

The Sapphire[™] Biomolecular Imager Applications Overview



SEE WHAT YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH WITH A **Sapphire Biomolecular Imager**

Whatever type of imaging your lab does—whether it's the ubiquitous western blot, Southern blots of 2D DNA gels, visualizing gross morphology of tissues or small model animals, or something more unique—the Sapphire Biomolecular Imager will deliver outstanding, quantitative detection with NIR and RGB fluorescence, chemiluminescence, and phosphorimaging.

Look through this book to see just a few examples of what the Sapphire can do, and then get in touch with us at **info@azurebiosystems.com** to test the Sapphire for yourself.



Applications

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BLOTTING IMAGING PART 1 – WESTERN BLOTS



What makes the Sapphire so great for sensitive detection and quantitation of chemiluminescent and fluorescent western blots?

- Four solid-state lasers deliver strong excitation
- Unique, three-detector design maximizes performance by ensuring that the right sensor is used for the type of imaging being done
 - A sensitive photomultiplier tube (PMT) optimizes blue light detection and phosphorimaging
 - A high quantum-efficiency avalanche photodiode (APD) enables near infrared (NIR), infrared (IR), red, and green light imaging
 - A CCD sensor provides chemiluminescent imaging with the same sensitivity as film
- Powerful yet easy-to-use Sapphire Capture and AzureSpot analysis software

Flourescent westerns with up to four color detection

Get faster workflows and more reliable quantitation

Western blotting is a powerful technique useful for characterizing protein-protein interactions, signaling pathways, post-translational modifications, cell surface proteins, RNAi analysis, and more. Quantitative Western blotting aims to measure changes in protein expression in order to make meaningful relative comparisons between treatments or conditions.



With the use of secondary antibodies labeled with four spectrally distinct fluorophores, the powerful capabilities of the Sapphire enable simultaneous detection of up to four different proteins. Here we show an example where HeLa cell lysates spiked with transferrin were imaged on a western blot that was simultaneously probed with anti-tubulin (550 nm, green), anti ß-actin (700 nm, red), anti-GAPDH (800 nm, gray), and anti-transferrin (490 nm, blue). Sensitive and specific detection of all four proteins can be seen, with no evidence of background auto-fluorescence or bleed-through between channels.

FLUORESC Four-color in	CENCE IMAGING
Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	488 nm (transferrin)
	520 nm (tubulin)
	658 nm (B-actin)
	784 nm (GAPDH)

PUBLISHED DATA

See examples of fluorescent western blots imaged using a Sapphire in:

- Sex-Dependent Modulation of Anxiety
 - and Fear by 5-HT1A Receptors in the Bed Nucleus of the Stria Terminalis. Catherine A. Marcinkiewcz, et al. ACS Chem Neurosci. 2019 Jul 17;10(7):3154-3166.
- Activation of the Extracytoplasmic Function σ Factor σ^P by β-Lactams in Bacillus thuringiensis Requires the Site-2 Protease RasP.

Theresa D. Ho, et al. mSphere. 2019 Aug 7;**4**(4). pii: e00511-19.

• Oxidation of human plasma fibronectin by inflammatory oxidants perturbs endothelial cell function.

Siriluck Vanichkitrungruang, et al. Free Radic Biol Med. 2019 May 20;**136**:118-134.

Sensitive chemiluminescent detection

Maximize your western blot workflow options

Chemiluminescent Western blotting takes advantage of the enzymatic reaction between horseradish peroxidase (HRP)-labeled secondary antibodies and an enhanced chemiluminescence (ECL) substrate to produce photons of light. The signal enhancement of the enzymatic reaction is useful for detecting small amounts of protein.

Switching to the Sapphire doesn't mean that you have to convert all of your familiar and well-validated chemiluminescent protocols to fluorescent ones. Unlike other scanning systems, the Sapphire can deliver chemiluminescent detection with the same sensitivity as film, but with a much broader dynamic range.



