Whole Genome Alignment Plugin
USER MANUAL
User manual for
Whole Genome Alignment (beta) 1.0
Windows, macOS and Linux

March 26, 2019
This software is for research purposes only.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Whole Genome Alignment (beta) plugin makes it possible to compare genomes, and to explore and visualize their evolutionary relations (figure 1.1).

![A Whole Genome Alignment view.](image)

The plugin installs the tools in a Whole Genome Alignment (beta) folder in the Toolbox as seen in figure 1.2, and adds the relevant format files to the Export and Import functionality of the Workbench.

![The tools are installed in a folder called Whole Genome Alignment (beta) in the Toolbox.](image)

The plugin contains functionality for:

- Fast whole genome dot plots
- Aligning multiple genomes
- Visualizing alignments of multiple genomes, which can contain large-scale events such as inversions and translocations
- Calculating the Average Nucleotide Identity
- Creating evolutionary trees and heat maps based on the Average Nucleotide Identity
• Importing and exporting standard Whole Genome Alignments formats (MAF and XMFA)
• Extracting multiple sequence alignments, optionally restricting to annotations such as coding regions

This plugin comes with certain limitations: the tools are optimized for working with small and medium-sized genomes (up to 100M bases). They are not designed for larger eukaryotic genomes. Note that this plugin is in beta.
Chapter 2

Create Whole Genome Dot Plot

The Create Whole Genome Dot Plot (beta) tool makes it possible to compare two genomes and get a quick, initial overview of the similarities between them.

Note that the dot plots created by the Create Whole Genome Dot Plot are fundamentally different than the dot plots created by the Create Dot Plot tool already available in the Workbench’s Toolbox (see http://resources.qiagenbioinformatics.com/manuals/clcgenomicsworkbench/current/index.php?manual=Create_dot_plots.html). Whereas the classic Create Dot Plot tool compares all positions between two sequences, the Create Whole Genome Dot Plot (beta) tool works by identifying seeds, i.e., short stretches of nucleotide sequences that are shared between two genomes but not present multiple times on the same genome - which is the same approach as the one used in the initial stages of the Create Whole Genome Alignment tool. So when compared to the classic Create Dot Plot tool, the Create Whole Genome Dot Plot tool will produce less noise, but might also miss homologous regions if better matches are found in a different region on a genome.

To run the Create Whole Genome Dot Plot (beta) tool:

Toolbox | Whole Genome Alignment (beta) (beta) | Create Whole Genome Dot Plot (beta) (beta)

Once the tool wizard has opened (figure 2.1), choose two nucleotide sequences or nucleotide sequence lists. If the input elements are nucleotide sequence lists, each sequence in the list (chromosomes or contigs) is considered to be part of the same genome.

![Figure 2.1: Select input for the Create Whole Genome Dot Plot (beta) tool.](image)

You can set the following parameters (figure 2.2):

- **Minimum initial seed length** The tool works by identifying seeds - short stretches that are similar - in the two genomes. This option determines the smallest number of nucleotides
required before a seed is shown in the dot plot.

- **Allow mismatches in seeds** When this option is enabled, the search for initial seeds will allow for mismatches in the seeds. This makes it possible to visualize more divergent genome pairs, but may also introduce more noise.

The tool outputs a dot plot (figure 2.3):
Chapter 3

Create Whole Genome Alignment

The Create Whole Genome Alignment (beta) tool works by identifying seeds, i.e., short stretches of nucleotide sequence that are shared between multiple genomes but not present multiple times on the same genome. These seeds are then extended using a HOXD scoring matrix [Chiaromonte et al., 2002] until the local alignment score drops below a fixed threshold. From the initial extended seed matches, a distance matrix between the input genomes is calculated. This distance matrix is used for the subsequent pairwise processing, where the most similar genomes are processed first. Proceeding iteratively on the most similar pair of genomes, the tool will then extend and merge seed matches to create longer alignment blocks. These blocks may be present on two or more genomes, and may align to both strands of the genomes (allowing for the identification of inversions).

To run the Create Whole Genome Alignment (beta) tool:

Toolbox | Whole Genome Alignment (beta) | Create Whole Genome Alignment (beta)

Once the tool wizard has opened (figure 3.1), choose two nucleotide sequences or nucleotide sequence lists. If the input objects are nucleotide sequence lists (chromosomes or contigs) , each sequence in the list is considered to be part of the same genome.

