq2: AGA--CTA   Seq2: AGA--CTA  
Seq3: G-A--CTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT

Score: +30   Score: 2\*(+5)   Score: 2\*(+11)   Score: 0

**SUM OF PAIRS SCORE: 62**

Weighting of sequences: one variant CIBIV MFPL

Dataset:  
Seq1: AGACTA  
Seq2: AGACTA  
Seq3: GACTT  
Seq4: AGAAACTT

Compute

Pairwise Distance Matrix

	1	2	3	4
1	-			
2		-		
3			-	
4				-

Reconstruct

Seq1: 0.43  
Seq2: 0.43  
Seq3: 1  
Seq4: 0.73

Normalize

Seq1:  $(0.29/2+0.2/3)=0.21$   
Seq2:  $(0.29/2+0.2/3)=0.21$   
Seq3: 0.49  
Seq4:  $(0.29+0.2/3)=0.36$

Apply weights

A typical variant: Weighted Sum of Pairs CIBIV MFPL

$$\sigma_{wsp}(\alpha) = \sum_{i < j} \omega_i \omega_j S(\alpha_i, \alpha_j)$$

Seq1: AGA--CTA  
Seq2: AGA--CTA  
Seq3: G-A--CTT  
Seq4: AGAAACTT

Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq1: AGA--CTA   Seq3: G-A--CTT  
Seq2: AGA--CTA   Seq3: G-A--CTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT

Seq2: AGA--CTA   Seq2: AGA--CTA  
Seq3: G-A--CTT   Seq4: AGAAACTT

Score:  $0.43^2 \times 30$    Score:  $(0.43 \times 5)^2$    Score:  $(0.43 \times 0.73 \times 11)^2$    Score: 0

**SUM OF PAIRS SCORE: 16.7**

Progressive Alignment Strategies (ClustalW) CIBIV MFPL

- The sequences are added stepwise. Thus, never more than two sequences (or multiple sequence alignments) are simultaneously aligned
- Sequences or MSAs are aligned using **Dynamic Programming**

Progressive Alignment Strategies (ClustalW) CIBIV MFPL

CIBIV MFPL

### Scoring for the alignment of two alignments

$$\sigma(a^i, b^j) = \frac{1}{n+m} \sum_{x=1}^n \sum_{y=1}^m S(a_x^i, b_y^j) \times \omega_x \times \omega_y$$

$\sigma(a^i, b^j)$ : score for aligning column  $i$  from alignment (or sequence)  $a$  to column  $j$  from alignment or sequence  $b$   
 $n, m$ : number of sequences in alignments  $a$  and  $b$ , respectively  
 $S(a_x^i, b_y^j)$ : score for aligning position  $i$  in sequence  $x$  from alignment  $a$  to position  $j$  in sequence  $y$  from alignment  $b$   
 $\omega_x, \omega_y$ : respective weights of the sequences  $x$  and  $y$

CIBIV MFPL

### Scoring for the alignment of two alignments

$$\sigma(a^i, b^j) = \frac{1}{n+m} \sum_{x=1}^n \sum_{y=1}^m S(a_x^i, b_y^j) \times \omega_x \times \omega_y$$

1 peeksavfal  
 2 geekaavfal  
 3 padktnvfaa  
 4 aadktnvfaa

4 egewgllhvf  
 5 aaektklrsa

**With sequence weights:**  
 Score =  $(S(t,v) * \omega_t * \omega_v)$   
 +  $S(t,i) * \omega_t * \omega_i$   
 +  $S(l,v) * \omega_l * \omega_v$   
 +  $S(l,i) * \omega_l * \omega_i$   
 +  $S(k,v) * \omega_k * \omega_v$   
 +  $S(k,i) * \omega_k * \omega_i$   
 +  $S(k,v) * \omega_k * \omega_v$   
 +  $S(k,i) * \omega_k * \omega_i$  / 8

