

# Ridom™ SeqSphere+ Software



## Microbial Genomics For Clonal and Plasmid transmission studies and real-time surveillance

ridom  
BIOINFORMATICS

Combining the best – Comparability of MLST and discriminatory power of PFGE

**Ridom SeqSphere+ Software** is designed for distributed work-groups (client/server model) and allows automatic processing and analyzing of NGS (e.g., **Illumina**, **Ion Torrent**, **ONT**, or **PacBio**) and Sanger capillary-electrophoresis sequence data. SeqSphere+ is the single solution for easy and automated microbial analysis; enabling your lab to employ whole genome microbial typing (*Nat Biotechnol.* **31**: 294, 2013).

**Bacterial typing** generates isolate-specific geno- or phenotypic characters that can be used to elucidate the sources and routes of spread of bacteria. Typing may also be used to identify emerging pathogenic strains or clones within a species (*Clin Microbiol Infect.* **13** [Suppl. 3]: 1, 2007).

A variety of methods have been developed to generate isolate-specific fingerprints for genotyping. However, until recently there was no single typing method available to address all bacterial species, different population structures (monomorphic vs. panmictic), and all study types (e.g., evolutionary/phylogenetic, population genetics, or transmission chain/outbreak). For decades, the common typing method was based on multi locus sequence typing (**MLST**) of 5-7 housekeeping genes, pulse field gel electrophoresis (**PFGE**), or multi locus VNTR analysis (**MLVA**). Although widely adopted, these methods either lack discriminatory power or are labor intensive and difficult to standardize.

Now, microbiologists everywhere can experience the genomic revolution that benchtop next generation sequencing (**NGS**) provides. With fast and affordable microbial whole genome shotgun sequencing (**WGS**) and automatized software analysis (**Fig. 1**), microbiologists can use genome-wide gene-by-gene allele calling of hundreds/thousands of genes (core genome MLST [**cgMLST**]) for genotyping (**Fig. 2**). cgMLST schemes consist of a fixed set of conserved genome-wide genes. Alleles are used instead of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) or concatenated sequences to mitigate the effects of recombination and to enable for a global and public nomenclature (**cgMLST.org** service). The high discriminatory power of cgMLST, coupled with rapid and simple WGS workflow, makes this complete solution ideal for everyday usage in a laboratory, e.g., for prospective surveillance of multi-drug resistant bacteria in a hospital (*JCM* **54**: 2874, 2016). That is, **one disruptive, accurate, and highly reproducible technology (JCM 55: 908, 2017) that fits any bacteria or virus (SARS-CoV-2), any research topic, and any lab** is finally within reach for every microbiologist.

### Ridom SeqSphere+

#### User friendly

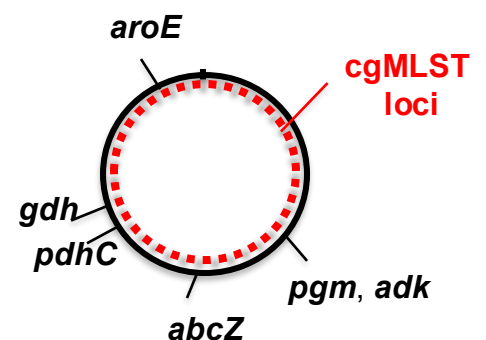
**No scripting or bioinformatics skills needed** to process your data and run your analyses.