IMAGING	INESCENCE
Pixel size	1x1 binned
	image with a
	resolution of
	2688x 2200
Detector	CCD Sensor



Total protein normalization and detection of up-to three proteins

Generate quantitative western blot data you can count on

Normalization uses an internal loading control or total protein stain in order to correct for variations between lanes and samples. Unless some type of normalization is performed, it is impossible to know if changes in band volume and intensity are caused by biological changes in samples or if they are due to loading or sample inconsistencies or a variance in sample preparation. The technique is used to account for unequal protein concentrations, loading inconsistencies across a gel and transfer variability across a blot and is a must when trying to make meaningful comparisons within Western blots. It gives you a baseline to compare changes in protein expression.



Four-color detection of a blot with increasing amounts of HeLa cell lysate. Tubulin is in red, actin is in blue, GAPDH is in green, and AzureRed/total protein is in white.



Quantitation of the tubulin signal normalized to total protein (orange) shows how TPN can correct for loading differences.

AzureRed Total Protein Stain

Easily stain total protein for the most accurate blot normalization.

Azure Catalog Number AC2124



Of the common normalization techniques, total protein stains are gaining preference among major journals because total protein stains are unaffected by experimental conditions. When combined with the AzureRed Fluorescent Protein Stain for total protein normalization, the Sapphire enables simultaneously detection of up to three different proteins and normalization to total protein.





Individual channels of the same blot. To calculate the total protein signal, simply draw a box around the entire lane and normalize your signal-of-interest to the total protein signal as usual.

*Ghosh R, Gilda JE, Gomes AV. The necessity of and strategies for improving confidence in the accuracy of western blots. Expert Rev Proteomics. 2014 Oct; **11**(5): 549–560. PMCID: PMC4791038.

Fluorescent western blotting tip

Improve sensitivity by drying your western blot before imaging

How does imaging wet or dry effect your data? The data below shows the effect of wet and dry imaging with the Sapphire Biomolecular Imager. While scanning a wet membrane does produce detectable signal, drying the membrane results in increased signal intensities, lower background and better signal to noise ratios. Water can attenuate fluorescence and even slight differences in the dryness of different regions of a blot can lead to variable quantitation. Drying your blot prior to imaging can greatly improve sensitivity and the ability to generate reliable quantitative data.



Western blot imaged while wet.



Western blot imaged while dry.

FLUORESC Western blo	CENCE IMAGING It imaged wet
Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	658 nm, 784 nm
Filter	710BP40, 832BP37
Intensity	7 (658 nm), 7 (784 nm)

FLUORESCENCE IMAGING Western blot imaged dry	
Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	658 nm, 784 nm
Filter	710BP40, 832BP37
Intensity	5 (658 nm), 2 (784 nm)

Quantitation comparison

With both excitation wavelengths (658 nm, left; 784 nm, right), signal intensity from the dry blot (orange) is much higher than signal intensity from the wet blot (blue).







GEL IMAGING



The same three detector technology that makes the Sapphire so great for imaging western blots is also flexible enough to image a wide range of gels, whether they are ethidium bromide (EtBr)-stained DNA agarose gels, coomassie-stained protein gels, or even 32P-labeled DNA acrylamide gels and more.

Measure protein-DNA binding using EMSA

Image delicate gels while still in glass plates

The electrophoretic mobility shift assay (EMSA), a.k.a. gel shift assay, is a great way to monitor any type of stable binding reaction such as protein-protein, protein-ligand, and protein-DNA. The technique can be used to analyze sequence specific interactions as complexes of protein or protein and DNA migrate slower than unbound protein or DNA, causing a "shift" in the bands within a sample.

Traditionally, EMSAs are performed with radioactive isotopes, but the technique can also be adapted to use non-hazardous fluorescent dyes, which can decrease assay time by cutting the time required for film or screen exposure.





FLUORESC EMSA (Gel si glass plates	ENCE IMAGING hift)—gel imaged while still in
Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	658 nm, 784 nm
Filter	710BP40, 832BP37
Analysis	AzureSpot 1D module, Normalized volume vs. volume

Here we show the results of a demo testing the Sapphire's ability to image a protein-DNA binding reaction using EMSA (DNA is shown in red and protein in green). The powerful lasers used in the Sapphire enable imaging of the gel directly within the glass plates, reducing the risks of breaking these delicate gels during transfer to blotting paper or while drying.



