

# eagle-i: biomedical research resource datasets

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**Abstract.** In this paper we present the linked data sets produced by the eagle-i project. We describe the content, the features and some of the applications currently leveraging these datasets.

**Keywords:** eagle-i, linked data, biomedical ontologies, research resources, research profiles

## 1. Introduction

Biomedical research relies on the ability to access the right tools and research resources needed to answer specific biological questions. Biomedical resources are generated, purchased and used during the course of research. Information about such resources is often sequestered in lab notebooks or in lab digital records, making the resources difficult to find, share, and reuse. The goal of eagle-i, (<http://www.eagle-i.net>) - a project initially funded by the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) and now in its fourth year- is to make these “invisible” research resources more discoverable by collecting information about them and making the information available through a semantic federated search application and as linked data sets.

To support structured data collection, retrieval and publication, we developed a distributed software platform (<https://open.med.harvard.edu/display/eaglei/>) and a modular set of ontologies collectively known as the eagle-i Resource Ontology (ERO) and available at <https://code.google.com/p/eagle-i/>.

The ontology contains domain representation for research resources including organisms, instruments, protocols, constructs, antibodies, biospecimens, human studies and research opportunities. The eagle-i system architecture comprises four main compo-

nents: the underlying ontology; data collection tools including an Extract, Transform, Load (ETL) toolkit and a web-based, ontology-driven Semantic Web Entry and EditIng Tool (SWEET, see Figure 4); institutional triple-store repositories; and a central web-based search application (see Figure 3).

The ETL toolkit allows generation of Excel templates driven by the ERO ontology for automatic data ingest. Data sources used in the project range from csv files, database dumps and Resource Description Framework (RDF) triples that can be automatically ingested through ETL procedures, to data entered manually through the SWEET. The data generated through eagle-i’s data collection tools are stored as RDF triples in Sesame 2.6, and made available through SPARQL endpoints and as linked data sets. The datasets provide interlinks to several other datasets such as DBpedia and VIVO (<http://datahub.io/dataset/vivo>).

In this paper we present the key characteristics of the datasets, provide sample SPARQL queries and discuss some of the known usages of our datasets.

## 2. Dataset Descriptions

Our datasets describe biomedical resources available at 25 institutions. We also maintain a dataset of resources shared across eagle-i institutions (e.g. or-

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ganizations, generic organisms) referred to as *global eagle-i instances*. The main resource types we cover are: Biological Specimen, Database, Document, Human Study, Instrument, Organism or Virus, Organization, Person, Reagent, Research Opportunity, Service, Software.

The datasets can be queried through SPARQL endpoints (<https://www.eagle-i.net/export/sparqlers/>), can be browsed using classic and linked data browsers and are also available via direct RDF download (<https://www.eagle-i.net/export/rdf-download/>). They are open and may be freely reused in conformance to our terms of use (<http://eagle-i.net/help/terms-of-use>). Full information about each dataset is available at the Data Hub (<http://datahub.io/dataset?q=eagle-i>). In Table 1, we present a summary of the triples in each dataset; these numbers include only the triples that are directly related to resource instances, that is (a) triples where the subject is a resource instance and (b) triples that provide minimal information (type and label predicates) for the objects in (a). We deliberately exclude from these datasets most ERO ontology tri-

ples, as they do not *per-se* represent biomedical resources. Table 2 gives an overview of the number of triples across all participating institutions devoted to each of the resource types.

A URI for a resource resolves as an HTML page when accessed by a browser. This page displays all the data about the resource and its inferred types as well as a link to the RDF download (see Figure 1). The eagle-i data sets are linked to the VIVO dataset through the reuse of its Organization hierarchy. When available, individual person records in eagle-i link to their corresponding Profiles URI (<http://profiles.catalyst.harvard.edu/>). Our datasets link to the Gene Ontology (GO) datasets through the adoption of GO terms for anatomy and biological processes. Links from sets of animal models and related resources (such as cell lines, antibodies and reagents) to the DBpedia dataset are implemented by connecting organisms in the two datasets through owl:sameAs statement, for example: [http://global.eagle-i.net/i/Mus\\_musculus](http://global.eagle-i.net/i/Mus_musculus) owl:sameAs <http://dbpedia.org/resource/Mouse>.

Tables 1 and 2

Number of triples published per site (Table 1) and per resource type (combined for all institutions) (Table 2) as of March 5, 2013.