CIBIV MFPL

### Features of ClustalW

- > progressive strategy
- > Distance based generation of a guide tree (approximative or exact)
- > tree-guided (NJ) alignment
- > change of the scoring matrix as the alignment proceeds (adaptation to increasing divergence of the sequences)
- > dynamic variation of gap penalties in position- and residue-specific manner
  - gap opening penalties are locally reduced in stretches of 5 or more hydrophilic residues (indicative of loop or random coil regions).
  - gap penalties are locally increased within eight residues of existing gaps.
- > sequence weighting

CIBIV MFPL

### (Known) Problem of ClustalW: Local Optima

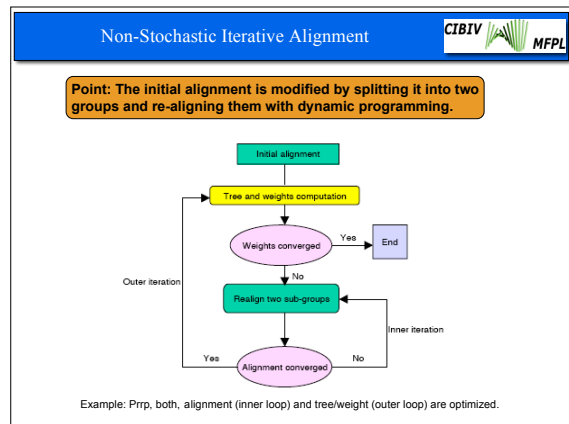
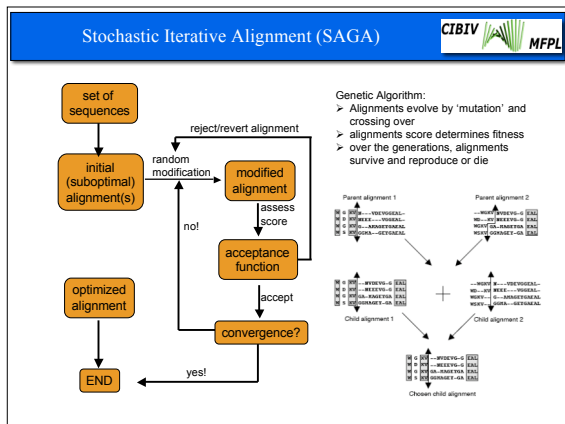
a.k.a: Once a gap always a gap

CIBIV MFPL

### Iterative Alignment Strategy

CIBIV MFPL

### Stochastic Iterative Alignment



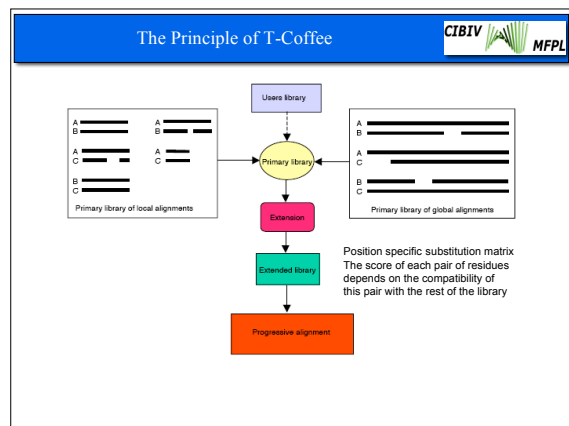
### Consistency based algorithm

**Point: The optimal MSA is defined as the one that agrees the most with all optimal pair-wise alignments**

**Features:**

- does not depend on a specific substitution rate
- can apply any method capable to align two sequences
- position dependant, i.e. the score associated with the alignment of two residues depends on their position within the sequence rather than their individual nature
- rationale: given a set of independent observations, the constellation most often observed is often closer to the truth

