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# 1 The use of Oxford Nanopore native barcoding for complete genome assembly.

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## 15 7 **Abstract**

### 18 8 **Background**

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21 9 The Oxford Nanopore MinION(TM) is a mobile DNA sequencer that can produce long read  
22  
23 10 sequences with a short turn-around time. Here we report the first demonstration of single contig  
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25 11 genome assembly using Oxford Nanopore native barcoding when applied to a multiplexed library  
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27 12 of 12 samples and combined with existing Illumina short-read data. This paves the way for the  
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29 13 closure of multiple bacterial genomes from a single MinION(TM) sequencing run, given the  
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32 14 availability of existing short-read data. The strain we used, MHO\_001, represents the important  
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34 15 community-acquired methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* lineage USA300.

### 37 16 **Findings**

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40 17 Using a hybrid assembly of existing short read and barcoded long read sequences from  
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42 18 multiplexed data, we completed a genome of the *S. aureus* USA300 strain MHO\_001. The long-  
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44 19 read data represented only ~5-10% of an average MinION(TM) run (~7x genomic coverage), but,  
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46 20 using standard tools, this was sufficient to complete the circular chromosome of *S. aureus* strain  
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48 21 MHO\_001 (2.86 Mb) and two complete plasmids (29 Kb and 3 Kb). Minor differences were noted  
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51 22 when compared to USA300 reference genome, USA300\_FPR3757, including the translocation,  
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53 23 loss and gain of mobile genetic elements.

### 56 24 **Conclusion**

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59 25 Here we demonstrate that MinION(TM) reads, multiplexed using native barcoding, can be used in  
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26 combination with short-read data, to fully complete a bacterial genome. The ability to complete  
1 27 multiple genomes, for which short-read data is already available, from a single MinION(TM) run is  
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3 28 set to impact on our understanding of accessory genome content, plasmid diversity and genome  
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5 29 rearrangements.

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### 10 11 31 **Keywords**

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14 32 Whole genome sequencing, *Staphylococcus aureus*, MinION(TM), long read, hybrid assembly,  
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16 33 bacterial genomics, multiplexing, native barcoding.

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### 23 24 25 36 **Data description**

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27 37 The spread of methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) represents a significant  
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30 38 healthcare burden both in health-care settings and in the community. The USA300 clone is a  
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32 39 particular cause for concern, being responsible for an increasing number of skin and soft-tissue  
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34 40 infections within the community, particularly in North America [1]. The advent of new sequencing  
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36 41 technologies is set to inform on novel intervention and surveillance strategies, although important  
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39 42 technical limitations remain. Whilst short read data provides an excellent means to assay the  
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41 43 variation within the core genome, which is useful for reconstructing hospital outbreaks, it is usually  
42  
43 44 not possible to infer genome re-arrangements or to fully assemble mobile genetic elements  
44  
45 45 (MGEs) such as plasmids from these data. Closure of bacterial genomes has been demonstrated  
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47 46 on *Escherichia coli* using MinION(TM) reads alone and on a range of bacteria including  
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50 47 *Bacteriodes fragilis*, *Acinetobacter baylyi* and *Francisella* spp. using a hybrid approach combining  
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52 48 error prone long reads with low error rate short reads [2–5]. Here we demonstrate that it is also  
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54 49 possible to generate complete genomes using multiplexed reads from a single MinION(TM) run in  
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56 50 combination with matched Illumina short reads. We used a strain of *S. aureus* of the USA300  
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59 51 lineage as an example.

## 1 53 **Methods**

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### 5 6 55 **MinION(TM) library construction and sequencing**

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9 56 *S. aureus* strain MHO\_001 was recovered in 2015 from asymptomatic nasal carriage via a

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11 57 standard nasal swab of a healthy individual with informed consent. DNA from an overnight culture

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13 58 was extracted using the Qiagen Genomic Tip 500/G Kit, following the manufacturer's instructions,

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15 59 except lysozyme was replaced with lysostaphin to a final concentration of 200 µg/ml. Sequencing

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17 60 library preparation was carried out with Nanopore Genomic Sequencing Kit SQK-MAP006 (Oxford

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19 61 Nanopore, UK) and a PCR free 'native barcoding' kit provided by ONT. The NEBNext Ultra II End

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21  
22 62 Repair/dA Tailing kit (E7546S, NEB, USA) was used to prepare 1000 ng of sheared genomic DNA

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24 63 (1000 ng DNA in 50 µl nuclease free water, 7 µl of Ultra II End-Prep Buffer, 3 µl Ultra II End-Prep

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26 64 Enzyme Mix in a total volume of 60 µl). The reaction was incubated for 5 minutes at 20°C and heat

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28 65 inactivated for 5 minutes at 65°C. The DNA was purified using a 1:1 volume of Agencourt AMPure

