COOL IMAGES

Lithic Europe

DIEGO MEOZZI

Stonehenge may be the most famous, but it's not the only rocky monument left behind by Europe's prehistoric inhabitants. Above, for example, are Scotland's Stones of Stenness, all that remains of 12 stones arranged in a rock-hewn ditch that make up the 5000-year-old site on the Isle of Orkney. One can embark on a tour of over 100 stone circles, cairns, dolmens, and other megalithic sites in Western Europe at the Stone Pages, created by Italian journalists Paola Arosio and Diego Meozzi (www.stonepages.com). The pages also list many other useful archaeo Web sites on everything from archaeoastronomy to French rock art.

HOT PICKS

Burning questions. Do fish sleep? Do they close their eyes? Find out by consulting the archive at The Mad Scientist Network, run by grad students at Washington University in St. Louis who funnel questions to appropriate scientists. Queried not just by kids but the odd postdoc too, the site also offers a tour of the Visible Human and describes edible (and nonedible) experiments you can try at home. www.madsci.org

Afrocentric. Browse the tables of contents for seven-and-counting African journals in crop science, chemistry, and other fields at this site, part of a United Nations–supported pilot project to promote African science. oneworld.org/inasp/ajol/index.html

Remains of the day. Followers of the clash over Kennewick Man, a set of 9300-year-old Caucasian-looking bones claimed by an American Indian tribe, may dig this National Park Service database of 250 documents relating to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. The site includes the act itself and related notices as well as a huge database of "gray literature" on U.S. archaeological sites. www.cr.nps.gov/aad/nadb.htm

NET NEWS

Interplanetary Internet

Is cyberspace ready for outer space? Absolutely, according to MCI senior vice president and Internet guru Vinton Cerf, who caused a stir at an Internet Society meeting in Geneva last month when he broached the topic. "We think we will see planetary Internet networks that look very much like the ones we use today," said Cerf, who in the 1970s helped make the rules for how data traverse the Net.

Such future-shock talk is being taken quite seriously at NASA, says Adrian Hooke of the agency's Jet Propulsion Lab in California, where Cerf recently became a distinguished visiting scientist. For several years, Hooke says, NASA has been working to make Internet transmissions work when sent via satellites near Earth. Now NASA's planetary scientists are hoping to extend this reach deeper into space: They'd like to be able to transfer data from a rover on Mars using Internet-compatible protocols. The data might be shipped via gateways in orbit around the planets, in the same way that gateways direct Internet traffic on Earth. That could save mission costs, smooth the transfer of data to scientists, and perhaps even allow students to telecontrol a rover on a distant planet, Hooke says.

The main technical hurdle to a space Internet, Hooke says, is the huge delays when sending radio signals—it can take up to 50 minutes round trip to Mars. Such delays would bog down even the slowest connections on today's Internet, on which Web text and images are sent as bits and pieces via back-and-forth "handshakes" between computers. A space-friendly Internet protocol might need to "bundle" a Web page and send it all at once, Hooke says.

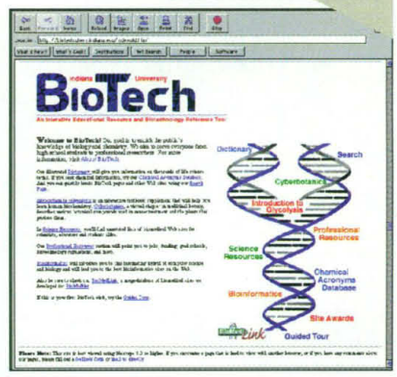
Don't expect a stampede just yet for Internet addresses ending in .mars and .moon. That will come later. "In 20, 50, or 100 years, it's quite conceivable that we'll have colonies of people on Mars or the moon," Hooke says. And they'll undoubtedly be checking their e-mail from loved ones back home.

SITE REVIEW

Storehouse for Biotech Lore

At a loss over how to define biotechnology, let alone ferret out resources on the Web? Take a peek at BioTech, 1000 pages crammed with primers and links covering topics as diverse as genetics, nanotechnology, and lab protocols. Toward its stated goal of enriching the public's knowledge of biology, the site features valuable resources such as Cyberbotanica—a guide to anticancer compounds derived from plants (hemp to periwinkle) and the cancers they target—as well as introductory tutorials, a brand-new chemical acronyms database, and an 8200-entry, hyperlinked life sciences dictionary.

biotech.chem.indiana.edu



Making the site a real keeper is its road map to other Web treasures. Want to know why those hand-picked 'shrooms you sautéed last night are making your stomach do flips today? Click to the FDA's Bad Bug Book on food poisoning. BioTech serves up a wealth of heavily annotated links ranging from metabolic pathways and test animal lines to pathology and phylogeny. Explains the site's creator, University of Texas, Austin, evolutionary engineer Andy Ellington, "There was a crying need for a resource that explained resources."

SCIENCE ONLINE

"I try to avoid calling myself a librarian," says information scientist Diane Brown. "It conjures up images of a gray-haired woman, in twinset and pearls, stamping books." A former botanist, Brown is just one of many ex-scientists who have discovered the allure of library and information science. This week *Science*'s Next Wave gives you the lowdown on an alternative career desperate for employees with a science background. www.nextwave.org

Send Internet news and great Web site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org