PTMNavigator: Interactive Visualization of Differentially Regulated Post-Translational Modifications in Cellular Signaling Pathways

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Abstract

Post-translational modifications (PTMs) play pivotal roles in regulating cellular signaling, fine-tuning protein function, and orchestrating complex biological processes. Despite their importance, the lack of comprehensive tools for studying PTMs from a pathway-centric perspective has limited our ability to understand how PTMs modulate cellular pathways on a molecular level. Here, we present PTMNavigator, a tool integrated into the ProteomicsDB platform, which offers an interactive interface for researchers to overlay experimental PTM data with pathway diagrams. PTMNavigator provides ~3000 canonical pathways from manually curated databases and further enables users to modify and create custom diagrams, tailored to their data. Additionally, PTMNavigator automatically runs multiple kinase and pathway enrichment algorithms whose results are directly integrated into the visualization. This offers a comprehensive view of the intricate relationship between PTMs and signaling pathways. To demonstrate the utility of PTMNavigator, we applied it to two phosphoproteomics perturbation datasets. First, PTMNavigator enhanced pathway enrichment analysis by showing how the regulated peptides and proteins are distributed in the pathways with high enrichment scores. Second, it visualized how drug treatments result in a discernable flow of PTM-driven signaling within pathways. Third, PTMNavigator aided in proposing extensions to an existing pathway by suggesting putative new links between both PTMs and pathway components. By enhancing our understanding of cellular signaling dynamics and facilitating the discovery of novel PTM-pathway interactions, PTMNavigator advances our knowledge of PTM biology and its implications in health and disease.

Introduction

Protein post-translational modifications (PTMs) are among the key regulators of cellular pathways. The presence of a certain PTM on a specific residue can, for instance, determine whether or not the protein can interact with other proteins, activate or inactivate an enzyme, alter a proteins' location in the cell, or mark it for degradation. Understanding the specific role of various types of PTMs within intracellular signaling cascades is essential to gain insights into the molecular mechanisms that govern biological processes. Perturbation studies that examine the effects of altered PTM patterns on pathways have been particularly useful in advancing our knowledge[1-7]. While proteome-wide measurements of PTMs have become a routine procedure for proteomics laboratories, its correct interpretation in the context of cellular signaling pathways continues to pose a daily challenge.

Multiple databases are available to the scientific community that are dedicated to the study of pathways[8-11], including the Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG) and WikiPathways. KEGG[9] contains 563 manually curated pathway maps with annotations for almost 9,000 different organisms. WikiPathways[10] is an open-source initiative to collect, maintain, and disseminate data on biological pathways. Its March 2023 release consists of 3,130 pathways across 33 species. Both of these databases are designed to study relationships between genes, gene products, and compounds (such as metabolites or drugs). They offer no (KEGG) or only limited (WikiPathways) direct support for research on the role of specific PTM-sites within pathways. For the study of PTM data, several resources exist, the most notable being PhosphoSitePlus[12], which includes data from a large number of research articles not only on phosphorylation, but also acetylation, ubiquitinylation, and other PTMs. Where evidence exists, the sites in PhosphoSitePlus are annotated with their functions and putative upstream or downstream interactors or modifiers.

While PhosphoSitePlus has been a tremendously useful resource, it remains tedious to explore

multiple or all sites of a signaling cascade together in order to uncover potential relationships

between them and perform higher-level analysis of the data.

To place all regulated peptides into the context of signaling networks, a commonly employed

method is pathway enrichment analysis (PEA)[13-15], implemented in tools such as g:Profiler[16].

While very useful for the analysis of proteome expression changes, this approach has several

shortcomings in the context of PTM analysis, as has been pointed out by *Krug et al.*[17].

The authors introduced two algorithms that address the problems of traditional PEA: One is gene-

centric redundant (GCR) single-sample gene set enrichment analysis (ssGSEA), in which genes

are potentially counted multiple times during the calculation of enrichment scores, depending on

how many regulated PTMs they harbor. The second is PTM-signature enrichment analysis (PTM-

SEA), which uses a specifically assembled database of associations between sites of PTMs and

perturbations, pathways, or kinase activities (PTM signatures database; PTMsigDB) and thus can

calculate enrichments on PTM level. This constitutes a valuable complementary approach to

conventional PEA and both methods have shown superior performance compared to non-

redundant gene-centric PEA. A number of software tools to visualize PTM datasets and pathways

have been developed[18-23]. For instance, Phosphomatics[23] is a web service that helps researchers to

examine kinase-substrate relationships in their phosphoproteomic datasets, whereas

KEGGViewer[19] can integrate gene expression profiles and KEGG pathways. A functionality

which these tools have been lacking so far is the visualization of regulated PTMs directly within

biological networks. The Cytoscape[18] app PhosphoPath[21] has addressed this issue for time-course

PTM data, but the app is no longer supported by Cytoscape. PHONEMeS[22] is a software that

creates data-driven pathways from phosphoproteomics datasets. Starting from a prior knowledge

network of protein-protein and kinase-substrate interactions, it uses mathematical optimization to

extract the subset of interactions that best explain the observations. Running the software and

visualizing the results is, however, not trivial for non-expert users.

To overcome the aforementioned problems of pathway enrichment on the PTM level and to

empower researchers to visually examine pathway engagement via PTM-regulation, we introduce

PTMNavigator, a web application that projects PTM perturbation datasets onto pathway diagrams

in the form of interactive graphs. To this end, we created internal representations in ProteomicsDB

for thousands of pathways from public databases. This enables users to trace signaling cascades

across a cell and identify pivotal PTMs within a pathway. PTMNavigator is available as part of

the 'Analytics Toolbox' of ProteomicsDB[24, 25] and can visualize data hosted on ProteomicsDB as

well as user-uploaded data. In addition, we implemented the functionality to design custom

pathway diagrams within PTMNavigator, in order to create bespoke representations of any PTM

dataset. The core visualization component of our software can be easily reused in web interfaces

outside of ProteomicsDB. Moreover, we implemented a service that provides programmatic access

to several PTM analysis algorithms, including GCR-ssGSEA, PTM-SEA, and PHONEMeS[17, 22,

26-31]. This service, which can also be used independently, is automatically invoked when a dataset

is uploaded, and the results are integrated into PTMNavigator's user interface. We demonstrate

the utility of our application using two phosphoproteomic drug profiling studies[2, 32]. First, we show

how PTMNavigator improves the interpretation of PEA by integrating the results of multiple

enrichment algorithms with visualizations of all potentially relevant pathway diagrams. Second,

we visualize target and pathway engagement of kinase inhibitors at different steps in a

phosphorylation-dependent signaling cascade. Last, we show how PTMNavigator leverages the

information contained in dose-dependent drug perturbation studies to aid the functionalization of

PTM sites.

Results

A PTM-Centric Interface for Pathway-Level Data Analysis

PTMNavigator is a web-based graphical interface to analyze the results of PTM perturbation

experiments in the context of pathways (Fig. 1A). It combines interactive visualization and various

enrichment analysis algorithms (Fig. 1B) into a single application. The interface is embedded into

the ecosystem of ProteomicsDB, a multi-omics resource for life science data and data analysis.

The software combines two types of inputs. The first input, which needs to be provided by the

user, is a list of regulated modified peptides, e.g. the result of a differential or dose-response

analysis. Each peptide must be annotated with a regulation type (i.e. not, up, or down). The second

type of input are pathway diagrams. These can be of two different types: First, users can display

canonical pathways from KEGG and WikiPathways, for which we created internal representations

in ProteomicsDB. For *Homo sapiens*, we imported 1,121 pathways (779 from WikiPathways and

342 from KEGG) from the latest releases at the time of retrieval (see Methods). In addition, we

imported 1,838 pathways for 9 model organisms, including other mammals, bacteria, and plants

(Suppl. Fig. S1). Second, users can also create own diagrams by either modifying the canonical

pathways or by drawing custom diagrams from scratch, using the 'Editing Mode' of

PTMNavigator. The custom diagrams can be stored in ProteomicsDB and shared with other

researchers.