Visualization of band alignment (658 nm)



PUBLISHED DATA

See examples of EMSAs imaged using a Sapphire in:

H-NS Family Members MvaT and MvaU Regulate the Pseudomonas aeruginosa Type III Secretion System.

EAW McMackin, AE Marsden, and TL Yahr. J Bacteriol. 2019 Jun 21;201(14). pii: e00054-19.

Quantitation

Measurement of bound and unbound DNA is easily accomplished in the AzureSpot software.





View and quantify Sypro Ruby-stained 2D protein gels Analyze proteomics studies with ease

While 1D polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis is great for most applications, many proteomics and other studies benefit from an additional dimension of separation to resolve co-migrating proteins and their isoforms. Here we show a close-up of a 2D protein gel that was stained using Sypro Ruby. With a 50 µm resolution scan, you can easily see the distinct spots, which can also be quantified in the AzureSpot software.



FLUORES	CENCE IMAGING
2D protein	gel
Pixel size	50 µm
Laser	658 nm

View and quantify ³⁵S-labeled proteins in 2D gels Perform proteomics analysis on metabolically-labeled samples

For more sensitive detection, 2D gels can be run with protein samples isolated from cells grown in the presence of 35S-labeled methionine. The radiolabel becomes incorporated into cellular proteins which can be directly detected using the Sapphire's phosphorimaging capabilities. As with the Spyro Ruby-stained gel, the individual spots can be quantified using the AzureSpot software.



PHOSPHO	PRIMAGING
2D protein g	gel
Pixel size	200 µm

Image coomassie- and silver-stained protein gels

Coomassie and silver stains are common stains for detection and quantitation of proteins within a gel. While the Sapphire is powerful enough for high-resolution scanning applications, it can also be used for both scanning or CCD documentation quick documentation of protein gels. Here we show coomassie- and silver-stained gels. The Sapphire is compatible with a wide range of stains (contact us at info@azurebiosystems.com if you'd like to find out if a specific stain is supported) and the large scanning bed can accommodate multiple gels. With the Sapphire, you can choose which detection method best suits your assay – fluorescent detection or CCD imaging.



Coomassie-stained protein gel

NIR FLUOF	RESCENCE IMAGING
Coomassie p	orotein gel
Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	658 nm



Silver-stained protein gel

	ING
Silver Staine	ed protein gel
Pixel size	1x1 binned image
	with a resolution of
	2688x 2200

Get accurate DNA quantitation from EtBr-stained agarose gels

DNA agarose gel electrophoresis is one of the most basic and widespread molecular biology techniques, used to separate DNA according to molecular weight. The Sapphire[®] Biomolecular Imager uses the fluorescent properties of common DNA dyes, including EtBr, to easily image agarose gels and provide accurate DNA quantitation of stained gels without the use of damaging UV light.



Quantitation comparison

AzureSpot Software comes with a variety of tools for quantitation. Both the Quantity Calibration and the Toolbox Percentage functions provide accurate quantitation



Image Midori Green-stained DNA agarose gels

With the ability to visualize a range of dyes, the Sapphire can document and quantify more than just EtBrstained DNA agarose gels. Here we show an example of a Midori Green-stained DNA gel (contact us at info@azurebiosystems.com if you'd like to find out if a specific stain is supported).



Midori Green-stained DNA gel

Positive

Negative

Midori Green	stained DNA ael
Midoli Greer	I-stuilled DNA gei
Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	520 nm

Directly detect DNA for Sanger sequencing and footprinting

While next generation sequencing has revolutionized how we acquire DNA sequence information, there are still a few key applications where you need to run a DNA sequencing gel, such as DNA footprinting, studying transcription initiation, and mutation analysis. Whether you are using fluorescent dyes or ³²P, the Sapphire can image the gel and support your analysis



PHOSPHORIMAGING DNA gel				
Pixel size	200 µm			
Laser	658nm			
Filter	390BP40			

PUBLISHED DATA

See how the Sapphire is used to study how DNA structure affects viral integration in:

Nucleosome DNA unwrapping does not affect prototype foamy virus integration efficiency or site selection. Randi M. Mackler, et al. PLoS One. 2019 Mar 13;14(3):e0212764.