![Figure 3.1: Select input for the Create Whole Genome Alignment tool.](image)

The tool has the following options (figure 3.2):

- **Minimum initial seed length** The tool works by identifying seeds - short stretches that are similar - in the genomes. This option determines the number of nucleotides required for a seed to be included in the later stages of the alignment. **Note about memory requirements:** as a rule of thumb, the tool needs 10 bytes of memory for each nucleotide
Create Whole Genome Alignment

Figure 3.2: Configurable parameters for the Create Whole Genome Alignment (beta) tool.

in the input genomes, plus additional memory for storing the found seeds. This means that smaller values of the "Minimum initial seed length" option will require more memory. As a consequence, the tool is not designed for large eukaryotic genomes, but for aligning bacterial size genomes.

• **Allow mismatches in seeds** When this option is enabled, the search for initial seeds will allow for mismatches in the seeds. This makes it possible to visualize more divergent genome pairs, but may also introduce more noise.

• **Minimum alignment block length** Only alignment blocks larger than this length will be output. This parameter may be used to filter away smaller and potentially erroneous alignments.

The tool outputs a Whole Genome Alignment showing the aligned regions between the genomes (figure 3.3). Note that the tree that is output per default in the Whole Genome Alignment view is a Neighbor-Joining tree based on the distance matrix (see above).

Figure 3.3: Whole Genome Alignment view.

An alignment block (shown as a colored box) corresponds to a region of the genome that is aligned to a region on at least one other genome. The position of the box relative to the sequence indicates the strand on which the alignment was identified: above the sequence for the plus strand, below the sequence for the minus strand. When hovering the mouse over a block, the corresponding alignment blocks on the aligned genomes will be highlighted. The connected alignment blocks (which will share the same color) can be thought of as an ordinary linear multiple sequence alignment: they will not contain any internal rearrangements.

When clicking on a position on a genome, the view will automatically modify so that the aligned positions are centered on top of each other. When double clicking an alignment block, the regions covered by the connected alignment blocks will be selected.

The Whole Genome Alignment view shares most of the functionality of the ordinary sequence viewer: this includes the ability to show any annotations on the genomes (such as CDS or
Gene annotations), searching for gene names (using the "Find" panel), and zooming down to the nucleotide level.

The Whole Genome Alignment view has a few special options:

- **Blocks visible (%)** This option makes it possible to hide the smallest alignment blocks. A value of 20 means that only the longest 20% of the alignment blocks will be shown. The default value is chosen such that 100 alignment blocks are visible.

- **Tree** When the editor is opened, a tree is shown to the left of the genomes. This is the tree created by the Create Whole Genome Alignment tool using Neighbor-Joining on the distance matrix calculated from the extended seeds. This tree will provide a rough overview of the relations between the genomes: closely related genomes should be located close to each other. It is possible to change the ordering of the genomes by dragging them in the view, but this requires that the "Show tree" option in the side panel has been disabled.

Extracting multiple sequence alignments: when selecting part of a sequence in an alignment block, it is possible to use the context menu to extract the selection into an ordinary multiple sequence alignment (figure 3.4):

![Figure 3.4: Whole genome alignment viewer.](image)
Chapter 4

Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison

The Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison tool is useful for getting a quantitative measure of the similarity between genomes. This tool takes a Whole Genome Alignment as input, and for each pair of genomes, the regions aligned between the two genomes are identified, and the following two measures are calculated:

- The Alignment Percentage is the average percentage of the two genomes which is aligned.
- The Average Nucleotide Identity is the percentage of exactly matching nucleotides for these aligned regions.

It is possible to calculate these measures either for the full set of aligned regions or for a set of regions defined by annotations on the genomes (such as the CDS annotations of protein coding regions).

To run the Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison (beta) tool:

![Toolbox | Whole Genome Alignment (beta) | Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison (beta)](image)

Once the tool wizard has opened (figure 4.1), choose the alignment you would like to analyze.

![Figure 4.1: Select a Whole Genome Alignment.](image)

In the next dialog, set the parameters for the tool (figure 4.2).

Click on the green plus sign to select the Annotations types you wish to restrict your analysis to, as can be seen to the right of figure 4.2. If the tool is restricted to a set of annotations, each
annotation must satisfy the Conservation filtering criteria: there must be a minimum required number of identical matches, the **Minimum similarity fraction**, over at least a specified fraction of the annotation length, the **Minimum length fraction**. In cases where no annotations are specified, the tool will divide all the aligned regions into smaller regions of 1024 nucleotides. Each of these smaller regions must then satisfy the conservation filtering criteria.

