



**Concept Web Alliance**

**USA HQ**

Stanford University/NCBO  
251 Campus Drive  
Stanford, CA 94305-5479, USA

**Europe HQ**

Netherlands Bioinformatics Centre  
Geert Grooteplein 28  
Route 260, Room 051  
6525 GA Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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Telephone USA +1 (518) 368 0542  
Telephone Europe +31 (6)225 25 338  
Fax +31 (184) 890 183  
Email [info@conceptweballiance.org](mailto:info@conceptweballiance.org)

Dear Kirk,

On behalf of its initiating group, I am inviting you to join the inaugural meeting of the Concept Web Alliance on 8 May 2009, New York (exact location to be announced).

For a few months now, a growing group of like-minded colleagues has been discussing the challenges of massive and complex biological and biomedical information and the need to make dispersed and disparate data interoperable.

The group is acutely aware of the fact that many efforts are going on in this field and the approach we want to take in the Concept Web Alliance is inclusive. We are inviting all credible initiatives to join and collaborate with us in a network of interconnected initiatives and groups in order to reach very practical goals around global data interoperability, reduction of ambiguity, redundancy and other inhibiting factors. What we hope to achieve is an open, free exchange of richly annotated 'triples', representing ultimately all relevant scientific information, starting with the biomedical domain.

In our opinion, this ambitious goal can only be achieved in a public setting, with a strong 'trusted party' element intrinsic to the initiative and also an attitude to 'do' things together rather than to just 'discuss' things.

An executive summary of the CWA initiative is attached.

Between today's date and the meeting we intend to discuss several main aspects of the challenge we face in more detail and we will try to reach a consensus on these issues between as many of the participating parties as possible – but at least between the initiating members – preferably before the actual meeting. A convenient forum for this is the Conceptweblog (<http://conceptweblog.wordpress.com/members/>).

On May 7th we will meet with the initiating members to have final discussions and prepare for a presentation to the wider group on the 8th. On that second day you will also be given the opportunity to discuss the issues below with us and we will ask all participants whether they wish to join the CWA and how they can contribute to the CWA goals, for instance by contributing research, tools, content and/or modest funding for the operations.

Main topics to be discussed include:

1. Triple format and storage requirements
2. Accessibility, Open Access and Licensing issues
3. Updates of the triple store
4. Scope, Governance and initial funding of the Initiative



5. What and how members can, and are expected to, contribute
6. The potential of forming a public private partnership
7. Any other crucial topic suggested by participants

By responding to [info@conceptweballiance.org](mailto:info@conceptweballiance.org), please indicate whether you want to:

- a. join us on the 8th of May in New York (unfortunately we are not in a position to reimburse your travel costs);
- b. be on the update mailing list between now and the meeting;
- c. actively join one or more discussions (please indicate which of the topics above).

We do hope you will join us in this initiative and are looking forward to discuss this further with all interested parties.

Sincerely,

Albert Mons,  
On behalf of the CWA initiating group

*CWA initiating group:*

Amos Bairoch, SIB and UniProt (Switzerland)  
Katy Borner, Indiana University (USA)  
Carole Goble, University of Manchester (UK)  
Henning Hermjakob, EBI (UK)  
Mark Musen, NCBO and Stanford Biomedical Informatics group (USA)  
Gert Jan van Ommen, LUMC and CMSB (Netherlands)  
Abel Packer, Bireme and SciELO (Brazil)  
Jan Velterop, Concept Web Alliance preparatory group (UK)  
Mark Wilkinson, University of Vancouver (Canada)  
Frank van Harmelen, Free university of Amsterdam (Netherlands)

*Organising committee:*

Albert Mons  
Ruben Kok, Director NBIC (Netherlands)  
Jacintha van Beemen

*Support for the meeting and start up of CWA:*

Netherlands Bioinformatics Centre, Netherlands  
Bill Melton Foundation, USA  
Centre for Medical Systems Biology, Netherlands