\* - Denotes status as member institution of original eagle-i network # - Denotes status as currently funded, CTSA eagle-i member institution

Data set	Published triples
University of Pennsylvania <sup>#</sup>	21866
Vanderbilt University <sup>#</sup>	19536
Oregon Health & Science University <sup>*#</sup>	76818
Harvard University <sup>*#</sup>	372288
University of Alaska Fairbanks <sup>*</sup>	15446
University of Hawai'i Manoa <sup>*</sup>	347219
Jackson State University <sup>*</sup>	10501
Montana State University <sup>*</sup>	24737
Morehouse School of Medicine <sup>*</sup>	8763
Dartmouth College <sup>*</sup>	372288
University of Puerto Rico <sup>*</sup>	35733
Clark Atlanta University	928
Charles Drew University	3940
The City College of New York, CUNY	462
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	2761
Howard University	2944
Hunter College, CUNY	1352
Meharry Medical College	1805
Ponce School of Medicine	2001
Texas Southern University	1474
Tuskegee University	927
Universidad Central del Caribe	5477
University of Texas at El Paso	2773
University of Texas at San Antonio	4050
Xavier University of Louisiana	9395
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1345484</b>

Resource type	Published triples
Biological specimens	48317
Databases	421
Documents	68890
Human studies	6491
Instruments	125696
Organisms or viruses	456107
Organizations	950930
People	180554
Reagents	177543
Research opportunities	1078
Services	62501
Software	27291

**Estradiol-17b (E2)-Coat-the-Count RIA**

eagle-i ID  
<http://ohsu.eagle-i.net/i/0000012b-00c9-baa6-79a3-373680000029>

Resource Type  
[Material analysis service](#)

Properties

Resource Description	"Direct assay: Steroid, protein, or peptide assay without extraction are available as in-house assays or from commercial sources, including monkey LH, FSH, inhibin-B, growth hormone, prolactin, leptin, ghrelin, glucagons, IGF-1, total or high molecular weight adiponectin, pregnenolone, cotinine, and other commercial assay kits."
Resource Description	Protein hormone assay for endocrine system
Contact	<a href="#">Pau, Francis, Ph.D.</a>
Related Resource	<a href="#">Hamilton Microlab 500 diluter</a>
Related Resource	<a href="#">Packard Cobra Gamma counter</a>
Service Provided by	<a href="#">Endocrine Technology Support Core Laboratory</a>
Website(s)	<a href="http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/onprc/research-services/research-support/endocrine-technology.cfm">http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/onprc/research-services/research-support/endocrine-technology.cfm</a>
Related Technique	<a href="#">Radioimmunoassay</a>

Fig. 1. The information displayed by a browser when requesting the resource URI <http://ohsu.eagle-i.net/i/0000012b-00c9-baa6-79a3-373680000029>. It describes a protein hormone assay for the endocrine system.

### 3. Domain modeling

Our approach to domain modeling was driven by the following goals:

1. Reuse existing ontologies as much as possible to reduce the modeling burden and to maximize future data integration
2. Identify design patterns and ontology engineering solutions that would allow a set of

ontologies to drive the eagle-i user interfaces while remaining of general use to the biomedical community at-large.

Regarding the first point, because most of our domain coverage was biomedical in nature, we referred to principles and existing ontologies within the OBO Foundry [1]. Conformance with OBO Foundry standards fixed the following design choices:

- Use of the Basic Formal Ontology [2] as the upper level ontology
- Predominant utilization of ontologies in the OBO Foundry constellation due to their quality, extensive usage and common design principles
- Application of the MIREOT principle [3] for referencing entities in external ontologies

As far as the second goal is concerned, we developed a design pattern approach to separate, within our ontology suite, the application-specific portion from the “core” content that was worth sharing with the community. Our approach, described extensively in [4], has been generalized and reused in other efforts such as the Reagent Ontology (ReO <https://code.google.com/p/reagent-ontology/>) and the Agent, Resource and Grant ontology (ARG <https://code.google.com/p/connect-isf/>). It has also led to a set of recommendations for implementing a maintenance and release pipeline using available tools and services [5].

Another key element of our ontology development process has been the coordination of efforts within the Biomedical Ontology Community. These include active collaboration and discussion with other ontology development groups (through tracker term requests, developer call participation, etc.). Although time consuming, these efforts allow reuse of portions of other ontologies and help achieve better data integration and interoperability.

