"document" HOWL. Historically, work in this field was limited almost exclusively to trigrams ($n = 3$), which typically support reconstruction of less than 10% of the text, so skepticism is understandable. A categorical dismissal based on "the inadequacy of the n-gram text representation method," however, is unwarranted. No such reconstruction is possible based solely on a word list.

The system described in my article is not speculative; Acquaintance has been successfully applied to a wide variety of difficult tasks since 1991. Its demonstrated competence, language independence, and garble resistance should answer any concerns about "disaster."

The approach taken by this system—involving an unfamiliar combination of n-gram processing and vector-space transformation—may well be counterintuitive. Also, performance tradeoffs differ somewhat from those normally encountered in this field. My hope is that serious discussion of these matters will lead to a fuller understanding of how such techniques can complement more familiar approaches.

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Amateur Fossil Hunting

I read Carol Potera's article "Amateur fossil hunters dig up trouble in Montana" (News & Comment, 14 Apr., p. 198) with concern. While the specific incident described is troubling, tens of millions of dollars worth of one-of-a-kind fossils sit in museums throughout the world because of the generosity of many amateur fossil hunters. Untold other fossils sit rotting in the sun because of their location on government controlled land and the fact that collecting by amateurs is illegal. If it weren't for an amateur fossil hunter and her rock shop, Jack Horner might not have achieved such prominence as a paleontologist.

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High-Frequency Outer Hair Cell Motility: Corrections and Addendum

In our report "High-frequency motility of outer hair cells and the cochlear amplifier" (31 Mar., p. 2006) (*1*), we proposed an answer to the question of what powers the cochlear amplifier (*2*) at high frequencies. In subsequently analyzing a generalized network representing n excited and m nonexcited outer hair cells (OHCs) in the electrical environment of the organ of Corti, we obtained some unexpected results that make it necessary to correct our report and to offer new information.

The voltage representing the intracellular potential of an excited OHC is inversely proportional to n and has a steep midfrequency drop off with a high-frequency terminal slope of unity (approximately 6 decibels per octave). Simple unity slope is obtained only if $n = 1$, that is, if there is only one active hair cell in the network. It has been argued (*3*) that this assumed unity-slope high-frequency roll off of the cell's receptor potential makes it difficult to see how the voltage-driven electromotility might be expressed at high frequencies. We now see that the midfrequency roll off is, in fact, faster, and the response is smaller than that expected for a single cell. As a consequence, it would appear even less likely than previously assumed that high-frequency electromotility driven by the cells' own receptor potential is the basis of the cochlear amplifier. In line with our previous argument, the voltage gradient between the extracellular fluid spaces of the scala media