**Consistency based Objective Function For alignEment Evaluation (COFFEE)**

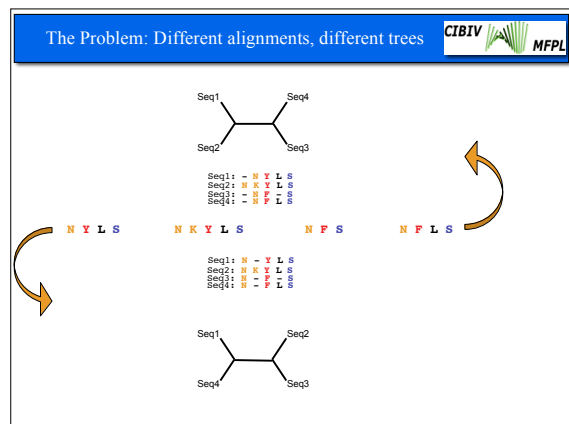


### A comparison

**Table 2. Some elements of validation on BAliBASE.**

Method	Ref1	Ref2	Ref3	Ref4	Ref5	Total
DiAlign	71.0	25.2	35.1	74.7	80.4	57.3
ClustalW	78.5	32.2	42.5	65.7	74.3	58.7
Prpp	78.6	32.5	50.2	51.1	82.7	59.0
T-Coffee	80.7	37.3	52.9	83.2	88.7	68.7

*Each method in the Method column was used to align the 141 test-sets contained in BAliBASE. The alignments were then compared with the reference BAliBASE alignment using aln\_compare [34]. Ref1-5 indicates the five BAliBASE categories. Results obtained in each category were averaged. All the observed differences are statistically significant, as assessed by the Wilcoxon rank-based test [34,47]. Ref1 contains a homogenous set of sequences, ref2 contains a homogenous group of sequences and an outlier, ref3 contains two distantly related groups of sequences. Ref4 contains sequences that require long internal gaps to be properly aligned and ref5 contains sequences that require long-terminal gaps to be properly aligned. Total is the average of ref1-5.*



The Problem: Different alignments, different trees

Seq1: - N Y L S  
Seq2: - N K Y L S  
Seq3: - N Y - L S  
Seq4: - N Y L S

N Y L S    N K Y L S    N F S    N F L S

The alignment strategy may have more impact on the reconstructed tree than does the type of tree building method.  
Morrison and Ellis (1997) Mol. Biol. Evol. 14:428-441

Focussing on stable parts of the alignment

**Gblocks (Castresana (2000) Mol. Biol. Evol. 17:540-552)**  
Objective:  
Define a set of conserved blocks from an alignment to be used in phylogeny reconstruction

Approach:

- Classification of Columns
  - non-conserved :  $<n/2 + 1$  identical residues, or a gap
  - conserved :  $\geq n/2 + 1$  and  $< 85\%$  identical residues
  - highly conserved :  $> 85\%$  identical residues
- discard contiguous stretches of non-conserved positions (default  $l = 8$ )
- from remaining blocks: remove flanking positions until blocks begin and end with highly conserved positions, i.e. selected blocks are anchored by positions that can be aligned with high confidence
- discard blocks with  $l < 15$
- remove all positions with gaps together with adjacent positions until a conserved position is reached
- discard blocks with  $l < 10$

Note: all given values are the program defaults as given in the original publication

Focussing on stable parts of the alignment

70 80 90 100 110 120

hsdR\_parde D-D...AVSFALE-DVAL...MVFPLA  
hsdR\_acaca D-D...KLIIDTOS-PPG...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_lima D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_speo D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_acath D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_balca D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_chocor D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_drome D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_human D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_kuan D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_lter D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_mango D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_melae D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_pinea D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_podan D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_prowi D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_recan D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL

130 140 150

hsdR\_parde D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_acaca D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_lima D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_speo D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_acath D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_balca D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_chocor D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_drome D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
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hsdR\_mango D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_melae D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_pinea D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_podan D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_prowi D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL  
hsdR\_recan D-D...AVSISVQV-LGQ...LIFLFL