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30 66 XP beads (A63880, Beckman Coulter, USA) according to manufacturer's instructions and eluted in

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33 67 31 µl of nuclease free water. Blunt/TA Ligase Master Mix (M0367S, NEB, USA) was used to ligate

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35 68 native barcode adapters to 22.5 µl of 500ng end prepared DNA for 10 minutes at room

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38 69 temperature. The barcoded DNA was purified using a 1:1 volume of AMPure XP beads and eluted

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40 70 in 26 µl nuclease free water. Twelve barcoded samples from diverse sources including other

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42 71 bacterial samples were pooled, 58 ng of each sample was added to give 700 ng of pooled library

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44 72 DNA. Hairpin adapters were ligated using 10 µl Native Barcoding Adapter Mix, 50 µl Blunt/TA

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46 73 Ligase Master Mix and 2 µl Native Barcoding Hairpin Adapter (BHP) added to 38 µl the pooled

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49 74 library DNA to give a final reaction volume of 100 µl. The reaction mixture was incubated for 10

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51 75 minutes at room temperature before the addition of 1 µl of HP tether and a further 10 min

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53 76 incubation. The final reaction was cleaned using pre-washed Dynabeads MyOne Streptavidin C1

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55 77 beads (65001; Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA). DNA concentrations at each step were measured

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58 78 using a Qubit Fluorometer. 6 µl of the pooled, barcoded library was mixed with 65 µl nuclease free

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79 water, 75 µl 2x Running Buffer and 4 µl Fuel Mix (SQK-MAP006, Oxford Nanopore, UK) and  
180 immediately loaded onto a MinION(TM) Flow Cell Mark I R7.3 on a MinION(TM) Mark I controlled  
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381 by MinKNOW version 0.50.2.15 software (Oxford Nanopore, UK). Base calling was performed  
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582 using Metrichor ONT Sequencing Workflow Software v1.19.0 with the Basecall\_Barcoding  
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783 workflow (Oxford Nanopore, UK). The additional DNA samples included in the pooled library were  
8  
984 a diverse assemblage of bacterial and eukaryotic DNA samples provided by attendees during the  
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11  
1285 PoreCamp Workshop 2015 at the University of Birmingham. The additional pooled library samples  
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1486 are being prepared for separate publication. Details on the PoreCamp Workshop and associated  
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1687 publications can be found at <http://porecamp.github.io/>. MinION reads were deposited in the  
17  
1888 European Nucleotide Archive under study accession PRJEB14152.  
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## 23 2490 **Illumina library construction and sequencing**

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2691 An overnight culture was grown on TSB agar from a 15% glycerol stock maintained at -80 °C. An  
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2892 aliquot of the culture was added to tubes containing DNA beads and library preparation was carried  
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3093 out by MicrobesNG, University of Birmingham (<http://microbesng.uk>). A single 250 bp paired end  
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3294 library was constructed and sequenced on both MiSeq and HiSeq Illumina platforms. The reads  
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3595 from both sequencing runs were combined before downstream analysis. The sequenced strain is  
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3796 stored in the MicrobesNG indexed repository as strain 2998-174. Reads were deposited in the  
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3997 European Nucleotide Archive under study accession PRJEB14152.  
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## 43 4499 **Assembly, Annotation and Analysis**