The tool outputs a Pairwise Comparison table as the one seen in figure 4.3.

![Figure 4.3: Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison table.](image)

It is possible to export the table using the Pairwise Comparison CSV exporter (see section 8.2). It is also possible to input this file in the Create Tree from Comparison and Create Heat Map from Comparison tools for better visualization of the results.
Chapter 5

Create Tree from Comparison

The Create Tree from Comparison tool builds a tree from a Pairwise Comparison such as those generated by Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison tool.

To run the Create Tree from Comparison (beta) tool:

Once the tool wizard has opened (figure 5.1), choose the Pairwise Comparison table you would like to use.

![Figure 5.1: Select a Pairwise Comparison table.](image)

In the next dialog (figure 5.2), you can set the following parameters:

![Figure 5.2: Select the table types and tree construction methods you would like to use for building trees.](image)

- **Table types** The possible table types are extracted from the Pairwise Comparison table
input. In the case of a Pairwise Comparison table obtained from Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison, these are: ANI (Average Nucleotide Identity) or AP (Alignment Percentage). If left empty, as it is by default, both types will be used.

- **Tree construction method** Neighbor Joining, well suited for trees with varying rates of evolution, and/or UPGMA, method that assumes a constant rate of evolution. Learn more about distance based reconstruction methods here: [http://resources.qiagenbioinformatics.com/manuals/clcgenomicsworkbench/current/index.php?manual=Distance_based_reconstruction_methods.html](http://resources.qiagenbioinformatics.com/manuals/clcgenomicsworkbench/current/index.php?manual=Distance_based_reconstruction_methods.html).

Note that the tool outputs a tree for each combination of table types and tree construction method. In addition, metadata from the Pairwise Comparison is automatically transferred to the tree. Sequence metadata containing taxonomy information is also added if this information was present in the inputs.


The Pairwise Comparison table input is either a distance or similarity matrix. The tool automatically detects the type of each table by checking the values on the diagonal: if the diagonal contains only zeros, then the table represents a distance matrix, otherwise it is a similarity matrix. From the table, a symmetric distance matrix $d$ is calculated as follows:

\[
d[i][j] = \begin{cases} 
( t[i][j] + t[j][i] ) / 2 & \text{if the table is a distance matrix,} \\
(1 - t[i][j] + 1 - t[j][i]) / 2 & \text{if the table is a similarity matrix,}
\end{cases}
\]

where $t[i][j]$ is the relative value (between 0 and 1) found in the table in row $i$ and column $j$.

A tree is then created from the distance matrix $d$ using the specified tree construction method. The tree is then generated such that the distance between two leaves (calculated as the sum of lengths of the branches connecting the leaves) is below 1, as the relative distance was used above. The branch lengths are then scaled so that the distance between two leaves reflects the absolute distance between them to match the entries in the table.
Chapter 6

Create Heat Map from Comparison

The Create Heat Map from Comparison tool builds a heat map from a Pairwise Comparison such as those generated by Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison tool.

To run the Create Heat Map from Comparison (beta) tool:

Toolbox | Whole Genome Alignment (beta) (β) | Create Heat Map from Comparison (beta) (β)

Once the tool wizard has opened (figure 6.1), choose the Pairwise Comparison table you would like to use.

![Figure 6.1: Select a Pairwise Comparison table.](image)

In the next dialog (figure 6.2), you can set the following parameters:

- **Table types** The possible table types are extracted from the Pairwise Comparison table input. In the case of a Pairwise Comparison table obtained from Create Average Nucleotide Identity Comparison, these are: ANI (Average Nucleotide Identity) or AP (Alignment Percentage). If left empty, as it is by default, both types will be used.

- **Clusters construction methods**

There are three kinds of **Distance measures**:

- **Euclidean distance**. The ordinary distance between two points - the length of the segment connecting them. If \( u = (u_1, u_2, \ldots, u_n) \) and \( v = (v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n) \), then the
Figure 6.2: Select the table types and clusters construction methods you would like to use for building the heat maps.

