

1 **Pixel: a content management platform for**
2 **quantitative omics data**

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12 **ABSTRACT**

13 **Background.** In biology, high-throughput experimental technologies, also referred as
14 “omics” technologies, are increasingly used in research laboratories. Several thousands of
15 gene expression measurements can be obtained in a single experiment. Researchers are
16 routinely facing the challenge to annotate, store, explore and mine all the biological
17 information they have at their disposal. We present here the Pixel web application (Pixel Web
18 App), an original content management platform to help people involved in a multi-omics
19 biological project.

20 **Methods.** The Pixel Web App is built with open source technologies and hosted on the
21 collaborative development platform GitHub (<https://github.com/Candihub/pixel>). It is written
22 in Python using the Django framework and stores all the data in a PostgreSQL database. It is
23 developed in the open and licensed under the BSD 3-clause license. The Pixel Web App is
24 also heavily tested with both unit and functional tests, a strong code coverage and continuous
25 integration provided by CircleCI. To ease the development and the deployment of the Pixel
26 Web App, Docker and Docker Compose are used to bundle the application as well as its
27 dependencies.

28 **Results.** The Pixel Web App offers researchers an intuitive way to annotate, store, explore
29 and mine their multi-omics results. It can be installed on a personal computer or on a server to
30 fit the needs of many users. In addition, anyone can enhance the application to better suit their
31 needs, either by contributing directly on GitHub (encouraged) or by extending Pixel on their
32 own. The Pixel Web App does not provide any computational programs to analyze the data.
33 Still, it helps to rapidly explore and mine existing results and holds a strategic position in the
34 management of research data.

35 **Introduction**

36 In biology, high throughput (HT) experimental technologies - also referred as “omics” - are
37 routinely used in an increasing number of research teams. Financial costs associated to HT
38 experiments have been considerably reduced in the last decade (Hayden, 2014) and the trend
39 in HT sequencing (HTS) is now to acquire benchtop machines designed for individual
40 research laboratories (for instance Illumina NextSeq500 or Oxford Nanopore Technologies
41 MinION, (Blow, 2013)). The number of HT applications in biology has grown so rapidly in
42 the past decade that it is hard to not feel overwhelmed (Hadfield & Retief, 2018)(“The data
43 deluge,” 2012). It seems possible to address in any organism, any biological question through
44 an “omics” perspective, providing the right HT material and method are found. If HTS is
45 often put at the forefront of “omics” technologies (essentially genomics and
46 transcriptomics, (Reuter, Spacek & Snyder, 2015)), other technologies must be considered.
47 Mass spectrometry (MS) for instance, enables HT identification and quantification of proteins
48 (proteomics). Metabolomics and lipidomics are other derived applications of MS to
49 characterize quantitative changes in small-molecular weight cellular components (Smith et al.,
50 2014). Together, they all account for complementary “omics area” with the advantage to
51 quantify distinct levels of cellular components (transcripts, proteins, metabolites, etc.).

52 Integration of datasets issued from different HT technologies (termed as multi-omics datasets)
53 represents a challenging task from a statistical and methodological point of view (Huang,
54 Chaudhary & Garmire, 2017). It implies the manipulation of two different types of data. The
55 first type is the “primary data”, which correspond to raw experimental results. It can be
56 FASTQ files for sequencing technology (Cock et al., 2010) or mzML files for MS (Martens et
57 al., 2011). These files can be stored in public repositories such as SRA (Leinonen et al.,
58 2011), GEO (Clough & Barrett, 2016), PRIDE (Martens et al., 2005) or PeptideAtlas (Desiere
59 et al., 2006). Analyses of primary data rely on standard bioinformatics protocols that for
60 instance, perform quality controls, correct experimental bias or convert files from a specific
61 format to another. A popular tool to analyse primary data is Galaxy (Afgan et al., 2016),
62 which is an open web-based platform. “Secondary data” are produced upon analysis of
63 primary data. It can be the counts of reads per genes for HTS results or the abundance values
64 per proteins for MS results. In multi-omics datasets analysis, combining secondary data is
65 essential to answer specific biological questions. It can be typically, the identification of
66 differentially expressed genes (or proteins) between several cell growth conditions from
67 transcriptomics (or proteomics) datasets, or the identification of cellular functions that are

68 over-represented in a list of genes (or proteins). In that respect, secondary data can be
69 analysed and re-analysed within a multitude of analytical strategies, introducing the idea of
70 data analysis cycle. The researcher is thus constantly facing the challenge to
71 properly annotate, store, explore and mine all the biological data he/she has at his/her disposal
72 in a multi-omics project. This challenge is directly related to the ability to extract as much
73 information as possible from the produced data, but also to the crucial question of doing
74 reproducible research.

75 A Nature's survey presented in 2016 indicates that more than 70% of the questioned
76 researchers already experienced an impossibility to reproduce published results, and more
77 than half of them were not able to reproduce their own experiments (Baker, 2016). This last
78 point is intriguing. If experimental biology can be subjected to random fluctuations hardly
79 difficult to control, computational biology should not. Running the same software on the same
80 input data is expected to give the same results. In practice, replication in computational
81 science is harder than people generally think (see (Mesnard & Barba, 2017) as an illustration).
82 It requires to adopt good practices for reproducible-research on a daily basis, and not only
83 when the final results are about to be published. Initiatives to improve computational
84 reproducibility exists (Peng, 2011; Stodden, Guo & Ma, 2013; Vasilevsky et al., 2017;
85 Rougier et al., 2017; Stodden, Seiler & Ma, 2018), and today it is clear that the data alone are
86 not enough to sustain scientific claims. Comments, explanations, software source codes and
87 tests are prerequisites to ensure that an original research can be replicated by anyone, anytime,
88 anywhere.

