



Figure 1. Gene counts in a variety of species. Viruses, the simplest living entities, have only a handful of genes but are exquisitely well adapted to their environments. Bacteria such as *Escherichia coli* have a few thousand genes, and multicellular plants and animals have two to ten times more. Beyond these simple divisions, the number of genes in a species bears little relation to its size or to intuitive measures of complexity. The chicken and grape gene counts shown here are based on draft genomes [50,51] and may be revised substantially in the future.