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<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>Genome projects and multiomics experiments generate huge volumes of data that must be stored, mined and transformed into useful knowledge. All this information is supposed to be accessible and, if possible, browsable afterwards. Computational biologists have been dealing with this scenario for over a decade and have been implementing software libraries, toolkits, platforms, and databases to succeed in this matter. The GMOD's (Generic Model Organism Database project) biological relational database schema, known as Chado, is one of the few successful open source initiatives, it is widely adopted and many softwares are able to connect to it. We have been developing an open source software named Machado (<a href="https://github.com/lmb-embrapa/machado">https://github.com/lmb-embrapa/machado</a>), a genomics data integration framework implemented in Python, to enable research groups to both store and visualize genomics data. The framework relies on the Chado database schema and, therefore, should be very intuitive for current developers to adopt it or have it running on the top of already existing databases. It has several data loading tools for genomics and transcriptomics data and also for annotation results from tools such as BLAST, InterproScan, OrthoMCL and LSTrAP. There is an API to connect to JBrowse and a web browsing visualisation tool is implemented using Django Views and Templates. The Haystack library integrated with the Elasticsearch engine was used to implement a google-like search i.e. single auto-complete search box that provides fast results and incremental filters. Machado (RRID:SCR_018428; biotools:machado) aims to be a modern object-relational framework that uses the latests Python libraries to produce an effective open source resource for genomics research.</p>	
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<b>Response to Reviewers:</b>	<p>Reviewer 1</p> <p>1) How can new analysis tools be integrated in this framework? Multi-omics data analysis is a more critical issue than data storing or visualization. What kinds of data analytics tool will be available? How to provide the flexibility to integrate third-party software in this framework?</p> <p>Response 1) Currently, there are several multi-omics data sets being generated in our</p>	

institution and it's a major issue Machado intended to deal with primarily. We decided that any multi-omics data analysis should initially be processed separately and the results loaded to the database. This enables users to select features based on the analysis results without having to wait for the analysis to run, which makes Machado faster and simpler. However, this can change in the future. It is possible to integrate analysis tools to Machado as it provides direct access to features, sequences and analysis results via API. There's much to improve in the API interface and we're working on it regularly. Developers can also access the data via the object-relational model or the ElasticSearch index.

2) For the data integration, how can external database be integrated? The framework provides the flexibility to link with other databases? Databases does not only mean relational databases, but can be multiple data sources or biological databases such as KEGG.

Response 2) The current version of Machado already contains links to other databases such as the NCBI SRA and GEO databases. It's quite simple to add links to external databases by editing the feature template. Each feature may have several dbxrefs (DB external reference) that enable to directly link to external data sources. The integration with different data sources, such as KEGG, is not complicated. Our objective is really to expand these data sources in order to integrate as much information as possible.

3) What kinds of benefit does the function of search powered by ElasticSearch engine provide to users? Seems all components already exist and this proposed framework just implemented by integrating them.

Response 3) The search engines available in other open source frameworks to integrate multi-omics data are split in several search boxes for different parameters. For example: ID search, GO term search, Gene name search, Organism search, and so on. The user have to execute each search separately and then run another tool to intersect the searches results. The benefit of using the ElasticSearch is to execute complex queries using a single search box, such as, 'calcium GO:0016020 PF02705', which will select features that transport (PF02705) calcium through the membrane (GO:0016020). The result of this query can be additionally filtered by several criteria, such as, organism, expression, orthology, and so on. Although it's true that "components already exist and the framework just implemented it", the novelty is that Machado provides the software to generate and access the ElasticSearch index automatically from a Chado database.

Reviewer 2

The authors present Machado, which is a python-based framework for browsing genomic datasets. The software itself is of very high quality. It is version controlled, conforms to formatting standards, is easy to read, is well commented, and critically - it includes excellent documentation. These are attributes common to successful scientific software.

There are some additional features the authors should consider adding.

- The export icons for TSV/FASTA are identical. This is a UX issue that should be addressed.

Response 1) We will improve this, thanks.

- To facilitate deployment/usage, it may be beneficial to create a Dockerfile that can read a configuration and allow users to immediately test Machado on their existing Chado database.