PTMNavigator combines the experimental data and the pathway information into a projection of

modified peptides onto their corresponding genes within a pathway diagram. The main interface

of PTMNavigator (Fig. 2A) is accessible at www.proteomicsdb.org/analytics/ptmNavigator. Users

can visualize datasets already contained in ProteomicsDB or upload their own (templates for input

formats are available as Supplementary Table 1). It is possible to access (previously) uploaded

datasets by a private, user-specific session ID and to visualize one or multiple datasets at a time.

When the user selects a pathway diagram, it is rendered together with additional nodes for each

PTM peptide next to its corresponding protein. These additional PTM nodes are colored according

to their regulation (up, down, not). The initial coordinates of the nodes are the same as in the

reference databases so that it resembles the original pathway diagram. However, users can

rearrange the layout by dragging nodes around, highlighting interesting subnetworks, and filtering

their data by experiments or regulation categories. Where available, additional information on

PTM sites is displayed as part of a tooltip and kinase-substrate relationships can be visualized in

the form of additional arrows in the diagram. To this end, we imported a list of functional

annotations and upstream regulators from PhosphoSitePlus and a list of predicted phosphosite

functional scores calculated by *Ochoa et al.*[33] into ProteomicsDB. It is also possible to visualize

protein-level data in combination with PTM-level data (see Suppl. Fig. S5 for an example, where

this has been exemplified using a dataset from *Lee et al.*[34]).

In addition to the pathway visualization component, we implemented a service that hosts a number

of established enrichment algorithms (Fig. 1B). After a dataset is uploaded, this service is

automatically invoked and two pathway enrichment analysis algorithms are run over the dataset

('Gene-Centric' and 'Gene-Centric-Redundant' ssGSEA). For phosphoproteomics datasets,

additional algorithms are run, including PTM-SEA, KSEA, and PHONEMeS. The results of the

enrichments are displayed in tabular form in PTMNavigator (Fig. 2B). In the pathway selection

menu in PTMNavigator, the pathways are sorted by 'Gene-Centric-Redundant' ssGSEA scores to

show to the users which pathways are likely most relevant for the dataset. Some of the information

is also integrated into the pathway view, e.g., for phosphoproteomics datasets, kinase activities

calculated with RoKAI and KSEA can be shown as colored borders around the nodes in the graph.

The final pathway diagrams as well as the results of the enrichment analysis can be downloaded

as scalable vector graphics (SVG) or in tabular format, respectively. In the following, we

exemplify the capabilities and benefits of PTMNavigator using two recent PTM perturbation

datasets.

Enrichment Analysis and Pathway Visualization Synergize in PTMNavigator

To demonstrate how PTMNavigator aids in interpreting the results of a pathway enrichment

analysis (PEA), we re-analyzed data from a recent phosphoproteomics study, in which 30 different

kinase inhibitors targeting members of the EGF signaling pathway (Fig. 3A) were profiled for their

effect on the phosphoproteome of a human retinal pigment epithelial cell line (RPE1)[32]. Re-

analysis of all 30 datasets yielded 4,989 regulations (2,563 up and 2,426 down) on 1,757 peptides

(out of 7,871 peptides measured in each sample) at 10% FDR. PEA for each compound with gene-

centric-redundant ssGSEA resulted in enrichment scores (negative log-transformed p-values; ES)

for each combination of drug and pathway (Fig. 3B). Some results confirmed prior knowledge on

the compounds, e.g., the six drugs inhibiting either EGFR or MEK, which are both located

upstream of MAPK, were strongly enriched for 'WP: MAPK Cascade'. A PTM-SEA analysis of

the same dataset (Suppl. Fig. S6) showed the datasets of the mTOR inhibitors Everolimus and

Temsirolimus to be enriched for both the signatures 'PERT-PSP_Rapamycin' and 'PERT-P100-

DIA2_Sirolimus'. Rapamycin and Sirolimus are different names for the same compound that also

inhibits the kinase mTOR. Yet, for many drug perturbations, the results were not as easy to

interpret. E.g., the KEGG pathway 'Progesterone-Mediated Oocyte Maturation' received a

significant score in 3 of the datasets, however, since the cells studied were retinal cells, it is not

obvious where this significance arose from.

To gain more insight into how the regulated peptides were distributed within the enriched

pathways, we used PTMNavigator to investigate the high-scoring pathways of the pan-PKC

inhibitor Go-6983, one of the datasets which was enriched in 'Progesterone-Mediated Oocyte

Maturation'. Other pathways that received high Enrichment Scores in the ssGSEA analysis of this

dataset (Fig. 3C) include signaling networks related to prostate cancer and the nervous system.

Manual inspection of the pathways showed that genes with strong fold changes are often shared.

Most of the high-scoring pathways contain 4E-BP1, RPS6KA, MAPK1, MAP3K7, mTOR, and/or

AKT, all of which have peptides with strong fold changes in the Go-6983 data (Suppl. Fig. S7).

Therefore, these proteins likely were the drivers of the high enrichment scores. In the PTM-SEA

analysis of the dataset (Fig. 3D), the highest positively and negatively enriched signatures,

respectively, were the mTOR and RPS6KA1 PhosphoSitePlus signatures (Scores=5.78 and -5.76,

FDR=0.022 for both). mTOR and RPS6KA1 were also reported to be increased (decreased) in

activity by KSEA. We investigated these scores in more depth, using the PhosphoSitePlus kinase-

substrate annotations integrated into PTMNavigator (Suppl. Fig. S8). Highlighting the substrates

of mTOR and RPS6KA1 within the diagram 'mTOR Signaling Pathway - hsa04150' showed that

most of the peptides phosphorylated by RPS6KA1 had strong negative fold changes (e.g.

EIF4B_S422 and SOS1_S1134), while most mTOR substrates were increased in phosphorylation

(e.g. the autophosphorylation sites T2474 and S2478). This demonstrates how PTMNavigator can

help in interpreting the results of enrichment analyses.

Visualizing Target and Pathway Engagement in PTMNavigator

We next employed PTMNavigator on the same dataset to compare the kinase inhibitors Lapatinib,

Wortmannin, and Temsirolimus, which target the same signaling cascade, but at different steps.

Projection of their perturbed PTM peptides on 'mTOR signaling pathway - hsa04150' (Fig. 4A), which includes all members of said cascade except for EGFR, confirmed that all three drugs perturbed the pathway. Lapatinib had the largest number of both up- and downregulated peptides and also the regulations most upstream in the pathway (Fig. 4A, upper panel). Among the sites exclusively regulated by Lapatinib were GSK3B_S9, TSC2_S939, and BRAF_S729, whose importance has previously been pointed out in the literature[35-37]. In contrast, the effects of Wortmannin in this pathway were limited to sites on PRAS40, LPIN, 4E-BP1 and RPS6, all of which are downstream of PI3K in the depicted network (Fig. 4A, middle panel). Likewise, Temsirolimus regulated even fewer sites and all were downstream of mTOR (Fig. 4A, lower panel). Most of the regulated peptides for Wortmannin and Temsirolimus were shared with Lapatinib (PRAS40_T246, 4EBP1_T77/S101, LPIN1_S252 for Wortmannin, RICTOR_Y1174&Y1177 for Temsirolimus), or one another (RPS6_S236&S240&S244). This was further substantiated by the results of kinase activity scoring on the three datasets: KSEA produced significant negative scores for AKT, RAF, RPS6KA, and RPS6KB in the Lapatinib and Wortmannin data. For Temsirolimus, only RPS6KA and RPS6KB were reported to have decreased activity. RPS6KB is the only of these kinases that appears downstream of mTOR, and the high score of RPS6KA probably stems from the large number of substrates that are shared with RPS6KB. Together, these observations confirm that all drugs perturb the same signaling network at different stages.

