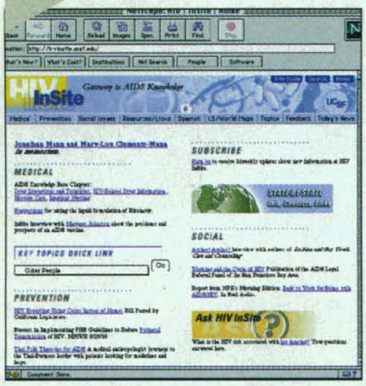
hivinsite.ucsf.edu



SITE VISIT

Portal for AIDS Info

The AIDS epidemic has sparked a flurry of activity on the Web, from sites aimed at patients to AIDSLINE, the government's database of AIDS research abstracts. InSite, launched last year by AIDS researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, helps Internet surfers navigate this info, billing itself as "a gateway to AIDS knowledge."

Jeff Stryker, one of the site's editors, says InSite aims to improve on government AIDS Web sites, which he says are "good" but "tend to be a little clunky." The site flags a huge range of material, from news on drug studies to audio reports on the 12th World AIDS Conference last summer in Geneva. One central offering is the AIDS Knowledge Base, a textbook on HIV treatment and prevention that includes chapters updated since the book's last printing in 1994. InSite's Trials Search taps into ongoing clinical AIDS drug trials. One can pull up the latest HIV statistics by U.S. city, peruse country AIDS profiles, or read the United Nations' 1998 report on AIDS. The site's staff members also write news features, including a recent interview with Margaret Johnston, the new head of the National Institutes of Health's AIDS vaccine research effort. And they craft frank responses to queries—including one on the risks of contracting HIV from a lap dancer.

HOT PICKS

Household physics. Find out what goes on inside your CD player or why badminton birdies are made that way at How Things Work, written by a physics professor (Landau1.phys.Virginia.EDU/Education/Teaching/HowThingsWork). A flashier site along these lines is How Stuff Works, www.howstuffworks.com

Natural gas blues. Carbon dioxide may get most of the attention, but methane—in the United States, mainly from landfills and livestock—is also a major player in global warming. Here you can bone up on methane emissions and read EPA's preliminary report on the costs of cutting back. www.epa.gov/outreach/ghginfo

Get your antibodies. Monoclonal, polyclonal ... if those terms are in your daily lexicon, check out the Antibody Resource Page. It offers links to online suppliers and antibody-related research sites, a discussion board, and even an image gallery. www.antibodyresource.com

NET NEWS

Mentoring by E-mail

Want to lend an ear to a young woman just getting started on a scientific career? One solution might be MentorNet, a new project that hopes this academic year to forge e-mail connections between 500 women studying engineering, science, or math and mentors working in industry (www.mentornet.net).

Women are particularly scarce in engineering, making up less than 9% of the profession. MentorNet's executive director, Carol Muller, says that although e-mail lacks some advantages of face-to-face conversations, studies suggest it can help "students feel less intimidated approaching someone who may be much older and more powerful." A computer helps match MentorNet students and mentors, and program staff members also provide training and advice.

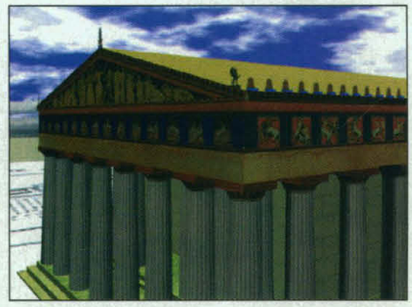
The project follows a pilot last spring when MentorNet connected 204 undergrad and grad students from 15 universities to mentors at about 90 companies, who talked about everything from job interviews to family pressures. MentorNet "has been groundbreaking," says Suzie Laurich-McIntyre of the Center for Women in Science and Engineering at the University of Washington, Seattle, in that it is the first to give busy professionals a way to interact with students despite their location or tight schedules. MentorNet hopes to reach 5000 pairs in 2001–02.

The AT&T and Intel foundations and the federal government have kicked in $500,000 to start MentorNet, which was begun by Women in Engineering Programs and Advocates Network, a nonprofit group of academics and professionals. The project isn't the only new Internet effort to encourage would-be women engineers: The National Academy of Engineering has just launched a Web site offering career advice and success stories (www.nae.edu/cwe).

COOL IMAGES

Building Simulacra

As anyone who's been to Athens knows, the Parthenon, built in the fifth century B.C., is a crumbling shadow of its former self. Not so on the Net, where Carolina Cruz-Neira, a virtual reality expert at Iowa State University in Ames, and her colleagues have used computer modeling to restore this temple—and a handful of other buildings symbolic of important architectural eras—to their full color grandeur. Net tourists can see still images, manipulate models, or take a fly-through movie tour of the monuments, ranging from a reconstruction of the circa-1500 B.C. Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut's temple to Paris's Notre Dame, revamped to its 12th century state. The tours are virtual in one other way: Unlike on a real visit to these famous places, on the Web you're the only one in the building. www.icemt.iastate.edu/~timmyg/miller/index.html



SCIENCE ONLINE

Astronomers in the 18th century thought that bits of rock falling as shooting stars were a kind of bad weather, so they named these chunks "meteorites." In the Perspective on p. 1971, Greenberg discusses a Report in this issue on how material from the asteroid belt can end up as meteorites. The online Enhanced Perspective provides links to asteroid and meteorite resources and other planetary science sites on the Web. www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/281/5385/1971

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