Response 2) We had this discussion before within the developers and we agree a Dockerfile will facilitate the use of the Machado framework. We'll start to work on it soon, thanks.

- documentation for the API appears to be lacking. When I go to [https://www.machado.cnptia.embrapa.br/demo\\_machado/api/](https://www.machado.cnptia.embrapa.br/demo_machado/api/) I get 'undefined' for

	<p>some queries, and it is unclear how to use the API.  Response 3) The API is being completely remodeled and there's much to improve. We'll definitely improve the documentation and create some usage examples, thanks.</p> <p>Within the manuscript, there were some minor wording issues the authors should consider revising. For example, it is unclear what a "public wide database" is. There are also a handful of grammatical errors in the manuscript that need to be fixed. Also, the first github link appears to be broken.  Response 4) The manuscript was revised for grammatical errors. The link was fixed.</p> <p>Overall, I believe Machado is of high quality and worthy of publications. The authors should consider revising their manuscript for grammatical errors and consider the software suggestions above.</p>
<b>Additional Information:</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
Are you submitting this manuscript to a special series or article collection?	No
<p><b>Experimental design and statistics</b></p> <p>Full details of the experimental design and statistical methods used should be given in the Methods section, as detailed in our <a href="#">Minimum Standards Reporting Checklist</a>. Information essential to interpreting the data presented should be made available in the figure legends.</p> <p>Have you included all the information requested in your manuscript?</p>	Yes
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>A description of all resources used, including antibodies, cell lines, animals and software tools, with enough information to allow them to be uniquely identified, should be included in the Methods section. Authors are strongly encouraged to cite <a href="#">Research Resource Identifiers</a> (RRIDs) for antibodies, model organisms and tools, where possible.</p> <p>Have you included the information requested as detailed in our <a href="#">Minimum Standards Reporting Checklist</a>?</p>	Yes
<b>Availability of data and materials</b>	Yes

All datasets and code on which the conclusions of the paper rely must be either included in your submission or deposited in [publicly available repositories](#) (where available and ethically appropriate), referencing such data using a unique identifier in the references and in the “Availability of Data and Materials” section of your manuscript.

Have you have met the above requirement as detailed in our [Minimum Standards Reporting Checklist](#)?

# Machado: open source genomics data integration framework

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## ABSTRACT

### Background

Genome projects and multiomics experiments generate huge volumes of data that must be stored, mined and transformed into useful knowledge. All this information is supposed to be accessible and, if possible, browsable afterwards. Computational biologists have been dealing with this scenario for over a decade and have been implementing software libraries, toolkits, platforms, and databases to succeed in this matter. The GMOD's (Generic Model Organism Database project) biological relational database schema, known as *Chado*, is one of the few successful open source initiatives, it is widely adopted and many softwares are able to connect to it.

### Results

We have been developing an open source software named *Machado* (<https://github.com/lmb-embrapa/machado>), a genomics data integration framework implemented in *Python*, to enable research groups to both store and visualize genomics data. The framework relies on the *Chado* database schema and, therefore, should be very intuitive for current developers to adopt it or have it running on the top of already existing databases. It has several data loading tools for genomics and transcriptomics data and also for annotation results from tools such as *BLAST*, *InterproScan*, *OrthoMCL* and *LSTrAP*. There is an API to connect to *JBrowse* and a web browsing visualisation tool is implemented using *Django Views and Templates*. The *Haystack* library integrated with the *ElasticSearch* engine was used to implement a google-like search i.e. single auto-complete search box that provides fast results and incremental filters.

### Conclusion

*Machado* (RRID:SCR\_018428; biotools:machado) aims to be a modern object-relational framework that uses the latests *Python* libraries to produce an effective open source resource for genomics research.

**Keywords:** database, multiomics, Chado, python

## BACKGROUND

The technological advances for biological research regarding genomic sequencing, phenotype prediction and re-engineering of living systems have led to the creation of large volumes of data that must be stored, mined and transformed into useful knowledge. These technological advances of the omic approaches, including genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics and metabolomics, have great impact in several areas of knowledge including agriculture, specially for integrating big data analysis into animal and plant breeding programs.