Euclidean distance between $u$ and $v$ is

$$|u - v| = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(u_i - v_i)^2}.$$ 

1 - Pearson correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient between two elements $x = (x_1, x_2, ..., x_n)$ and $y = (y_1, y_2, ..., y_n)$ is defined as

$$r = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left( \frac{x_i - \bar{x}}{s_x} \right) \times \left( \frac{y_i - \bar{y}}{s_y} \right)$$

where $\bar{x}/\bar{y}$ is the average of values in $x/y$ and $s_x/s_y$ is the sample standard deviation of these values. It takes a value $\in [-1, 1]$. Highly correlated elements have a high absolute value of the Pearson correlation, and elements whose values are un-informative about each other have Pearson correlation 0. Using $1 - |Pearson\ correlation|$ as distance measure means that elements that are highly correlated will have a short distance between them, and elements that have low correlation will be more distant from each other.

Manhattan distance. The Manhattan distance between two points is the distance measured along axes at right angles. If $u = (u_1, u_2, \ldots, u_n)$ and $v = (v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n)$, then the Manhattan distance between $u$ and $v$ is

$$|u - v| = \sum_{i=1}^{n} |u_i - v_i|.$$ 

The possible cluster linkages are:

Single linkage. The distance between two clusters is computed as the distance between the two closest elements in the two clusters.

Average linkage. The distance between two clusters is computed as the average distance between objects from the first cluster and objects from the second cluster. The averaging is performed over all pairs $(x, y)$, where $x$ is an object from the first cluster and $y$ is an object from the second cluster.
--- **Complete linkage.** The distance between two clusters is computed as the maximal object-to-object distance $d(x_i, y_j)$, where $x_i$ comes from the first cluster, and $y_j$ comes from the second cluster. In other words, the distance between two clusters is computed as the distance between the two farthest objects in the two clusters.

The Pairwise Comparison table input is either a distance or similarity matrix. The tool automatically detects the type of each table by checking the values on the diagonal: if the diagonal contains only zeros, then the table represents a distance matrix, otherwise a similarity matrix. If the table is distance matrix, a similarity matrix $s$ is calculated as follows:

$$s[i][j] = \min + (1 - t[i][j]) \times (\max - \min) \text{ if the table is a distance matrix},$$

where $t[i][j]$ is the relative value (between 0 and 1) found in the table in row $i$ and column $j$, and $\min$ and $\max$ are the minimum and maximum magnitude of the table.

A heat map (figure 6.3) is then created from the similarity matrix $s$ according to the specified clustering options and using a hierarchical clustering algorithm. Note that the tool outputs a heat map for each chosen table type and its name contains the table type used.

![Figure 6.3: A Comparison Heat Map.](image)

Metadata from the Pairwise Comparison is transferred to the map. Additionally, sequence metadata containing taxonomy information is added if this information was present in the inputs.

Chapter 7

Extract Multiple Sequence Alignment

The Extract Multiple Sequence Alignment tool traverses all aligned blocks in a Whole Genome Alignment and creates a linear concatenated Multiple Sequence Alignment. In contrast to the Whole Genome Alignment, a Multiple Sequence Alignment has all aligned blocks occurring in the same order and orientation.

Note: if the extracted Multiple Sequence Alignment contains long sequences, viewing the Multiple Sequence Alignment may be slow. The purpose of this tool is to make it possible to export the extracted alignment in Nexus format for example, so it can be used in third-party software that cannot process whole genome alignments formats (MAF and XMFA).

To run the Extract Multiple Sequence Alignment (beta) tool:

Toolbox | Whole Genome Alignment (beta) (β) | Extract Multiple Sequence Alignment (beta) (β)

Once the tool wizard has opened (figure 7.1), choose the Whole Genome Alignment you would like to use.

In the next dialog (figure 7.2), you can set the following parameters:

- **Minimum percentage of genomes** An alignment block is only included if it is present on at least this fraction of the genomes. Setting this value to 100 means that only alignment blocks covering all genomes are included.

- **Extract only annotated blocks** It is possible to restrict the extraction only to regions of the genome covered by an annotation (such as the CDS annotations for protein coding regions). If an alignment block is partly covered by an annotation, only the intersection
of the annotation region and alignment region is included. Choose among the following options:

- **Annotation types** Which annotations types to restrict the extraction to, such as CDS or Gene types.

- **Annotation must cover all genomes** The intersection of the alignment block and the annotations is extracted only if the block intersects an annotation on all genomes the alignment block covers.

- **Include genomes where annotation is missing** An alignment block only needs to intersect an annotation for some of the genomes it covers in order for the intersection of the block and the annotations to be extracted.

