

Informal survey results for an Automated Crystallization Robot Vs. an Automated Imaging System as a shared resource for four university crystallography groups.

Poll conducted May 2006 | CCP4bb | Price \$100,000 for either machine | Target for 4 crystallography groups (8-10 students; 3-5 post-docs; university setting; Shared resource; Protein, RNA+protein, and virus crystallography).

Researcher	Comments	Automated Crystallization Robot	Automated Imaging System
Researcher 1	Use fastdrop technique for set-up; But use imager for detailed analysis		1
Researcher 2	Robot provides quantitative (throughput) and qualitative (small drop size) advantage. Imager can be useful at later stage.	1	
Researcher 3	Imaging system allows archiving; Use of pre-made screens reduces need for robot (good for special buffers).		1
Researcher 4	Crystallization robot first; removes the first bottleneck; smaller drop size feasible; Imager should follow soon to remove next bottleneck	1	
Researcher 5	Crystallization robot first; get results; can convince grantees to fund for the imager afterwards.	1	
Researcher 6	Get robot; more hits with less protein; removes laborious and error-free process; But carefully select robot. Can waste time if not properly chosen	1	
Researcher 7	Get the robot; increased productivity; removes problems associated with variation in setting-up drops.	1	
Researcher 8	We have both; But get the robot first; difficult to justify the imager when robot is not there (not many wells to examine).	1	
Researcher 9	Get the imager; use multi-channel pipetter for quick set-up; then use imager; set-up is done once but observation done multiple times; automation helps latter.		1
Researcher 10	Get the robot; can use it to try several conditions; bottleneck may arise in imaging if several people use the robot for setting crystals.	1	
		7	3