Omic enables a systems biology approach toward understanding the complex interactions between genes, proteins, and metabolites within the resulting phenotype (Van Emon, 2016). Omic data integration offers the potential to increase the productivity and sustainability in crop and livestock production. The challenges are diverse but are usually composed of identifying genetic variation that derive desirable traits that can drive genomic prediction, performing precise genome editing/engineering (e.g.: using CRISPR-CAS systems for the induction of mutations or disruptions in the genome), identifying molecular targets for developing vaccines to diseases/plagues, and probably others (Huang et al., 2017).

All these novel genomic information, specially those from genome projects and multiomics experiments (transcriptomics, proteomics, etc.) is supposed to be accessible and, if possible, browseable afterwards. Even further, a great challenge is to integrate data from different organisms and projects for analysis and mining of data. Plant and animal trait data are typically generated by diverse, costly and time-consuming experiments, and thus can hugely benefit from increased data sharing and integration (Leonelli et al., 2017). Bioinformaticians and computational biologists have been dealing with this scenario for over a decade now and have implemented (and are still implementing) a collection of software libraries, toolkits, platforms, databases and data warehouses in this regard.

Although public databases exist, research groups still struggle to store and analyse data with local resources and expertise. The GMOD, Generic Model Organism Database project, is currently the initiative that most advanced in producing a "collection of open source software tools for managing, visualizing, storing and disseminating genomic data" (GMOD, 2020). Its biological relational database schema named Chado (Mungall & Emmert, 2007) is widely adopted and many softwares are able connect to it eg. Jbrowse (Skinner et al., 2009), Gbrowse (Stein et al., 2002), Apollo (Lee et al., 2013), Intermine (Kalderimis et al., 2014), and Tripal (Spoor et al., 2019).

The development of a front-end for Chado named Tripal, based on the Drupal CMS, facilitated the construction and publication of genomic databases (Tripal, 2020), although historically PHP is barely used in bioinformatics. For instance, BioPHP, a collection of open source PHP code with a number of bioinformatics tools latest release is from 2003 ("BioPHP," 2020).

"Python has arguably become the de facto standard for exploratory, interactive, and computation-driven scientific research" (Millman & Aivazis, 2011). Ranking first in the 2019 IEEE Spectrum top programming languages (Cass, 2019), Python has a vast collection of libraries and modules for

bioinformatics eg. BioPython (Cock et al., 2009), PyVCF, and PySAM; and data science eg. SciPy, NumPy, pandas, and Matplotlib. Coupled with Django, one of the most mature and feature-rich web application framework for Python (Django, 2020), developers are able to produce fast, secure, and scalable softwares.

The Embrapa's Bioinformatics Multi-user Laboratory began to develop an open source software called Machado that has a Django Model to connect to Chado, thus avoiding extra efforts to make data compatible to the database schema.

The Chado database schema enables us to integrate different data types using controlled vocabularies and ontologies. For example, the Sequence Ontology (Eilbeck et al., 2005), a collection of sequence feature types, is used for typing features in the sequence module of Chado. Therefore, every biological component and its relationships are formally described, allowing the identification of exons that are 'part\_of' a gene or transcripts that are 'part\_of' a gene. Additionally, the Gene Ontology (Gene Ontology Consortium, 2004) enables us to functionally characterize the biological components regarding to their molecular function, cellular localization and the biological process they are involved with.

The Django framework provides practical means to build visualization tools and APIs (Application Programming Interface) to assist software developers to deal with multiple genomic data sources for building seamless, interoperable applications. The API framework is a set of clearly defined methods of communication between various software components. The data standardization across different research groups, coupled with the API framework, will facilitate future collaborations with data scientists in order to explore the data sets even further.

We intend to provide a Python framework to store diverse biological data, make complex queries and visualize results for this project. But even further, we hope to broaden the Machado software usability and provide the community with a powerful, simple, open source software that could be used by other scientific groups in projects of many ranges of complexities.