#### Highly automated workflow

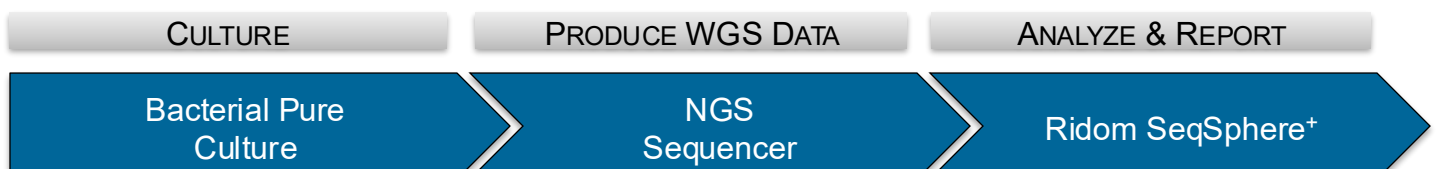
Download pre-defined typing schemes or quickly create your own scheme based on a reference genome or allele libraries. Setup an assembling and processing pipeline to analyze hundreds of your samples without any further user intervention.

#### Global nomenclature

Submit your high-quality allelic profiles and contribute to the world-wide unique cgMLST.org nomenclature service that ensures for a 'Molecular Typing Esperanto' derived from WGS data.



**Figure 2. MLST of 6 genes versus genome-wide cgMLST.** Shown are the 6 MLST targets for *N. meningitidis* and red dots across the genome that represent symbolically the cgMLST loci.



**Figure 1. Microbial WGS next generation sequencing and genome-wide gene by gene (cgMLST) analysis workflow.**

**Elevate your microbial research to the next level — [www.ridom.de](http://www.ridom.de)**

# Ridom SeqSphere+ Key Features

## DNA re-sequencing editor

Assemble raw reads (**FASTQ**) with integrated VELVET, SKESA, SPAdes, FLYE\*, or RAVEN\* (combined with Medaka v2 and ONT-cgMLST-Polisher for polishing; [bioRxiv](#)) and BWA algorithms. Read and analyze assembly files (ACE, BAM, FASTA). Inter-species contamination check with MASH SCREEN. Edit and analyze **NGS** or **Sanger** DNA sequence data.

## Pipeline for automated sequence analysis

Define and start a pipeline to trim by quality, down-sample, assemble, analyze, and type hundreds of NGS data at once automatically; e.g., by fetching raw reads from the benchtop sequencer as soon as data are generated. Define quality criteria for sample success.

## Characterize bacteria

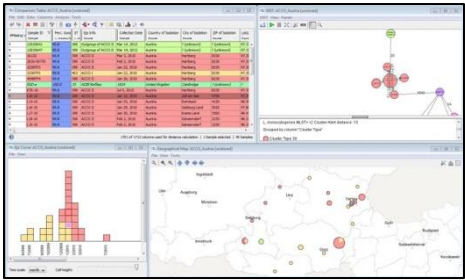
Type bacteria automatically with user defined QC parameters (e.g., frame shifts). Genome-wide allele and SNP calling from WGS data either on core genome and/or accessory genome level is implemented. Use public schemes for genotyping or define them by using the incorporated cgMLST Target Definer. Use the NCBI AMRFINDER for resistance prediction. *Salmonella* (SISTR), *E. coli* and *L. monocytogenes* genoserotyping. MOB-SUITE and MOBILEELEMENTFINDER plasmid reconstruction and characterization.

## Database

Store, search, retrieve, export, and create reports from experiment, circumstantial information, and DNA sequence data stored in an integrated database. Data fields are compliant with the meta-data requirements of the EBI European Nucleotide Archive (ENA). Compare new sequence entries against stored data. Get automatically **clonal** and/or **plasmid transmission alerts\*** of clusters (*Microbiol Spectr.* **12**: e0210024, 2024). Manage and backup all data (sequence and epi-data). Download from NCBI GENOME complete/draft genomes or NCBI SRA reads. Submit with just one click raw read- and epi-data to EBI ENA.

## Analytical tools

Visualize place, time, 'person', and type dimensions in a comparison table with built-in GIS, epi-curve, and phylogenetic tree (among others the minimum spanning tree algorithm is supported) functionality (**Fig. 3**). All dimension views are inter-linked and exportable in publication quality format (SVG and EMF). Store tree coloring, topology, and selection of samples in a comparison table snapshot. **Search for group-specific SNPs**, e.g., for designing a cluster specific PCR screening assay (*Microbiol Spectr.* **10**: e0303622, 2022). Visualize and compare plasmids with PYGENOMEVIZ.