- **Use gaps where annotation is missing** If an alignment block covers a region of a genome without an annotation, that region will be represented as gaps in the extracted alignment.
Chapter 8

Import and export

8.1 Whole Genome Alignment import and export

Whole Genome Alignments can be exported and imported as MAF and XMFA files using the standard Import and Export functionality of the Workbench (figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Export and import of Whole Genome Alignments can be done using the MAF and XMFA formats.

For MAF and XMFA import, an alignment block must contain each genome only once. We do not support alignment blocks that map multiple times on the same genome.

The MAF importer does not support the optional line types (such as i and e) and these are ignored if found in the file.

The XMFA importer tries to extract the sequence names found as comments in the sequence headers. If the extraction fails, the sequences are named using the numbers found in the file and the comments are ignored.

8.2 Pairwise Comparison export

Pairwise Comparison tables can be exported as CSV file (figure 8.2).

In that case, the following options are available (figure 8.3).

The exporter creates a CSV file from a Pairwise Comparison element. It can export the element in two different formats: a long format (which is the default option), or a shorter one called matrix format (when the option is checked).

The long format will export the data with a pair of samples for each line (figure 8.4), with the
Figure 8.2: Export of Pairwise Comparisons can be done using the CSV format.

Figure 8.3: Options for CSV export.

different values found in the Pairwise Comparison as columns:

```
"Sample 1","Sample 2","ANZ","AP"
"CP000000","CP000000","CP000000","CP000000"
"CP000000","CP000000","CP000000","CP000000"
"CP000000","CP000000","CP000000","CP000000"
"CP000000","CP000000","CP000000","CP000000"
```

Figure 8.4: Options for CSV export.

The short (matrix) format will export the data with a pair of samples for each line (figure 8.5), with all the tables found in the Pairwise Comparison after each other:

```
"Sample 1","Sample 2","ANZ","AP"
"CP000000","CP000000","CP000000","CP000000"
```

Figure 8.5: Options for CSV export.

Learn about the other export options here:

Chapter 9

Install and uninstall plugins

Whole Genome Alignment (beta) is installed as a plugin.

**Note:** In order to install plugins and modules, the Workbench must be run in administrator mode. On Linux and Mac, it means you must be logged in as an administrator. On Windows, you can do this by right-clicking the program shortcut and choosing "Run as Administrator".

Plugins are installed and uninstalled using the plugin manager.

**Help in the Menu Bar | Plugins... ( ) or Plugins ( ) in the Toolbar**

The plugin manager has two tabs at the top:

- **Manage Plugins.** This is an overview of plugins that are installed.
- **Download Plugins.** This is an overview of available plugins on QIAGEN Aarhus server.

### 9.1 Install

To install a plugin, click the **Download Plugins** tab. This will display an overview of the plugins that are available for download and installation (see figure 9.1).

![Managing Plugins](image)

**Figure 9.1:** The plugins that are available for download.

Select Whole Genome Alignment (beta) to display additional information about the plugin on the
right side of the dialog. Click **Download and Install** to add the plugin functionalities to your workbench.

**Accepting the license agreement**

The end user license agreement (EULA) must be read and accepted as part of the installation process. figure 9.2.

![End User License Agreement](image)

Figure 9.2: The End User License Agreement is presented during the installation process.

Please read the EULA text carefully, and if you agree to it, check the box next to the text **I accept these terms**. If further information is requested from you, please fill this in before clicking on the **Finish** button.

If Whole Genome Alignment (beta) is not shown on the server but you have the installer file on your computer (for example if you have downloaded it from our website), you can install the plugin by clicking the **Install from File** button at the bottom of the dialog and specifying the plugin *.cpa* file saved on your computer.

When you close the dialog, you will be asked whether you wish to restart the workbench. The plugin will not be ready for use until you have restarted.

### 9.2 Uninstall

Plugins are uninstalled using the plugin manager:

**Help in the Menu Bar | Plugins... (⌘) or Plugins (⌘) in the Toolbar**

This will open the dialog shown in figure 9.3.

The installed plugins are shown in the **Manage plugins** tab of the plugin manager. To uninstall, select Whole Genome Alignment (beta) and click **Uninstall**.

If you do not wish to completely uninstall the plugin, but you do not want it to be used next time
you start the Workbench, click the **Disable** button.

When you close the dialog, you will be asked whether you wish to restart the workbench. The plugin will not be uninstalled until the workbench is restarted.
Bibliography