## **METHODS**

### **The database model**

The *Machado* software (<https://github.com/lmb-embrapa/machado>) was developed and tested using Python3 and Django 2.2.10. The first step was to create an object-relational model for the GMOD Chado database schema 1.31, using the Django inspectdb tool and a custom Python script that is available within the Machado repository. The resulting model integrates the Machado package and is used solely to connect to a Chado database, not to create the tables. During a new Machado installation, the original GMOD Chado schema SQL file is used to create the database instance. Therefore, users should be able to provide an already populated database instance if desired.

### **The data loading tools**

The data loading tools were developed following the interface segregation principle, in which, the classes related for ETL (extract, transform, and load) are independent from the classes related to the

user interface. This design pattern makes it possible to implement diverse user interfaces (command-line, web, or API) while preserving the ETL classes.

The user interface was implemented using the Django management tool, a command-line management system to execute database related tasks in a standard manner. The management tool, together with a few Python libraries, allowed us to implement an effective set of data loading commands capable of loading data files using multi-threading and providing users with real-time progress monitoring.

The ETL classes benefit from well-established bioinformatics libraries to handle the genomics data files, namely, BioPython to load FASTA, GFF, Blast, and InterproScan; obonet to load ontology files; and bibtextparser to load Bibtext files.

### **The web interface**

The Machado web interface was developed using the Django views and templates, which is a convenient way to generate HTML dynamically. The core set of web pages is constituted of a search form, a search results page, and a feature page.

The search form is embedded in the page header in order to allow users to conveniently search for features at any time. The search form contains autocomplete capabilities to help users to validate keywords i.e. to identify keywords that are stored in the database and its correct spelling.

Once a query is executed, the search form redirects the web browser to the results page, which contains basic information of every feature that meets the search criteria. The search results are paginated and this page also provides filtering, text download, sequence download, column sorting, and selection of the number of records per page.

Every feature has an hyperlink that leads to the feature page, which contains every information stored in the database related to the feature itself eg. genes, transcripts, and proteins. Currently, it's set to show ID, description, relationships, genomic location, functional annotation, similarity analysis results, co-expression networks, groups of orthologs, expression data, sequence, and related publications. The genomic location is rendered with an embedded JBrowse instance in order to enhance the users experience. It shows the genomic region in detail, the gene structure with its exons, and UTRs, and allows to zoom in/out to identify adjacent genes.

### **The search engine**

The Machado search and filter components are powered by the ElasticSearch engine that is invoked via the Haystack library. This approach allowed us to create a single search box that autocompletes the user keywords and finds matches throughout the whole database. The search results can be filtered by organism, type, orthology, coexpression, annotation, expression biomaterial, and expression treatment. This filtering component was implemented using the ElasticSearch faceted navigation which allow users to filter through vast data sets by checking filters.

Both the search and the indexing components are invoked via the Haystack library, which significantly simplified the software programming process since it uses familiar Django syntax, rather than native ElasticSearch coding. The Haystack library is able to directly connect to the Django model and



retrieve data to a few search engines, such as, ElasticSearch, and Solr. The Machado repository contains the specific code to generate the search index based on the Chado schema. Therefore, after having all the data loaded up, the user will simply build the search index using a specific command in the Django management tool.

### Availability of Supporting Source Code and Requirements

Project name: Machado (RRID:SCR\_018428; biotools:machado)

Project home page: <https://github.com/lmb-embrapa/machado>

Programming language: Python 3

License: GNU GPL

The complete source code is available in GitHub (<https://github.com/lmb-embrapa/machado>) and the tests are executed routinely, triggered by Travis-CI for every new code commit. Extensive testing and code reviews ensure the software is fully functional upon new installations. There's also detailed instructions hosted at Read The Docs (<https://machado.readthedocs.io>) on how to install, load data, and set up the user interface.

### OVERVIEW

Machado is a Django instance that provides data management, visualization, and searching functionalities to Chado databases. The resulting object-relational framework enables users, not only to set up a local instance containing data regarding their organisms of interest, but also to develop all sorts of tools by accessing the open source code.