A more surprising example was presented when comparing the effects of Sorafenib and Cobimetinib. Both compounds target the RAF-MEK-ERK pathway, another phosphorylation axis downstream of EGFR (Fig. 3A). Since Sorafenib is perturbing the network at a more upstream position (RAF), one would expect its impact on the PTM level to be more pronounced. In reality,

Cobimetinib (which inhibits MEK) had a wider impact than Sorafenib, which was visible in

PTMNavigator's visualization of 'MAPK Signaling Pathway - hsa04010' (Fig. 4B). As expected,

Cobimetinib significantly inhibited the phosphorylation of the site MAPK1_Y187, which is

essential to MAPK1 activity, with a Log2 Fold Change (logFC) of -4.39 between conditions (p-

value=0.01). There also were effects upstream in the pathway, e.g. on SOS1_S1134. This is likely

the result of an inhibited feedback loop, since this site is a substrate of RPS6KA1, which is itself

regulated by ERK[38]. In contrast, Sorafenib only inhibited the phosphorylation of one site in this

pathway (BRAF_S729), which was also strongly downregulated by Cobimetinib (logFC=-5.44,

p=0.07 for Sorafenib and logFC=-5.41, p=0.09 for Cobimetinib) and is known to be important for

BRAF-dimerization[39]. PTMNavigator's visualization suggests that Sorafenib does engage its

target, but the perturbation in signaling does not progress beyond RAF. Previous research on the

compound pointed out that Sorafenib, while being an effective agent against renal cell carcinoma

and other cancer types, might not exert its efficacy via inhibition of RAF[40, 41]. In both examples

presented here, PTMNavigator provided a visual insight into the target engagement and signaling

cascades that one would not get as easily from other depictions such as heatmaps.

Exploring Dose-Dependent Perturbation Data in PTMNavigator

A very important characteristic of a drug's mode of action is how potently it perturbs different

parts of cellular signaling, which can be captured by applying a series of doses and measuring the

changes on the level of PTMs for each dose. Such a concentration-dependent approach, called

decryptM, was recently published by *Zecha et al.*[2]. decryptM allows determination of dose-

response characteristics for each peptide, including drug potency (negative logEC50 or pEC50

value) and drug effect size (curve fold change). Output files of the decryptM pipeline[2] or

CurveCurator[42] can directly be imported by PTMNavigator. We implemented additional features

for dose-dependent data into PTMNavigator, which we demonstrate by using the tool to compare

data from *Zecha et al.* to data from *Bekker-Jensen et al*. for the EGFR inhibitor Lapatinib.

The decryptM study included an experiment in which Lapatinib was applied to the breast cancer

cell line MDA-MB-175-VII for 2 hours in 10 different concentrations (from 1 nM to 10 µM). The

experiment yielded 180 upgoing and 441 downgoing dose-response curves classified as significant

(see Methods). PTMNavigator's projection of the regulated peptides onto the pathway 'mTOR

signaling pathway - hsa04150' (Fig. 5A; this was the highest-scoring pathway in the gene-centric

and gene-centric-redundant ssGSEA of the dataset) showed that the overall perturbation of the

network was very similar to that observed in the Lapatinib experiment by *Bekker-Jensen et al.* on

RPE1 cells (Fig. 4A, upper panel). Many proteins had regulated peptides in both experiments (for

example, RAF, MEK, and RICTOR), and some downregulated sites were shared by both

biological systems (TSC2_S939, PRAS40_T246, and GSK3B_S9). However, the decryptM data

adds the potency dimension for every regulation as an additional layer of information (Fig. 5B),

represented in PTMNavigator by PTMs colored according to their pEC50 value. This visualization

reveals that all peptides perturbed by Lapatinib in this pathway were regulated at a pEC50 between

6.4 and 7.4, which corresponds to a concentration range between 40 nM and 400 nM (Fig. 5C).

The dose-response curves of each shown peptide can be displayed directly within PTMNavigator.

Lapatinib is known to be a highly selective EGFR/ErbB2 inhibitor[40], and the fact that all potencies

were within one order of magnitude suggests that this pathway is only regulated by a single initial

perturbation. Here, this is likely the inhibition of ErbB2, as EGFR has been reported to be not

active in MDA-MB-175-VII cells[43]. In other biological systems, the effect might differ. Such cell-

type specific observations can also be highlighted by PTMNavigator, which we exemplified by

comparing the effect of Dasatinib on 3 different cell lines (Suppl. Fig. S9).

PTMNavigator Aids in Refinement and Expansion of Pathway Diagrams

We applied PTMNavigator to two other decryptM datasets to put phosphorylation sites with and without functional annotation into context. Refametinib and Mirdametinib are two highly selective kinase inhibitors that both target MAP2K1 (MEK1) and MAP2K2 (MEK2). Both inhibitors were applied to A549 lung carcinoma epithelial cells in the decryptM study (in ten concentrations ranging from 1 nM to 10 µM). Both drugs elicited a selective response in the A549 phosphoproteome, with 148 regulated dose-response curves for Refametinib (38 up, 110 down) and 73 for Mirdametinib (15 up, 58 down). Among the pathways that were enriched for both datasets, the diagram 'Regulation of actin cytoskeleton – WP51' depicted the signaling around the compounds' targets most comprehensively. Projection of the drug-regulated peptides onto this pathway using the 'potency' color scheme (Fig. 6A) showed that Mirdametinib regulates MEK signaling more potently than Refametinib. This is in agreement with the reported higher affinity observed in pulldown experiments[40].

By focusing on dose-dependent phosphorylation signals in common between both drugs, we obtained a more complete understanding of the MEK signaling in this cellular system. Both drugs potently downregulated phosphorylation of MAPK1 and MAPK3 at their most important activating sites (T185 and Y187 for MAPK1, T202 and Y204 for MAPK3), which are all direct substrates of MEK1 and MEK2 and are part of the MEK1 kinase activity signature in PTMSigDB[17]. Downstream of MAPK, both drugs elicited downregulation of several peptides including MYPT1_S507, a site that has previously been associated with treatment by Selumetinib (a MEK1 and MEK2 inhibitor)[44] and Vemurafenib (which has MEK5 as a potent off-target)[40, 45]. The fact that it is also affected by the two inhibitors studied here and that its dose-response profiles are similar to other peptides associated with MEK inhibition (Suppl. Fig. S10) suggests that this

site could also be part of the general PTM signature of MEK inhibition. Less straightforward to

interpret were several downregulations upstream of MEK at SOS1 sites as well as RAF1_S43 and

GRLF1_S589 in both datasets. This is an example where the pathway diagram does not depict all

relevant interactions for the cellular system, a frequently observed issue of the canonical pathway

definitions (see Discussion). To obtain a more complete network of the effects of MEK inhibition,

we investigated the pathway that PHONEMeS generated for the dataset (Fig. 6B) and consulted

previous research on the matter. PHONEMeS reproduced the RAF-MAP2K-MAPK axis that is

the essential part of the network. It also proposed a flow of signal from MAPK to SOS via RPS6KA

and from MAPK to RAF1. Prior literature confirmed the first proposal: the regulated SOS1

residues S1134 and S1161 are RPS6KA substrates[38], and RPS6KA activity is controlled by

MAPK[46]. Therefore, this regulation likely is the result of an inhibited feedback loop. SOS1_S1064

has no annotated kinase, but the other regulations suggest it could also be an RPS6KA substrate.

RAF1_S43, however, is a substrate of PKACA, not MAPK[47]. The 'Editing Mode' of

PTMNavigator allowed us to integrate this information into an extended pathway, using the

diagram 'Regulation of actin cytoskeleton – WP51' as a starting point (Fig. 6C). GRLF_S589 has

no functional annotation or putative upstream kinase in PhosphoSitePlus and PHONEMeS did not

find a link, however, the similarities in regulation (Suppl. Fig. S10) suggest that it is part of the

same phosphoproteomics signature. Therefore, it remains to be investigated which kinases are

directly responsible for phosphorylating this site, how essential these phosphorylations are to the

signaling pathway and whether this finding translates to other biological systems. Taken together,

this shows that PTMNavigator can support researchers in the functionalization of uncharacterized

PTM sites and can thus in aid in proposing putative new links in pathways by combining prior

knowledge with experimental data.

Discussion

PTMNavigator is a tool for visualizing quantitative PTM data in the context of cellular pathways which supports users to analyze complex PTM proteomics data. In its current implementation in the ProteomicsDB platform, it allows exploring pathways of 10 organisms using pathway annotations from KEGG and WikiPathways and functional annotations from PhosphoSitePlus. The integration of automated enrichment analyses adds another dimension of information and the possibility of creating user-defined pathways from scratch and sharing them makes PTMNavigator versatile and unique. Other databases, such as BioCyc[48] and Reactome[8], may be utilized in future iterations of the tool to further extend the list of available pathways. We envision that it will become a platform for knowledge exchange in the systems biology field. We consciously decided to realize this software as a website instead of a desktop application. We believe that this makes it more accessible, as users will not have to install it or be concerned about the computational power of their desktop computers. The core visualization component of our software was built on the Web Component standards, making it easy to reuse in web interfaces outside of ProteomicsDB. We demonstrated how PTMNavigator facilitates the interpretation of pathway enrichment analyses, makes perturbed signaling traceable, leverages the novel information contained in dose-dependent PTM data, and generates hypotheses for follow-up experiments to study unannotated modification sites. To our knowledge, PTMNavigator is the only available software that can graphically illustrate how regulated PTMs are distributed within pathways.

