1 Full title

Unraveling transcription factor functions through integrative inference of transcriptional networks in *Arabidopsis thaliana* yields novel regulators involved in reactive oxygen species stress signaling

6 Short title

Integrative inference of transcriptional networks in *Arabidopsis thaliana* yields novel regulators involved in reactive oxygen species stress signaling

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ABSTRACT

Gene regulation is a dynamic process in which transcription factors (TFs) play an important role to control spatiotemporal gene expression. While gene regulatory networks describe the interactions between TFs and their target genes, our global knowledge about the complexity of TF control for different genes and biological processes is incomplete. To enhance our understanding of the global regulatory lexicon in *Arabidopsis thaliana*, different regulatory input networks capturing complementary information about DNA motifs, open chromatin, TF binding and expression-based regulatory interactions, were combined using a supervised learning approach, resulting in an integrated gene regulatory network (iGRN) covering 1,491 TFs and 31,393 target genes (1.7 million interactions). This iGRN outperforms the different input networks to predict known regulatory interactions and has a similar performance to recover functional interactions compared to state-of-the-art experimental methods like yeast one-hybrid and ChIP-seq. The iGRN correctly inferred known functions for 681 TFs and predicted new gene functions for hundreds of unknown TFs. For regulators predicted to be involved in reactive oxygen species stress regulation, we confirmed in total 75% of TFs with a function in ROS and/or physiological stress responses. This includes 13 novel ROS regulators, previously not connected to any ROS or stress function, that were experimentally validated in our ROS-specific phenotypic assays of loss- or gain-of-function lines. In conclusion, the presented iGRN offers a high-quality starting point integrating different experimental data types at the network level to enhance our understanding of gene regulation in plants.

INTRODUCTION

Accurate spatiotemporal gene expression is of key importance for plant development and molecular responses to environmental cues. Key factors controlling this process are transcription factors (TFs) which regulate their target genes by recognizing and binding short *cis-*regulatory DNA sequences called TF binding sites (TFBSs or DNA motifs) [1]. The full set of regulatory interactions between TFs and their target gene(s) forms a gene regulatory network (GRN) and depending on the underlying source of data, GRNs are composed of physical and/or regulatory protein-DNA interactions. Efficiently identifying regulatory interactions is pivotal to understand how a gene's transcriptional activity is controlled through the interplay of one or multiple regulators. Driven by different modes of gene duplication, specific TF families have been expanded within the green plant lineage, with the model species *Arabidopsis thaliana* containing around 1700 TFs [2]. Although specific regulatory networks and the associated TFs have been studied and are often conserved across species [3], still for hundreds of *Arabidopsis* TFs experimental information is missing [4].

Several studies have used high-throughput assays to systematically identify GRNs under specific conditions or in specific developmental and/or anatomical contexts in *Arabidopsis*. Examples include yeast one-hybrid (Y1H) screens to map tissue- or process-specific GRNs as well as TF chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) experiments describing regulatory interactions between TFs and target genes involved in flower development, light and clock signaling, hormone response, and (a)biotic stress response [5]. The latter revealed the high complexity of plant gene regulation and suggested that a single gene can potentially be regulated by up to 75 different TFs [6,7]. Open chromatin profiling, either using DNase-Seq or Assay for Transposase-Accessible Chromatin using sequencing (ATAC-Seq), allows studying the organization and dynamics of accessible chromatin regions, and provides a template to infer GRNs in different organs, in response to specific treatments or in different cell types [8-12]. Whereas all these methods aid the construction of GRNs by reporting physical protein-DNA interactions, a major challenge remains the identification of functional interactions, referring to the binding of a specific TF to a cis-regulatory sequence leading to a regulatory effect on a target genes' expression.

In this paper we present a network-based approach based on supervised learning for large-scale functional data integration to enhance our understanding of TF gene regulation in *Arabidopsis*, hence referred to as an integrative GRN (iGRN). Supervised learning approaches

make efficient use of the available prior knowledge to train a machine learning algorithm, called

a classifier, for handling new data. Compared to unsupervised learning approaches, supervised

learning is considered more powerful when a large amount of existing knowledge is available to

guide the classification task, which here is the identification of functional TF-target interactions

[13]. Construction and validation of the iGRN, leveraging a diverse set of complementary

experimental datasets, revealed a strong enrichment for functional interactions and a high

predictive power to correctly infer functions for both functionally characterized and

uncharacterized TFs involved in a variety of biological processes. The latter is demonstrated in a

case study by the experimental validation of novel iGRN-based function predictions for TFs

involved in plant defense responses to oxidative stresses.

RESULTS

An integrated gene regulatory network for *Arabidopsis thaliana*

To generate an integrated gene regulatory network (*Arabidopsis* iGRN), different types of

complementary regulatory datasets were first processed, resulting in different input networks

(Table 1). In total seven input networks, encompassing information about DNA motifs, open

chromatin, TF binding and expression-based regulatory interactions, were obtained by applying

different network inference and data analysis approaches (see Methods for underlying datasets;

Figure 1A). Subsequently, through the application of a supervised learning approach, a classifier

was built to identify those interactions from the input networks that most likely represent

functional interactions.

The first network is based on the presence of a TF motif, modelled using Position Weight

Matrices (PWMs), in the promoter of a target gene. A total of 1,260 high quality PWMs, covering

874 TFs, were mapped onto the *Arabidopsis* genome resulting in a TF - PWM target gene

network. Using the genomic locations of publicly available DNaseI datasets the PWM network

was filtered resulting in a second open chromatin regulatory input network (called "PWM in

DHS"). DNaseI hypersensitive sites (DHS) are considered to be a proxy for open chromatin and

potential protein binding to the DNA [14]. As a third network, the set of PWMs was also evaluated

for evolutionary conservation across 13 dicotyledonous genomes using a comparative motif

mapping algorithm [15], which resulted in an evolutionarily conserved regulatory network

("Conserved PWM"). To integrate experimental data, a fourth "TF ChIP" network was created by

integrating experimentally determined TF binding occupancy profiles from 27 TFs [7]. Next to a

physical TF binding network, two co-expression-based regulatory networks were also generated.

Co-expression approaches measure similarity at the output level of transcriptional regulation

and as such can provide a complementary view compared to promoter-centered regulatory

networks. First, the Pearson correlation between a TF and a target gene was used to build co-

expression clusters around each TF, resulting in a fifth "CoE TF-target" input network. Secondly,

GENIE3, a reverse engineering tool for reconstructing regulatory networks based on expression

data, was used to build a sixth input network [16]. GENIE3 was among the best performing tools in

reconstructing regulatory interactions in a large-scale benchmark study [17]. The last network was

generated using a hybrid approach of co-expression and PWM based methods ("COE+PWM").

Initially a co-expression cluster was constructed for each gene and PWM enrichment was

subsequently performed. Only genes with significantly enriched PWMs in their co-expression

cluster were retained, resulting in a seventh network where TF binding site information is

combined with co-regulatory information (see Methods).

Figure 1. Construction and evaluation of the integrated gene regulatory network (iGRN).

A. Overview of the different input networks used to construct the supervised iGRN. Whereas colored

circles indicate the type of data that is used to construct the input network, the information below each

network depicts how edges in that network are weighted. B. Overview of the sizes of the different
networks together with the recall and enrichment for edges in the evaluation test dataset (green and blue
bars, respectively). The yellow bars report the fraction of each input network that is present in the iGRN
while the red bars report which fraction of the iGRN edges is supported by this input network.