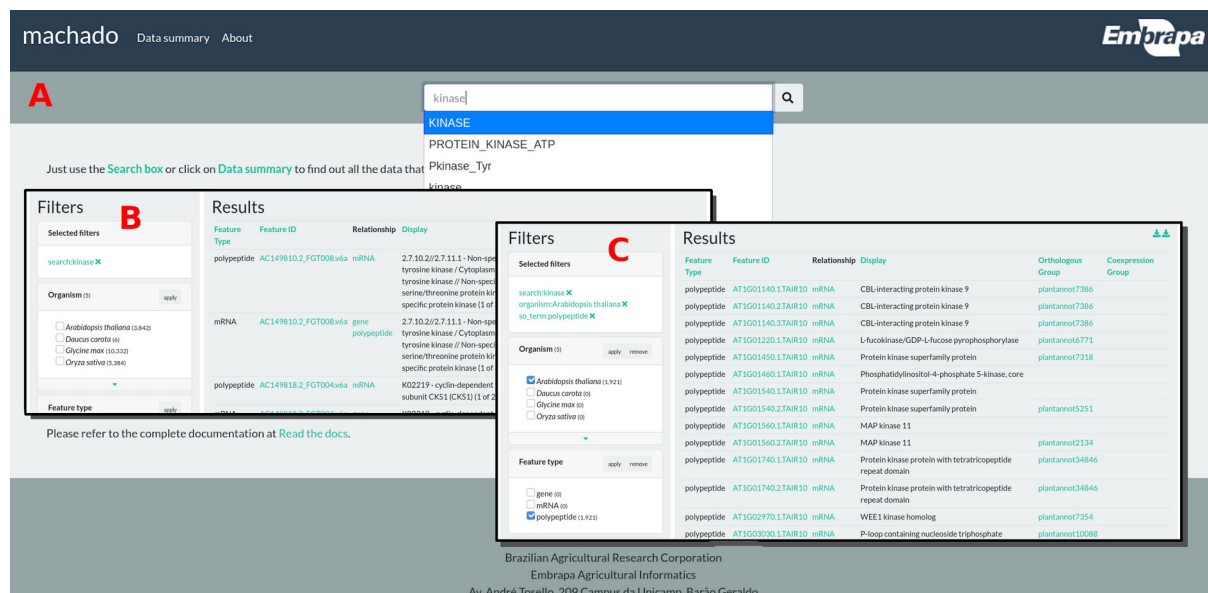


Figure 1: A) the Machado demonstration site home page, the search form, and autocomplete component; B) the search results for the term 'kinase'; C) the search results for the term 'kinase', filtered by organism 'Arabidopsis thaliana', and and feature type 'polypeptide'.

The data loading tools are currently available via the Django management interface. Such tools were developed to load data from the most common bioinformatics file formats to the Chado database. This implementation provides users with commands capable of loading data files using multi-thread and real-time progress monitoring. Developers are welcome to create or propose new data formats to future versions.

Machado also provides users with an out-of-the-box solution to browse the data, which is able to display every data loaded using the current data loading tools. This web interface is fully customizable in order to encourage the development of new solutions or the connection to analysis tools.

Arabidopsis thaliana  
mRNA: AT1G04440.1

ID: AT1G04440.1TAIR10  
Display: casein kinase like 13  
gene: [AT1G04440.TAIR10](#)  
polypeptide: [AT1G04440.1TAIR10](#) casein kinase like 13

Location

Athaliana\_Ch1:1202254..1205803 1

1,201,250 1,202,500 1,203,750 1,205,000 1,206,250 [Full-screen view](#)

REST Reference Sequence [View sequence](#) Zoom in to see sequence Zoom in to see sequence Zoom in to see sequence Zoom in to see se

Gene track  
Transcript track  
CDS track

Functional annotation [^](#)

Gene Ontology [Interpro databases](#)

Ontology	ID	Term
molecular_function	GO:0005524	ATP binding
biological_process	GO:0006468	protein phosphorylation
molecular_function	GO:0004672	protein kinase activity

Expression data [^](#)

Coexpression Group: [ath\\_coexpr\\_mcl\\_1](#)

