

Exploring Data Ark Data Commons: A Focus on Accessing De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data

Yiyuan Liu, PhD
The Minerva HPC Team

October 10, 2025



Icahn
School of
Medicine at
**Mount
Sinai**

Outline

- ▶ Data Ark Introduction
 - Mission
 - Available Datasets
 - Data Access
 - Data Onboarding Procedures and Policy
- ▶ Accessing De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data
 - Data Information
 - Data Access Workflow

Introduction to Data Ark

Data Ark Data Commons Increase the Power, Pace and Relevance of Our Science

Challenges



- ▶ Exhaustive searches for relevant datasets
- ▶ Repeated downloads of the same files across groups
- ▶ Difficulty in understanding opaque data structures

How Data Ark Helps



- ▶ Storage space for frequent-use research datasets
- ▶ A team managing the resources, simplifying access, training and user support

Data Ark website: <https://labs.ica hn.mssm.edu/minervalab/resources/data-ark/>

Data Ark Offers Mount Sinai Researchers Readily Available Datasets

- ▶ There are 18 datasets hosted under Data Ark currently

Access within 24 hours after DUA signed

Public Data Sets

- 1,000 Genomes Project
- BLAST
- gnomAD
- eQTLGen
- Genebass
- GTEx
- GWAS Summary Stats
- LDSCORE
- Reference Genome
- The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA)
- UKBB-LD

Mount Sinai Generated Data

- CBIPM-BioMe Data
- De-identified Digital Pathology Slides
- Living Brain Project
- Mount Sinai COVID-19 Biobank
- MSDW COVID-19 EHR Data Set
- MSDW OMOP EHR Data
- STOP COVID NYC Cohort

How to Rapidly Access Public and Mount Sinai-Generated Datasets Through Data Ark

- ▶ Visit the dataset webpage on Data Ark
- ▶ Access instruction is provided in the 'Access' section
- ▶ User completion of dataset-specific [DUA](#) (data use agreement)
- ▶ Access is granted within 24 hours

Data Onboarding Process

User-requested datasets must follow an approval process.

1. Data onboarding requested via the REDCap form (https://redcap.link/data_intake) that asks for the storage needed and prospective users.
2. Data Ark team verifies that the prospective users will use the data set.
3. If the dataset is < 1 TB, the Data Ark team will approve and start the onboarding process (webpage, copying data, verifying consent, build data usage agreement, notify users, etc).
4. Dataset > 1 TB requires the Advisory Board for approval.

Eligibility for Cost-waived for Data Ark Hosting and Data Retention Policy

- ▶ The eligibility for cost-waived hosting on Data Ark is based on the number of user groups calibrated to the data size.

Data Size (in Terabytes)	# Of user groups/dataset	Cost waived/year
1 or less	≥ 2	\$100
3	≥ 3	\$300
10	≥ 10	\$1,000 (\$500 for 6 months)
20	≥ 20	\$2,000 (\$1,000 for 6 months)
30	≥ 20	\$3,000 (\$1,500 for 6 months)
100	≥ 20	\$10,000 (\$5,000 for 6 months)

- ▶ Data with annual low usage will be archived and offboarded.

Questions and Support: Contact Data Ark

All service requests must come through the ticket system:

hpchelp@hpc.mssm.edu

De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data Access

De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data:

Introduction

- ▶ In June 2019, Mount Sinai Health System (MSHS) Department of Pathology and the Philips IntelliSite Pathology Solution jointly implemented a digital pathology system, gradually replacing traditional glass slide workflows.
- ▶ By early 2024, MSHS Department of Pathology is fully digitalized.
- ▶ These specimens encompass a broad spectrum of biopsies, resections, and autopsies, reflecting the diversity of diseases affecting patients from a wide range of backgrounds.
- ▶ Almost every organ system is represented within the collection.
- ▶ The slides were prepared using a variety of staining techniques.