As the different input networks capture different aspects of gene regulation, we next applied
supervised learning to construct, starting from these input networks, an integrative regulatory
network reporting functional interactions. A score for each possible TF-target interaction was
devised as a function of the feature-specific weights provided by the seven input networks. For
building a classifier, we compiled a gold standard dataset comprising interactions based on all
validated interactions in AtRegNet [18], an exhaustive literature-based network reporting
interactions in secondary cell wall development [19], and a large-scale data mining effort on 974
peer reviewed articles called ATRM [20]. This gold standard entails interactions for 47 TF families
involved in different biological processes, with on average 11 interactions per TF (Table 1 and
Supplemental Table S1). Eighty percent of the interactions present in this gold standard were
retained as training dataset for the machine learning classification algorithms while the
remaining twenty percent was used as an evaluation set. Initially different classifiers were
learned and their performance to identify functional interactions in the evaluation set was
assessed (Supplemental Table S2). The classifier based on gradient boosting model using
decision trees showed the best performance, with an area under the curve (AUC) value of 0.77,
and Precision and Recall of 71% and 48% on the evaluation set, respectively (Supplemental
Table S2). Applying this classifier to the complete set of interactions present in the seven input
networks resulted in an integrative network of 1,709,871 interactions for 1,491 TFs, containing
31,393 target genes (29,137 protein-coding genes; see Data file 1).
In order to obtain an unbiased performance estimate of the input networks compared to the
iGRN, all input networks were compared to the evaluation dataset of known interactions and
benchmarked measuring the recovery of true edges (referred to as the recall, Figure 1B).
Furthermore, we also determined the enrichment of a network towards the evaluation dataset,
which functions as a proxy for specificity [21]. Focusing on the different input networks, Figure 1B
shows that the network based on evolutionary conserved TF binding sites ("Conserved PWM")
has the highest enrichment (6.4 fold, Supplemental Table 3). Evolutionary conservation is known
to be a strong predictor of functional regulatory elements explaining this high enrichment [22,23].

The TF ChIP-seq network also performs well with both a high recovery (29%) and enrichment

(6.0 fold). This overlap can partially be explained by the fact that a subset of the validated

AtRegNet interactions in the gold standard are based on ChIP studies [7]. Other TF motif mapping

strategies recover larger fractions of true edges but suffer from low specificity, resulting in low

enrichment values. The simple mapping of TF motifs ("PWM") is known to result in many false

positives because TF binding sites are often short and typically contain some level of degeneracy

[11,24]. Both co-expression based networks do not consider TF binding site information and are

therefore able to also identify regulatory interactions for TFs lacking DNA binding motif

information. Both these networks perform relatively well: correlation-based co-expression

between TF and target genes, implemented in the "CoE TF-target" network, has the third

highest enrichment towards the evaluation dataset (10% recovery and 3.0 fold enrichment),

while GENIE3 displays a good balance between recovery of true edges and specificity

(Supplemental Table 3). Focusing on the integrative network (iGRN) shows it has the strongest

enrichment (8.8 fold) as well as a high recovery for true regulatory relationships (46% recovery

of interactions in the evaluation set), clearly outperforming the different computational and

experimental approaches used to construct the input networks.

Apart from determining the power of the iGRN network to recover known functional

interactions, we also measured the contribution of each of the seven input networks to the

iGRN. Ideally, a good integration approach should favor interactions from the input networks

with high enrichment values towards the evaluation set, as these would boost the recovery of

correct interactions. As reported in Figure 1B (yellow and red bar charts), the evolutionary

conserved motifs ("Conserved PWM") and the "TF ChIP" network contributed the largest part of

their edges to the integrative network (91% and 80%, respectively), while networks showing low

specificity, such as "PWM", only contributed a small fraction of interactions (7%). This result

corroborates that the applied supervised approach successfully identified functional interactions

coming from high-quality input networks. Next, we measured which iGRN interactions are

supported by the different input networks (Figure 1B, red bar plot). Overall, the integrative

network has 70% of the edges supported by a PWM mapping, meaning that a majority of

regulatory interactions is supported by the presence of TF binding site(s). Furthermore, 36-48%

of the interactions are supported by at least one of the two co-expression networks, indicating

for nearly half of all interactions a regulatory effect at the transcript level. Overall, 92% of the

iGRN interactions are supported by more than one input network (Figure S1), confirming both

the commonality and complementarity of the input networks.

iGRN interactions are complementary to TF regulatory events identified from

experimental methods

To assess whether the iGRN identifies functional TF-target gene interactions that are

supported by experimental data, detailed comparisons of the iGRN interactions were made

against three different datasets, capturing a variety of TFs and biological processes, which were

not used during the iGRN construction (see Methods). These datasets cover i) a set of 2,759 Y1H

interactions reflecting direct *in vitro* interactions ii) 28 TF ChIP-seq experiments collected from

different studies (148,949 interactions, see also Methods) reflecting primarily direct *in vivo*

binding and iii) a set of 40 differentially expressed (DE) gene sets upon genetic TF perturbation

(51,178 interactions, see Methods). The significance of the observed overlaps was examined

through comparison to a background distribution of expected overlaps generated by

randomizing the iGRN (see Methods). First, we detected a weak but significant overlap between

edges in the integrative network and regulatory edges determined by Y1H (Figure 2A). An

overlap of 336 edges (12%) was observed reflecting a 1.6 higher overlap than expected by

chance (Figure 2B). TF ChIP-seq interactions displayed an overlap of 15,487 interactions (10%)

with a fold enrichment of 2.4. Only considering TFs that occur in both the iGRN and this ChIP-

Seq dataset, for 25/28 regulators there was a significant overlap between the iGRN and ChIP

defined target genes (Supplemental Table S4). Overall we found that TF ChIP-seq data confirmed

39% of predicted interactions in the iGRN, demonstrating that a large fraction of iGRN

interactions are supported by *in vivo* TF binding. This fraction is comparable with the

concordance between TF ChIP-based regulatory interactions and altered target gene transcript

levels after genetic TF perturbation, an approach that is frequently used to identify bound target

genes that are also regulated [25]. Next to TF-DNA binding assays, we also investigated the

recovery of directly and indirectly regulated target genes based on differential target gene

expression. The iGRN recovered 9,672 differentially expressed interactions (19%) resulting in a

3.6 fold enrichment (Figure 2A and 2B). Taken together, both the comparison with binding and

regulatory datasets demonstrate that the iGRN represents high-quality interactions supported

by experimental data.

Figure 2. Overlap between iGRN interactions and different experimental data sources describing gene regulatory and functional information.

A. Venn diagrams showing the number of shared interactions between the iGRN and TF ChIP, Y1H and differentially expressed (DE) genes after TF perturbation (depicted in blue, yellow and red, respectively).

B. Histograms showing the expected overlap based on 10,000 randomized networks, together with the observed overlap indicated by the black arrow. The p-values for observing the measured overlap by chance are also reported. C. Fold enrichment for a functional metric describing how well target genes of a specific TF are involved in similar biological processes (average values for all TFs present in the different data series are reported). Whereas the grey bars indicate the functional enrichment for shared

interactions, blue, red, yellow and green depict fold enrichment for interactions unique to the ChIP, DE,

Y1H and iGRN, respectively. D. Sub-networks showing experimental protein-protein interactions for TFs

sharing a large number of target genes (Jaccard index >0.3). Whereas the edge thickness and values

reports the fraction of shared target genes for a pair of TFs quantified using the Jaccard index, the color

represents the absolute value of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the expression profiles of a

pair of TFs.

To evaluate the relevance of the regulatory interactions uniquely predicted by the iGRN and

hence not overlapping with the three experimental datasets (Y1H, TF ChIP-Seq, and DE), a

functional metric was used to measure whether a TF's target genes participate in similar

biological processes or have similar functions. This metric starts from the assumption that a set

of bona fide target genes will have a higher enrichment for functional annotations than

randomized networks [21]. For each TF, the enriched Gene Ontology (GO) Biological Process terms

based on its target genes were determined, summarized in a distribution and compared to the

background distribution based on randomized networks. In Figure 2C, the iGRN-predicted

interactions were first divided in different sets based on their overlap with the TF ChIP, Y1H and

DE experimental datasets (as in Figure 2A), respectively. Next, for each subset the fold

enrichments for functional GO Biological Process terms were assessed. Whereas the grey series

in Figure 2C show the regulatory interactions shared between the iGRN and the experimental

dataset, the green series shows the interactions unique to the iGRN. Likewise, the blue, yellow

and red series show the regulatory interactions present in the ChIP, Y1H and DE dataset not

overlapping with the iGRN.