Enter a term name in the search box below to see a list of matches in the eagle-i vocabulary. Alternatively, browse the term hierarchy using the left sidebar.

**Transgenic organism**

**Resource Types**

- < All Resource Types
- < Organism or Virus
- < Mutant organism
- Transgenic organism

**Embedded Types**

- Antibody target
- Construct insert
- Data
- Immunogenic material
- Intervention
- Observational method
- Phenotype

**Referenced Taxonomies**

- Matriculation Status
- Quantitative study design
- Life cycle stage
- Programming language
- Antibody isotype
- Data format
- Technique
- Measurement scale
- Biosafety level
- Phase
- Algorithm
- Employee status
- Software license
- Biological process
- US residency status
- Quality
- Software purpose
- Phenotype
- Disease
- Anatomical entity
- Data collection method

**A**

### Transgenic organism

**Is a:** [Organism or Virus, Mutant organism](#)

**Definition:** A non-viral organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques.

**Annotations:** ClassGroup\_NoAssertedInstances

**Properties:** \* indicates a required property

- [Genetic alteration](#) [Transgenic insertion\\*](#) [Genetic alteration](#)
- [Additional Name](#) string
- [Biological process studied](#) [Biological process](#)
- [Clinical or Environmental Source](#) string
- [Contact](#) [Person](#)
- Definition** Name of the primary person responsible for the resource. Contact and PI may be the same person. Use the format: Last Name, First Name.
- Annotations** <none>
- URI** [http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/ERO\\_0000021](http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/ERO_0000021)
- [Developed by](#) [Organization](#) [Person](#)
- [Exchange facilitator](#) string
- [Infectious History](#) string
- [Inventory Number](#) string
- [Location](#) [Organization](#)
- [Parental Strain Name](#) string
- [Phenotype annotation](#) [Phenotype](#)
- [Related Disease](#) [Disease](#)
- Definition** Disease or condition for which the organism or cell line presents some or all defining characteristics.
- Annotations** PropertyGroup\_SearchFacet
- URI** [http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/ERO\\_0000233](http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/ERO_0000233)
- [Related grant number](#) string
- [Related Publication or Documentation](#) [Document](#)
- [Related Technique](#) [Technique](#)
- [Resource Description](#) string
- [Transgenic Construct](#) [Construct](#)
- [Website\(s\)](#) string

**B**

Fig. 2. Eagle-i ontology browser interface. Classes can be searched for using the autocomplete feature (A). In this case, we see information about 'transgenic organism'. All of the properties for this class are shown. Clicking the property name displays its definition, URI and annotations as shown by feature (B). Referenced taxonomies are sets of terms used as ranges for some properties (such as the Disease taxonomy for the related disease property) while embedded types denote classes for which instances can be only created in the context of another instance. For example, a construct insert can only be created in conjunction with its containing construct.