PTMNavigator gives a bird's-eye view of PTMs within a pathway, while at the same time integrating multiple sources of information on particular sites. This accelerates PTM perturbation analysis considerably, especially in large scale data sets. Furthermore, it fosters the identification

of new kinase-substrate relationships and signaling pathway crosstalk, as we exemplified for the

phosphoproteomic response to MEK inhibitors in A549 cells.

There are usually multiple pathways that depict a signaling cascade of interest, and choosing a

single one can seem arbitrary. We'd like to note that for the purpose of conciseness, in this

manuscript we always selected a single KEGG or WikiPathways diagram for visualization of a

dataset, while in practice we recommend that the user should look at all diagrams of highly

enriched pathways to get an idea of how interchangeable the visualizations are and see if specific

subnetworks are shared between them. For example, the visualization of MEK inhibition, for

which we chose 'Regulation of actin cytoskeleton – WP51' (Fig. 6A), would for our purpose have

worked just as well with the eponymous KEGG diagram 'Regulation of actin cytoskeleton –

hsa04810', as it contains the same subnetwork of SOS1, RAF1, MAPK1/3, GRLF1, and MYPT1.

Meanwhile, for other datasets or visualization purposes one diagram might be preferable over the

other, and it is usually not possible to decide that without inspecting both. This is also the case if

one of the pathways has a substantially higher relevance score – this can simply happen because

the other pathway contains more additional proteins that 'water down' the score, however, that

pathway can still be the better choice for visualization if the subnetwork of interest is more

appropriately represented.

Current PEAs are far from ideal for analyzing PTM data sets, and their outcomes must, therefore,

be taken with considerable caution. Nonetheless, PEAs provide currently the best starting point,

which is why PTMNavigator uses PEA to pre-sort pathways by putative relevance. The initial

ranking should help users to prioritize pathway engagement, but users should keep in mind that

some high-ranked pathways are not biologically relevant and a PEA artifact. This is often rooted

in the fact that pathway annotations are highly redundant (i.e., the same well studied proteins show

up in many well-studied pathways). On the other hand, also pathways with non-significant scores

are often worth examining and additional resources, such as previous literature, should be

considered when selecting diagrams for visualization. If better pathway ranking procedures are

developed in the future, PTMNavigator can easily be updated to use those. We emphasize that

PTMNavigator is a visualization tool, and that the interpretation of the results remains the

responsibility of the user. While we believe the current work constitutes a substantial advance, we

point out several caveats as follows: i) Differential or dose-response analysis is not part of

PTMNavigator and users need to perform this prior to data upload. PTMNavigator only shows

what its users already deemed significantly regulated. This is also a benefit, as it makes

PTMNavigator flexible to many experimental settings. ii) The currently available canonical

pathway diagrams are heterogenous in structure and, for PTM research, they may sometimes even

be misleading. One example are the phosphorylation and dephosphorylation annotations in KEGG

diagrams ('+/- p'). A phosphorylating connection from kinase *A* to protein *B* just means that at

least one site on *B* is a substrate of *A*, not necessarily (actually not likely) all of them, but for a user

the latter may seem implied. Furthermore, we could only retain those details of the pathway

diagram that were also represented in the KGML or GPML files. Some of the pathways resemble

drawings rather than formal diagrams and the relationships between pathway members are not

encoded as edges in the graph (consider for example the KEGG pathway 'Nucleocytoplasmic

transport - hsa03013' and the WikiPathways *D. melanogaster* pathway 'Homologous

recombination - WP1205'). In PTMNavigator, these pathways contain few or no edges and can

only serve as a collection of functionally related proteins. iii) Pathway definitions are typically

generalized from a large amount of heterogeneous data. Consequently, they cannot be specific for

a certain tissue or cell type, and some proteins depicted in a pathway might not be expressed or

active in the cells in which an experiment was performed. iv) A single node may represent a single

gene or gene product, but can also summarize a subfamily of proteins (such as MAPK) or even an

entire class of proteins (such as all receptor tyrosine kinases). Conversely, a 'group' node can

represent a protein complex, but can also represent a set of alternatives for a step in the pathway.

Users of the pathway diagram need to be wary of these disparate definitions. v) The current

knowledge of pathways is limited and many relationships are not yet discovered. PTMNavigator

can only show what is already known and its use for the discovery of novel signaling cascades or

nodes is necessarily limited. As a consequence, PTMNavigator will become more powerful as

pathway databases become more comprehensive in the future.

Materials and Methods

Creating a Pathway Database in ProteomicsDB

We assembled a collection of pathways from 10 different species within ProteomicsDB based on the reference pathway databases in KEGG (Release 107.0, July 1, 2023) and WikiPathways (Release 20230610, June 6, 2023). Both projects provide textual pathway definitions in variations of the extensible markup language (XML) format (KEGG: KEGG Markup Language (KGML); WikiPathways: Graphical Pathway Markup Language (GPML)), which we used as a starting point. There are differences in the detailed pathway specifications of KEGG and WikiPathways (see the next two subsections), but essentially, both define a pathway in the form of a mixed graph, consisting of a set of nodes and a set of edges (both directed and undirected) which connect the nodes. There are two classes of nodes: *regular nodes* have a description that includes 2-dimensional cartesian coordinates as well as information on the entity the node represents (for example a gene name), *group nodes* do not contain any additional description and are instead defined solely by a set of regular nodes contained in them. We wrote a Python package termed *pathway-importer* that converts both types of pathways into JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) format. The JSON format is better suited for use with a web application, since it can be parsed at runtime without further conversion (in contrast to XML). We did not import pathways that contained zero gene or gene product nodes, since they are not interesting for the study of cellular signaling (this includes, for example, metabolic pathways that are focused only on metabolites).

Preprocessing of KEGG Pathway Diagrams

We retrieved the list of pathways for each organism and downloaded the KGML files using the KEGG REST API (https://rest.kegg.jp). KGML files distinguish four types of nodes: *gene, compound, ortholog,* and *map*. To reduce the complexity of our internal representation, we

summarized the *gene* and *ortholog* nodes into a common *gene_protein* node type. *map* nodes were

renamed as *pathway* nodes since they describe connections to other pathways, and *compound*

nodes were not modified (Suppl. Fig. S2). In KGML files, nodes are labeled using KEGG

identifiers, which we mapped to Uniprot accession numbers using the 'idmapping' service of the

Uniprot REST API (as described here: https://www.uniprot.org/help/id_mapping). In order to

maximize the number of nodes that had a human-readable name, we subsequently mapped the

Uniprot accession numbers to gene names (also using the Uniprot API).

KEGG pathways have two classes of edges: *relations*, which connect exactly two nodes, and

reactions, which can also represent many-to-many relationships by specifying a list of substrates

and a list of products. We intended to only represent one-to-one relationships in ProteomicsDB,

therefore we replaced each *reaction* by an equivalent set of *relations,* connecting each substrate-

product pair by an individual edge. KEGG *relations* can have 19 different subtypes, which we

retained in our JSON representation with two exceptions (Suppl. Fig. S3):

a) The types 'indirect' and 'indirect effect' were summarized to one type 'indirect'.

b) The types 'inhibition' and 'repression' were summarized to one type 'inhibition'.

Preprocessing of WikiPathways Pathway Diagrams

We downloaded GPML files from http://data.wikipathways.org/current/gpml. These pathways,

which are maintained by a large, open community, are less standardized than in KEGG. The

pathway collection we downloaded distinguishes 13 types of nodes, which we mapped to the same

types as the nodes from the KEGG pathways. In addition to the *gene_protein*, *compound*, and

pathway types, we introduced a fourth type *misc* to account for WikiPathways nodes that could

not be assigned one of the other categories (Suppl. Fig. S2). In GPML files, each node is annotated

with a reference to an external database, such as Entrez or Ensembl. To unify these diverse

annotations, we mapped them to Uniprot Accession Numbers where possible, using the Uniprot

API (Suppl. Fig. S4). Edges in GPML files have 24 different types. 10 of these were converted

into one of the KEGG edge types, the other 14 were retained as additional types (Suppl. Fig. S3).