Focusing on the overlap with TF ChIP dataset revealed that the functional enrichment was

similar for the interactions unique to the iGRN compared to those shared between the iGRN and

TF ChIP dataset (2.63 and 2.55, respectively). However, the regulatory interactions unique to the

TF ChIP datasets showed lower fold enrichments (1.94), indicating that these show less

functional coherence. For the Y1H comparison, the interactions uniquely predicted by the iGRN

had a similar fold enrichment as the interactions only reported by the Y1H assays (2.41 and

2.61). The interactions that are reported by both approaches had a considerable higher

enrichment compared to the other networks (5.55; though note the small set size, n=336). The

comparison with the DE dataset showed a similar result with an increase in enrichment fold

from uniquely predicted edges in the iGRN to the intersection and uniquely predicted edges by

the DE gene sets (2.33, 2.96 and 3.23, respectively). Taken together, these results indicate that

the predicted interactions, including those unique to the iGRN, convey functional gene

regulatory events.

Network architecture reveals different levels of gene regulatory complexity affecting

plant phenotypes

Starting from the complete iGRN comprising 1.7 million interactions, we investigated the

structure and complexity of the network and determined if network architecture can be linked

to specific biological functions. On average, each gene in the network has 54 incoming TFs

(median 32), while each TF is linked to 1,147 target genes (median 802; Supplemental Figure S2).

There was a large range in connectivity with half of the genes being regulated by 8-79 TFs

(interquartile range), and a small number of TFs (107/1491, or 7%) regulating more than 3,000

target genes. Focusing on the top 1% genes with the largest number of incoming TFs revealed a

significant bias towards genes with transcription factor activity, corroborating previous findings

reporting that regulators themselves are complexly regulated by other regulators [7,26]. In

contrast, the 2172 genes having only one incoming TF showed enrichment for RNA binding and

translation, suggesting that these functions are less complexly regulated by TFs.

Next, we examined if network structure can offer new insights in the role of individual

regulators. More precisely, we investigated whether the degree (number of target genes) and

betweenness centrality (a measure for the importance based on number of shortest paths in the

network graph) of TFs in the iGRN can be predictive for potential master regulators showing

prominent phenotypes upon genetic perturbation. Whereas degree refers to the number of

interactions a node, or gene, has in the network, betweenness centrality measures how

important a node is to the shortest paths through the network. Nodes with a high centrality are

assumed to be more important in the network as more information is passing through these

nodes. After processing large-scale phenotyping data from RARGE II, an integrated phenotype

database of Arabidopsis mutants scoring traits using a controlled vocabulary for 14,540 genes,

phenotypes were recorded for 2,224 genes [27]. When splitting all TFs present in the iGRN and

part of the RARGE II dataset in four quartiles (Q1-Q4) based on their degree values, we observed

that 17.4% of the high-degree (Q3+Q4) and 15.1% of the low-degree (Q1+Q2) TFs had a

reported phenotype (p-value 0.43; two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test). When comparing the

quartiles of TFs based on betweenness centrality, a significant difference was found when

scoring regulators with a reported phenotype (19.6% for Q3+Q4 and 12.4% for Q1+Q2,

respectively; p-value 0.0088; two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test; Figure 3A). This pattern is

confirmed when comparing the betweenness centrality for TFs with and without phenotypes, as

regulators showing RARGE II phenotypes have more of the shortest network paths going

through their nodes (log2 median value of 17.50 and 16.46 for TFs with and without reported

phenotypes, respectively; p-value 1e-05; two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test; Figure 3B). iGRN TFs

within the top 10% genes with highest centrality for which mutants have reported phenotypes

(19/91) are significantly biased towards post-embryonic development and include ATGTL1, PIF4,

SEP3, IDD4 and IDD8, ANAC056, DOF5.6, LFY3 and TCP4. Interestingly, both for TFs with and

without phenotypes, a similar number of TFs in their target genes was found (9.45% and 9.44%,

respectively), indicating that TFs showing a phenotype do not regulate more TFs and thus are

not higher in the TF hierarchy.

Figure 3. Phenotypes reported after TF perturbation for TFs with different network centrality

properties.

A. RARGE-II phenotypes reported for iGRN TFs with different betweenness centrality. Q1-Q4 refer to the

four quartiles of all iGRN TFs (sorted based on increasing betweenness centrality) and values in

parenthesis refer to the median centrality value together with the number of lines available in the RARGE

II dataset for that quartile. B. Betweenness centrality distribution for TFs with and without phenotypes

reported in RARGE-II (n= 153 and 1589, respectively).

As transcriptional regulation is mediated through interactions between TFs, co-activators or

co-repressors, and the general transcriptional machinery, we determined whether the iGRN has

predictive power to identify cooperative TF regulation. Therefore, we measured if regulators

sharing a large number of target genes are more likely to interact with each other, based on

experimentally determined protein-protein interactions (PPIs). We found that TF pairs sharing

many target genes (Jaccard index >0.3) have a 15-fold higher occurrence of PPIs compared to TF

pairs having less shared target genes (Jaccard index <0.3), which is highly significant (2.71%

versus 0.31%; p-value <2.2e-16, hypergeometric distribution). Whereas most of these PPIs cover

TFs from the same gene family, probably due to the high similarity of their corresponding

binding sites yielding similar sets of target genes, their potential to act as heterodimers and/or

potential functional redundancy, also cases of interacting TF pairs from different gene families

were found. Examples of the latter case include HY5-PIF3/PIF4 involved in far-red signaling,

MYB21-RGL1/RGL2 controlling hormone-mediated cell proliferation and differentiation, and

BES1-BIM1/BIM2 acting synergistically to control brassinosteroid signaling (Figure 2D). Highly

correlated expression profiles of these TFs sharing a large number of target genes further

suggest they exert their regulatory roles in a cooperative manner.

334   Network-based identification of gene functions for Arabidopsis TFs

Based on the validation results indicating the functional relevance of regulatory edges in the

iGRN, we also investigated if individual TF functions can be inferred. Therefore, we performed

GO enrichment analysis for all target genes of each TF, only considering experimental Biological

Process annotations and excluding very general GO terms (see Methods). Next, we determined

if the enriched Biological Process terms were already known for that specific TF or whether a

novel functionality was predicted (Data file 2. TF_function_all). In total we could infer functions

for 1,301 TFs and for 54% (681) of the 1,259 TFs with experimental Biological Process

annotations we could correctly infer one or more of the known functions. For 268 TFs lacking

experimental annotations, novel iGRN-based functions were predicted. Reciprocally, per

Biological Process term, on average 21% of the known regulators were recovered, while for

several distinct processes the recovery was 50% or higher. Examples of processes with high

recovery rates include response to wounding (14/20, 70%), plant-type secondary cell wall

biogenesis (18/28, 64%), response to hormone (174/343, 51%), chloroplast organization (6/12,

50%) and DNA replication (3/6, 50%).