TISSUE & SMALL ANIMAL MODEL IMAGING



With the capability to image down to $10 \,\mu m$ resolution and a $25 \,cm \times 25 \,cm$ scanning bed, the Sapphire can go from scanning blots to scanning tissues and small animal models like mice, rats, small plants, and zebrafish. Quickly capture—and quantify—gross anatomy, morphology, protein localization and more.

Track protein movement through tissue in small animals Lymphatic antigen tracking in mouse hindpaw

The Sapphire is useful for imaging more than just gels and blots. You can image whole small animal models using fluorescence, chemiluminescence, and phosphorimaging detection. Here we show a demo where a fluorescently labeled antigen is injected subcutaneously into a mouse hindpaw, the animal euthanized, and fluorescence from the draining popliteal and sciatic lymph nodes measured.



Image multiple animals/samples

FLUORESCENCE IMAGING				
EtBr-stained DNA agarose gel				
Pixel size	100 µm			
Laser	658 nm, 784 nm			
Filter	710BP40, 832BP37			
Analysis	AzureSpot 1D module, Normalized volume vs. volume			



Negative Image

Quantitation

Numbered green circles indicate areas with signal to be measured.





Get information on tissue structure

Using CLARITY for whole brain imaging

Studying morphology and neural connectivity in the brain has been greatly enhanced with the development of CLARITY, a method for making brain tissue transparent for fluorescence and other imaging modalities. With a resolution down to 10 µm, the Sapphire can be used to image CLARITY-prepared brains from small animal models.



CLARITY-prepared mouse brains		
Pixel size	10 µm	
Laser	488 nm	
Filter	518P22	
Intensity	10	
Scan speed	Highest	

Positive Image



Negative Image

WHAT IS CLARITY?

Developed to help neuroscientists better image entire brains, the CLARITY technique is a way to optically clear brain tissue while preserving biologically important molecules like protein and DNA in the context of larger brain structures. In a manner similar to fossilization, lipid bilayers are replaced by a sturdier yet porous and clear hydrogel mesh. Labeled macromolecules lying deeper within the brain can now be imaged. With the flexible and powerful focusing power of the Sapphire, you can obtain wide-field imaging of CLARITY-prepared brains from small animal models.

Measure protein localization in tissue

Studying the permeability of embryo/placenta barrier

In another example of tracking protein distribution in different tissues, this demo shows administration of an IR dye conjugated to an antibody that cannot cross the placental barrier (embryo on the right) versus conjugation to an antibody that can cross the placental barrier (embryo on the left).

By imaging with the Sapphire rather than a camera-and-filter setup, you can quickly observe protein localization across distal tissues and easily quantify relative protein distribution.



Positive Image



Negative Image

FLUORESCENCE IMAGING Fluorescently-labeled antibody			
Pixel size	50 µm		
Laser	784 nm		
Filter	832BP37		
Intensity	10		
Scan speed	Highest		

Track viral infection and quantify viral load

The Sapphire can be used to track localization of more than just protein. In this demo, FITC-labeled virus is used to infect a zebrafish, which is then placed directly onto the Sapphire for imaging.





+FITC-labeled virus

-FITC-labeled virus

FLUORESCENCE IMAGING Virus infection in zebrafish		
Pixel size	10 µm	
Laser	488 nm	
Intensity	10	

Visualize anatomical structure

The large scanning bed of the Sapphire can accommodate many of the most common small animal models used in today's research labs. Here we show visualization of stained intestine in a rat.



