

Facebook for scientists gets millions in Funding

Scientists to unite via project funded via Stimulus bill
By [Bob Brown](#) , Network World , 10/20/2009

The University of Florida, Cornell University and a handful of other schools have been awarded \$12.2 million to build a social/collaborative network for scientists and researchers. The idea is to make it easier to find research and like-minded researchers in an effort to speed new discoveries.

The project, funded via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will initially take the form of networks within each of the 7 founding schools but within two years could expand across the country. Eventually, the network will go worldwide, grant recipients hope.

"The goal of the program is national networking of all scientists," said Michael Conlon, interim director of biomedical informatics for the University of Florida, in a [statement](#). "Scientists have problems finding each other. We often find that researchers have pretty good networks with students or with scientists at institutions where they received their degree or worked before. But they don't always know people even at their own institutions."

Technologies used to support the effort will include [VIVO](#), an open source discovery tool out of Cornell used to search for research information. It will also exploit concepts of the [Semantic Web](#), Tim-Berners Lee's vision for an even more useful Web that enables better sharing of data.

In addition to the University of Florida and Cornell, also involved in the project are Indiana University, Weill Cornell Medical College, Washington University in St. Louis, the Scripps Research Institute and the Ponce School of Medicine in Puerto Rico.

Of course this effort is by far not the only one looking to make it easier for scientists to find one another. One commercial venture, [Epernicus](#), recently took the stage at the [Web Innovators Group](#) in Boston to talk about its effort to link life sciences researchers within companies with one another, and eventually across organizations.

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