The global recovery of known TF functions based on the iGRN was lower compared to the

probabilistic functional gene network AraNet v2 [28], which recovered known functions for 739 TFs

(28% average recovery of known regulators per GO BP term). However, both approaches are

highly complementary, as 207 and 265 TFs had known functions only recovered using iGRN and

AraNet, respectively (Supplemental Figure S3 iGRN_TF_GOBPpredictions.pdf). Examples of

known TF functions uniquely recovered through the iGRN cover EIN3 (ethylene-activated

signaling pathway), APETALA2 (flower development), LFY (flower development, gibberellic acid-

mediated signaling pathway), FUS3 (somatic embryogenesis), TINY (multidimensional cell

growth), and AMS, ATWRKY34 and CRF12 (pollen development). Focusing on specific GO terms,

biological processes with a higher recovery of known regulators in the iGRN compared to AraNet

cover response to biotic stimulus (47% versus 35%), chloroplast organization (50% versus 0%),

response to abiotic stimulus (47% versus 26%), pollination (33% versus 0%), and root hair cell

differentiation (35% versus 6%). For the latter process we correctly identified the regulators

ZPF5, RSL2 and RSL4, RHD6, LRL2 and LRL3, as well as MYB36. MYB36 regulates the

developmental transition in the root endodermis, where the differentiated endodermis forms a

protective waxy barrier called the Casparian strip. In our network, MYB36 is predicted to

regulate genes involved in cell wall organization such as CASP1-5, PER64 and ESB1, which are

known to be involved in Casparian strip formation and have been shown to be differentially

expressed in the *myb36* mutant [29]. Furthermore, our iGRN network also predicts MYB36 to be

involved in root hair elongation, which is in agreement with the longer root hairs observed in

myb36 mutants.

Identification of novel TFs in reactive oxygen species (ROS) stress regulation

Apart from recovering known functions of TFs involved in development and stress responses,

the predictive power of the iGRN was used to identify novel TF functions. As a test case, we

extracted TFs from the iGRN with predicted oxidative stress signaling and/or responsiveness

functions. As an increase in ROS levels is a common theme during abiotic and biotic stresses,

oxidative stress responsiveness was used to validate novel regulators of plant stress responses.

One hundred twenty-four ROS-related TFs were extracted from the iGRN by identifying those

TFs that entailed an enrichment for core ROS responsive transcripts in their target genes [30].

Among these TFs, 17 had an already reported function in plant responses to ROS or cellular ROS-

inducing agents (hydrogen peroxide [H_2O_2], methyl viologen [MV] and 3-amino triazole [3-AT]),

here referred to as 'KNOWN_ROS' TFs (Table 2, Supplemental Table S5). Fifty-eight ROS TFs

were previously reported to function in plant responses to environmental stresses, such as

salinity, drought, heavy metals, cold, hypoxia, high light and infection by bacterial and fungal

pathogens (and that we refer to as 'KNOWN_STRESS' TFs, Supplemental Table S5). The

remaining 49 extracted ROS TFs had previously not been linked to any role in

ROS/environmental stress (referred to as 'NOVEL' TFs in Table 2), at the time the iGRN was

constructed (see Methods). In the meantime, five of the 49 novel TFs were validated for a role in

environmental stress responses by recent literature evidence (Table 2): NAC102 (high light; [31]), ,

BEH2 (drought; [32]), NAC103 (genotoxic; [33]), ZAT18 (drought; [34]) and ERF019 (drought, bacterial

and fungal pathogens; [35,36]).

For experimental validation of a function in ROS responses, we selected the top 32 novel TFs,

ranked based on enrichment for ROS marker target genes, for which at least one *Arabidopsis*

loss- or gain-of-function transgenic line was available (Supplemental Table S6). Plant

performance based on rosette area growth of the mutant lines compared to the wild type was

monitored when grown at low and high MV and 3-AT stress, respectively, using automated

image analysis (see Methods).

Figure 4. Oxidative stress phenotyping results of novel ROS TFs.

Heatmap presenting phenotypes associated with mutant alleles of iGRN-extracted novel ROS TFs under different oxidative stress conditions. Mutant lines with a statistically significant phenotype under oxidative stress (1 µM and 1.5 µM 3-AT and 15 and 20 nM MV) and/or normal growth conditions (MS) are displayed. Results of other mutant lines that were tested in this study can be found in Supplemental Table S5 and S6. Statistically significant differences relative to wild type (Col-0) are indicated by asterisk; *, $P <$ 0.05 and **, $P <$ 0.001 as determined by the hypothesis tests on the fixed effects of the mixed model (see Methods). Color scale indicates the ratio of the rosette area of 14-day-old mutant alleles relative to wild type (Col-0). Black and grey borders indicate presence or absence of a bleaching phenotype of the mutant plants, respectively. Small grey circle indicates a statistically significant genotype-by-stress treatment interaction effect.

For 13 of the 32 phenotyped novel ROS TFs we found at least one mutant allele with significant oxidative stress-induced changes in rosette area relative to the wild type (i.e.

genotype effect dependent on the oxidative stress treatment and/or genotype-by-treatment

effect under at least one of the tested stress treatments; Figure 4; Table 2). For the other novel

TFs, no significant changes were detected by the genotype under all tested conditions, either

there was an overall genotype effect under all tested conditions (similar changes were

observed) or that was independent of the stress treatment (e.g. WRKY47; Figure 4). For SCL13,

WRKY45, BEH2 and PHL1, experimental evidence is provided by at least two mutant alleles.

WRKY45 loss-of-function (T-DNA mutant RATM11–0634–1_H and RNAi line AS3.1) affected the

rosette area growth during low and high 3-AT stress compared to the wild type in a genotype-

by-treatment dependent matter, whereas, *WRKY45* OE (line 15.1) caused an increased rosette

yield that was dependent on stress treatments low 3-AT and low MV (Figure 5). Two *SCL13*

overexpression alleles (1.11 and 2.12) displayed decreased rosette growth dependent on both

MV conditions in a genotype-by-treatment-dependent manner (Figure 5). Similarly, knockdown

of *SCL13* (AS112D and AS28C) negatively affected rosette growth under MV stress, but no

genotype-by-treatment interaction effect was observed. *PHL1* T-DNA and *PHL1/PHR1* double T-

DNA lines displayed altered growth on low and high 3-AT, respectively, the latter dependent on

the genotype-by-treatment. *BEH2* mutation altered the rosette area that was dependent on the

stress treatments high 3-AT and low MV for line SALK_079430 and dependent on the genotype-

by-treatment for line SAIL_76B06.

Figure 5. Representative images of oxidative stress phenotypes for a selection of mutants.

Representative images of novel ROS TFs with a phenotype during oxidative stress. 17-days-old seedlings

of selected mutant lines compared to wild type (Col-0).

We further demonstrated that ANAC102, BME3, MYB51, WRKY55, AT2G33710, ERF022,

AT5G57150 and ERF115 have a function in oxidative stress responses based on one mutant

allele (for *ERF022* and *ERF115* only one line was available) (Figure 4 and Table 2). For example,

ANAC102 OE line 3.4 (strong OE; ~ 100-fold) displayed a larger rosette area that was

independent of the stress treatment, while rosette area changes by *ANAC102* OE2.8 (weak OE;

~4.5-fold) were dependent on the genotype-treatment interaction (Figure 5). *ERF115* OE

affected plant performance in a manner that was dependent on the stress treatment, with a

decreased rosette area under low 3-AT (dependent on the genotype-by-stress treatment) and

severe bleaching under high MV and 3-AT concentrations (Figure 5).

Next, the expression profiles of KNOWN_ROS and validated novel ROS TFs during different

oxidative stress conditions were analyzed and compared [30]. Fourteen out of the 17 known ROS

TFs were identified as responsive to a wide range of oxidative stress conditions ($|\log_2$ fold

change$| > 1$ and FDR < 0.01; Figure 6; Supplemental Table S7). Among the 13 newly validated

novel ROS TFs, only half were ROS responsive at the transcript level. *WRKY55*, *MYB122* (for

which the triple mutant *myb34/51/122* shows a phenotype, but not the *myb122* single mutant),

ERF022, *BEH2*, *PHL1*, AT5G57150 and *ERF115* expression levels are not or only under very

specific ROS-inducing conditions/mutants regulated, and thus, would not have been predicted

from studies solely relying on differential expression at the whole plant or organ level. For

example, *ERF115* has tissue-specific expression patterns, confined to the stem cell niche within

the root meristem [37], indicating that transcript analysis on the whole plant level might not reveal

stress-induced alterations in this specific tissue [38].