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47100 The full informatics analysis and associated data is available as a step-by-step walk-through at  
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49101 [https://github.com/SionBayliss/MHO\\_analysis](https://github.com/SionBayliss/MHO_analysis). Illumina reads were trimmed using Trimmomatic-  
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51102 0.33 [6]. Reads were trimmed to a minimum read quality of Q15. Reads below 30 bp in length  
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53103 were excluded and sequencing adapters were removed. MinION(TM) 2D pass reads were  
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56104 demultiplexed by the Metrichor work flow. 2D reads that failed the sample QC were demultiplexed  
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58105 using an in-house script (FilterBarcodes.pl). The twelve 40 bp barcodes used for library  
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106 construction were compared in a moving 40 bp window to the sequence in the first and last 150 bp  
107 of each read. The barcode requiring the least insertions, deletions or substitutions to be permuted  
108 into a sequence in the beginning or end of a read, with a maximum cut-off of 14 permutations, was  
109 considered a match. Each read could only be assigned to one individual sample, in the case of a  
110 tie the reads were discarded. Sequence preceding or following the presence of a barcode at the  
111 beginning or end of a read, respectively, were trimmed as adapter sequence. After quality  
112 trimming, 439,480 paired short reads, 1324 2D pass reads and 1499 demultiplexed 2D fail reads  
113 (2823 total) nanopore long reads were passed as input files to SPAdes v3.6.1 using the  
114 --nanopore, --cov-cutoff 5 and --careful options [7]. The nanopore reads had a median read length  
115 of 7,577 bp, a maximum length of 23,380 bp and a minimum length of 250 bp (Figure 1A). After  
116 assembly, all contigs less than 300 bp were removed. This resulted in three contigs, the complete  
117 chromosome of MHO\_001, and two complete plasmids. The contigs were circularised by MUSCLE  
118 alignment (default parameters) of identical overlapping regions at the end of contigs and removal  
119 of one alternative overlapping sequence using an in-house script (CirculariseOnOverlaps.pl) [8].  
120 Start sites were fixed relative to the beginning of the relevant reference sequence. A BLAST search  
121 against the nt/nr database using default megablast settings revealed the closest, well studied,  
122 reference genome was USA300\_FPR3757 (Genbank:CP000255) [9]. The two smaller contigs  
123 were 100% identical in both aligned sequence and alignment length to previously sequenced *S.*  
124 *aureus* lineage USA300 plasmids, SAP046A (Genbank:GQ900404.1) and SAP046B  
125 (Genbank:GQ900403.1). The smallest plasmid was also identical to USA300\_FPR3757 plasmid  
126 pUSA01 (CP000256). The complete genome of MHO\_001 was annotated using Prokka 1.11 [10].  
127 In order to calculate per base read coverage short and long reads were mapped to MHO\_001  
128 using BWA 0.7.12-r1039 and coverage was calculated using samtools 1.2 [11,12]. Nanopore  
129 reads were mapped using the 'bwa mem -x ont2d' option. In order to assess the sequence  
130 similarity and number of reads mapped between the long reads and the MHO\_001 assembly the  
131 nanopore 2D pass, demultiplexed 2D fail reads and 2D fail reads in which no barcodes were  
132 identified were aligned to the MHO\_001, including plasmids, using BLASR (Figure 1, Table 1) [13].

5 of 14

133 SNPs were called between the chromosome and reference genome using MAUVE [14]. SNPs  
134 were further confirmed by mapping short reads independently to USA300\_FPR3757 and calling  
135 variants. Mapping was performed using BWA, reads at indel sites were realigned using the GATK  
136 toolbox and SNPs were called using samtools [12,15]. The variant call file (VCF) was filtered for  
137 variants supported by a minimum read depth of 4 (minimum 2 per strand), >30 map quality, >50  
138 average base quality, no significant strand bias and >75% of reads supporting the variant. Indels  
139 were additionally confirmed using pindel [16]. The VCF file was filtered to remove regions unique to  
140 MHO\_001 or USA300\_FPR3757. Repeat regions of >50bp, which are notoriously problematic for  
141 short read mapping, were identified using nucmer and removed from the comparison  
142 [17] [Supplementary Table 1].

143

## 144 **Results and Discussion**

145 A hybrid assembly using a low coverage of MinION(TM) reads (6-8x) combined with moderate  
146 coverage Illumina reads (~50x) was used to generate a complete genome. The assembly resolved  
147 regions of the genome that were problematic for short read assembly alone, such as chromosomal  
148 rRNA operons. The generation of a complete genome from only ~5% of the possible current yield  
149 of a MinION(TM) run using a multiplexed library should represent a cost effective means to  
150 complete multiple genomes during a single MinION(TM) sequencing run, although the approach  
151 also requires matching short-read Illumina data. Larger or more complex bacterial genomes may  
152 require higher coverage read data alongside additional bioinformatics analyses to generate  
153 comparably polished, complete genomes [3].

154 By demultiplexing the 2D fail reads we were able to double the number of nanopore reads for  
155 assembly from 1324 to 2823 reads. The nanopore reads were aligned to the complete MHO\_001  
156 genome using BLASR (Figure 1, Table 1). 1320/1324 (99.70%) 2D pass reads demultiplexed by  
157 Metrichor aligned to the assembly with an average match of 85.87% and a mean hit length of  
158 96.79% of the input read. 1292/1499 (99.70%) 2D fail reads demultiplexed by in-house scripts  
159 aligned to the assembly with an average match of 77.76% and a mean hit length of 92.90%. The

160 fail reads in which we failed to find a barcode contained 722/9501 (7.60%) reads that aligned to the  
161 MHO\_001 genome. In summary, a considerable amount of useful information was contained within  
162 the demultiplexed 2D fail reads without which we would have been unable to produce a complete  
163 genome. We can conclude that we were able to correctly identify the ONT barcodes in ~85% of the  
164 2D fail reads used for assembly.