89 We developed the Pixel web application (Pixel Web App) with these ideas in mind. It is a
90 content management platform to help the researchers involved in a multi-omics biological
91 project, to collaboratively work with their HT data. The Pixel Web App does not store the
92 primary data. It is rather focused on annotation, storage and exploration of secondary data
93 (see **Figure 1**). These explorations represent critical steps to answer biological questions and
94 need to be carefully annotated and recorded to be further exploited in the context of new
95 biological questions. The Pixel Web App helps the researcher to specify necessary
96 information required to replicate multi-omics results. We added an original hierarchical
97 system of tags, which allows to easily explore and select multi-omics results stored in the
98 system and to use them for new interpretations. The Pixel Web App can be installed on any
99 individual computer (for a single researcher for instance), or on a web server for collaborative
100 work between several researchers or research teams. The entire software has been developed

101 with high quality programming standards and complies to major rules of open-source
102 development (Taschuk & Wilson, 2017). The Pixel project is available on GitHub
103 at <https://github.com/Candihub/pixel>, where full source code and detailed documentation are
104 provided. We present in this article the Pixel Web App design and implementation. We
105 provide a simple case study, emblematic of our daily use of the Pixel Web App, with the
106 exploration of results issued from transcriptomics and proteomics experiments performed in
107 the pathogenic yeast *Candida glabrata*.

108 **Material and Methods**

109 **Stack overview**

110 The Pixel Web App provides researchers an intuitive way to annotate, store, explore and mine
111 their secondary data analyses, in multi-omics biological projects. It is built upon mainstream
112 open source technologies (see **Figure 2**). Source code is hosted on the collaborative
113 development platform GitHub¹ and continuous integration is provided by CircleCI². More
114 precisely, the Pixel Web App uses the Python Django framework. This framework is based on
115 a model-template-view architecture pattern, and data are stored in a PostgreSQL³ database.
116 We have built a docker image for the Pixel Web App. Other containers, Nginx (to serve the
117 Django application) and PostgreSQL rely on official docker images. Each installation /
118 deployment will result in the creation / execution of three docker instances: one for the Pixel
119 Web App, one for the PostgreSQL database and one for the Nginx web server. In case of
120 multiple installations, each trio of docker instances is fully isolated, meaning that data are not
121 shared across multiple Pixel Web App installations.

122 **Technical considerations**

- 123 • Docker images

124 The Pixel Web App is built on containerization paradigm (see **Figure 2**). It relies
125 on Docker⁴, *i.e.* a tool which packages an application and its dependencies in an image that
126 will be run as a container. Docker helps developers to build self-contained images to run a
127 software. These images are downloaded on the host system and used to build the Pixel Web
128 App.

¹ <https://github.com/>

² <https://circleci.com/>

³ <https://www.postgresql.org/>

⁴ <https://www.docker.com/>

- 129 • Minimal configuration and dependencies

130 The Pixel Web App can be deployed on Linux and MacOS operating systems (OS).

131 Deployment on Windows is possible, but this situation will not be described here. Minimal
132 requirements are: (i) 64 bits Unix-based OS (Linux / MacOS), (ii) Docker community edition
133 > v18, (iii) Internet access (required in order to download the Docker images) and (iv)
134 [optional] a web server (Apache or Nginx) configured as a reverse proxy.

135 **Installation**

136 A step-by-step tutorial to deploy the Pixel Web App can be found in the project repository⁵
137 together with a deploy script. To summarize, this script runs the following steps:

- 138 ➤ Pull a tagged image of Pixel (web, see docker-composer file),
- 139 ➤ Start all instances (web, db and proxy) recreating the proxy and web instances. Collect
140 all static files from the Django app. These files will be served by the proxy instance.
- 141 ➤ Migrate the database schema if needed (to preserve existing data).

142 Note that further technical considerations and full documentation can be found on GitHub
143 repository associated to the Pixel project⁶.

144 **Results**

145 **Definition of terms: Omics Unit, Pixel and Pixel Set**

146 In the Pixel Web App, the term "Omics Unit" refers to any cellular component, from any
147 organism, which is of interest for the user. The type of Omics Unit depends on the HT
148 experimental technology (transcriptomic, proteomic, metabolomic, etc.) from which primary
149 and secondary datasets were collected and derived (**Figure 1A**). In this context, classical
150 Omics Units can be transcripts or proteins, but any other cellular component can be defined
151 as, for instance, genomic regions with "peaks" in case of ChIPseq data analyses (Merhej et al.,
152 2014). A "Pixel" refers to a quantitative measurement of a cellular activity associated to a
153 single Omics Unit, together with a quality score (see **Figure 1A**). Quantitative measurement
154 and quality score are results of statistical analyses performed on secondary
155 datasets, *e.g.* search for differentially expressed genes (Seyednasrollah, Laiho & Elo, 2015). A
156 set of Pixels obtained from a single secondary data analysis of HT experimental results is
157 referred as a "Pixel Set" (see **Figure 1A**). Pixel Sets represent the central information in the

⁵ <https://github.com/Candihub/pixel/blob/master/docs-install/how-to-install.md>

⁶ <https://github.com/Candihub/pixel/tree/master/docs>

158 Pixel Web App and functionalities to annotate, store, explore and mine multi-omics biological
159 data were designed according to this concept (see below).

