Using apps to educate the public about transgenic technology

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If you know a twenty-year-old American consumer, they have spent their entire life living with transgenic crops (GMOs). The opportunity for future farmers to take advantage of established and emerging technologies in genetic engineering and gene editing will depend in part on acceptance by these young consumers.

Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska have a joint project funded by USDA-NIFA that includes the development and testing of Web App resources to teach the public the science-based story of using genetic engineering to solve agricultural problems. These Apps create classroom ready resource for teachers and their students to learn about the application of this science in both animal and plant agriculture.

We have tested the impact of these APPs on high school teacher and high school and college student learning. In addition we have tested how this education treatment impacts GMO acceptance to test the hypothesis that students use of this APP on their own to learn and this learning makes them more accepting of GMOs in our food system. We will mimic this experiment in our session with you as the learner.

Figure 1. Journey of a Gene Web-APP https://ge.unl.edu/journey-of-a-gene/