165 The chromosome showed minor differences to the USA300 reference genome USA300\_FPR3757  
166 including 155 SNP differences and the loss and gain of mobile genetic elements (Figure 2). In  
167 order to provide an independent confirmation of the 155 SNP differences identified by MAUVE  
168 between aligned regions of MHO\_001 and USA300\_FPR3757 the short reads were mapped to  
169 USA300\_FPR3757 and variants were called using strict parameters. Of the 155 MAUVE SNPs 41  
170 (26.5%) were present in repeat regions and excluded from the comparison. Of the remaining 114  
171 SNPs, 111 (97.36%) were supported by short read mapping to USA300\_FPR3757. The remaining  
172 3 SNPs (2.6%) were unsupported. No indels were identified by short read mapping to MHO\_001  
173 by either GATK/samtools or pindel. In summary, of the 114 SNPs identified by MAUVE that could  
174 be robustly investigated by short read mapping 111 (97.4 %) were confirmed using low error rate  
175 short reads. Furthermore, the long and short read coverage support at the edge of each of the  
176 large structural variants in MHO\_001 was 8-10x for nanopore reads, with the exception of the 3'  
177 edge of the transposed 13,356 bp insertion sequence (IS) which had a read coverage of 3x,  
178 compared to the genomic average of 6.8x coverage. The edge of each structural variant was  
179 supported by >25 short reads.

180 There was minor sequence dissimilarity, including a small deletion, in ribosomal RNA operons. This  
181 could either reflect evolutionary changes in these highly conserved sequences or minor  
182 misassembly; these regions are typically difficult to assemble. MHO\_001 lacked Staphylococcal  
183 pathogenicity island 5 (SAPI5), a 13,960 bp exotoxin encoding transposon observed at position  
184 881,852 in the reference. MHO\_001 also lacked the prophage phiSA3USA which harbours the  
185 important virulence factor staphylokinase. As the integration site of this phage (the *hIb* gene) is  
186 intact it is possible that MHO\_001 has never acquired this phage. MHO\_001 contained a 42,297-

187 bp tyrosine recombinase bacteriophage integrated at position 867,385. This bacteriophage  
188 contained a beta-lactamase and a putative Panton-Valentine-like leukocidin and several  
2  
189 hypothetical genes. The position of an insertion sequence containing ftsK translocase differs  
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190 between MHO\_001 and the reference genome, consistent with a translocation event  
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191 (USA300\_FPR3757:1630720-1644076 to MHO\_001:679522-692877). The location of this element  
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192 in MHO\_001 truncates a gene of unknown function. There is a short 1282 bp deletion of a gene  
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193 encoding an exotoxin at position 448,767 in MHO\_001. MHO\_001 also has an extended tRNA  
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194 cluster at 554,826 containing 7 additional tRNAs (val, thr, lys, gly, leu, arg, pro) relative to  
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195 USA300\_FPR3757, representing either gene expansion, or reduction of this gene cluster in  
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196 USA300\_FPR3757.

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197 A BLAST search revealed that the two smaller contigs were identical to previously sequenced  
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198 plasmids associated with USA300 [18]. The larger of the plasmids contained an N-type replication  
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199 system (repA) with a pSK1 type plasmid partitioning system. It encoded a host of resistance  
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200 genotypes including macrolide (mac), erythromycin (ery), cadmium (cadX and cadD), streptothricin  
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201 (sta), aminoglycoside (aad), neomycin and kanamycin (aph) resistance genes. In addition to this  
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202 the plasmid contained a Tn552-like transposon containing a beta-lactam resistance (bin, blaI,  
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203 blaR1, blaZ) operon and a sin recombinase. The smaller of the two plasmids encoded three  
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204 hypothetical proteins and a replicase. Both plasmids have been previously observed to occur  
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205 concurrently in the same host.

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206 There was a discrepancy observed between the coverage of short and long reads of plasmidic and  
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207 chromosomal contigs (Figure 2, top and middle panels). The average chromosomal coverage was  
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208 49.6x (7.0 SD) with short read data and 6.8x (2.6 SD) with nanopore reads. The average short  
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209 read coverage of plasmids A and B was 78.35 (8.9 SD) and 7302.04 (85.4 SD) respectively. This  
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210 represents an coverage increase of 1.5- and 150-fold relative to the chromosome. The opposite  
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211 trend was observed with long reads; plasmids A and B had an average coverage of 4.05 (2.0 SD)  
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212 and 2.9 (1.7 SD) respectively, which represents a 40% and 60% decrease in coverage relative of  
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213 the chromosome. In addition to this the smaller of the two plasmids was only intermittently covered  
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214 by nanopore reads. The reduced number of mappable nanopore reads was likely due to the  
215 fragment size selection steps during library preparation. The inherent problems of aligning long  
216 error-prone reads to reference sequences may also have contributed. It is thus important that  
217 future studies attempting to reconstruct plasmids or studying plasmid diversity consider the impact  
218 of size selection on downstream analysis or to prepare multiple DNA libraries with differential size  
219 selection as previously discussed by Koren and Phillippy [19]. However, the clear benefit of hybrid  
220 sequencing is that it allows for the generation of larger assemblies with less uncertainties than by  
221 using a single sequencing technology preferentially over another.