A specific feature of the GPML specification is that edges may also end on another edge instead

of a node. This is represented by an additional tag in the XML schema, called *anchor*. To keep our

representation simple, we replaced *anchor* tags by edges that had other edges as their start or end

point.

Implementation of the *pathwaygraph* Web Component

We developed a Web Component (www.webcomponents.org), termed *pathwaygraph,* for the

dynamic rendering of pathway diagrams together with peptide-level experimental data.

pathwaygraph was implemented using the Lit library (https://lit.dev/), Version 2.0.2. Our Web

Component expects two inputs: A pathway diagram in JSON format (we call this 'pathway

skeleton'), and a list of PTMs, each annotated with a regulation type (possible values are 'up',

'down', and 'not'). Optionally, a list of proteins and their regulation types can be supplied in

addition.

pathwaygraph maps each entry of the PTM list to nodes of the pathway skeleton by comparing the

gene names and/or Uniprot accession numbers that are associated with the nodes. For each

matched PTM, an additional node is added to the graph definition, as well as an edge from the new

node to its associated node in the skeleton. A PTM can be matched to multiple nodes of the

skeleton, resulting in multiple PTM nodes for the same entry of the PTM list. This can happen, for

example, when a protein appears twice in the same pathway because the creators wanted to

describe two different routes of a signaling cascade.

After the matching process has completed, *pathwaygraph* renders the graph as an SVG object

using the software library D3.js[49] (Version 6.2.0). The cartesian coordinates of the pathway

skeleton nodes are used for the initial layout. The edges are drawn in such a way that they connect

their two adjacent nodes in a straight line. When a node changes its position (e.g. by a user dragging

it around), the endpoints of the edge are automatically updated. The PTM nodes, which do not

have cartesian coordinates assigned, are positioned using simulated physical forces (using the d3-

force package (https://github.com/d3/d3-force), Version 2.1.1), which cause them to remain close

to their reference skeleton node without colliding with one another. PTM nodes can either be

represented individually, or in the form of a single summary node for each regulation type that

only displays the number of regulations (step 6 in Fig. 2A; users can toggle between the two

representations). Optionally, a label consisting of the modified residue and position within the

protein can be displayed above the PTM node.

The different node types (*gene_protein*, *compound*, *pathway*) are distinguished by different colors.

Group nodes are represented as a polygon around the convex hull of all members of the group. 4

types of edges are distinguished visually by different dash patterns or arrowheads: *activation*,

inhibition, *binding/association*, and *indirect*. All remaining edge subtypes are rendered with the

same style. Only edges from the skeleton are rendered, the edges between PTM nodes and skeleton

nodes are invisible (but their presence is required for the force simulation).

There are three possible color schemes for the PTM nodes: the default and most simple option is

to color them by their regulation type ('up' nodes are colored red, 'down' nodes blue, and 'not'

nodes grey). Alternatively, nodes can be colored by fold change or (in the case of decryptM data)

by potency (using EC50 values estimated from the dose-response curve fit). In both cases, the full

range of values is determined after mapping the PTM nodes to the skeleton. A continuous color

gradient is then calculated between the minimum and the maximum value and applied to each

node.

Each PTM in the input can be annotated with arbitrary details. In the case of phosphoproteomics

data, these details may include upstream kinases. If such annotations are present, and the kinases

happen to also be present in the currently displayed pathway skeleton, *pathwaygraph* will

automatically add the kinase-substrate relationships as additional edges to the diagram that can

optionally be shown during the analysis.

In addition to PTM-level and protein-level data, a list of perturbation targets (e.g. estimated by a

KSEA) may be supplied. These targets can optionally be highlighted within the pathway diagram

by blue and red circles around the respective nodes.

In addition to pathway viewing and projection of PTM datasets, we implemented a second

application mode for *pathwaygraph*, in which pathway diagrams can be edited. This mode allows

the addition, removal, and rearrangement of nodes, node groups, and edges. Details of nodes and

edges (such as labels or gene identifiers) can be edited as well. Diagrams can be exported in the

same JSON format as the canonical 'pathway skeletons' and they can also be stored in

ProteomicsDB. It is also possible to upload JSON files from a user's local machine for editing and

storing in ProteomicsDB.

Using the package @api-client/context-menu, v0.4.1, we developed a context menu for

pathwaygraph which allows the user to interact with the application. The context menu is dynamic

and its contents depend on the current state of the application (e.g., it shows different options in

'viewing' mode and in 'editing' mode).

Implementation of PTMNavigator

We implemented PTMNavigator as a Vue.js component (https://vuejs.org). It is essentially a

wrapper around *pathwaygraph* that facilitates interaction of the Web Component with both the

user and the backend of ProteomicsDB and can provide additional information such as the results

of enrichment analyses (see below). PTMNavigator handles user interactions such as the selection

of datasets, organisms, and pathways, or the application of filters on the loaded data, by calling the

necessary endpoints of the ProteomicsDB API, processing the returned data, and passing it on to

pathwaygraph. Custom pathway diagrams can also be saved to and restored from ProteomicsDB

(they are associated with the user's Session ID), as well as downloaded and uploaded in JSON

format.

PTMNavigator is embedded into ProteomicsDB, which is also Vue.js-based since its latest

release[24]. The tool can be found in the 'Analytics' section of ProteomicsDB:

https://www.proteomicsdb.org/analytics/ptmNavigator.

Implementation of a Service for Enrichment Analyses

Using the *flask* framework (version 2.0.3), we implemented a Python-based web server that

provides a number of common enrichment analysis algorithms for proteomics data, with a focus

on phosphoproteomics. An Application Programming Interface (API) allows applications as well

as human users to send POST requests to the server. Since each of the method that the service

offers requires a different way of structuring the input data, we implemented preprocessing

scripts that convert JSON input into the required formats, so that the actual input that the user has

to provide is as similar as possible for all algorithms. The result of each algorithm is then also

converted into JSON and sent back to the requester. We mostly used existing Python or R

packages, except where noted. The service is publicly available under this web address:

https://enrichment.kusterlab.org/main_enrichment-server/. The code can be accessed here:

https://github.com/kusterlab/enrichment-server. In the following, we describe the methods that

were offered by our service at the time of writing. For details on the input formats, please refer to

the Github repository, where we provide examples for every endpoint.

PTM Signature Enrichment Analysis (PTM-SEA)

We use the R package ssGSEA2.0 (https://github.com/broadinstitute/ssGSEA2.0), commit hash

4b5198f (July 20, 2023). As database, we use PTMSigDB v2.0.0, "flanking" and "uniprot".

Expected input is a list of PTM sites and a numeric value for each experiment (e.g. normalized

measured expressions). Duplicates are eliminated during preprocessing by only retaining the

entry with maximal absolute expression value for each site. The algorithm is invoked with the

export (-e) parameter set to FALSE, and all other parameters set to their default values. From the

resulting .gct file, the 'Signature ID' column and the 'Overlap', 'adj p-val' and 'Score' columns

for every processed experiment are returned.

Gene-Centric and Gene-Centric Redundant single sample Gene Set Enrichment Analysis

Again, we use the R package ssGSEA2.0. As database, we use the subset of all KEGG and

WikiPathways signatures from MSigDB. In order to match the set of pathways that are available

in PTMNavigator, we excluded 'KEGG medicus' signatures. The expected input is a list of gene

symbols and their expression in each experiment. In the case of Gene-Centric analysis,

duplicates are eliminated as described for PTM-SEA. In the case of Gene-Centric Redundant

analysis, duplicates are not eliminated. The same columns as for PTM-SEA are returned.

Kinase-Substrate Enrichment Analysis (KSEA)

We use the *kinact* Python package (https://github.com/saezlab/kinact, commit hash 572d3a8)

which performs KSEA as described by *Casado et al.* by comparing the mean fold change among

the set of substrates of a kinase to an expected value. As prior knowledge, we use the set of

kinase-substrate relationships from PhosphoSitePlus, retrieved using OmniPath

(https://pypath.omnipathdb.org/) on February 2nd, 2024, and converted into an adjacency matrix

by a custom Python script. Expected input is a list of phosphorylation sites and a numeric value

for every experiment. Duplicates are eliminated as described for PTM-SEA. For each

experiment, scores and adjusted p-values are returned.