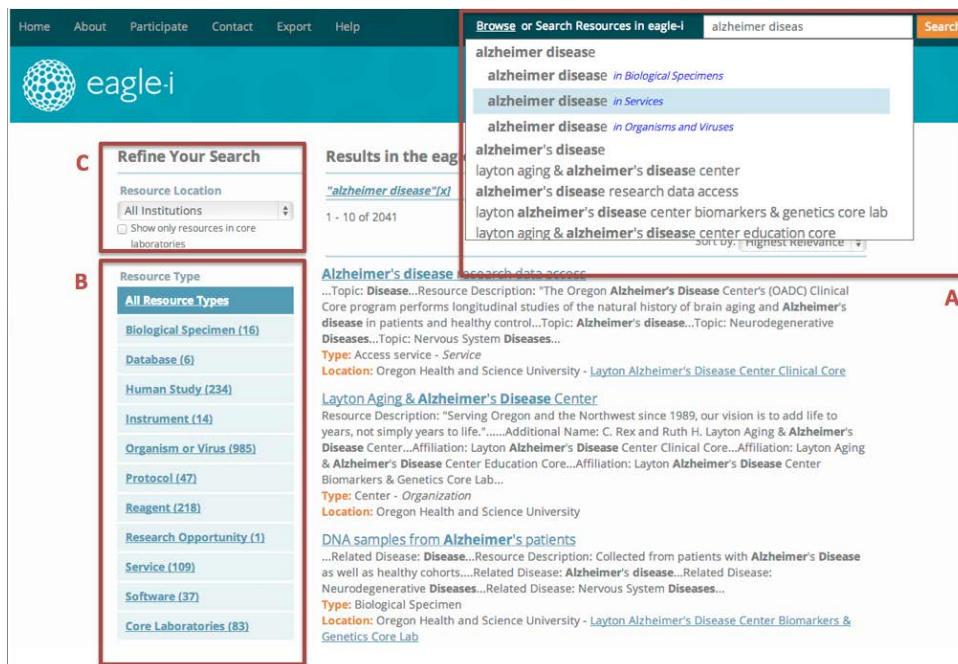


Fig. 3. The eagle-i search interface. The search box provides autocomplete features that highlight resource types matching the searched keywords (A). Search results can be refined by institutions (C) and by resource type (B).

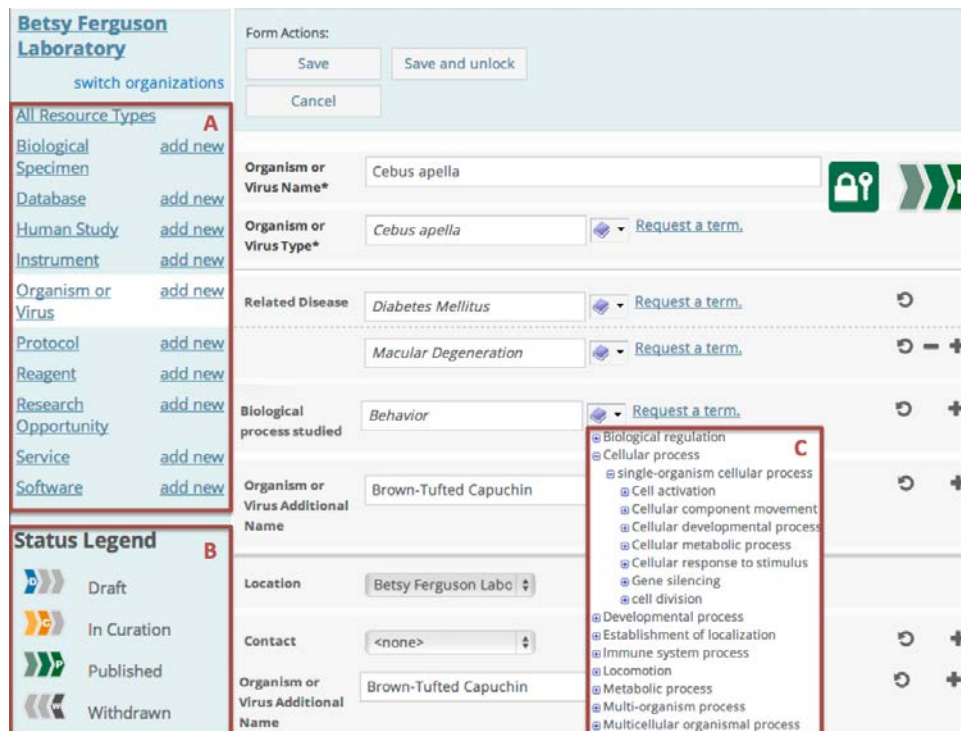


Fig. 4. The SWEET interface. Data for a Tufted capuchin used to study diabetes is shown. (A) The resource types available in the lab. (B) The curation status legend (the record displayed is “published”). (C) The Gene Ontology hierarchy used for representing biological processes. The above interface is available for authorized users at <https://ohsu.eagle-i.net/sweet>.

## 4. Sample SPARQL queries

We present sample queries that illustrate interesting usages of the eagle-i datasets. For each one, we specify the particular SPARQL endpoint used such that query results can be reproduced. In order to better understand the classes and relationships used in the following queries we suggest referring to the eagle-i ontology browser (<http://search.eagle-i.net/model/>), a screen capture from which can be seen in Figure 2.

URIs of eagle-i classes and properties can also be found using Ontobee [6]

(See <http://www.ontobee.org/browser/index.php?o=ERO>). The queries can be executed through a SPARQL interface or passed programmatically to the endpoint.