## 223 **Competing interests**

224 No competing interests.

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## 237 **Authors Contributions**

238 SB and VH were responsible for the conception and design of study and data acquisition. SB

239 performed the analysis and interpretation of data and manuscript drafting. HAT and EF revised the  
240 manuscript critically for important intellectual content. SB and EF approved the version of the  
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## 251 **Data Availability**

252 The dataset supporting the conclusions of this article is available in the European Nucleotide  
253 Archive repository under project number PRJEB14152.

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## Figure Legends

Figure 1. Figure summarising read statistics for the 2D nanopore pass (red) and fail (green) reads. A) Read length distributions of pass and fail reads. Data was binned every 500 bp. B) Box and whisker plot of the sequence similarity of nanopore reads to the genome of MHO\_001 as determined by BLASR. Only the top hit per read was considered. The lower and upper "hinges" correspond to the first and third quartiles. The upper and lower whiskers extend from the hinge to the most extreme value that is within 1.5 x interquartile range. Data beyond the end of the whiskers are outliers and plotted as points. C) The distribution of BLASR alignment lengths of nanopore reads as a percentage of the original read length. Only the top hit per read was considered.

315 Nanopore 2D reads with a phred score greater than 8 were classified by Metrichor as pass reads  
316 (blue), all other 2D reads were classified as fail reads (blue).

317  
318 Table 1. Table summarising the BLASR analysis of demultiplexed 2D pass and fail nanopore long  
319 reads assigned to sample MHO\_001. Reads were aligned to the assembled MHO\_001 reference  
320 genome using BLASR with default parameters. Only the top hit per read was considered. The  
321 mean hit length was calculated the length of the top BLASR hit relative to the length of the input  
322 read.

323  
324 Figure 2. Alignment of MHO\_001 chromosome (A), plasmid A (B) and plasmid B (C) to the  
325 USA300\_FPR3757 genome and reference plasmids alongside long and short read coverage. The  
326 bottom panels show alignments between MHO\_001 and the reference sequences. Contiguous  
327 sequences are shown by connecting red lines and inversions are depicted in blue. Coding  
328 sequences (CDS) are annotated as blue rectangles with the exception of ribosomal RNA operons  
329 which are represented by red rectangles. Those above the line represent open reading frames on  
330 the forward strand and those under the line on the reverse strand. Notable mobile genetic  
331 elements or genomic features are annotated. A scale bar in basepairs (bp) is present underneath  
332 each sequence. The middle panels represent per base read coverage of short reads across the  
333 MHO\_001 genome. The data was binned every 1000 bp. The y-axis, representing per bin read  
334 coverage, has been constrained to 200, 350 and 8000 reads per bin for the MHO\_001  
335 chromosome, plasmid A and plasmid B respectively. The top panel represents the per base read  
336 coverage of nanopore long reads across the MHO\_001 genome. The data was binned every 1000  
337 bp. The y-axis, representing per bin read coverage, has been constrained to 20 reads per bin for  
338 each contig.

339  
340 Supplementary Table 1. Table summarising the BLASR analysis of demultiplexed non-target  
341 sample 2D nanopore long reads and 2D fail reads in which no barcode was detected. Reads were  
342 aligned to the assembled MHO\_001 reference genome using BLASR with default parameters.

343 Only the top hit per read was considered. The mean hit length was calculated the length of the top  
344 BLASR hit relative to the length of the input read.

345  
346 Supplementary Table 2. Spreadsheet summarising the comparison between SNPs called by  
347 MAUVE alignment of assemblies created using long and short reads and SNPs called via mapping  
348 short reads to USA300\_FPR3757.

349  
350 Supplementary Figure 1. MAUVE alignment of the overlapping region included in the circularised  
351 single chromosomal contig aligned to USA300\_FPR3757.

352  
353 Supplementary Figure 2. MAUVE alignment of the overlapping region not included in the  
354 circularised single chromosomal contig aligned to USA300\_FPR3757.