Figure 6. Expression of KNOWN and NOVEL ROS TFs during various conditions provoking cellular ROS/redox imbalances.

Heatmap showing the expression response of ROS TFs extracted from the iGRN during a selection of conditions provoking cellular ROS production or redox imbalances (a more elaborate set of oxidative stress conditions is displayed in Supplemental Table S7). TFs with previously known function in ROS responses and TFs with no functional link with any oxidative stress and/or (a)biotic stress responses (NOVEL) that were tested in our phenotyping assays are displayed. NOVEL TFs validated in our study are shown using blue and red circles, indicating a positive and negative effect by the TF on oxidative stress tolerance, respectively.

Overall, among the 124 novel ROS TFs extracted from the iGRN, 80 (65%) were validated by previously published studies, including recent publications after the iGRN was constructed, to be involved in the plant's responses to ROS perturbation and/or (a)biotic stresses. By analyzing

transgenic lines perturbed in one of the 32 novel ROS TFs, 13 additional regulators were

validated for a function in ROS responses by our phenotyping assays. Among the novel ROS TFs

newly identified by our phenotyping assays, WRKY55, WRKY47, AT2G33710 [ERF] and

AT5G57150 [bHLH] had previously not been associated with any function. Other validated novel

ROS TFs are known to function in age-triggered senescence (WRKY45, ERF022 [AP2/EREBP];

[39,40]), response to phosphate starvation (WRKY45, PHL1 [G2 family]; [41,42]), submergence stress

(WRKY45; [43]), glucosinolate (antimicrobial compounds involved in plant immunity) biosynthesis

(MYB51, MYB122; [44]), brassinosteroid signaling (BEH2 [BES1 TF family]; [45]), phytochrome-

dependent light signaling (SCL13 [GRAS family]; [46]), hypocotyl growth (BEH2 [BES1 family]; [47]),

seed germination (BME3 [GATA family]; [48]) and somatic embryogenesis (ERF022; [49]). Overall,

among the novel ROS TFs validated for an oxidative stress function by literature evidence or in

our phenotyping assays, the AP2-EREBP (5), NAC (5) and WRKY (5) families are highly

represented (Supplemental Table S5). These families are typically associated with abiotic, biotic

and/or oxidative stress responses [50] and the iGRN identified additional members with an

oxidative stress phenotype. In addition, the iGRN correctly predicted an oxidative stress

response function for one or more members of the bHLH, ZAT (or C2H2), HSF, MYB and bZIP

families that are also often associated with functions in plant stress responses. The iGRN also

identified novel ROS TFs from families that were known to be mainly involved in plant

growth/developmental processes, such as GRAS (SCL13), BES1 (BEH2) and GATA (BME3) ([45,51,52]) .

So far there is very little evidence for the involvement of GATA TFs in plant stress responses:

during low nitrogen stress [53,54] and by the identification of differentially expressed alternative

splice products of rice GATA TFs during salt and drought stress [55]. BME3 is therefore one of the

first GATA transcription factors with a proven function in the regulation of stress responses.

Exploring the GATA family might provide novel leads for regulators and novel functional links

with plant stress responses.

DISCUSSION

The comprehensive experimental mapping of plant GRNs is a major challenge and different

technologies, either *in vitro* or *in vivo*, provide partial snapshots of the regulatory logic in

Arabidopsis. While different integrative approaches have been applied to identify regulatory

networks controlling specific biological processes in plants [12,56-59], in this study we leveraged a

wide variety of regulatory datasets capturing different properties of TF-mediated transcriptional

control. Through the application of an advanced machine learning approach for large-scale

functional data integration, we performed for the first time a systematic regulatory annotation

for nearly all *Arabidopsis* genes. Although the presented iGRN is generic and not tailored

towards specific plant organs or growth stages, extensive validation using different types of

experimental datasets, measuring TF binding and/or regulation, revealed a strong enrichment

for functional interactions. In addition, the iGRN outperformed all input networks when

assessing the prediction power using a gold standard evaluation set, demonstrating the success

of the supervised learning approach. An assessment of the functional coherence of a TF's target

genes suggests that the iGRN regulatory interactions are of equally high quality compared to

those obtained through experimental methods. Taken together, our validation results indicate

that the iGRN is strongly enriched for functional interactions and that the applied integrative

approach clearly complements GRNs inferred through a single experimental assay.

Investigating the relationship between network architecture and the complexity of TF control

confirmed that TFs themselves are complexly regulated by other TFs. In addition, through the

integration of large-scale phenotyping data, a significant association was found between a TF's

network centrality (but not degree) and observing a phenotype when knocking out that TF. This

finding indicates that these TFs occupy key positions in the GRN and loss of their gene products

has major consequences for plant growth and development. Furthermore, TFs showing a

phenotype when screening mutant lines were not having more TFs among their target genes

compared to TFs lacking phenotypes, suggesting that master regulators high in the TF network

hierarchy are not more frequently showing phenotypes compared to lower-tier TFs. This finding

complements previous results reporting that higher-tier TFs do not show more differential

expression during ABA response [26]. Finally, TF pairs sharing many target genes are indicative of

combinatorial control, where TFs physically interacting with each other form higher-order

protein complexes mediating increased DNA-binding specificity [60]. Consequently, TF pairs with

many shared target genes in our integrative network which also show correlated expression

profiles are good candidates for future research to shed light on the role of cooperative TF

control in specific biological processes in plants.

Predicted TF functions based on the iGRN regulatory interactions indicated that for various

biological processes many known regulators could be recovered. Starting from our systematic

regulatory annotation, known functional annotations were confirmed for 681 TFs. For several

biological processes our predicted TF functions are highly complementary to the AraNet

probabilistic functional gene network and for 268 TFs lacking experimental annotations, new

functions were inferred. To validate the power of our integrative network, novel regulators

predicted to play a role in oxidative stress signaling were experimentally validated using ROS-

specific phenotyping of loss- or gain-of-function lines. By analyzing transgenic lines perturbed in

one of the 32 novel ROS TFs, an additional 13 (41%) regulators were validated for a function in

ROS responses by our phenotyping studies. In addition to TF families that have often been

associated with oxidative or other environmental stress responses, the iGRN identified novel

ROS TFs from the GRAS, BES1 and GATA families that are not, or to a lesser extent, known to be

involved in stress responses. Notable, compared to previous studies that predicted gene

functions or prioritized candidate regulators based on (co-)expression analysis [61], our method

enables the identification of novel regulators that would have been missed when solely relying

on (differential) expression information. To conclude, our integrative network offers a high-

quality resource to study TF control for individual target genes and to identify, through the

interrogation of specific or condition-specific gene sets, novel regulators controlling different

plant traits.

METHODS

Input datasets

We assembled a comprehensive compendium of genome-wide datasets that were used as

primary data sources to construct the seven input networks and to build the integrative gene

regulatory network. Starting from the TAIR10 Arabidopsis gene annotation, we added a set of

5711 non-coding RNAs described in [62] resulting in a dataset covering 38,966 genes. A first

dataset consisted of 1,260 PWM binding site profiles for 874 transcription factors. This dataset

contained 108 and 623 positional frequency matrices that were obtained from protein binding

microarray studies performed by [63] and [64], respectively, and 529 positional frequency matrices

obtained from DAP-seq experiments [65]. A second dataset contained all available DNaseI

hypersensitive data obtained from the plant regulome data resource

(http://www.plantregulome.org/, [14]). All separate conditions were merged into a single open

chromatin dataset. A third dataset, composed of evolutionary conserved binding sites for 874

TFs, was obtained using the comparative motif mapping algorithm as described in [15], starting

from the input motif dataset as described above.