160 **Functionalities to annotate, store, explore and mine Pixel Sets**

161 Pixel Sets are obtained from secondary data analyses (see **Figure 1A**). Their manipulation
162 with the Pixel Web App consists in (i) their annotation, (ii) their storage in a database, (iii)
163 their exploration and (iv) their mining (see **Figure 1C**). This represents a cycle of multiple
164 data analyses, which is essential in any multi-omics biological project. These different steps
165 are detailed in the following.

166 • Annotation of Pixel Sets

167 Annotation of Pixel Sets consists in tracking important details of Pixel Set production. For
168 that, Pixel Sets are associated with metadata, *i.e.* supplementary information linked to the
169 Pixel Sets. We defined minimal information necessary for relevant annotations of Pixel Sets
170 (see **Figure 3**). "Species", "Strain", "Omics Unit Type" and "Omics Area" are mandatory
171 information that must be specified *before* a new Pixel Set submission (highlighted in blue,
172 **Figure 3**). They refer to general information related to the multi-omics biological project on
173 which the researcher is working on: (i) the studied organism and its genetic background
174 (Species and Strain, *e.g.* *Candida glabrata* and ATCC2001), (ii) the type of monitored
175 cellular components (Omics Unit Type, *e.g.* mRNA, protein) and (iii) the nature of the
176 experimental HT technology (Omics Area, *e.g.* RNA sequencing, mass spectrometry). All
177 Omics Units must be declared in the Pixel Web App before new Pixel Set submission. They
178 must be defined with a short description and a link to a reference database. "Experiment" and
179 "Analysis" are Pixel Set mandatory information, input during the submission of new Pixel
180 Sets in the Pixel Web App (highlighted in orange, **Figure 3**). They include respectively the
181 detailed description of the experimental strategy that was applied to generate primary and
182 secondary data sets (Experiment) and the detailed description of the computational procedures
183 that were applied to obtain Pixel Sets from secondary data set (Analysis). Information
184 regarding the researcher who performed the analyses is referred as "Pixeler".

185 • Storage of Pixel Sets in the database

186 Import of new Pixel Sets in the Pixel Web App requires the user to follow a workflow for data
187 submission. It corresponds to six successive steps that are explained below (**Figure 4A**).

188 1. The "Download" step consists in downloading a template Excel file from the Pixel
189 Web App (see **Figure 4B**). In this file, multiple-choice selections are proposed for

190 "Species", "Strain", "Omics Unit Type" and "Omics Area" fields. These choices
191 reflect what is currently available in the database and can be easily expanded. User
192 must fill other annotation fields related to the "Experiment", "Analysis" and "Pixeler"
193 information. The Excel file is next bundled into a ZIP archive with the secondary data
194 file (in tab-separated values format), the user notebook (R markdown⁷ or Jupyter
195 notebook⁸ for instance) that contains the code used to produce the Pixel Sets from the
196 secondary data file.

- 197 2. The "Upload" step consists in uploading the ZIP file in the Pixel Web App.
- 198 3. The step "Meta" consists in running an automatic check of the imported file
199 integrity (md5sum checks are performed, Excel file version is verified, etc.). Note that
200 no information is imported in the database at this stage, but a careful inspection of
201 all Omics Units listed in the submitted Pixel Sets is done. This is why Omics Units
202 need to be pre-registered in the Pixel Web App (see previous section).
- 203 4. In "Annotation" step, the annotations of Pixel Sets found in the Excel file (see **Figure**
204 **4C**) are controlled and validated by the user.
- 205 5. Next, the "Tags" step is optional. It gives the opportunity to the user to add tags to the
206 new Pixel Sets (see **Figure 4C**), that could be helpful for further Pixel Set explorations
207 (see next section).
- 208 6. The final step "Import archive" consists in importing all Pixel Sets in the database,
209 together with annotations and tags.

210 Note that the procedure of importing meta data as an Excel file has been inspired from the
211 import procedure widely used in GEO (Clough & Barrett, 2016).

212 • Exploration of Pixel Sets

213 The Pixel Web App aims to help researchers to mine and integrate multiple Pixel Sets stored
214 in the system. We developed a dedicated web interface to explore all the Pixel Sets stored in a
215 particular Pixel instance (see **Figure 5**). The upper part named "Selection" lists a group of
216 Pixel Sets selected by the user for further explorations (**Figure 5A**). The middle part named
217 "Filters" lists the Pixel database contents regarding the Species, Omics Unit Types, Omics
218 Areas and Tags annotation fields. The user can select information (*Candida glabrata*
219 and modified pH here), search and filter the Pixel Sets stored in the database (**Figure 5B**).
220 The lower part is a more flexible search field in which keywords can be type. These keywords

⁷ <https://rmarkdown.rstudio.com/>

⁸ <http://jupyter.org/>

221 are searched in the Analysis and Experiment detailed description fields as illustrated here
222 with LIMMA. The web interface also comprised detailed information for the selected subset
223 of Pixel Sets with for instance, distributions of values and quality scores and a list of
224 individual Omics Unit shown at the bottom of the page (**Figure 5C**). Note that tags have been
225 implemented to offer to the user a versatile yet robust annotation of Pixel Sets. They are
226 defined during the import process, but they can be modified at any time through the Pixel web
227 interface. Once searched, matching Pixel Sets are gathered in a table that can be exported.