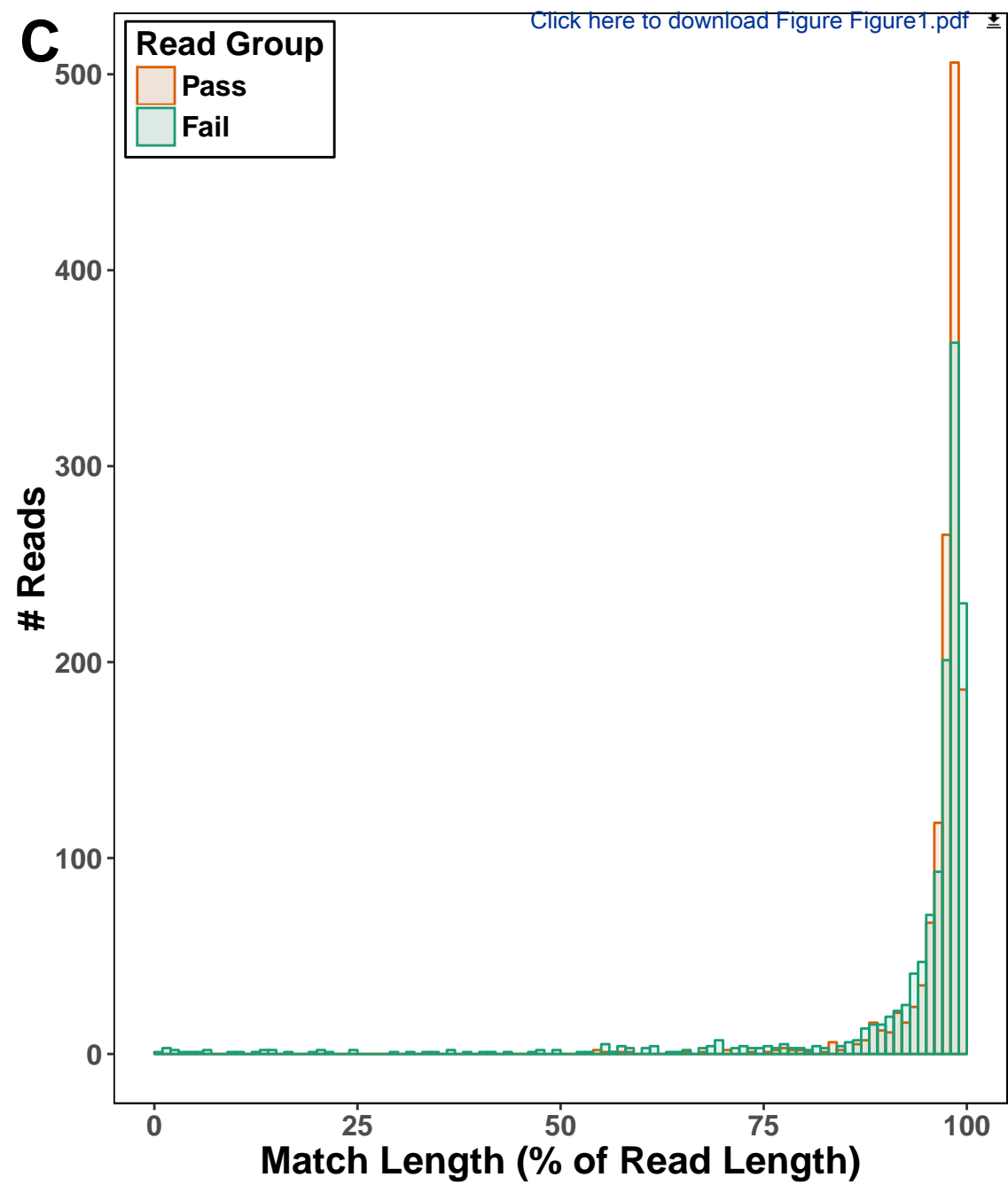
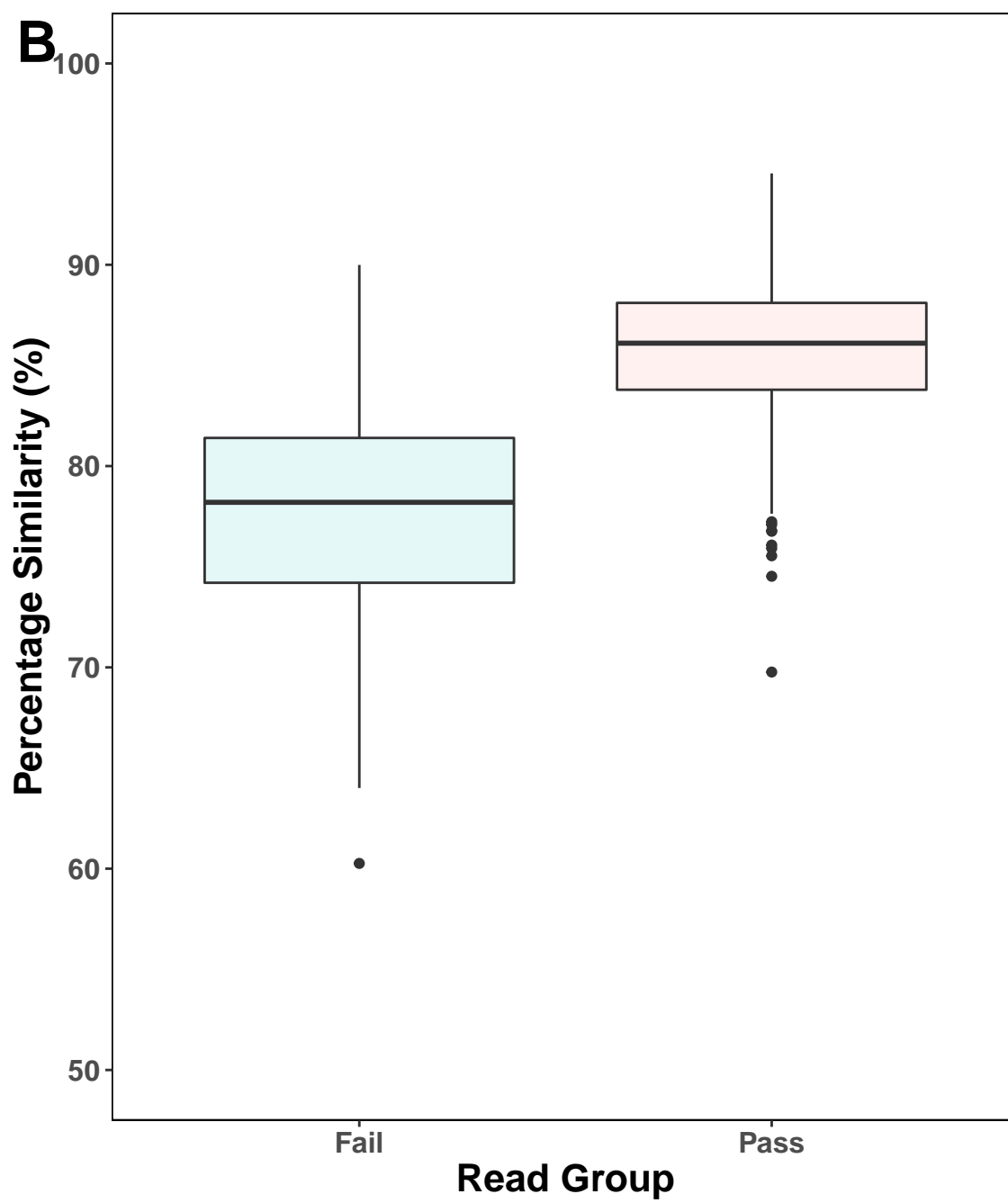
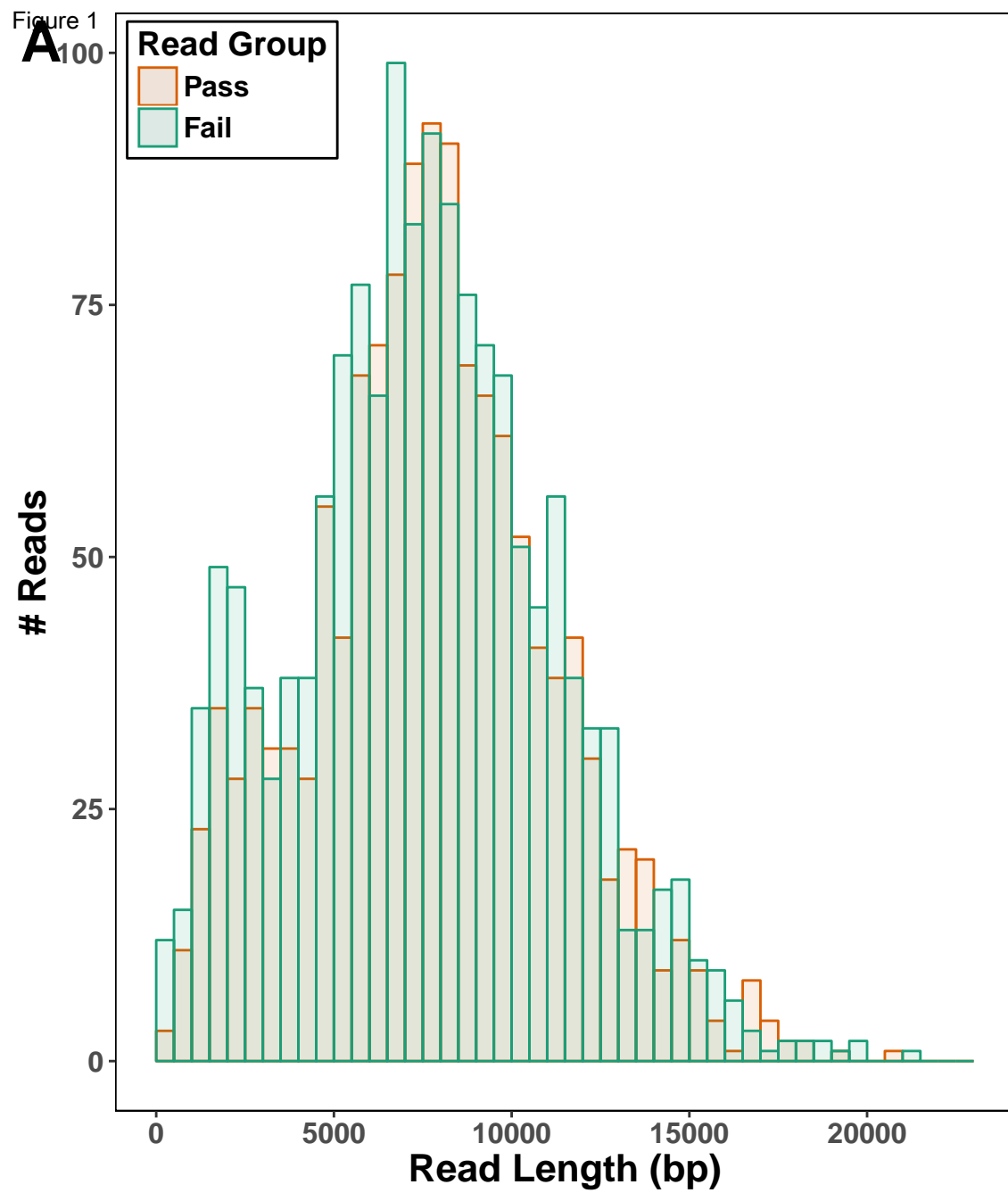
355  
356 Supplementary Figure 3. CLUSTAL visualisation of the MUSCLE alignment between the two  
357 overlapping regions at the edge of the single chromosomal contig.

