How Confident Can We Be That Genetic Information Required an Intelligent Programmer?

This talk presents the latest evidence that genetic information requires significant levels of functional information, which is a fingerprint of an intelligent programmer. The seminar begins by explaining how genetic information can be measured. That approach is then applied, using two different approaches, to show that a very significant level of genetic information must be encoded into DNA to produce biological proteins. Then, the two current objections to these results are then examined, including: a) the idea that evolution has not done enough sampling yet and, b) natural selection will artificially limit our own data, either of which will result in a vast over-estimation of the genetic information encoded in the genomes of life. However, an examination of these two objections shows that they do not stand up to scrutiny. We can conclude, with a high degree of confidence, that the genetic information in the genomes of life are covered with the fingerprints of an intelligent programmer.

Kirk Durston is a scientist, a philosopher, a clergyman, and an apologist with over 36 years of experience speaking at universities across Canada, as well as in the USA, UK, and Europe on subjects pertaining to the interaction of God, philosophy, and science. In addition to graduate studies in theology, he has a Ph.D. in Biophysics, a M.A. in Philosophy, and undergraduate degrees in physics and mechanical engineering. Kirk has published papers in peer-reviewed journals of both science and philosophy. His most recent contribution at a popular level is a chapter on God and science in the just-released book Everyday Apologetics. He loves nature photography as well as wilderness hiking and canoeing with his family.

I. **What is "Functional Information"?**

   A. Think of functional information as "meaningful" or "useful" information

   B. A published, peer-reviewed way of measuring functional information

   C. This method can be applied to biological proteins

   1. Published method

   2. Confirmation of the published method by other scientists

II. **Significant Levels of Functional Information Are Unique to Intelligent Minds**

   A. Hypothesis: the ability to produce significant levels of functional information is unique to intelligent minds

B. There are two ways to test this hypothesis:

    1. We can test it with computer simulations

    2. We can test it in the lab

C. Conclusion: the hypothesis continues to be verified

III.   What Do Actual Results Show?

A. The functional information for biological proteins is very significant

B. This is confirmed by other scientists using a different method

C. We can conclude that the fingerprints of intelligence are all over the genomes of life

IV. Two Current Objections

A. Thus far, there are only two objections to the experimental results:

    1. Insufficient sampling of possible sequences, badly skewing the results

    2. Natural selection makes it look like there are far fewer functional sequences than what would actually work, badly skewing the results.

B. Both objections are falsified

1. Even if we take the extreme lower limits of functional information, protein sequences still test positive for an intelligent programmer.

2. The results are also supported by an independent method

3. The data shows that the natural selection objection is based on a false assumption about the "fitness" of proteins

V.   Conclusion:

There is a method, using real data, to estimate the amount of functional information that was encoded for each gene. The results indicate that an intelligent programmer would have been required.

For Further Reading:

A variety of short articles, written for the lay-person, on this topic and many others relevant to Christianity can be found at KirkDurston.com. The short articles often have references to more technical or lengthy articles and books so you can pursue each topic more deeply.