228 **A case study in the pathogenic yeast *Candida glabrata***

229 The yeast *Candida glabrata* (*C. glabrata*) is a fungal pathogen of human (Bolotin-Fukuhara
230 & Fairhead, 2014). It has been reported as the second most frequent cause of invasive
231 infections due to *Candida* species, *i.e.* candidemia, arising especially in patients with
232 compromised immunity (HIV virus infection, cancer treatment, organ transplantation, etc.).
233 Candidemia remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the healthcare
234 structures (Horn et al., 2009; Pfaller et al., 2012). The genome of *Candida glabrata* has been
235 published in 2004 (Dujon et al., 2004). Its size is 12.3 Mb with 13 chromosomes and is
236 composed of ~5200 coding regions. Our research team is familiar with functional genomic
237 studies in *C. glabrata*. In collaboration with experimental biologists, we published in the past
238 ten years half dozen of articles, in which HT technologies were used (Lelandais et al., 2008;
239 Goudot et al., 2011; Merhej et al., 2015, 2016; Thiébaud et al., 2017). In our lab, the Pixel
240 Web App is installed locally and store all the necessary genomics annotations to manage any
241 multi-omics datasets in this species.

242 As a case study, we decided to present how the Pixel Web App can be helpful to answer a
243 specific biological question with only a few mouse clicks. As a biological question, we
244 wanted to identify the genes in the entire *C. glabrata* genome: (i) which are annotated as
245 involved in the yeast pathogenicity and (ii) for which the expression is significantly modified
246 in response to an environmental stress induced by alkaline pH. Indeed, during a human host
247 infection, *C. glabrata* has to face important pH fluctuations (see (Ullah et al., 2013; Brunke &
248 Hube, 2013; Linde et al., 2015) for more detailed information). Understanding the molecular
249 processes that allow the pathogenic yeast *C. glabrata* to adapt extreme pH situations is
250 therefore of medical interest to better understand host-pathogen interaction (Linde et al.,
251 2015).

252 In a paper published in 2015, Linde *et al.* provided a detailed RNAseq based analysis of the
253 transcriptional landscape of *C. glabrata* in several growth conditions, including pH shift
254 experiments (Linde et al., 2015). The primary dataset (RNAseq fastq files) is available in the
255 Gene Expression Omnibus (Clough & Barrett, 2016) under accession number GSE61606. The
256 secondary dataset (log₂ Fold Change values) is available in Supplementary Table S1 on the
257 journal website⁹. A first Pixel Set (labelled A) was created from this secondary dataset,
258 annotated and imported into our Pixel Web App instance, following the procedure previously
259 described. The associated ZIP archive is provided as supplemental file, along with the all the
260 details related to the experiment set up and the analysis. The Pixel Set A thus illustrates how
261 publicly available data can be managed with the Pixel Web App. In our laboratory, we
262 performed mass spectrometry experiments that also include pH shift (unpublished results, but
263 ZIP archive of the data is provided as supplemental file). Secondary dataset issued from these
264 experiments leads to the Pixel Set B. Pixel Sets A and B comprise 5,253 Pixels and 1,879
265 Pixels (**Figure 6**).

266 Transcriptomics (Pixel Set A) and proteomics (Pixel Set B) are interesting complementary
267 multi-omics information that can be easily associated and compared with the Pixel Web App.
268 In that respect, tags allowed to rapidly retrieve them using the web interface, applying the
269 keywords "Candida glabrata" and "alkaline pH" (**Figure 6**, Step 1). As we wanted to limit the
270 analysis to the *C. glabrata* genes potentially involved in the yeast pathogenesis, a filter could
271 be used to only retain the Omics Units for which the keyword "pathogenicity" is written in
272 their description field (see **Figure 6**, Step 2). As a result, a few numbers of Pixels were thus
273 selected, respectively 17 in Pixel Set A and 6 in Pixel Set B. The last step consists in
274 combining the mRNA and protein information (see **Figure 6**, Step 3). For that a table
275 comprising the multi-pixel sets can be automatically generated and easily exported. We
276 present **Table 1** five genes for which logFC values were obtained both at the mRNA and the
277 protein levels, and for which statistical p-values were significant (< 0.05). Notably two genes
278 (CAGL0I02970g and CAGL0L08448g, lines 3 and 5 in **Table 1**) exhibited opposite logFC
279 values, *i.e.* induction was observed at the mRNA level whereas repression was observed at the
280 protein levels. Such observations can arise from post-translational regulation processes or
281 from possible experimental noise, which could explain approximative mRNA or protein
282 quantifications. In both cases, further experimental investigations are required. The three
283 other genes (CAGL0F04807g, CAGL0F06457g and CAGL0I10516g, underlined in grey

⁹ <https://academic.oup.com/nar/article/43/3/1392/2411170>

284 **Table 1**) exhibited multi-omics coherent results and significant inductions were observed at
285 the mRNA and protein levels. Again, further experimental investigations are required to fully
286 validated these observations. Still, it is worth noting that the gene CAGL0F04807g, is
287 described as “uncharacterized” in the Candida Genome Database¹⁰. Considering that logFC
288 values for this gene are particularly high (> 1), such an observation represents a good starting
289 point to refine the functional annotation of this gene, clearly supporting the hypothesis that it
290 has a role in the ability of *C. glabrata* to deal with varying pH situations.