In the following examples, we omit for brevity the declaration of the following prefixes:

```
PREFIX rdfs: <http://www.w3.org/2000/01/rdf-schema#>
PREFIX obo: <http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/>
PREFIX mesh:
<http://purl.bioontology.org/ontology/MSH/>
```

### 4.1. Query for researcher expertise

The eagle-i datasets allow identification of individual expertise by leveraging the connection between resources and related techniques, diseases and instruments as well as the linkage between resources and people. As an example, the query below identifies likely experts in radioimmunoassay techniques (obo:ERO\_0000652) by connecting the nodes between the technique and individuals. In this case, collecting all resources that reference the technique (obo:ERO\_0000543) and returning the person(s) indicated as contact (obo:ERO\_000021) for that resource.

```
SELECT DISTINCT? person WHERE
{
  ## Select Resources that have related
  ## technique radioimmunoassay

  ?resource obo:ERO_0000543 obo:ERO_0000652.

  ## Select the contact person for
  ## the resource

  ?resource obo:ERO_000021 ?person.
}
```

If the query is executed against the OHSU endpoint (<http://ohsu.eagle-i.net/sparqler/query/>) it will return

a contact for a set of services that involve radioimmunoassay such as the one represented in Figure 1.

### 4.2. Query for animal models relevant for a particular disease

Another interesting query is related to the identification of animal models used in the research of autoimmune diseases. The query is reported below.

```
SELECT ?resource WHERE
{
  ## Select Organism Resources

  ?resource a obo:OBI_0100026.

  ## That are model of some disease

  ?resource obo:ERO_0000233 ?disease.

  ## And the disease is an autoimmune
  ## disease

  ?disease rdfs:subClassOf mesh:D001327.
}
```

It is interesting to note that the results returned for this query, when executed against the Harvard endpoint (<http://harvard.eagle-i.net/sparqler/query>) include animal models related to Diabetes Mellitus, Type 1 (see for example: <http://harvard.eagle-i.net/i/0000012a-25bf-7988-f5ed-943080000005>) and Sjogren's Syndrome (<http://harvard.eagle-i.net/i/0000012a-25bf-7988-f5ed-943080000003>) because both are subsumed in the MeSH Hierarchy for Autoimmune disease (mesh:D001327).

### 4.3. Query for resources across datasets

For several resources in eagle-i (such as animal models) we collect information on related genes via Entrez gene IDs. This is a useful entry point for connecting non-eagle-i datasets. In the query below for instance, we probe data at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) for resources relevant to Stony Brook investigators based on the genes they have published about. This query, when executed against the UPR endpoint (<http://upr.eagle-i.net/sparqler/query/>) returns 4 authors related to a ErbB2 construct insert used in a particular plasmid (<http://upr.eagle-i.net/i/0000012b-8e1f-e389-3bbe-1c0980000000>).

```
SELECT ?entrezgeneid ?author ?resource
WHERE
{
  ## Query the SPARQL endpoint at Stony Brook

  SERVICE
```

```

<http://link.informatics.stonybrook.edu/sparql/>
{
  ## Get the AUIs and the CUIs related to the
  ## entrez gene ids

  ?au1
  <http://link.informatics.stonybrook.edu/umls/ATN#EN
  TREZGENE_ID>
  ?entrezgeneid.
  ?au1 rdfs:label ?label.
  ?au1
  <http://link.informatics.stonybrook.edu/umls/hasCUI
  > ?cui.

  ## Select the papers that have as subject
  ## the gene identified by the Entrez ID

  ?paper    <http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/subject>
  ?cui.

  ## Select the author of the paper

  ?paper
  <http://vivoweb.org/ontology/core#informationResourceInAuthorship> ?authorship.

  ?authorship
  <http://vivoweb.org/ontology/core#linkedAuthor>
  ?author.

  ?author
  <http://vivoweb.org/ontology/core#hasMemberRole>
  ?membership.}

  ## Bind the Entrez gene IDs to eagle-i resources
  ?resource obo:ERO_0000236 ?entrezgeneid.
}

```

## 5. Dataset Usage

A number of groups have begun to make use of eagle-i-produced data by implementing search and visualization tools that reuse the RDF and that complement the functionality provided by eagle-i applications. The Harvard Catalyst Core Facilities Portal (<http://cbmi.catalyst.harvard.edu/cores/index.html>) was an early adopter on this front. This portal component generates HTML pages from the core facilities data stored at Harvard University's eagle-i repository. The automated production of these pages ensure that the service offerings as well as the contact information for each core are standardized, centralized and current, as they are maintained through the eagle-i SWEET. Another interesting reuse of eagle-i RDF data is the CoreSearch service (<http://www.ohsu.edu/research/coresearch/>) at Oregon Health & Science University. Leveraging the Plumage tool (<http://ctsiatucsf.github.com/plumage/>) developed by the Clinical & Translational Science Institute at the University of California San Francisco, CoreSearch allows for visualization and search of

