

AminoCraft, a Fun App to Learn Amino Acids

Two associate professors at Université Grenoble Alpes (UGA) have developed an app that teaches the structure of the 20 amino acids which are the building blocks of all living creatures. The application is available for free on Android and Apple smartphones, in English and French and it does not require a network connection to play. It provides a great way for students, and those who are curious, to have fun while quickly learning the amino acids on their smart phone, any time of the day, while commuting, in the street or on a coffee break.

Because the 20 amino acids constitute the basic elements for the production of proteins, university students in biology and health sciences must know their chemical structures by heart. An unpleasant and painful rite of passage...

In order to make it fun to learn the amino acids, Eve de Rosny and Véronique Rossi, two Associate Professors at UGA and researchers in biochemistry at the Institute of Biology of Grenoble (CEA-CNRS-UGA) have created AminoCraft, a game for smartphones.

The name AminoCraft comes from “amino acids” and “craft”. “I had this idea when watching my kids playing to Mine Craft” explains Eve de Rosny.

Learning While Having Fun

Not only do players have fun, but they progress through levels in the game, as their skills improve.

For beginners: the “quiz” option lets players match the names of the amino acids with their structures (and vice-versa).

More experienced players can start directly in “craft” mode, which consists of building amino acids up from empty frames and chemical groups.

Experts can try the “challenge” mode where they can compete with others and share their scores on social networks.

At all times, players have access to a library that shows the structure, the formula and key properties of each amino acid.

AminoCraft has been developed by the Grenoble’s group Curious and funded by the Auvergne Rhône Alpes region via its Digital University program (UNR-RA)

Since the application is available in English students from the around the world can use the app as a tool to learn their amino acids.

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