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The OEIS[®] reaches 200,000 sequences.

The *On-Line Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences*[®] (or OEIS[®]) isn't interested in DNA sequences, they are too messy.¹ Only well-defined number sequences, like the Fibonacci numbers, the pentagonal numbers, or the number of pieces you can cut a bagel into with n knife cuts are acceptable. The OEIS was begun by Neil Sloane, a mathematician at AT&T Labs, 47 years ago when he was a graduate student. In 2010 he was still running it, still essentially single-handedly, but with 50 new sequences coming in every day it had become too much for one person to manage.

After a difficult two-year transition period, the OEIS now has a new life—it is owned by a non-profit foundation (of which Sloane is the president), it has its own web site, oeis.org, and it operates as a wiki. It was launched on November 11, 2010, at which time it contained 180,000 sequences.

Last night, December 1, 2011, after a year of successful operation, a milestone was reached: the 200,000-th sequence was added. What is it? Sequence A201463 is a list of 25 numbers, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, . . . , 117, 144, with some special properties, one of which is that the sum of their reciprocals is 1. This is a new development in the four-thousand-year-old Egyptian Fraction problem. It is not exactly new, though—Sloane found it in a 2006 volume of the journal *Discrete Mathematics*. Why wasn't it in the OEIS already? Probably the author of the article didn't know of the existence of the OEIS. But many other people do: the OEIS Foundation web site has a list of over 2000 articles, books and web pages that reference the OEIS, and the following comment is typical of many that have been received: “*I consider OEIS one of the remarkable mathematical resources on the web, thanks to your enormous efforts in maintaining it.*”

The OEIS hasn't yet decided how to celebrate this event. Back in 2004 when they reached 100,000 sequences, they threw an eParty—see oeis.org/100k.html.

What's next? One goal is to spread the word that the OEIS exists, and that anyone in the world coming across an interesting sequence of numbers (although not a DNA sequence) should submit it. And the OEIS Foundation has been in existence for less than two years; it has charitable status in the U.S. and will continue to need to raise funds to secure its future.

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¹*DNA Sequencing Caught in Deluge of Data*, by Andrew Pollack, New York Times, December 1, 2011, page B1.