OHSU core laboratories, their service offerings and their instruments by converting the RDF data accessed through the eagle-i SPARQL endpoints to static HTML pages that can be optimally indexed by Google and other search engines. eagle-i datasets are also used in the context of the CTSACConnect (<http://www.ctsacconnect.org/>) project to link clinicians to basic researchers through publications and research resources. There are several related initiatives that aim at representing and sharing data about biomedical resources. For those under the OBO Foundry umbrella, such as phenoscape (<http://phenoscape.github.io/>), we are actively working on the reuse of URIs, modeling approach and technical solutions and we are engaged in discussions about these topics with other initiatives such as Bio2RDF (<http://bio2rdf.org/>).

## 6. Updating maintenance and scalability

The creation of the eagle-i datasets over the four years of the project was possible as a result of the dedicated work of *resource navigators* (Ph.D. level scientists contacting laboratories and collecting resource information) and curators responsible for the data entry and quality control of collected data. Our ETL procedures provide a robust mechanism for automating the ingest of large amounts of structured or semi-structured data, though they require schema mapping and some curation of the input data to ensure data quality. After the initial grant period, each institution in the network took over the responsibility for maintaining and updating their local datasets with the help of detailed guidelines and tools (<https://open.med.harvard.edu/display/eaglei/Training>).

The eagle-i software stack, which is available as open source, will continue to be maintained and enhanced by the development team at Harvard with contributions from the open source community. The Harvard team also operates central components that tie the eagle-i network together (a network node registry, the central search application, the global instances repository). The eagle-i ontology has been and will remain an open source community resource that is updated through tracker requests. Each new eagle-i software release incorporates the latest release of the eagle-i Resource Ontology. To assure data alignment in accordance with these regular ontology changes, the developers concurrently release data migration scripts to update each of the datasets. Other

sustainability efforts for data collection are related to the integration of the eagle-i backend with laboratory inventory management systems such as iLab (<http://www.ilabsolutions.com/>).

## 7. Discussion

During the process of data collection and in the maintenance of the datasets we have developed a set of data QA guidelines that guarantee data consistency. All the data were manually curated and we have a set of procedures to check data consistency upon ontology changes. While we make available only the latest version of the datasets, all previous ontology releases are available. Data are updated with each ontology release and in an ongoing basis. Institutions continue to add eagle-i resources to their repositories as need arises, and new institutions continue to join the eagle-i network. The software has a mechanism to collect user feedback directly into a ticket tracking system, and users can request additional terms to be included in the ERO ontology both through our Google code tracker and directly from the SWEET interface. Most of the quality issues users have reported so far were related to missing ontology terms.

The eagle-i linked data is a collection of datasets: one for each institution participating in the network. This choice was motivated by a desire to allow each institution to control their data and to assign their own URIs. Moreover this ensures a better performance of the SPARQL endpoints, as our largest datasets contain in the order of 600,000 triples.

The lack of a single SPARQL query interface to search over all of the eagle-i datasets at once is easily overcome by using programmatic access. As an internal response, for curation purposes we have developed a simple web application that allows eagle-i curators to select multiple SPARQL endpoints and issue queries against them in bulk.

Another characteristic of our datasets is related to the usage of numeric URIs for most of the classes and properties. This choice was driven by the decision to adhere to the OBO Foundry Principles. From the perspective of ontology development, it makes sense to have the semantics of a particular resource be conveyed by its textual and logical definition rather than by a human readable URI or `rdfs:label`. This prevents misuse of entities when, for example, a label of a particular entity changes. It makes writing SPARQL queries less straightforward but we have found that good documentation of the ontology

through the ontology browser and Ontobee are of great help for our end users.

Another problem we had to face while creating the dataset was related to particular “instances” that did not belong to any institution but were supposed to be “global” (i.e. used from each institution). Examples of this kind of instances are Organizations, Manufactures or any kind of resource that are not tied to particular institutions in our network. For these kinds of resources we use a particular name space and we store them in a dedicated global repository (<http://global.eagle-i.net/sparqler/sparql>).

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