FLUORESCENCE IMAGING Fluorescently-labeled antibody			
Pixel size	50 µm		
Laser	784 nm		
Filter	832BP37		
Intensity	10		
Scan speed	Highest		

PUBLISHED PROTOCOL

The Sapphire enables a range of tissue visualization, including in plants:

• Detecting Rapid Changes in Carbon Transport and Partitioning with Carbon-11 (11C). Benjamin A. Babst, Richard Ferrieri, and Michael Schueller. Methods Mol Biol. 2019;2014:163-176.

Image Xenopus oocytes and track protein localization

The Sapphire's 10 µm resolution facilitates imaging samples such as Xenopus oocytes and embryos. Here we show oocytes on a slide placed directly on the scanning bed and imaged. With fluorescently-labeled protein samples, researchers can easily observe localization to specific regions of the oocyte.



Oocytes on the scanner



Oocytes on the scanner





FLUORESCENCE IMAGING

Fluorescently-labeled protein

Pixel size	10 µm
Laser	488 nm, 520 nm, 658 nm,
	784 nm



96-WELL PLATE IMAGING



The Sapphire's 10 μ m resolution also means you can image and quantify cells within multi-well plates. Use fluorescence detection for a range of quantitative, cell-based assays.

Image cells in multi-well plates

Measuring cell viability using crystal violet

Crystal violet is used to measure cell viability of adherent cells. During the assay, dead cells are washed away and the remaining cells are visualized with the crystal violet dye, which absorbs at 595 nm. The Sapphire enables imaging and quantitation of several multi-well plates at a time, and the abosrbance of each well easily measured.



Positive Image



Name	Volume	Background	Background Level	Background Type	Average Intensity
1 cell(1, 1)	4.24E+06	2.54E+06	38.06	Local Average	101.52
1 cell(1, 2)	2.91E+06	2.61E+06	38.33	Local Average	81.16
1 cell(1, 3)	2.59E+06	2.50E+06	36.66	Local Average	74.72
1 cell(2, 1)	2.25E+07	2.63E+06	38.92	Local Average	372.07
1 cell(2, 2)	2.34E+07	2.67E+06	39.37	Local Average	385.47
1 cell(2, 3)	2.14E+07	2.68E+06	39.25	Local Average	353.36
1 cell(3, 1)	2.00E+07	2.63E+06	38.95	Local Average	334.77
1 cell(3, 2)	2.56E+07	2.76E+06	40.38	Local Average	415.12
1 cell(3, 3)	1.77E+07	2.75E+06	40.2	Local Average	298.88
1 cell(4, 1)	2.28E+07	2.57E+06	38.09	Local Average	375.39
1 cell(4, 2)	2.23E+07	2.63E+06	38.53	Local Average	364.32
1 cell(4, 3)	1.73E+07	2.57E+06	37.31	Local Average	288.56

FLUORESCENCE IMAGING

Crystal violet adherent cell viability assay

Pixel size	100 µm
Laser	658 nm
Filter	710BP40
Intensity	5
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis Toolbox, Grid Shape

Improve efficiency with in-cell western blotting

Accurately quantify intracellular proteins with the repeatability, speed, and throughput of an ELISA

While western blotting has been a lab standard for decades, the high performance of the Sapphire enables time- and labor-saving extensions of the western blot would have been hard to imagine when the technique was introduced. One such extension is in-cell western blotting, where plate-grown cells are fixed, permeabilized, and then probed with antibody in situ. The result is accurate measurement of intracellular protein expression while the cells are still in the plate, which provides a high throughput method for assessing multiple stimulations, end-points, proteins of interest and replicates on a single plate. By using NIR antibodies and the Azure Biosystems Sapphire[™] Biomolecular Scanner the potential for in well multiplex analysis also exists offering further improvements to throughput.

A	В	С
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No.				0	0		0
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	9		\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	0
(\bigcirc			\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc

A serial dilution of HeLa cells were seeded into a 96-well plate, cultured, fixed and permeabilized. A) Columns 1-3 were probed for beta-Actin using AzureSpectra 550 (green). B) Columns 3-6 were probed for Tubulin using AzureSpectra 800 (blue). C) The entire plate was stained with RedDot1 Nuclear Stain as a normalization control (red). D) The individual channels were scanned simultaneously then combined into a single composite image using the Sapphire Capture Software.