De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data:

Hierarchical Pathology Imaging Assets

Multi-level Hierarchy

```
|— Patient (1 patient → ≥ 1 case)
  |— Case (1 case → ≥ 1 specimen)
    |— Specimen (1 specimen → ≥ 1 block)
      |— Block (1 block → ≥ 1 slide)
        |— Slide
```

De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data:

Hierarchical Pathology Imaging Assets (Continued)

Level	Conceptual Examples
Patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Patient ID: PT-2023-001<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Name: Jane Smith○ MRN: 123456789○ Demographics, clinical history
Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Case ID: C-2023-001<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Diagnosis: Invasive ductal carcinoma (Breast)○ Date: 2023-05-08○ Pathologist: Dr. Lee
Specimen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Specimen ID: SP-2023-001-A<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Type: Core needle biopsy○ Laterality: Left breast○ Collection date: 2023-05-10
Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Block ID: BL-2023-001-A1<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Derived from: SP-2023-001-A○ Processing date: 2023-05-12
Slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Slide ID: SL-2023-001-A1-1<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Stain: H&E○ Scan date: 2023-05-13

De-identified Digital Pathology Slides Data:

Electronic Health Records (EHR) and Slide Image Data

- ▶ EHR data is served through Mount Sinai Data Warehouse.
- ▶ Slide image data
 - De-identified and accessible via Data Ark on Minerva
 - TIFF format
 - 40x resolution (~0.25 microns/pixel)
 - > 1.6 million slides with new slides ingested daily
 - Retrospective slide digitization has not yet been performed.
- ▶ With an approved IRB protocol, crosslinking of EHR and slide image data is provided as a service by Mount Sinai Data Warehouse.

Build a Cohort in Leaf:

<https://leaf.mssm.edu>

The screenshot shows the Leaf cohort builder interface. The top bar indicates an "Unsaved Query" for "189 patients". The left sidebar lists various concepts, with "Patient Cohorts" expanded. A list of cohorts is shown, including "BioMe Biobank" (53,932), "BioMe Biobank Global Diversity Array (Sema4)" (10,628), "BioMe Biobank Global Screening Array (Regeneron)" (15,143), "BioMe Biobank Whole Exome Sequencing (Regeneron)" (14,669), "Cancer Institute Biorepository" (13,687), "Cancer Patient Cohort" (235,684), "Dental Patient Cohort" (59,570), "Digitized Pathology Slides Cohort" (992,234), "Foundation Medicine" (4,110), "Imaging Research Warehouse 1.0" (268,975), and "Imaging Research Warehouse 2.0" (1,228,215). The right panel shows a query builder with a "Limit to" section and a table of criteria. The table has three columns, each with a dropdown menu for "Patients Who", "And", and "Anytime". The first column is set to "At Least 1x", the second to "At Least 1x", and the third to "At Least 1x". The table contains three rows of criteria: "Digitized Pathology Slides Cohort", "Foundation Medicine", and "BioMe Biobank".

Unsaved Query
189 patients

All Concepts... Search...

Medications (ATC)

Patient Cohorts 2,896,847

- BioMe Biobank 53,932
- BioMe Biobank Global Diversity Array (Sema4) 10,628
- BioMe Biobank Global Screening Array (Regeneron) 15,143
- BioMe Biobank Whole Exome Sequencing (Regeneron) 14,669
- Cancer Institute Biorepository 13,687
- Cancer Patient Cohort 235,684
- Dental Patient Cohort 59,570
- Digitized Pathology Slides Cohort 992,234
- Foundation Medicine 4,110
- Imaging Research Warehouse 1.0 268,975
- Imaging Research Warehouse 2.0 1,228,215

Procedures (CPT4)

Vitals 3,315,306

My Saved Cohorts

Save Query

Limit to

Patients Who	And	And
Anytime	Anytime	Anytime
At Least 1x	At Least 1x	At Least 1x
Digitized Pathology Slides Cohort	Foundation Medicine	BioMe Biobank
In the Same Encounter	In the Same Encounter	In the Same Encounter