291 **Software Availability**

292 Pixel is released under the open-source 3-Clause BSD license
293 (<https://opensource.org/licenses/BSD-3-Clause>). Its source code can be freely downloaded
294 from the GitHub repository of the project: <https://github.com/Candihub/pixel>. In addition, the
295 present version of Pixel (4.0.4) is also archived in the digital repository Zenodo
296 (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1434316>).

297 **Discussion**

298 In this article, we introduced the principle and the main functionalities of the Pixel Web App.
299 With this application, our aim was to develop a tool to support on a daily basis, the biological
300 data mining in our multi-omics research projects. It is our experience that research studies in
301 which HT experimental strategies are applied, require much more time to analyse and
302 interpret the data, than to experimentally generate the data. Testing multiple bioinformatics
303 tools and statistical approaches is a critical step to fully understand the meaning of a
304 biological dataset and in this context, the annotation, the storage and the ability to easily
305 explore the all results obtained in a laboratory can be the decisive steps to the success of the
306 entire multi-omics project.

307 The data modelling around which the Pixel Web App was developed, has been conceived to
308 find a compromise between a too detailed and precise description of the data (which could
309 discourage the researchers of systematically use the application after each of their analyses)
310 and a too short and approximate description of the data (which could prevent the
311 perfect reproduction of the results by anyone). Also, an attention has been paid to allow
312 heterogeneous data, *i.e.* different Omics Unit Type quantified in different Omics Area, to be
313 stored in a coherent and flexible way. The Pixel Web App does not provide any
314 computational programs to analyse the data. Still, it allows to explore existing results in a

¹⁰ http://www.candidagenome.org/cgi-bin/locus.pl?locus=CAGL0F04807g&organism=C_glabrata_CBS138

315 laboratory and to rapidly combine them for further investigations (using for instance the
316 Galaxy platform or any other data analysis tool).

317 Therefore, the Pixel Web App holds a strategic position in the data management in a research
318 laboratory, *i.e.* as the starting point but also at the final point of all new data explorations. It
319 also helps data analysis reproducibility and gives a constant feedback regarding the frequency
320 of the data analysis cycles; the nature of the import and export data sets as well as full
321 associated annotations. It is thus expected that the content of different Pixel Web App
322 instance will evolve with time, according to the type of information stored in the system and
323 the scientific interests of a research team.

324 **Conclusion**

325 The Pixel Web App is freely available to any interested people. The initial installation on a
326 personal workstation required IT support from a bioinformatician, but once this is done, all
327 administration tasks can be performed through the Web Interface. This is of interest for user
328 with a few technical skills. We chose to work exclusively with open source technologies and
329 our GitHub repository is publicly accessible¹¹. We thus hope that the overall quality of the
330 Pixel Web App source code and documentation will be guaranteed over time, through the
331 shared contributions of other developers.

332 **Figure and table legends**

333 **Figure 1: Dataset flow through the Pixel Web App.** (A) Different types of datasets, which are
334 managed in a multi-omics biological project. Primary and secondary datasets are two types of
335 information arising from HT experimental technologies (see the section **Introduction**). Only
336 secondary data and their associated Pixel Sets are stored in the Pixel Web App. Note that several Pixel
337 Sets can emerge from multiple secondary data analyses. They comprise quantitative values (Value)
338 together with quality scores (QS) for several hundred of different "Omics Units" elements (for
339 instance mRNA or proteins, see the main text). Omics Units are identified with a unique identifier
340 (ID). (B) Screenshot of the home page of the Pixel web interface. (C) Schematic representation of the
341 data analysis cycles that surrounds the integration of Pixel Sets in the Pixel Web App (see the main
342 text).

343 **Figure 2: Stack overview of the Pixel Web App.** Open source solutions used to develop Pixel are
344 shown here. They are respectively used for the software development and test (blue section), the data
345 storage (green section) and the web application for both staging and production (orange section).

346 **Figure 3: Data modelling in the Pixel Web App.** The Pixel Set is the central information (see **Figure**
347 **1A**), the corresponding table in the model is highlighted in red. Information that is required *before*
348 Pixel Set import in the Pixel Web App is surrounded in blue, whereas information required *during*
349 Pixel Set import is highlighted in orange. Other tables are automatically updated during the Pixel Web

¹¹ <https://github.com/Candihub/pixel>

350 App data analysis life cycle (see **Figure 1C**). Enlarge version of this picture together with full
351 documentation is available online¹².