Robust Kinase Activity Inference (RoKAI) + KSEA

We use the R package RokaiApp (https://github.com/serhan-yilmaz/RokaiApp), commit hash

e2eb10a. As prior knowledge, we use the file 'rokai_network_data_uniprotkb_human.rds'

provided by the RokaiApp repository. Expected user input is the same as for KSEA. In addition

to RoKAI's default Kinase-Substrate network, all optional components of the RoKAI circuit

system are used (PPI, SD, CoEv). The resulting refined phosphorylation profiles are

subsequently processed by KSEA as described above.

PHONEMeS

We use the R package PHONEMeS (https://github.com/saezlab/PHONEMeS), v2.0.1, as well as

Cytoscape v3.10.1 equipped with the yFiles plugin (https://www.yworks.com/products/yfiles-

layout-algorithms-for-cytoscape), v1.1.4. As prior knowledge network, we use the concatenation

of the 'phonemesPKN' and 'phonemesKSN' networks, which describe ground truth protein-

protein interactions and kinase-substrate relationships. The expected user input is, for each

experiment, a list of up- and down-regulated perturbation targets (in gene symbol format), and a

list of sites with numeric values for each experiment (e.g., normalized measured expression, Fold

Change, or t-statistic). The PHONEMeS algorithm is then invoked for each experiment with

n_steps_pruning set to 2, and default values for all other parameters, and using the IBM cplex

optimizer (https://www.ibm.com/products/ilog-cplex-optimization-studio/cplex-optimizer) as

solver for the Integer Linear Program (ILP). If no solution is found, the algorithm is rerun with

n_steps_pruning set to 3. Then, the resulting network for each experiment is converted into a

pathwaygraph pathway skeleton: First, all nodes representing a phosphorylation site are replaced

by a node for the protein to which the phosphosite corresponds. Then, duplicated *node-edge-*

node triplets and self-loops are removed. Next, the network is loaded into Cytoscape (we use the

Python package py4cytoscape, v1.9.0., for programmatic interaction with Cytoscape), and the

yFiles 'Hierarchic Layout' is applied and the graph is exported as a '.cx' file. Using custom

Python code, this file is converted into a JSON file with the 'pathway skeleton' format that can

be parsed by *pathwaygraph*. The JSON file is returned to the requester.

Motif Enrichment

We use inhouse Python code that essentially reimplements the service provided here:

https://kinase-library.phosphosite.org/ea. In brief, from the kinase library data we created

position-specific scoring matrices for each kinase that reflect the preference of every amino acid

to appear at every position of the kinase's substrate motif. We scored every phosphopeptide in

PhosphoSitePlus against the matrix of each kinase to obtain a background score distribution. The

expected user input is then a list of phosphopeptide sequences, the Uniprot Accession Numbers

of the corresponding proteins, and for each experiment the regulation category of this peptide

('up'/'down'/'not'). Every peptide from the user input is scored against every kinase and the

result is compared to the background to obtain quantiles. The 15 highest scoring kinases for

every site are determined. Then, each kinase that appears in the result is tested for significant

overrepresentation by means of a Fisher's exact test (including multiple testing correction using

the Benjamini Hochberg method). The test results for each kinase in each experiment are

converted into JSON format and returned to the requester.

KEA3

We use the application programming interface (API) of KEA3. The expected user input is a list

of proteins (gene symbols) for each experiment. The enrichment service sends a POST request to

the URL https://amp.pharm.mssm.edu/kea3/api/enrich/. The tables 'Integrated--meanRank' and

'Integrated--topRank' are extracted from the response and returned to the requester.

KSTAR

We use the kstar Python package, v0.5.3. The expected user input is a list of phosphopeptide

sequences, the associated Uniprot Accession Numbers and a numeric value for each peptide in

each experiment. The peptides are converted into 'flanking sequence' format (7 adjacent amino

acids in both directions) and annotated with their position within the protein using the

psite_annotation package (v.0.5.0) and the reference proteome from PhosphoSitePlus (Version

from November 2nd, 2020). KSTAR is then executed using 'mean' as aggregation method and 0

as threshold (which means that values are regarded as significant, therefore non-significant

regulations need to be filtered out by the requester in advance). The algorithm is run twice, first

with 'greater' set to FALSE, then to TRUE, to capture both over- and underactive kinases. This

is executed for both modification types ('ST' and 'Y'). The p-values of the hypergeometric test

are log-transformed and, in the 'greater==TRUE' run, multiplied by -1. This ensures that

activated kinases receive a score >0, while inactivated kinases get a score <0. These scores are

returned to the requester. Note that the KSTAR protocol recommends to afterwards perform

analyses on randomized datasets and conduct Mann Whitney U-tests to obtain more robust p-

values. Since this is a time-intensive calculation that takes significantly bigger amounts of

memory then the other enrichment algorithms, we decided against including this step in our

enrichment service.

Processing of User Data Upload

We extended the upload page of ProteomicsDB

(www.proteomicsdb.org/analytics/customDataUpload) to allow the upload of data for

PTMNavigator in csv format. It is possible to upload conventional quantitative proteomics ('Fold

Change') data as well as decryptM data on both PTM and protein level. In the case of

phosphorylation data, users can upload data on both peptide and p-site level; for other PTMs, only

peptide-level upload is possible at this time. Example files for all input types are provided for

download on the website (see also Supplementary Table 1). In the case of decryptM data, the

'curves.txt' file output by the decryptM pipeline or CurveCurator can directly be uploaded together

with the TOML file containing the experimental parameters. The uploaded data is stored

temporarily in ProteomicsDB and is deleted if not accessed for 14 days. After the completion of

the upload, requests are sent to the endpoints of the enrichment service (see above). For

phosphoproteomics data, all endpoints are queried, for other PTM and protein-level data, only the

gene-centric and gene-centric redundant GSEA are performed. In the case of the

PHONEMeS+Cytoscape endpoint, perturbation targets are required as input in addition to the

phosphoproteomic data. Here, the results of the RoKAI+KSEA analysis are used. For each

experiment, the 3 highest scoring kinases are regarded as perturbation targets. The pathways

returned by the endpoint are added to the user's custom pathway diagram list. All other enrichment

results are inserted into a dedicated table in ProteomicsDB. To limit the access to the data, the user

receives a personalized 32-digit alphanumeric session identifier during the upload that needs to be

entered in PTMNavigator to retrieve the uploaded data.

When a user visits https://proteomicsdb.org/analytics/ptmNavigator, the custom pathways

associated with their Session ID are automatically retrieved. When the user requests a dataset they

had previously uploaded, all enrichment analysis results for this dataset are also retrieved. The

canonical KEGG and WikiPathways pathways are sorted by gene-centric redundant GSEA score.

All kinases that received an absolute score >0.5 in the RoKAI+KSEA analysis are considered

perturbed and are passed as a property to the *pathwaygraph* instance. If those kinases appear in a

pathway diagram, they can optionally be highlighted by red (up) and blue (down) circles.

Import of PhosphoSitePlus annotations and Functional Scores

We downloaded the files 'Regulatory_sites.gz' and 'Kinase_Substrate_Dataset.gz' from

PhosphoSitePlus (https://www.phosphosite.org/staticDownloads; accessed October 18, 2023).

Using a custom Python script, we mapped all annotations to the *in silico* digested human reference

proteome present in ProteomicsDB and created API endpoints to make the information accessible

from the PTMNavigator frontend. The phosphosite functional scores were imported analogously,

using Supplementary Table 3 from the paper by Ochoa and colleagues[33]. During retrieval of a

dataset, the associated annotations are collected from ProteomicsDB and forwarded to

PTMNavigator alongside the data. This allows, for example, to display kinase-substrate

annotations from PhosphoSitePlus as additional edges within the diagram.

Preprocessing of data from Bekker-Jensen et al.