A fourth dataset comprised gene expression profiles generated by RNA-seq. The RNA-Seq

expression compendium was built with public datasets from NCBI's Sequence Read Archive

(SRA) using Curse [66]. The compendium contains gene-level expression values for 40 manually

selected samples (Supplemental Table S8) of different treatment and tissue combinations (in

total >2,7 billion reads). SRA files for each sequencing run were downloaded from the SRA and

converted to the FASTQ format using fastq-dump (v2.4.4) from the SRA toolkit. FASTQ files from

runs of the same sample were concatenated. Paired-end reads were unpaired by randomly

selecting either the forward or reverse read and processing it as single-end. FastQC (v0.9.1) was

used to detect overrepresented adapter sequences, which were subsequently clipped with

fastx_clipper from the FASTX toolkit (v0.0.13). Nucleotides with Phred quality scores lower than

20 were trimmed with fastq_quality_trimmer from the FASTX toolkit. Reads shorter than 20

nucleotides after quality trimming were discarded. To obtain raw read counts for each transcript

in the TAIR10 annotation, Sailfish (v0.6.3) [67] was run with a k-mer length of 20. For genes with

multiple transcripts, the raw read counts of its transcripts were summed to get a gene-level read

count. Counts were then normalized for the entire compendium with the Variance Stabilizing

Transformation (VST) from the DESeq R package (v1.14.0) [68]. VST was chosen since it results in

correlation coefficients between genes that are most comparable to those obtained with

microarray data [69]. A fifth dataset consisted of a compendium of 27 genome-wide TF binding

datasets obtained through ChIP-seq [7].

Network inference for the different input datasets

We derived input networks from each dataset and a weight was assigned to each TF-target

gene interaction reflecting the certainty of the regulatory interaction. The motif target gene

network was created by mapping all binding site data on an extended locus for each gene in the

Arabidopsis thaliana genome spanning 2kb upstream, intron and 1kb downstream regions, with

the exons masked. All binding site specificity matrices were mapped genome-wide using Cluster-

Buster with C parameter set to zero and M parameter set to 5 [70]. Both the C and M scores were

used as weights. Due to the short length of motifs, many instances of motifs in a single genome

are expected to be coincidental matches that may not be bound *in vivo* or have no functional

regulatory effect. Therefore, the resulting set of binding sites was filtered using DNaseI

hypersensitive sites [14] in order to obtain an open chromatin filtered motif network. The

signalValue reported by the authors was retained as weight for motif matches in open

chromatin, this is a measurement of overall enrichment for the region to DNaseI

hypersensitivity. A second filtering approach was based on the evolutionarily conservation of

these binding sites resulting in a conserved motif network. Weights in the conserved motif

network are defined by the species conservation score according to the CMM method as

described in [23]. Co-expression clusters were built around all TFs obtained from PlantTFDB [71]

using the Pearson correlation coefficient and only the top 1000 most co-expressed genes were

retained as putative target genes. GENIE3 was run using standard parameters with the same list

of regulators, only predicted interactions with a variance in expression explained larger than

0.005 were retained [16]. A k-nearest neighbor (k-NN) co-expression cluster of size 100 was built

around each gene in the *Arabidopsis thaliana* genome using the RNA-seq compendium as

defined above. PWM motif enrichment was performed on this co-expression cluster using the

hypergeometric distribution and significantly enriched motifs (p-value < 0.001 after Benjamini–

Hochberg correction for multiple hypotheses testing) were assigned to the members of the co-

expression cluster in order to obtain the k-NN motif enrichment network. The enrichment fold

of the motif in the co-expression cluster is used as a weight. The peak scores for each TF bound

region assigned to the closest gene were used as weight in the ChIP-seq network [7].

Integrative network inference

The integrative network inference method is based on a binary classifier, where the class label

represents the presence or absence of an interaction. The set of true interactions (positives)

used in the training set was obtained from all validated interactions in AtRegNet [18], a review

article on known interactions in secondary cell wall development [19] and large scale data mining

effort on 974 peer reviewed articles called ATRM [20], and has 5,732 edges, connecting 522 TFs

with 3,738 targets. The remaining interactions between these TFs and potential target genes are

considered to be negatives. In other words, while no true "negatives" are present in the dataset,

we assign negative labels to TF–target pairs where the TF appears in one of the positive pairs.

The negative labels reflect the fact that the TF has been studied and since no interaction is

reported for it, it is more likely to represent a negative interaction. This dataset was split into a

dataset for learning (80%) and a dataset for independent evaluation (20%). As such, the training

set consists of 1,951,236 TF–target gene pairs, out of which 4,586 are positives (true

interactions) and 1,946,650 negatives. The remaining gene pairs for TFs absent from the

learning/evaluation dataset are considered to be negatives. Using the weights derived from the

input networks we tested a number of different classification methods. We extracted the 4,586

validated interacting pairs from the true dataset and obtained the negative pairs for training by

selecting a random subset of 13,758 (three times the number of positives; 3x 4,586) negatively

labeled interacting pairs. Using this labeled training set different classifiers were built using the

weights of the input networks as features. All features were normalized to have zero mean and

unit variance. Classifiers were evaluated using the 20% evaluation dataset. In this analysis the

gradient boosting using decision trees, random forests, and logistic regression were compared.

The gradient boosting model made use of 1,000 trees, shrinkage of 0.01 and an interaction

depth of 3. The random forest model used 500 trees selecting a random set of features of size

square root (features) was sampled in each iteration. Logistic regression was used with a

binomial distribution suitable for binary classification. All classifiers were compared using the

area under the curve (Supplemental Table S2).

The final network was generated using the gradient boosting classifier, as this was the best

performing throughout the training and validation steps. A total set of 60,714,507 unlabeled

interactions was classified. We included all interactions that are predicted to interact with a

probability of 0.35 or higher in the integrative network as this cutoff maximized the F1 measure

on the test dataset (Supplemental Table S2).

Functional evaluation using experimental datasets

Three experimentally obtained gene regulatory networks were used for further validation of

the predicted network. An accumulation of publicly available Y1H data from literature was used

to generate a Y1H network containing 2,759 interactions [72-75]. A set of differentially expressed

genes upon TF perturbation was obtained from the CORNET database, containing 51,178

interactions [76]. An independent set of interactions determined by ChIP-seq was obtained from

literature, reporting 148,949 interactions [26,77-80]. From Song et al. 2016 only non-ABA conditions

were considered.

The overlap between the iGRN and three experimentally determined gene regulatory

networks was evaluated by counting how many interactions from the experimental networks

were present in the integrative network. The enrichment between two networks was defined as

the number of interactions that are present in both networks divided by the number of

interactions expected by chance. The number of common interactions expected by chance is

given by the mean overlap of 10,000 randomized networks [21]. Network randomization was done

by permuting the labels of all TFs and the labels of all genes, which preserves the network

structure. This assures that the observed enrichment is not due to potential biases arising from

structural properties of the network (Supplemental Table S3).

Functional enrichment was determined for each sub network (intersection, FN, FP) using

biological metrics as described in [23] using Gene Ontology information. Note that no functional

GO information was used as input for the iGRN construction.

Analysis of network architecture and overlap with plant phenotypes

Based on the target genes for all TFs present in the iGRN, degree and betweenness centrality

were computed using the igraph R package. Based on bulk downloads of the RARGE II database

([27]; download November 2018), which reports ontology-based phenotype information for

48,077 lines (17,671 RIKEN Arabidopsis Ds transposon mutant lines, 16,337 CSHL Arabidopsis

genetrap mutant lines, 14,069 RIKEN Arabidopsis full-length cDNA overexpressed Arabidopsis

lines). The presence of phenotypes in the RARGE II dataset was scored for different sets of

regulators, defined based on degree and betweenness centrality.