FLUORESCENCE IMAGING In-cell western blotting		
Pixel size	100 µm	
Laser	520 nm, 784 nm	
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis	



BLOTTING IMAGING PART 1 -SOUTHERN BLOTS



With the ability to image radiolabeled, fluorescently-labeled, and even chemiluminescently-labeled molecules, the Sapphire places an array of southern blot detection technologies at your fingertips.

Measuring plasmid abundance with both phosphorimaging and chemiluminescence

Southern blotting is an excellent method for detecting specific DNA sequences, but it can also provide quantitative information on DNA abundance. In this study, we show a comparison of the linearity of detection of the same plasmid using a P32-labeled probe versus a chemiluminescent detection system. Both methods show similar sensitivity and both can be used for measuring plasmid abundance— $R^2 = 0.9742$ for P^{32} ; $R^2 = 0.9599$ for chemiluminescence.





Positive Image

Negative Image

Southern blot	NESCENCE
Exposure	90 sec (single mode)
Bin level	3 x 3
Gain	3
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis Toolbox



10 sec



20 sec



30 sec







50 sec



60 sec

CHEMILUMINE Southern blot	ESCENCE
Exposure	90 sec (single mode)
Bin level	3 x 3
Gain	3
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis Toolbox





Positive Image

Negative Image

Southern blot	with P ³² -labeled probe
Pixel size	200 µm
Intensity	5
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis Toolbox

Quantitation comparison

Chemiluminescence



Sensitive, quantitative DNA detection with a ³²P-labeled probe

Determining DNA structure with 2D agarose gel electrophoresis

2D agarose gel electrophoresis is an essential technique for understanding DNA structure during replication and recombination, and can differentiate between bubbles, forks, simple Ys, and double Ys. Because these structures can represent only a small fraction of the total DNA loaded on the gel, sensitive detection is a must. Here we show detection and quantitation of 2D agarose gels by Southern blotting with a ³²P-labeled probe.



PHOSPHORIMAGING Southern blot with P ³² -labeled probe		
Pixel size	50 µm	
Scan speed	Highest	
Intensity	5	
Focus position	5	
Quality	1	
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis Toolbox	



Positive Image



Negative Image



PHOSPHORIMAGING Southern blot with P ³² -labeled probe		
Pixel size	200 µm	
Intensity	5	
Analysis	AzureSpot Analysis Toolbox, 3D Viewer	

Sensitive, quantitative DNA detection with a ³²P-labeled probe

Measuring light chain-heavy chain DNA ratios for recombinant antibody expression

A common step during recombinant antibody production is the measurement of light chain (LC) DNA to heavy chain (HC) DNA ratio. Here the Sapphire Biomolecular Imager was used in this application to detect samples of interest alongside a DNA standard for quantity calibration. The images produced by the Sapphire Biomolecular Imager show data that is not only linear (R²=0.99) but also highly sensitive with detection down to 2 copies











PHOSPHORIMAGING Southern blot with P ³² -labeled probe		
Exposure	1 Day	
Pixel size	50 µm	
Intensity	3	
Analysis	AzureSpot 1D module Graph calibration volume	

General Image Capture

Easily scan & image samples for record-keeping, quantitation, visual inspection, and more...









Sapphire Biomolecular Imager ONE INSTRUMENT, A WEALTH OF CAPABILITIES

The next generation of laser scanning systems, the Sapphire Biomolecular Imager delivers unmatched flexibility and performance for today's demanding labs.

With more imaging modalities than any other instrument currently on the market, the Sapphire's four solid state lasers and patent-pending three-detector system enables an incredibly wide range of applications. And the intuitive, easy-to-use software ensures a smooth acquisition and analysis experience for all users.

- Improved multiplex fluorescent detection (near IR and visible)
- Chemiluminescent imaging, surpassing film
- Higher sensitivity for lower limits of detection (femtograms)
- Broad linear dynamic range for accurate quantitation
- Ease-of-use with intuitive control software



Get a quote or schedule a demo by contacting us at info@azurebiosystems.com



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