## Community

- Download certified typing schemes online.
- Rapidly and easily share typing schemes with others.
- Contribute optional to the world-wide expanding publicly available cgMLST.org server of allele nomenclature.
- CONSORTIUM SERVER functionality allows several SeqSphere+ users each with their own installation to share a minimum agreed upon amount of data. The shared data can be used for automatically triggered clonal matching alert emails.

## Security/Privacy

- Encryption (SSL) of all data in transmission.
- Configurable anonymization of meta-data like place and time before making data public (cgMLST.org or ENA submission).
- Various configurable user roles, user groups, and access controls.
- **Audit trail** functionality (who did, what and when).
- Optional database and backup encryption.

Figure 3. Place, time, 'person' and type dimensions visualized with SeqSphere+. Screenshot of *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak data from *JCM* **53**: 2869, 2015).

**Demonstration videos, step-by-step tutorials with demonstration data, and free trial version are available at [www.ridom.de](http://www.ridom.de)**

Minimum requirements for evaluation: Microsoft Windows 64-bit, 8 GB RAM. Client and server can be installed on the same computer.

## Computer Specifications (recommended)

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Client</b> | Microsoft Windows 64-bit or Linux 64-bit, <b>quad-core processor</b> , <b>16-32 GB RAM</b> (LDAP* requires at least 32 GB), 1-2 TB hard disk(s), and Internet connection (via ports 80 & 443) required for license activation and to use public Ridom cgMLST Nomenclature Server and Task Template Sphere. |
| <b>Server</b> | Microsoft Windows 64-bit or Linux 64-bit, quad-core processor, 16 GB RAM, <b>1-2 TB HD</b> (with default settings 10,000 samples require approx. 1 TB on a single hard disk), for database backups and optional storage of assembly files (ACE/BAM) a separate server HD or NAS is highly desirable.       |

Please note that most computation is done on the client computer (e.g., assembling). Therefore, computational power and amount of RAM is more important on the client than on the server computer. Client and server communicate by default via port 8064 (configurable) over the Intra-/Internet. – A certain number of client computers can process the same pipeline script for **speeding-up** the analysis for example of a sequencing run. For **scaling-up** simply also add another client computer. To use the power of a **Linux-Cluster** the SeqSphere+ client pipeline can be started in command-line mode. SKESA, SPAdes, Mash, SISTR, MOB-suite, MobileElementFinder, AMRFinder, and pyGenomeViz are only supported by Linux- or Windows 10/11-Clients (with installed **WIN Subsystem for Linux**). For **Illumina** data the in SeqSphere+ integrated SKESA, Velvet, or SPAdes *de novo* assemblers are recommended. For **Ion Torrent** and **Oxford Nanopore Technologies** data the usage of the integrated SPAdes or Flye/Raven are the options of choice, respectively. For **Pacific Biosciences** data the SMRT Link software should be used.

The license is limited to a period and a certain number of named user accounts on the server. During the license period an **unlimited number of samples can be analyzed**. Each **named user account** allows to login interactively once at the same time. If somebody else logs in with the same account, a read-only mode is activated for this session. The Pipeline Mode also runs on behalf of a named user account but can run concurrently multiple times. Client software can be installed on an unlimited number of computers. The license period starts with the activation of the license. The license will expire after the defined period and the software runs with read-only access unless a new license is ordered. Read-only access still allows to view and export existing data. Licenses include **updates** of SeqSphere+ and the purchased modules and **free technical support** for installation and troubleshooting of the software within the period.

\*Part of the extra charged **Long-read Data Analysis Bundle (LDAB)** that includes *ONT Data Assembly and Long-read Data Plasmid Transmission Analysis Modules*.

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