TF function prediction

For each TF, iGRN target genes were subjected to GO enrichment analysis using the

hypergeometric distribution combined with Benjamini–Hochberg (B&H) correction for multiple

hypotheses testing. A q-value cutoff 1e-03 was applied since this resulted in the best F1 score, a

metric that combines precision and recall to recover known GO annotations. Only experimental

and curated GO BP annotations were considered (version August 2018), GO annotations were

propagated to include parental GO terms, and a set of 18 general GO terms, corresponding with

terms located at the root of the GO hierarchy, were excluded (GO:0008150, GO:0009987,

GO:0008152, GO:0044237, GO:0071704, GO:0050896, GO:0065007, GO:0032502, GO:0050789,

GO:0032501, GO:0007275, GO:0050794, GO:0006355, GO:0045893, GO:0045892).

To predict ROS TFs, core genes part of the ROS wheel clusters IV-VIII, covering genes related to

chemical and genetic perturbation of cellular ROS/redox, were used to define a custom category

of ROS marker genes [30]. Subsequently, the over-representation of these ROS markers in the set

of iGRN target genes per TF, was used to predict novel ROS TFs and rank them based on the q-

value for enrichment (hypergeometric distribution, q-value cutoff 1e-05). The assignment of ROS

TFs to the categories KNOWN_ROS, KNOWN_STRESS and NOVEL_TF was based on the

information available in the literature at the moment the initial iGRN was constructed

(December 2016).

Phenotyping candidate ROS TFs

T-DNA insertion mutants were obtained from the European Arabidopsis Stock Centre (NASC;

http://arabidopsis.info/), GABI-Kat (http://www.gabi-kat.de/db/), Versailles Arabidopsis Stock

Center (http://publiclines.versailles.inra.fr/tdna/index) (Supplemental Table S6). Homozygous T-

DNA insertion lines were selected by PCR analysis (Supplemental Table S9). Mutant lines

previously published were provided by the authors (Supplemental Table S6 (overview lines)).

Overexpression lines were generated by Gateway cloning in the binary destination vector

pK7WG2D (18056864) (Supplemental Table S9 (primers)). Plants were grown on half-strength

Murashige and Skoog (1/2MS) medium (Duchefa) supplemented with 1% (w/v) Suc, 0.75% (w/v)

agar, and B5 vitamins, pH 5.7, at 21°C and 60 µE m−2 s−1 light intensity in a 16-h/8-h light/dark

photoperiod. To induce oxidative stress, the 1/2MS medium was supplemented with 15 or 20

nM MV; or 1 or 1.5 µM 3-AT, causing on average 15% (15 nM MV), 30% (20 nM MV), 20% (1 µM

3-AT) and 55% (1.5 µM 3-AT) growth reduction compared to the nontreated seedlings. Rosette

area was determined by automated area measurements of individual plant rosettes using

ImageJ. Raw phenotyping results are available in Data file 3. Presence or absence of

chlorosis/bleaching was monitored by visual assessment. For each mutant line, the rosette area

of mutant seedlings was compared with wild-type plants grown in the same Petri plate. Data

were obtained using at least two biological replicates per experiment and from independent

experiments.

Statistical analysis leaf phenotyping data ROS TFs

A mixed model was fitted to the rosette area with genotype and treatment as fixed effects as

well as the interaction term with the mixed procedure from SAS (SAS Institute Inc. 2018.

SAS/STAT® 15.1, Cary, NC). The factor plate was added as random effect in the model to take

into account the correlation between observations made on the same plate. The Kenward-

Rogers method was used to calculate the denominator degrees of freedom of the fixed effects.

The null hypotheses of interest were an equal genotype effect upon treatment in the mutant

line and the wild-type line and an equal treatment versus MS effect between the mutant line

and the wild-type line (i.e. no interaction effect). A significance level of 0.05 was taken. To

correct for multiple testing, the maxT procedure was used as implemented in the plm

procedure.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

J.V.d.V., I.D.C. and K.V. designed the research. I.D.C., X.L., L.L. and R.P. performed the

phenotype screening. V.S. performed statistical data analysis. D.V. generated the expression

compendium. J.V.d.V. and K.V. performed network analysis and function prediction. J.V.d.V.,

I.D.C., F.V.V. and K.V. wrote the manuscript.

TABLES

Table 1. Overview of different networks used to construct the iGRN.

Type	Network name	#interactions	#TFs	Median #interactions (average)
Input network	PWM	17,053,785	874	21,797 (19,512)
	Conserved PWM	340,893	874	247 (390)
	PWM in DHS	5,231,258	874	6,195 (5,985)
	COE + PWM	324,864	703	290 (462)
	TF ChIP	46,619	27	1,026 (1,727)
	COE TF-target	1,547,002	1547	1,000 (1,000)
	GENIE3	2,588,312	1261	1,985 (2,053)
Gold standard	Gold standard	5,732	522	2 (11)
Evaluation	Test dataset	1,146	257	1 (4)
Output network	iGRN	1,709,871	1491	802 (1,147)

Table 2. Overview phenotype information for known and validated novel ROS regulators.

RANK iGRN	Symbol	q-val	Status (1)	Known oxidative stress phenotype from literature	Reference	Known other (a/biotic) stress phenotype from literature	Reference	Validated oxidative stress phenotype from this study
iGRN1	ANAC102	1.84E-35	**NOVEL**			high light	[31]	**MV**
iGRN3	ZAT11	2.81E-25	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[81]	heavy metal	[82]	
iGRN5	ZAT12	8.70E-25	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[83]	osmotic/salt/high light/heat	[84]	
iGRN6	WRKY30	1.42E-24	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[85]	salt	[85]	
iGRN11	HSFA4A	5.09E-23	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[86]	salt, anoxia	[86]	
iGRN12	WRKY15	7.46E-23	KNOWN_ROS	H2O2	[87]	salt/osmotic	[87]	
iGRN16	STZ	4.90E-22	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[88]	osmotic/salt/heat	[88]	
iGRN19	SCL13	3.76E-21	**NOVEL**					**MV**
iGRN22	MYB51	1.84E-20	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN27	BME3	2.01E-18	**NOVEL**					**MV**
iGRN29	WRKY55	6.69E-18	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN36	ERF6	3.13E-15	KNOWN_ROS	H2O2	[89]	high light, B. cinerea, osmotic	[89 90 91]	

ID	Gene	p-value	Category	ROS		Stress		Validation
iGRN50	WRKY45	5.93E-13	**NOVEL(**)**			submergence stress	[43]	**3-AT, MV**
iGRN52	ANAC032	1.26E-12	KNOWN_ROS	3-AT	[92]	P. syringae, salt/high light	[92 93]	
iGRN55	AT2G33710	9.71E-12	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN58	MYB122	1.42E-10	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN60	WRKY28	1.70E-10	KNOWN_ROS	MV, H2O2	[94]	salt/osmotic/drought, S. sclerotiorum, A. brassicicola	[94 95 96]	
iGRN62	ANAC013	1.93E-10	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[97]			
iGRN65	ABF3	8.06E-10	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[98]	cold/freezing/heat/drought	[98]	
iGRN66	ERF022	9.55E-10	**NOVEL**					**MV**
iGRN68	BEH2	2.75E-09	**NOVEL(**)**			drought	[32]	**3-AT, MV**
iGRN69	ANAC017	3.04E-09	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[99]	drought/high light	[100]	
iGRN81	PHL1	2.76E-08	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN85	JAM1	4.07E-08	KNOWN_ROS	MV, H2O2	[94]	salt/osmotic/drought	[94]	
iGRN93	MYC2	4.19E-07	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[101]	salt, B. Cinerea	[102 103]	
iGRN100	AT5G57150	1.50E-06	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN102	ERF115	1.73E-06	**NOVEL**					**3-AT, MV**
iGRN110	JUB1	3.20E-06	KNOWN_ROS	H2O2	[104]	salt/heat, P. syringae, drought	[104 105 106]	
iGRN111	HSFA2	3.21E-06	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[107]	high light, heat, cold, hypoxia	[107 108 109 110 111]	
iGRN118	CBF1	5.32E-06	KNOWN_ROS	MV	[112]	salt, drought, freezing	[112 113 114]	

(1) Asterisk indicates NOVEL TFs that were validated for a function in ROS (*) or (a)biotic stress (**) responses by literature evidence after 2016.

FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Construction and evaluation of the integrated gene regulatory network (iGRN).

A. Overview of the different input networks used to learn the supervised iGRN. Whereas colored circles indicate the type of data that is used to construct the input network, the information below each network depicts how edges in that network are weighted. B. Overview of the sizes of the different networks together with the recall and enrichment for edges in the evaluation test dataset (green and blue bars, respectively). The yellow bars report the fraction of each input netwo rk that is present in the iGRN (yellow) while the red bars report which fraction of the iGRN edges is supported by this input network.

Figure 2. Overlap between iGRN interactions and different experimental data sources describing gene regulatory and functional information.

A. Venn diagrams showing the number of shared interactions between the iGRN and TF ChIP, Y1H and differentially expressed (DE) genes after TF perturbation (depicted in blue, yellow and red, respectively). B. Histograms showing the expected overlap based on 10,000 randomized networks, together with the observed overlap indicated by the black arrow. The p-values for observing the measured overlap by chance are also reported. C. Fold enrichment for a functional metric describing how well target genes of a specific TF are involved in similar biological processes. Whereas the grey bars indicate the functional enrichment for shared interactions, blue, red, yellow and green depict fold enrichment for interactions unique to the ChIP, DE, Y1H and iGRN, respectively. D. Sub-networks showing experimental protein-protein interactions for TFs sharing a large number of target genes (Jaccard index >0.3). Whereas the edge thickness and values reports the fraction of shared target genes for a pair of TFs quantified using the Jaccard index, the color represents the absolute value of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between the expression profiles of a pair of TFs.

Figure 3. Phenotypes reported after TF perturbation for TFs with different network centrality properties.

A. RARGE-II phenotypes reported for iGRN TFs with different betweenness centrality. Q1-Q4 refer to the four quartiles of all iGRN TFs (sorted based on increasing betweenness centrality)

and values in parenthesis refer to the median centrality value together with the number of lines available in the RARGE II dataset for that quartile. B. Betweenness centrality distribution for TFs with and without phenotypes reported in RARGE-II (n= 153 and 1589, respectively).

Figure 4. Oxidative stress phenotyping results of novel ROS TFs.

Heatmap presenting phenotypes associated with mutant alleles of iGRN extracted novel ROS TFs under different oxidative stress conditions. Mutant lines with a statistically significant phenotype under oxidative stress (1 µM and 1.5 µM 3-AT and 15 and 20 nM MV) and/or normal growth conditions (MS) are displayed. Overview (of the results) of other mutant lines that were tested in this study can be found in Supplemental Table S5 and S6. Statistically significant differences relative to wild type (Col-0) are indicated by asterisk; *, $P < 0.05$ and **, $P < 0.001$ as determined by the hypothesis tests on the fixed effects of the mixed model (see Methods). Color scale indicates the ratio of the rosette area of 14-day-old mutant alleles relative to wild type (Col-0). Black and grey borders indicate presence or absence of a bleaching phenotype of the mutant plants, respectively. Small grey circle indicates a statistically significant genotype-by-stress treatment interaction effect.

Figure 5. Representative images of oxidative stress phenotypes for a selection of mutants.

Representative images of novel ROS TFs with a phenotype during oxidative stress. 17-days-old seedlings of selected mutant lines compared to wild type (Col-0).

Figure 6. Expression of KNOWN and NOVEL ROS TFs during various conditions provoking cellular ROS/redox imbalances.

Heatmap showing the expression response of ROS TFs extracted from the iGRN during a selection of conditions provoking cellular ROS production or redox imbalances (a more elaborate set of oxidative stress conditions is displayed in Supplemental Table S7). TFs with known function in ROS responses (KNOWN_ROS) and TFs with no functional link with any oxidative stress and/or (a)biotic stress responses (NOVEL) that were tested in our phenotyping assays are displayed. NOVEL TFs validated in our study are indicated: blue and red circles indicate a positive and negative effect by the TF on oxidative stress tolerance, respectively. * indicates validated by recently published studies after the time the iGRN was constructed.

OVERVIEW OF SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure S1. Overview of the iGRN interactions supported by different input networks.

Figure S2. Overview of the in- and out-degree for the complete iGRN.

Figure S3. Recovery of known GO annotations for TF belonging to different biological processes.

Supplemental Table S1. Overview of TF families in gold standard.

Supplemental Table S2. Overview of data types, training methods and performance results for different machine learning classification algorithms.

Supplemental Table S3. Overlap and enrichment between different networks.

Supplemental Table S4. Overlap of target genes between iGRN and ChIP-Seq data.

Supplemental Table S5. Overview of all TFs predicted by the iGRN with a function in ROS responses.

Supplemental Table S6. Overview of mutant lines used for phenotypic analysis.

Supplemental Table S7. Expression of KNOWN_ROS and NOVEL ROS TFs during various conditions provoking cellular ROS/redox imbalances.

Supplemental Table S8. Overview of samples included in the RNA-Seq expression compendium.

Supplemental Table S9. Primers used in this study.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Source data for Figs. 1,4 and S3 are provided with the paper.

Data file 1. Data_file1_iGRN_supervised_network_support.txt All TF-target interactions in the iGRN.

Columns report: TF, target genes, score, rank, support input networks.

Overview of generated, analysed and used iGRN regulatory interaction data for Fig. 1.

Data file 2. TF_function_all.txt reporting predicted functions for all TFs present in the iGRN.

The sheet README explains the different columns and offers 3 examples how this file can be explored for specific TFs, functions or a specific target gene.

Overview of generated, analysed and used iGRN TF function data for Fig. S3.

Data file 3. Raw phenotype results that were used as input for the statistical analysis.

Overview of raw phenotyping measurements for Fig. 4.

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a

CoE TF-target	GENIE3	TF ChIP	PWM		PWM in DHS		Conserved PWM		CoE + PWM	

Pearson Correlation Coefficient | Variance explained | Peak Score | Motif Score & Cluster Score | DNase HSS Score | Conservation Score | Enrichment PWM in COE cluster

● TF ChIP binding   ● co-expression

● TF motif   ● conserved non-coding sequences

● open chromatin

Classifier 80 % train data → 20 % evaluation test data set

Final Network iGRN

b

Approach	Number of interactions		Recall of true positives	Enrichment evalation set	Network contribution	Percentage of supervised
TF ChIP	46,619	·	29 %	6.0	80 %	2 %
PWM	17,053,785	⬤	60 %	1.0	7 %	70 %
Conserved PWM	340,893	∘	11 %	6.4	91 %	17 %
PWM in DHS	5,231,258	●	34 %	1.5	17 %	49 %
CoE + PWM	324,864	∘	3 %	2.2	18 %	3 %
CoE TF- target	1,547,002	●	10 %	3.0	40 %	36 %
GENIE3	2,588,312	●	17 %	1.7	32 %	48 %
Supervised Learning iGRN	1,709,871	●	46 %	8.8		

15 nM MV	20 nM MV	1 µM 3-AT	1 µM 3-AT	1.5 µM 3-AT
iGRN1 ANAC102 OE (2.8)	iGRN19 SCL13 OE (2.12)	iGRN50 WRKY45 T−DNA (RATM11−0634−1_H)	iGRN50 WRKY45 OE (15.1)	iGRN102 ERF115 OE