352 **Figure 4: Procedure to import new Pixel Sets in the Pixel Web App.** (A) New data-sets are
353 submitted following a dedicated workflow that comprised 6 successive actions named "Download",
354 "Upload", "Meta", "Validation", "Tags" and "Import archive" (see 1). Several files are required (see
355 2): the secondary data from which the Pixel Sets were calculated, the notebook in which the procedure
356 to compute Pixel Sets from secondary data is described and the Pixel Set files (2 files in this example).
357 A progression bar allows the user to follow the sequence of the submission process. (B) Excel
358 spreadsheet in which annotations of Pixel Sets are written. Information related to the Experiment (see
359 1), the Analysis (see 2) and the Pixel datasets (see 3) is required. Note that this file must be
360 downloaded at the first step of the submission process ("Download", see A), allowing several cells to
361 be pre-filled with annotations stored in the database (see 4 as an illustration, with Omics area
362 information). (C) All information filled in the Excel file (see B) is extracted and can be modified
363 anytime through a dedicated web page as shown here. User can edit the Pixel Set (see 1), edit the
364 analysis (see 2), edit the experiment (see 3) and add "Tags" (see 4). The Tags are of interest to further
365 explore Pixel Sets in the Pixel Web App.

366 **Figure 5 : Functionalities to explore the Pixel Sets stored in the Pixel Web App.** (A) Screenshot of
367 the exploration menu available *via* the web interface. (B) Screenshot of the table that comprises all
368 Pixel Sets, which match the filter criteria (see A). Particular Pixel Sets can be selected here (for
369 instance "Pixel_C10.txt" and "Pixel_C60.txt"). They will therefore appear in the "Selection" list (see
370 A). (C) Screenshot of the web interface that gives detailed information for the selected subset of Pixel
371 Sets (see A). Distribution of values and quality scores are shown and individual Omics Unit are listed
372 at the bottom of the page.

373 **Figure 6: Case study in the pathogenic yeast *Candida glabrata*.** Our Pixel Web App was explored
374 with the keywords "Candida glabrata" and "alkaline pH". Two Pixel Sets were thus identified because
375 of their tags. Two other tags were identical between the two Pixel Sets ("WT" and "logFC"), indicating
376 that (i) *C. glabrata* strains are the same, *i.e.* Wild Type, and (ii) Pixel values are of the same
377 type, *i.e.* log Fold Change. Notably Pixel Set A is based on transcriptomics experiments (RNAseq, see
378 the main text), whereas Pixel Set B is based on proteomics experiments (mass spectrometry, see the
379 main text). Omics Unit were next explored searching the keyword "pathogenesis" in their description
380 fields (coming from the CGD database (Skrzypek et al., 2017)). This results in the identification of 17
381 Pixels (respectively 6 Pixels) in transcriptomics (respectively proteomics) results. They were
382 combined and exported from the Pixel Web App, hence starting a new data analysis cycle.

383 **Table 1: Detailed information regarding the Omics Unit identified in the *C. glabrata* case**
384 **study.** The two first column give Omics Unit information as described in the Candida Genome
385 Database (Skrzypek et al., 2017). All the description fields comprise the keyword "pathogenesis" (in
386 bold). LogFC values measured in transcriptomic (Pixel Set A) and proteomic (Pixel Set B)
387 experiments are shown in the third and fourth columns. Quality scores (QS) are following logFC
388 values. They are p-values coming from the differential analysis of logFC replicates. The entire table of
389 multi-pixel sets is available in supplementary data.

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- 504

A

Public databases (GEO, PRIDE, etc.)

Primary dataset,
i.e. FASTQ, mzML files

Pixel Set

Pixel

Omics Unit

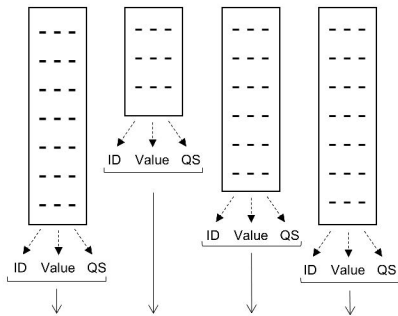
Omics Unit	Value	QS
CAGL0106743g	2,89	0,035
CAGL0F06413g	3,56	0,001
...		
CAGL0H03487g	0,78	0,075

Pixel Web App

Secondary dataset,
i.e. logFC, protein abundances

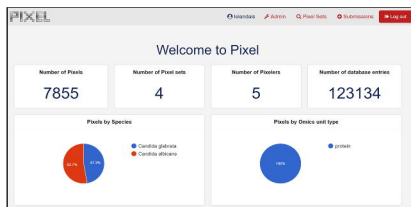
Data analysis #1 Data analysis #2 Data analysis #3

