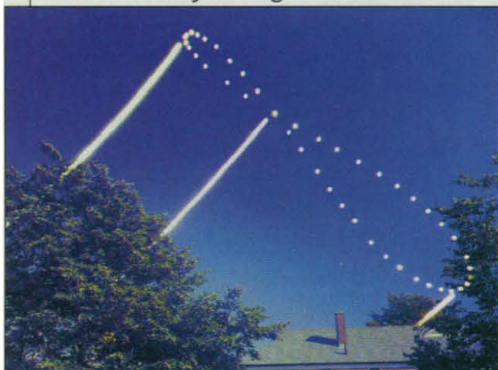


COOL IMAGES

Sunburst of Inspiration

This is an analemma, the figure-8 pattern the sun traces as its position in the sky shifts from season to season, due to Earth's tilt and elliptical orbit. Dennis di Cicco captured the analemma in the late 1970s by bolting a camera to his house in Massachusetts and opening the shutter about once a week, at the same time in the morning, for a year. It's the first photo of its kind made, says di Cicco, an editor at *Sky & Telescope* magazine. And it's one of 22 astronomy images in a poll at the magazine's Web site to let readers choose "the



most inspiring [images] of the 20th century." The top 10 vote-getters will be featured in the January issue. Pick from those posted—including galaxies, a nebula, comets, and a moonrise—or nominate one not on the list at www.skypub.com (For more about analemmas, visit www.analemma.com)

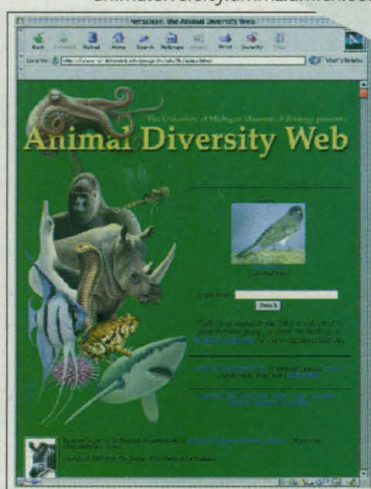
SITE VISIT

Animals, Animals

Some kinds of information naturally lend themselves to cyberspace. Catalogs, for example, can become constantly growing tomes adorned with the latest multimedia bells and whistles. That's what you'll find at Animal Diversity Web, where you can look up basic facts on sea sponges or mountain gorillas, listen to a gray wolf's mournful howls, or examine (in virtual reality) a flying lemur's skull.

Mammalogist Phil Myers, associate curator at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, built the site with help from his students, who have written around 1600 "species accounts" that can be retrieved by key word searches or by branching down phylum, order, and class. The accounts describe species' appearance and life history (American toads breed from April 5 to July 25), economic importance (the golden poison arrow frog has yielded a potential painkilling drug), and endangered status. Delve more deeply and you'll see why Myers calls the site "a resource for teaching about animal diversity," especially in mammals. He's written special sections that explore such topics as the huge variety in teeth (high-crowned cheek teeth help grazers munch tough grasses) or how different species are adapted for

animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu



longer stride length (cheetahs have long metapodials; kangaroos a long fourth digit). Making the site a virtual lab are hundreds of eye-popping photos of animal skulls.

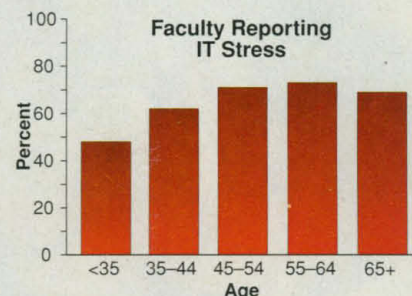
Myers cautions that the student-written accounts are probably only "95% accurate," because they haven't been checked by experts, so researchers may prefer more technical sites. But for teaching, says mammalogist Doug Kelt of the University of California, Davis, "I find it a fantastic page."

NET NEWS

High-Tech Anxiety

Frazzled by that hulk of plastic and silicon chips staring you down? You aren't the only one. Computers are a major cause of stress in many professors' lives, according to a new survey of 33,785 faculty members. Two-thirds reported that "keeping up with information technology (IT)" is a source of stress, outranking research and publishing demands, teaching load, and the promotion process—but not as anxiety-provoking as time pressures, household demands, or institutional red tape.

The survey, by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, concludes that IT stress "is quite likely a reflection of the time faculty invest in [IT]." Younger faculty are the heaviest users and the least stressed out (see chart). Most use e-mail, while about a third use the Internet



for research or posting or collecting course material. "The engineers were always highest" in tasks done on the computer, says co-author Linda Sax. Physical scientists were also near the top, while biologists were "in the middle," above humanities scholars.

www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/prtechnology.html

HOT PICKS

Green thumbing through history. A botanist created the Plant Trivia Timeline, a floral take on our planet's past. A few milestones: Evidence of blue-green algae 3.5 billion years ago, the first known seed eating by cave dwellers, Socrates's death by poison hemlock, and the coining of "green revolution" in 1968. www.huntington.org/BotanicalDiv/Timeline.html

Euro tech. Need to see what biotech research the European Union (EU) is funding in Ireland, or find partners for your meteorology project? This EU-sponsored site offers a wealth of info on European R&D, including position papers, abstracts of some 40,000 funded projects, and a digest of science policy news. www.cordis.lu

Rock science. Earth and its elements are the focus of this handy page of geochemistry links. You can find atomic radii or topographic maps, for instance, as well as crystallization data and how much sulfur dioxide was belched by the Etna volcano since the 1970s. www-ep.es.llnl.gov/germ/otherdata.html

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