358  
359 Supplementary Figure 4. Tablet visualisation of the nanopore long reads that span the overlapping  
360 regions at the edge of the circularised single chromosomal contig.

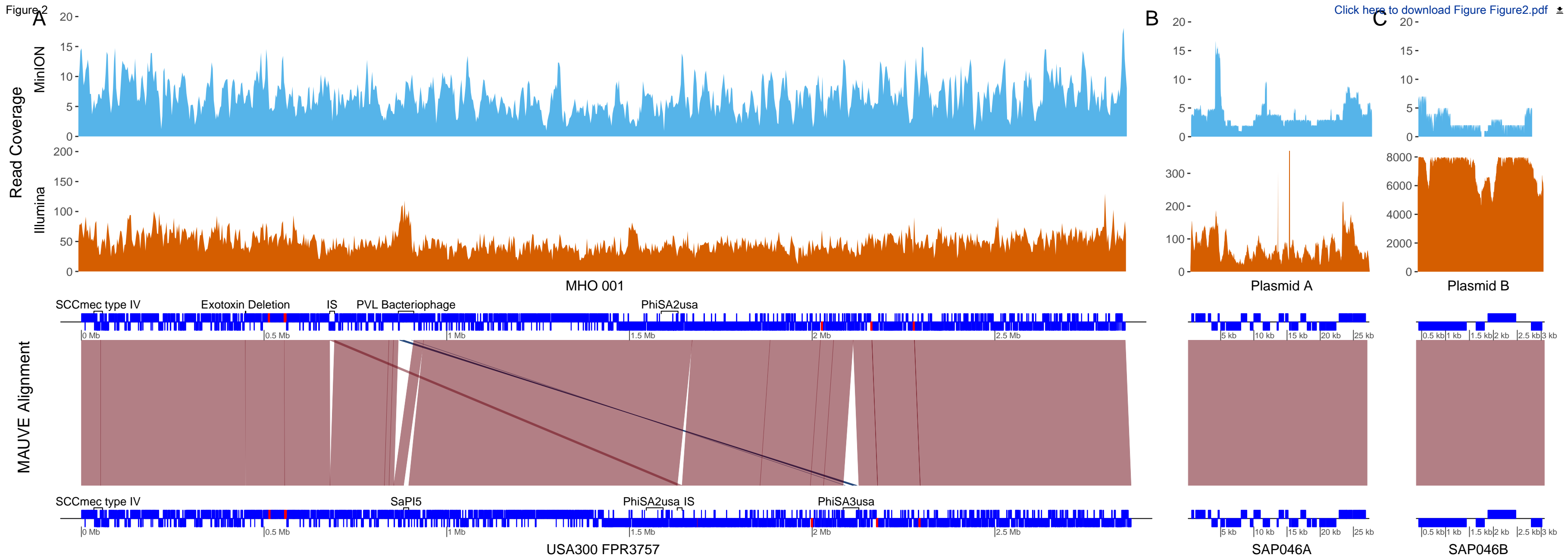
Table 1

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	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Fail</b>
<i># Reads</i>	1324	1499
<i># BLASR Hits (% # Reads)</i>	1320 (99.70%)	1292 (86.19%)
<i>Mean Hit Length (%)</i>	96.79	92.90
<i>Mean Percentage Match (%)</i>	85.87	77.76
<i># Hits &lt; 75% Length (%)</i>	11 (0.83%)	93 (7.20%)
<i># Hits &gt;= 75% Length (%)</i>	1309 (99.17%)	1199 (92.80%)







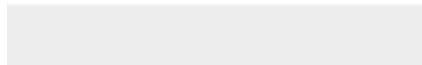


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