



# AAAS NEWS AND NOTES

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## EDUCATION

### Kinetic City Super Crew Takes Science to the World Wide Web

Strange balls of light have been seen on a small island in the Mediterranean, and the inhabitants think it's haunted. But a young girl who lives on the island calls in the Kinetic City Super Crew to investigate and explain the science behind the mystery. This is



The Kinetic City Super Crew solves scientific mysteries.

just one of the adventures that kids can participate in by logging on to the Kinetic City Cyber Club ([www.kineticcity.com](http://www.kineticcity.com)). The Web site, based on AAAS's award-winning Kinetic City Super Crew radio show and book series, is one of a kind in that it allows children to learn about science through engaging and interactive online dramas.

Supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, the site lets viewers join the Kinetic City Super Crew's four in-

quisitive children and a talkative supercomputer as they solve a new case every month. Kids can join in the adventures, try scientific experiments at home, and listen to episodes of the radio show. As they participate, they earn "Kinetic City Points," which they can spend on downloadable prizes, such as screensavers and computer backgrounds. Just added is the "Crew's Eye View" section, which reviews the science behind the scenes of current movies and provides links to other Web sites.

"There's nothing else like it on the Internet," said Bob Hirshon, executive producer of Kinetic City Super Crew. "It's like a science comic book online. But along with the fun, kids learn and become more interested in science." For teachers, Cyber Club offers an extracurricular activity for students to learn about science. And for parents, Cyber Club is a safe place on the Web for children to visit. The site has some 2000 users who play the games, plus many more who browse.

Kinetic City Super Crew, which won a Peabody Award in 1996, is a weekly, half-hour science radio show that airs nationally on commercial and public radio sta-

tions. It aims to boost science interest and appreciation in 8- to 12-year-olds, particularly girls and members of minorities. Other products based on the radio show include a book series published by McGraw-Hill and the Kinetic City Adventure Express Kit for teachers.

"We have lots of kids out there using the site and learning from it," said Hirshon. He said the next step is to add national science experiments to which kids contribute data, and hundreds of local Kinetic City Cyber Club pages, through which children share their science experiences with others.

## INTERNET

### AAAS Prepares Report On Future of Internet

An advanced networking infrastructure will be vital to the future of science and engineering research. AAAS is working on a report to determine what type of investment will be needed to make that type of support available.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has played a major role in expanding network communications for the pursuit of research and education. With the end of its vBNS (Very High Performance Backbone Network System) later this year, NSF must reevaluate what role it will play in the future development of high-speed computing networks, and has asked AAAS to formulate a proposal that includes input from the scientific community. NSF has also asked for comments from the computing and industry communities.

To draft a report, AAAS hosted a workshop on the policy debate over infrastructure investments. The workshop, held in February, brought together 100 university representatives from a range of disciplines in 25 research universities. The participants included research administrators, principal investigators, and graduate students.

AAAS has posted the preliminary proposal at [www.aaas.org/netpolicy](http://www.aaas.org/netpolicy), an interactive Web site that also contains comments received from the community, and is encouraging the university research community to review the proposal and submit their comments on advanced networking. The comment period will extend until 1 May. AAAS will then review the comments and come up with a final report, which will be submitted to NSF in June.

## PUBLICATIONS

### New AAAS Reports

*Directory of Persecuted Scientists, Health Professionals, and Engineers*, Elisa Muñoz, AAAS Science and Human Rights Program. Contact 202-326-6797 or [shr.aaas.org](http://shr.aaas.org).

*Few Middle School Math Textbooks Will Help Students Learn*, a textbook evaluation prepared by AAAS's Project 2061. Contact 202-326-6643 or [project2061.aaas.org](http://project2061.aaas.org).

*Perspectives on Genetic Patenting: Religion, Science, and Industry in Dialogue*, Audrey R. Chapman, ed. AAAS Program of Dialogue Between Science and Religion. Contact 202-326-6795 or [www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/dbsr](http://www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/dbsr).

*Science in Africa: Emerging Water Management Issues*, John Schoneboom, ed. AAAS Sub-Saharan Africa Project. Contact 202-326-6730 or [www.aaas.org/international/ssa/ssa.htm](http://www.aaas.org/international/ssa/ssa.htm).

*State Violence in Guatemala, 1960-1996: A Quantitative Reflection*, Patrick Ball, Paul Kobra, and Herbert F. Spier. AAAS Science and Human Rights Program. Contact 202-326-6799 or [shr.aaas.org](http://shr.aaas.org).

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