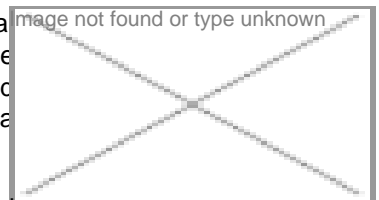


## New contours of convergence

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Internet and biotechnology are two industries accounting for a big share of the global economy. Additionally, these two industries are responsible for redefining how people live their daily lives. The internet revolution in the commercial, social and civic lives of India and many other countries has accelerated the technological innovation and the entrance of a variety of technologies into an entirely new communications environment.



Biotech companies like their internet counterparts, are marvels at venturing into uncharted waters. Innovative gene therapies and other modern techniques are continually advancing the frontiers of medical research and help to treat illnesses that were untreatable in the past.

"In contrast to the accelerated growth that the internet has experienced, companies in the biotech sector have just begun to utilize the variety of internet applications available. Although maintaining a web presence and accessibility for research exists for these companies, the industry has relatively overlooked the possibilities of B2B commerce, ASP applications or the ubiquitous wireless domain," says Aditya M Reddy, CEO of Hyderabad -based DeUS Infotech Private Ltd.

The company is engaged in the modeling and developing of a net-based bioexchange program that would enable biotech companies to not only interact with each other dynamically but also bridge the digital divide among them.

"As of now we have completed the first phase (i.e., the website [www.genomevalley.org](http://www.genomevalley.org)) of our project and in the second phase comprehensive information on biotech industries and various opportunities in this industry will be made available

through the website. In addition, we are also making available all the relevant government policies on this subject. Under the third phase of this project lots of information like job opportunities, list of universities offering biotech research facilities will be made available for the student community as well as for the industry," he added.

Biotechnology is like any other industry consisting of small, medium and large corporations. Presence on the net would benefit this industry with increased productivity, better accessibility to company data by researchers, and complementary services for marketing and administration departments. Integrating web and wireless applications for internal systems such as data management, document control, human resources etc., would competitively position a company in this market and the established biotech companies will benefit highly from the innovative internet technologies developed by companies such as DeUS.

"We are also in the process of creating a platform wherein foreign companies will find it much easier to decide on their investment plans for India. A contract research organization (CRO) forum is also under consideration where a lot of CRO based companies can come and get projects from foreign companies who are looking for partners in such areas," he explained. Aditya added that the key to future success is to become a decision enabler through the effective and timely exchange of intelligence. DeUS's expertise in internet-based intelligence systems and knowledge of the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry positions its 'genomevalley.org' project as a tool to help companies achieve their goals on the internet. "As of now we are doing this only for the Andhra Pradesh government under the genomevalley project but already we are getting a good response from states like Uttaranchal and Chattisgarh. Ultimately our aim is to devise an internet based platform wherein all the states will be interconnected and biotech information will flow seamlessly among different states," he explained.

Most pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device companies are currently making use of the vast power of the internet merely to display their brochures on their web sites – so called 'brochureware'. It will help them to leverage the internet as an essential tool in first exchanging knowledge and, ultimately, in making critical business decisions. It will also help them in attracting the right talent for their organizations, as the platform will also have a window for students to directly come and apply for their desired jobs in the biotech arena.

Zia Askari