Pixel Set A Pixel Set B Pixel Set C Pixel Set D

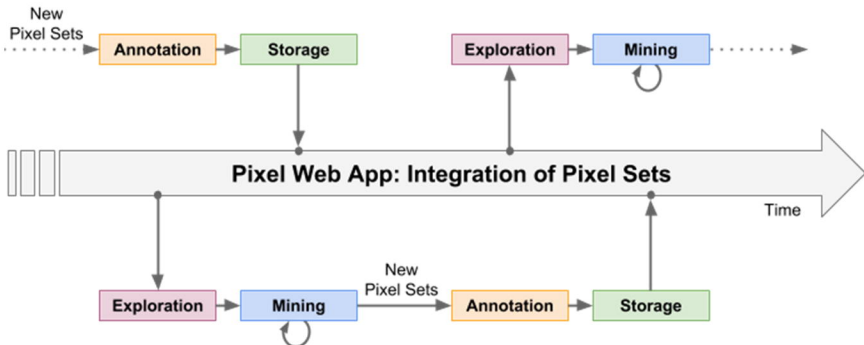


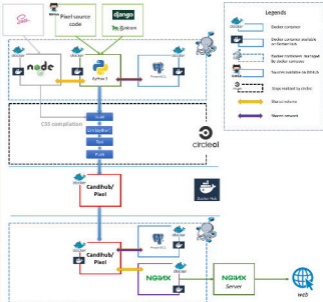
Annotation, Storage, Exploration

B



C

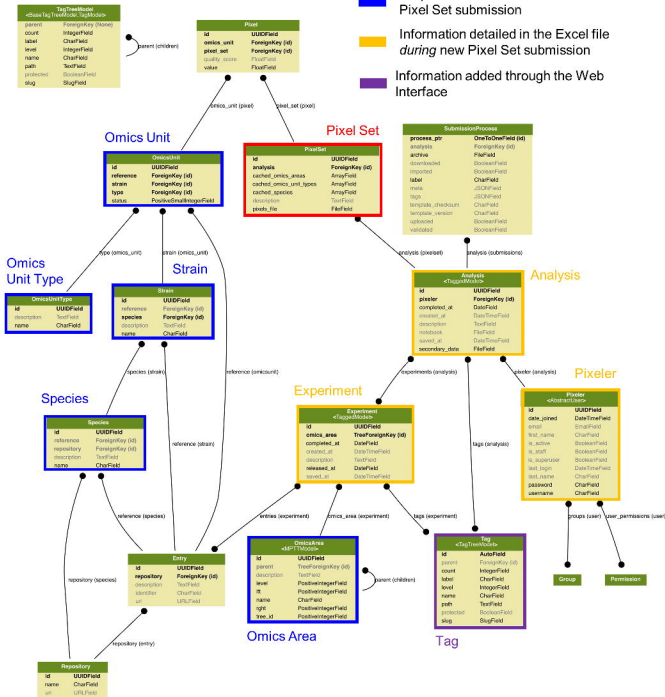




Required information *before* new Pixel Set submission

Information detailed in the Excel file *during* new Pixel Set submission

Information added through the Web Interface



A

Submissions / Dataset 1 - Submission 1 (submission #5)

3

1

100%

✓ DOWNLOAD ✓ UPLOAD ✓ META ✓ VALIDATION ✓ TAGS ✓ IMPORT ARCHIVE

Submission files

✓ Submitted archive has been successfully imported!

2

Submitted archive	Dataset1_12-02-2018.zip
Secondary data	1503002-protein-measurements-PD2.1.csv
Notebook	NoteBook.R
Pixel set 1	Dataset1_T10.txt
Pixel set 2	Dataset1_T60.txt

B

File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help Tell me Share

B3 --- Label free

Experiment	Analysis	Pixel datasets												
<p># This section describes the experimental conditions that were applied to obtain the secondary datafile (see section 'Analysis' below). Note that these experimental conditions a laboratory has to be specified).</p> <p>Omics area: --- Label free</p> <p>Completion date: </p> <p>Summary: analyses were performed in yeast Candida glabrata. Proteins were</p> <p>Release date: </p> <p>Data source: </p> <p>Reference (entry): </p>	<p># This section describes the data analyses that were performed on secondary datasets to obtain pixel datasets. The secondary datafile has to be associated to the secondary datafile.</p> <p>Name of secondary data file: 1503002-protein-measurements-PD2.1.csv</p> <p>Name of notebook file: NoteBook.R</p> <p>Description: Protein abundances obtained in two cell growth conditions (alkaline pH or standard) were compared, in order to identify differentially expressed proteins. LIMMA method was applied with default parameters, in order to calculate p-values. Completion date: Jan. 1, 2017</p>	<p># This section lists and describes each pixel datasets to be imported in the system. These files have to be associated to the secondary datafile (and the notebook file) for each set of Pixel to better describe their differences.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>File name</th> <th>Omics Unit type</th> <th>Strain (Species)</th> <th>Comment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pixel_C10.txt</td> <td>protein</td> <td>deltaHTU (Candida glabrata)</td> <td>This set of Pixel correspond to</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pixel_C60.txt</td> <td>protein</td> <td>deltaHTU (Candida glabrata)</td> <td>This set of Pixel correspond to</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	File name	Omics Unit type	Strain (Species)	Comment	Pixel_C10.txt	protein	deltaHTU (Candida glabrata)	This set of Pixel correspond to	Pixel_C60.txt	protein	deltaHTU (Candida glabrata)	This set of Pixel correspond to
File name	Omics Unit type	Strain (Species)	Comment											
Pixel_C10.txt	protein	deltaHTU (Candida glabrata)	This set of Pixel correspond to											
Pixel_C60.txt	protein	deltaHTU (Candida glabrata)	This set of Pixel correspond to											