Cohort Inclusion Criteria

- Digital Pathology Slides Cohort
- Foundation Medicine
- BioMe BioBank

Pathology Slides Minerva Paths Are Accessible on Leaf

The screenshot shows the Leaf application interface. At the top, there's a blue header with the 'leaf' logo, 'Unsaved Query', and '189 patients'. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with 'Current Datasets (click to edit columns)', 'Basic Demographics', and 'Pathology Slides'. A pink box highlights the 'Pathology Slides' dropdown, and a pink arrow points to the 'Export Data' button. The main content area displays a table of 189 de-identified patients. The table has columns: Person Id, Patient Of, Address Postal Code, Address State, Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Language, Marital Status, Race, Religion, and Pathology Slides File Paths. The first row shows a patient with Person Id -781222015, Patient Of Mount Sinai Health System, Address Postal Code 100, Address State NY, Age 76, Ethnicity Not Hispanic or Latino, Gender FEMALE, Language Unknown, Marital Status Unknown, Race African American, and Religion Unknown. The second row shows a patient with Person Id -749514478, Patient Of Mount Sinai Health System, Address Postal Code 100, Address State NY, Age 67, Ethnicity Not Hispanic or Latino, Gender MALE, Language Unknown, Marital Status Unknown, Race African American, and Religion Unknown. The 'Pathology Slides File Paths' column contains file paths like /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/1de/1d75f1-4b04-94d8-7d755b466abe.tiff, /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/4e3/4e3d729-4ce7-b4e5-797157dbe688.tiff, /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/17c/17cb9c8-4864-9357-d672ed89e523.tiff, and /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/ca8/ca8.

leaf

Unsaved Query
189 patients

Current Datasets (click to edit columns) Basic Demographics Pathology Slides

Displaying 189 de-identified patients with 189 rows of data
What is de-identification?

< 1 2 3 4 >

	Person Id	Patient Of	Address Postal Code	Address State	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Language	Marital Status	Race	Religion	Pathology Slides File Paths
View details (0 rows)	-781222015	Mount Sinai Health System	100	NY	76	Not Hispanic or Latino	FEMALE	Unknown	Unknown	African American	Unknown	
View details (0 rows)	-749514478	Mount Sinai Health System	100	NY	67	Not Hispanic or Latino	MALE	Unknown	Unknown	African American	Unknown	 /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/1de/1d75f1-4b04-94d8-7d755b466abe.tiff, /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/4e3/4e3d729-4ce7-b4e5-797157dbe688.tiff, /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/17c/17cb9c8-4864-9357-d672ed89e523.tiff, /sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides/ca8/ca8

Need Help?

Access Pathology Slides on Minerva

- ▶ Complete data use agreement (DUA: <https://dataarkforms.hpc.mssm.edu/>).
- ▶ Access grant confirmations are delivered via email within 24 hours.
 - Over 1.6 million slides are organized in subfolders of the data collection [/sc/arion/projects/data-ark/digital_pathology_slides](#).
 - Alternatively, load the Data Ark module (“[ml dataark](#)”) and the slide collection is referenced in the environment variable [\\$DPslides](#).

Contact for Help

- ▶ **Inquiries of Digital Pathology Slides access or other Data Ark/Minerva service**
 - HPC ticket system hpchelp@hpc.mssm.edu.
- ▶ **EHR data access, Leaf or related inquiries**
 - Mount Sinai Data Warehouse ticket system
<https://labs.icahn.mssm.edu/msdw/open-a-ticket/>.
- ▶ **Computational pathology modeling related collaborations**
 - Dr. Gabriele Campanella (PI), Windreich Department of AI and Human and Health email: gabriele.campanella@mssm.edu.

Please Acknowledge CTSA in Your Publications

- ▶ Please acknowledge the support from Scientific Computing and Data at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai by including the following acknowledgement in a publication of any material, whether copyrighted or not, based on or developed with Minerva HPC resources:

“This work was supported in part through the computational resources and staff expertise provided by Scientific Computing and Data at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and supported by the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) grant UL1TR004419 from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences.”





Thank You!