Assay source	Assay name	Assay description	Biomaterial name	Biomaterial description	Treatment	Score normalized (TPM)
SRR5167848.htseq	<a href="#">SRR5167848</a>	WT_dehydration2 leaf	<a href="#">GSM2453039</a>	Leaf	Dehydration	63.78
SRR2302912.htseq	<a href="#">SRR2302912</a>	Col s-2R salinity stress leaves	<a href="#">GSM1872390</a>	Leaf	Osmotic stress	39.45
SRR4033018.htseq	<a href="#">SRR4033018</a>	Heat stress rep1 leaves	<a href="#">GSM2280286</a>	Leaf	Heat stress	23.64
SRR2302914.htseq	<a href="#">SRR2302914</a>	Col h-1R heat stress (44oC for 1h) leaves	<a href="#">GSM1872392</a>	Leaf	Heat stress	68.98
SRR5196730.htseq	<a href="#">SRR5196730</a>	WT drought rep1 leaf	<a href="#">GSM2466003</a>	Leaf	Drought	16.17
SRR4033019.htseq	<a href="#">SRR4033019</a>	Heat stress rep2 leaves	<a href="#">GSM2280287</a>	Leaf	Heat stress	24.97

Sequence [^](#)

Publications [^](#)

Figure 2: Feature page

The current version can be tested at a demonstration website which contains genomics data from five plants and is available at <https://www.machado.cnptia.embrapa.br>. This interface aims to simplify data searching by providing users with a single search box to query all the data. The user would open the web page and type a given term (Figure 1-A) to have instant access to similar valid keywords

provided by the autocomplete feature. After typing the keywords and submitting the form, the user is redirected to the search results page (Figure 1-B). Such page contains summarized information about genes, transcripts, and proteins from all the organisms and filtering boxes at the left section which enables selecting features by specific criteria, such as organism, type, orthology, coexpression, and annotation. It also provides column sorting, control of the number of results, and download of the table or the sequences (Figure 1-C).

The search results columns contain hyperlinks to the feature itself (eg. protein), its related feature (eg. mRNA), orthologous groups, or coexpression groups. By clicking in a Hyperlink of a feature the user is redirected to the feature page that contains detailed information about it (Figure 2).

The feature page is organized in cards that can be collapsed to facilitate the visualization of specific information. The first card contains information about the feature itself, such as the organism, IDs, related features, and text annotation. If the feature is mapped to the genome, the next card will show the genomic location and an embedded genome browser powered by JBrowse. The following cards contain detailed information about functional annotation, orthologs groups, coexpression groups, sequence, and publications.

## DISCUSSION

Although Machado aims to simplify the genomics data integration, it requires considerable understanding of the data that's being loaded as well as of the computational tools. The GMOD Chado database schema relies upon ontologies to establish the relationship among data types and, therefore, the data must be loaded in a particular order to ensure the parent data is always loaded in advance. The user must observe the file format specifications and ascertain the feature IDs are consistent throughout the files. In regard to the computational tools, it's required to carry out systems administration tasks related to software installation and configuration, users permissions, and hardware requirements evaluation. There are other frameworks to integrate genomic data such as Intermine or Tripal that are in more advanced stages of development, but nevertheless users will have to go through the same laborious tasks described above.

The development of Machado was proven to be very fortunate once we started taking advantage of the Python libraries. For instance, Biopython enabled us to parse several file formats effectively and Haystack enabled very fast search and filtering capabilities. The single search box with autocomplete and faceting capabilities is arguably unprecedented among the open source frameworks available. The Python library repository is vast and, therefore, there is much to expand on future releases. For example, Machado can be used not to only host genomics data but also to enable the development of specific tools, such as, PlantAnnot (<https://www.machado.cnptia.embrapa.br/plantannot>), to identify and annotate genes of interest. There's extensive documentation within the Machado repository and users are welcome to contact us and propose documentation updates.

## CONCLUSION

The Machado software is a modern open source python framework that intends to store, integrate, query, and visualize multiomics data and also to be fast and easy to use. The software is public and everyone can download, use and collaborate by proposing improvements and submitting code.

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