Import information for Pixel

1

2

3

4

C

Pixel Sets / Pixel Set 6a3290

Edit this Pixel Set

1

Properties

ID	6a329052-e83e-46a7-8ae3-70e3db0540d2
Filename	Pixel_C10.txt
Species	Candida glabrata
Omics Unit types	protein
Omics Areas	Label free
Pixeler	Thomas Denecker

Analysis

Protein abundances obtained in two cell growth conditions (alkaline pH or standard) were compared, in order to identify differentially expressed proteins. LIMMA method was applied with default parameters, in order to calculate p-values. Completion date: Jan. 1, 2017

Edit this analysis

2

Experiments

In these experiments, mass spectrometry analyses were performed in yeast Candida glabrata. Proteins were extracted using FASP protocol (by Camille Garcia from the platform proteomics@IJM). Technical and biological replicates were done in order to evaluate the variability associated to each type of data reproduction. Protein abundances were obtained with PROGENESIS software, following the standard procedure of the proteomics platform (in 2015). Note that cell were submitted to an alkaline stress (1mL TRIS base), to observe modifications in protein abundances. Completion date: Jan. 1, 2015 Release date: Jan. 1, 2017

Edit this experiment

3

Tags

differential expression limma logFC

statistical p-value modified pH

standard growth media

4

A

Selection (2)

When you select and save Pixel Sets for export in the right panel, they are listed below. Then, click on the "Export" button to download an archive (.zip) with these selected Pixel Sets. You can also explore the pixels based on your selection.

6a32905 — Pixel_C10.txt

e26aa12 — Pixel_C60.txt

Clear Export Explore

Filters

Species

- Candida albicans*
- Candida glabrata*
- Saccharomyces cerevisiae*

Omics Unit Types

- mRNA
- protein

Omics Areas

- Proteomic
- Mass spectrometry
- Label free
- Transcriptomic
- Microarray
- RNAseq

Tags

- limma
- logFC
- modified pH
- standard growth media
- statistical p-value

Search

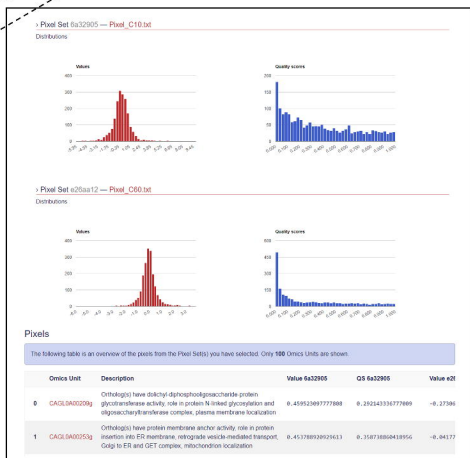
Type a gene name, an analysis ID or a keyword, e.g. CAGL0A02321g, c2436e3 or LIMMA

Clear Apply filters

B

#	Pixel Set	Species	Omics Unit type	Omics area	Pixeler
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pixel_C10.txt	<i>Candida glabrata</i>	protein	Label free	Thomas Denecker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pixel_C60.txt	<i>Candida glabrata</i>	protein	Label free	Thomas Denecker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dataset1_T10.txt	<i>Candida glabrata</i>	protein	Label free	Gaëlle Lelandais

C



Analysis

Protein abundances obtained in two cell growth conditions (alkaline pH or standard) were compared, in order to identify differentially expressed proteins. LIMMA method was applied with default parameters, in order to calculate p-values. Completion date: Jan. 1, 2017 ID: 07a9c74

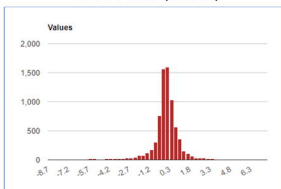
1 – Data exploration in the Pixel Web App

Keywords: « Candida glabrata » and « alkaline pH »

✓ Pixel Set A

Tags: Candida glabrata, WT, transcriptomics, alkaline pH, logFC

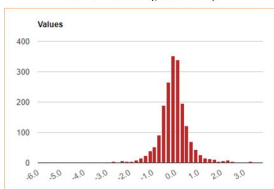
5253 Pixels (mRNA)



✓ Pixel Set B

Tags: Candida glabrata, WT, proteomics, alkaline pH, logFC

1879 Pixels (proteins)

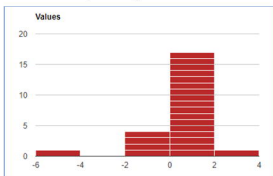


2 – Omics Unit filtering in the selected Pixel Sets

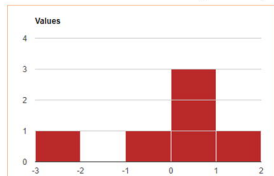
Keywords: « pathogenesis »

Omics Unit	Description
CAGL0C05467g	Ortholog(s) have role in biofilm formation, filamentous growth, pathogenesis and cytoplasm, nucleus localization
CAGL0D02156g	Ortholog(s) have glucosamine 6-phosphate N-acetyltransferase activity, role in UDP-N-acetylglucosamine biosynthetic process, pathogenesis and cytoplasm, nucleus localization
CAGL0F04807g	Ortholog(s) have role in pathogenesis and cell surface, hyphal cell wall, integral component of mitochondrial outer membrane, plasma membrane localization

17 Pixels (mRNA)



6 Pixels (proteins)



3 – Multi-pixel sets export for a new data analysis cycle