For the detailed experimental procedures of the kinase inhibitor screen, please refer to the original

publication. Briefly, RPE1 cells were treated with either 0.1 µM or 1 µM of inhibitor for 30

minutes, followed by stimulation with EGF for 10 minutes. All experiments were performed in

triplicates, except for an EGF-stimulation-only control, which was performed in duplicates. After

extraction of proteins, digestion into peptides, and Ti-IMAC-based phosphopeptide-enrichment,

the samples were measured using LC-MS/MS in Data-Independent Acquisition (DIA) mode. The

data was then processed using Spectronaut to identify and quantify phosphorylated peptides.

Our analysis of the data differed from that of *Bekker-Jensen et al.* in that they performed multiple

sample significance testing (ANOVA), comparing all conditions against the control together,

whereas we intended to compare each condition to the control separately using *t*-tests. We

downloaded the Spectronaut output file from ProteomeXChange using the Identifier PXD014525

('20190416_214744_Kinase-inhibitor-screen-3reps-STY-version13-LocProb-075-Score-

1_Report.txt') and imported it into Perseus (version 1.6.2.3). We transformed the normalized

intensities   into   phosphorylation   site   tables   using   the   Peptide   Collapse   plugin

(https://github.com/AlexHgO/Perseus_Plugin_Peptide_Collapse),   specifying

EG.PTMAssayProbability as grouping column. We filtered for three valid values in at least one

treatment group. We log-transformed and replaced missing values by sampling from a normal

distribution (setting the parameters 'width' to 0.3, 'downshift' to 1.8, and 'mode' to 'Total

matrix'). We then performed two-sided *t*-tests between the 60 treatment conditions (30 drugs, 2

doses) and the control condition for each quantified peptide. *p*-values were corrected for multiple

testing using the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure (FDR=10%). Finally, we summarized the data

into 30 conditions (one per inhibitor) and eliminated duplicated peptides using the following rules:

I.   If the peptide appeared multiple times in the same experiment (which can happen for

678   multiply phosphorylated peptides), retain only the most significant entry (lowest adjusted

679   *p*-value).

680   *II.*   If a peptide was neither significantly regulated in the low-dose experiment nor in the high-

681   dose experiment of a compound, retain only the entry from the high-dose experiment.

682   *III.*   If a peptide was significantly regulated in the high-dose experiment, retain only this entry.

683   *IV.*   If a peptide was significantly regulated *only* in the low-dose experiment, retain only this

684   entry.

The resulting tables was formatted to fulfil the input criteria of PTMNavigator.

Pathway enrichment was performed as described above.

The code of this analysis (starting from the Perseus output and ending at the creation of

PTMNavigator input files) is available as a Jupyter Notebook (see 'Data Availability').

Preprocessing of data from Zecha et al.

For details on the decryptM experimental protocol, please refer to the supplementary methods in

the original publication. In brief: In the Lapatinib experiment, MDA-MB-175-VII cells (human

breast cancer) were treated with a series of Lapatinib for 2h (concentrations: 1, 3, 10, 30, 100, 300,

1000, 3000, 10000 nM) or a DMSO-only control. In the Refametinib/Mirdametinib experiments,

human lung adenocarcinoma A549 cells were treated with a series of Mirdametinib (PD325901)

or Refametinib concentrations for 60 minutes (concentrations: 1, 3, 10, 30, 100, 300, 1000, 3000,

10000 nM), or a DMSO-only control. In the Dasatinib experiments, A431 epidermoid carcinoma

epithelial cells, K562 lymphoblast cells and A549 cells were treated with Dasatinib

(concentrations: 0.03, 0.3, 1, 3, 10, 30, 100, 300, 1000, 10000 nM for A431 cells; 1, 3, 10, 30, 100,

300, 1000, 3000, 10000 nM for A549 cells; 0.01, 0.03, 0.1, 0.3, 1, 3, 10, 30, 100 nM for K562

cells) or a DMSO-only control for 30 minutes (60 minutes for A549 cells). Proteins were extracted

from the cells and digested using Trypsin. The samples were multiplexed using tandem mass tags

(TMT). Phosphopeptide enrichment was performed using Fe-IMAC, after which the samples were

separated into six fractions using bRP-fractionation to increase phosphoproteomic coverage. The

fractions were then measured separately using LC-MS/MS in data-dependent acquisition (DDA)

mode. TMT phosphopeptides were identified and quantified using MaxQuant (version 1.6.12.0).

We downloaded the following archives containing MaxQuant output from ProteomeXChange

using the identifier:

708	-	Lapatinib experiment:	HER2_Inhibitors_Phosphoproteome_dd.zip
709	-	Refametinib experiment:	10_Kinase_Inhibitors_Rep_Phosphoproteome.zip
710	-	Mirdametinib experiment:	10_Kinase_Inhibitors_2KI_Phosphoproteome.zip
711	-	Dasatinib A431 experiment:	EGFR_Inhibitors_Phosphoproteome.zip
712	-	Dasatinib A431 experiment:	10_Kinase_Inhibitors_6KI_Phosphoproteome.zip
713	-	Dasatinib A431 experiment:	Dasatinib_Triplicates_Phosphoproteome_MS3.zip

We filtered the evidence.txt files for rows containing the experiments of interest. The filtered files,

together with TOML parameter files which we constructed manually, were used as input for

CurveCurator (https://github.com/kusterlab/curve_curator). Using CurveCurator, we fitted 4-

parameter log-logistic dose-response curves for every quantified peptide and obtained significance

estimates for the regulations. Then we imported the curves file and the TOML into PTMNavigator.

For the Refametinib and Mirdametinib datasets, pathway enrichment was performed as described

above.

Preprocessing of Data from Lee et al.

We downloaded the Datasets EV4 (Full Proteome Data) and EV5 (Phosphoproteome Data) from

here: https://doi.org/10.1038/s44320-023-00004-7 and used the sheets containing log-transformed

and median-centric normalized iBAQ Values with imputations

('normalized_FP_log10_imput_hmin' and 'normalized_PP_log10_imput_hmin', respectively).

We calculated the difference in iBAQ log fold changes between the A204 and RD-ES cell lines.

As a threshold for regulation, we set an iBAQ log fold change difference of 3 for the full proteome

data and 4 for the phosphoproteomic data (i.e., peptides/proteins higher in A204 are annotated as

'up', whereas peptides/proteins higher in RD-ES are annotated as 'down'). The resulting files were

loaded into PTMNavigator.

Data availability

Experimental data was downloaded from ProteomeXChange as described in the Methods, using the identifiers PXD014525 (*Bekker-Jensen et al.*) and PXD037285 (*Zecha et al.*), as well as from the website of Molecular Systems Biology: https://doi.org/10.1038/s44320-023-00004-7 (*Lee et al.*). The following files are available on Zenodo (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12720528):

- For the Bekker-Jensen data:
    - Perseus output (log-transformed phosphorylation site intensities) (.txt)
    - A Jupyter Notebook describing how to convert the Perseus output into PTMNavigator input (.ipynb)
    - PTMNavigator input (.xlsx)
    - Enrichment analysis results: GCR, PTM-SEA, KSEA, RoKAI+KSEA (all .xlsx)
- For the Zecha data:
    - CurveCurator parameter files (.toml)
    - CurveCurator output (.xlsx)
    - Enrichment analysis results: GCR, PTM-SEA, KSEA, RoKAI+KSEA (all .xlsx)
- For the Lee data:
    - PTMNavigator input (.xlsx)

All other data are available in the main text or the supplementary materials.

Code availability

The code to import and preprocess the pathway diagrams is available at https://github.com/kusterlab/pathway-importer. *pathwaygraph* is part of the series of Bio-Web Components developed by our lab, *@biowc,* and is available as a JavaScript module here: www.npmjs.com/package/@biowc/pathwaygraph. The code can be accessed here:

754 www.github.com/kusterlab/biowc-pathwaygraph. The source code of PTMNavigator can be

755 accessed here:

756 https://github.com/wilhelm-lab/proteomicsdb-

757 vue/blob/main/src/views/analytics/PTMNavigator.vue.

