

## DEFINING GENOME EDITING

Despite the prominence and constant stream of genome-editing breakthroughs in recent years, there is surprisingly no unified or standard definition for the term genome editing. Scientific literature in prominent publications to date has devoted substantial ink to discussing how the technology was developed, its mechanisms of action, what it can be used for, how it can be improved to increase its efficient use, and so on without attempting to attach any specific or particular meaning to the term. Nor has Congress or any administrative agency assumed leadership roles to address the need for a more concrete and standard definition. The increasingly interdisciplinary expansion of genome editing in a wide range of fields—spanning scientific, legal, economic, social, ethical, philosophical, and policy-related areas of study—guarantees that inconsistent meanings, interpretations, and uses of genome-editing definitions and terminology will obfuscate future discussions regarding what measures, if any, society should implement to promote or hinder technological development.

This presentation provides an interpretive and normative foundation to pave a path toward a working definition for the term genome editing. I argue that congruity and uniformity on genome-editing terminology is sorely needed at this point in time to facilitate predictability in statutory and regulatory interpretation and avoid the institution of inadequate laws, regulations, and policies. By analyzing and breaking down the proposed definition of genome editing into several constituent elements, the presentation reflects on a fundamental question: What does it mean and, more importantly, what should it mean when people use the term genome editing? The presentation builds upon my work in the realm of genome-editing law and science, including my recently published book [\*Rewriting Nature: The Future of Genome Editing and How to Bridge the Gap between Law and Science\*](#) (Cambridge University Press 2021).

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