

“COMPARTIR”: a Spanish academic network initiative for sharing genetically modified mice



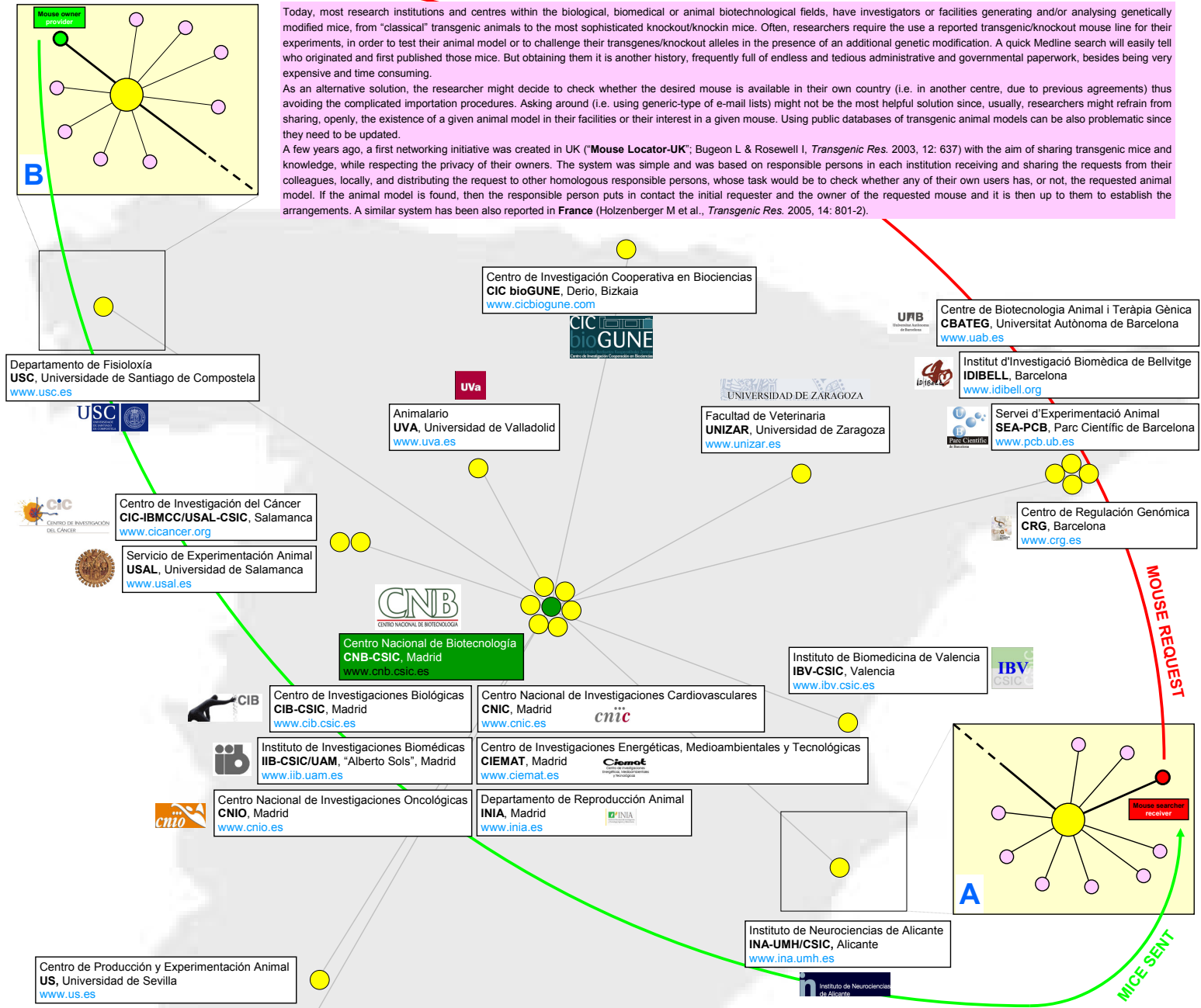
Lluís Montoliu, CNB-CSIC, Madrid-Spain



Today, most research institutions and centres within the biological, biomedical or animal biotechnological fields, have investigators or facilities generating and/or analysing genetically modified mice, from “classical” transgenic animals to the most sophisticated knockout/knockin mice. Often, researchers require the use a reported transgenic/knockout mouse line for their experiments, in order to test their animal model or to challenge their transgenes/knockout alleles in the presence of an additional genetic modification. A quick Medline search will easily tell who originated and first published those mice. But obtaining them it is another history, frequently full of endless and tedious administrative and governmental paperwork, besides being very expensive and time consuming.

As an alternative solution, the researcher might decide to check whether the desired mouse is available in their own country (i.e. in another centre, due to previous agreements) thus avoiding the complicated importation procedures. Asking around (i.e. using generic-type of e-mail lists) might not be the most helpful solution since, usually, researchers might refrain from sharing, openly, the existence of a given animal model in their facilities or their interest in a given mouse. Using public databases of transgenic animal models can be also problematic since they need to be updated.

A few years ago, a first networking initiative was created in UK (“**Mouse Locator-UK**”; Bugeon L & Rosewell I, *Transgenic Res.* 2003, 12: 637) with the aim of sharing transgenic mice and knowledge, while respecting the privacy of their owners. The system was simple and was based on responsible persons in each institution receiving and sharing the requests from their colleagues, locally, and distributing the request to other homologous responsible persons, whose task would be to check whether any of their own users has, or not, the requested animal model. If the animal model is found, then the responsible person puts in contact the initial requester and the owner of the requested mouse and it is then up to them to establish the arrangements. A similar system has been also reported in **France** (Holzenberger M et al., *Transgenic Res.* 2005, 14: 801-2).



Here, I am introducing the “COMPARTIR” (“share”, in Spanish) initiative, which I have established in Spain, within the working group of “Transgenesis in Mammals” (<http://www.cnb.uam.es/~transimp/>), founded in 1999, with its corresponding e-mail list (transgenicos@cnb.uam.es). The COMPARTIR network is currently made of 21 nodes (institutions, see the map in this Poster) with a responsible person in each centre, whose task is to keep an updated list of animal models existing in his centre and to facilitate a direct contact between the requester and the owner, following the schemes described in UK and France.

PROCEDURE:

- All 21 nodes (yellow circle) are interconnected through the e-mail list “transgenicos@cnb.uam.es”, hosted at CNB in Madrid, which operates as a coordinator
- Each node has a delegate-responsible persons whose task is to maintain an updated list of all mouse models owned by their mouse researchers (pink circle)
- (A) When a mouse researcher (red dot) is looking for a given mouse model, he/she first contact his/her corresponding node to submit the request through the list
- Alternatively, the researcher himself/herself might also submit the request directly to the list if he/she is a member of it
- The request is distributed to all nodes and mouse researchers that are members of the list
- All responsible persons in each node check whether they have or not the requested model in their animal houses
- (B) If a given node happens to have the mouse model, then he/she contacts the corresponding mouse owner (green dot) and put him/her in contact with the person requesting the mouse model
- The scientists owning and requesting the mouse model get in contact privately and eventually establish an agreement for the transfer of mice from B to A
- The entire mouse transfer is transparent to the rest of members of the list, thus maintaining the privacy of the process