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Conflict of Interest

773 BK and MW are founders and shareholders of OmicScouts and MSAID. They have no operational

774 role in either company. All other authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Figure 1. PTMNavigator combines PTM perturbation data, pathway diagrams, and enrichment analyses within a single application. (**A**) The four building blocks of PTMNavigator. Data from PTM perturbation experiments is provided by the user *(top left)*. This

data can then be projected onto canonical pathway diagrams from KEGG and WikiPathways *(top*

right). Uploaded datasets are automatically processed using several enrichment analysis

algorithms and the results are integrated into the visualization as well as displayed in tabular form

(bottom left). The user also has the option to design custom pathways, either by using the canonical

diagrams as templates or by starting from scratch *(bottom right)*. (**B)** Overview of the enrichment

algorithms available in PTMNavigator. *PHONEMeS is not an enrichment algorithm, instead it is

a method to reconstruct pathways for phosphoproteomics datasets using prior knowledge.

Figure 2. The User Interface of PTMNavigator. (**A**) The main interface of PTMNavigator. (1)

Datasets can be accessed via a 32-digit Session ID that users receive during data upload. An

arbitrary combination of datasets can be loaded at the same time. (2) A dataset may contain

multiple experiments (specified in the uploaded CSV file). In this panel, experiments can

dynamically be added to and removed from the diagram. (3) The list of pathways to choose from

is sorted by scores from a gene-centric redundant enrichment analysis. Users can also search this

list for the name or identifier of a pathway, or filter for pathways that contain a certain set of genes

or proteins. (4) Users can switch between a viewing mode, in which they can study the projection

of their data onto pathway diagrams, and an editing mode, in which they can modify existing and

create custom pathways. (5) The main canvas. After selecting a pathway, its diagram is rendered

here. Additional smaller nodes are added for the peptides in the user data. (6) Initially, all peptides

of a regulation group (up-/down-/unregulated) that belong to the same protein are summarized in

one circular node that is labeled with the number of peptides it contains. By double-clicking on it,

a summary node can be expanded into individual nodes for each peptide (elliptical shapes). The

position of the modified residue can optionally be displayed above the ellipsis. (7) When hovering

over a node, all information supplied during the upload is displayed as a tooltip. If a site is

annotated in PhosphoSitePlus, a link to the annotation is retrieved. (**B**) The Enrichment Analyses

View, showing the three most significant results from a Kinase-Substrate Enrichment Analysis

(KSEA).

Figure 3. PTMNavigator aids in interpreting pathway enrichment analysis results. (**A**) Overview of the kinases which were targeted with inhibitors in the study by *Bekker-Jensen et al.* (**B**) Results of gene-centric-redundant ssGSEA showing pathways with p-value<0.05 for the 30 kinase inhibitor datasets. Pathways are sorted by the number of datasets in which they were reported as enriched (larger numbers on the bottom). Inhibitors are grouped by their designated targets. GCR: gene-centric redundant. (**C**) 10 highest-scoring pathways for the PKC inhibitor Go-6983 by gene-centric-redundant ssGSEA score. Circle size indicates the fraction of genes in the

814   pathway that were contained in the set of regulations. (**D**) 10 highest-scoring pathways for the

815   PKC inhibitor Go-6983 by absolute PTM-SEA score. Circle size indicates the fraction of genes in

816   the signature that were contained in the set of regulations.

A

B

Figure 4. Analysis of a phosphoproteomic perturbation dataset in PTMNavigator. (A) Edited

screenshot from PTMNavigator showing an excerpt from the pathway diagram 'mTOR Signaling

Pathway - hsa04150' and the modified peptides significantly regulated by three of the drugs in

Bekker-Jensen et al. Note that the node for EGFR was added by the authors. It is not part of the

original pathway diagram, but is known to interact with GRB2 and PI3K. The blue borders indicate

kinases whose activity was significantly decreased (Score <-0.5, FDR < 0.1) according to KSEA

analysis. *Top:* Lapatinib. *Middle:* Wortmannin. *Bottom:* Temsirolimus. (**B**) Edited screenshot from

PTMNavigator showing an excerpt from the pathway diagram 'MAPK signaling pathway -

hsa04010' and the modified peptides regulated by two of the drugs in *Bekker-Jensen et al.*

Regulated PTMs are colored by the size of the effect (Log$_2$ Fold Change). *Left:* Cobimetinib.

Right: Sorafenib.

Figure 5. PTMNavigator supports analysis of drug dose-dependent perturbation data. (**A**) Edited screenshot from PTMNavigator showing an excerpt from the pathway diagram 'mTOR Signaling Pathway - hsa04150' and the modified peptides regulated in the Lapatinib experiment of *Zecha et al.* The node for EGFR was added by the authors, as it is not part of the original pathway diagram, but is known to interact with GRB2 and PI3K. The blue borders indicate kinases whose activity was significantly decreased (Score <-0.5, FDR < 0.1) according to RoKAI refinement followed by KSEA analysis. (**B**) decryptM curves from the Lapatinib dataset for those peptides that were also significantly downregulated in the *Bekker-Jensen* data. (**C**) decryptM curves with the highest (pEC_{50}=7.41) and lowest (pEC_{50}=6.37) potency in the mTOR signaling pathway.

Figure 6. Extending a Canonical Pathway with PTMNavigator. (A) Edited screenshot from

PTMNavigator showing an excerpt from the pathway diagram 'Regulation of Actin Cytoskeleton

– WP51' and the modified peptides regulated in the Refametinib (*left*) and Mirdametinib (*right*)

decryptM experiments. All regulations are downregulations. (**B**) Pathway graph of the

Refametinib dataset generated by PHONEMeS. The kinases with decreased activity (determined

by RoKAI + KSEA) were used as perturbation targets in the PHONEMeS input. (**C**) Proposed

manual extension to the diagram 'WP51', created using the 'Editing Mode' within

PTMNavigator. For illustrative purposes, nodes and edges added by hand are shown in green.

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary Table 1. Input examples for PTMNavigator.

Supplementary Figure 1. Number of pathways per organism and reference database that were imported into ProteomicsDB and are available in PTMNavigator.

Supplementary Figure 2. Mapping of Node Types from KEGG and WikiPathways to PTMNavigator.

Supplementary Figure 3. Mapping of Edge Types from KEGG and WikiPathways to PTMNavigator.

Supplementary Figure 4. Gene Identifier conversion for WikiPathways diagrams.

Supplementary Figure 5. Visualization of protein-level and peptide-level data in PTMNavigator.

Supplementary Figure 6. Results of PTM-SEA analysis of the Bekker-Jensen dataset.

Supplementary Figure 7. Common subnetworks of the high-scoring pathways in the Go-6983 dataset.

Supplementary Figure 8. PTMNavigator makes PTM-SEA and kinase activity scores transparent.

Supplementary Figure 9. Comparison of dose-dependent Dactolisib treatment in three different cell lines.

Supplementary Figure 10. decryptM curves from the Refametinib and Mirdametinib datasets.

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1027

A

PTM
Perturbation Data

Canonical
Pathways

*PTM*Navigator

Enrichment
Analyses

Pathway
Editing

B

Type	Algorithm Name	Publication
Gene Set Enrichment	ssGSEA - Gene-Centric	Krug et al.
Gene Set Enrichment	ssGSEA - Gene-Centric-Redundant	Krug et al.
PTM Set Enrichment	PTM-SEA	Krug et al.
Kinase Activity Inference	KSEA	Casado et al.
Kinase Activity Inference	RoKAI + KSEA	Yılmaz et al.
Kinase Activity Inference	KSTAR	Crowl et al.
Kinase Activity Inference	KEA	Kuleshov et al.
Motif Analysis	Motif Enrichment	Johnson et al. / Inhouse
Pathway Inference	PHONEMeS*	Gjerga et al.

A

B

Enrichment Analyses:

‹ PTM-SEA	PEA GENE-CENTRIC	**KSEA**	KSEA WITH ROKAI ›

Gene	Score (Experiment 1)	adj p-val (Experiment 1)	Score (Experiment 2)	adj p-val (Experiment 2)
Protein C	-3.23	0.01	-3.12	0.01
Protein X	-2.99	0.01	-2.61	0.03
Protein Y	-2.60	0.01	-2.60	0.09

A

Projection of Data onto Canonical Pathway (Regulation of Actin Cytoskeleton - WP51)

pEC50 [M]:

B

Graph Created for the Dataset by PHONEMeS

pEC50 [M]:

Decreased Kinase Activity

C

Manual Extension of the Graph Using PTMNavigator

Original diagram

Extension