



COOL IMAGES

Art Paleo

To the delight of archaeologists and laypeople alike, our ancestors have been driven to doodle for at least 30,000 years. From charcoal drawings of woolly rhinos locking horns by Ice Age Remingtons to these 500-year-old stencils of hands, axes, and boomerangs (above) by Aborigines in the Central Queensland Highlands of Australia, rock art serves as a window into the world of earlier cultures. In *Contemporary Approaches to World Rock Art*,* archaeologist Mike Morwood of the University of New England in Armidale, Australia, and colleagues describe the science of rock art. Classic approaches to studying ancient civilizations rely on artifacts sturdy enough to have survived to the present day. Rock art helps fill out this record, depicting trappings of culture otherwise lost to the ages: feathered head-dresses, belts, skirts, hair and beard styles, quivers and bows, and plants and skins. Follow links to visit rock art sites around the world.

www.une.edu.au/Arch/ROCKART/MMRockArt.html

NET NEWS

Pedagogy First, Technology Later

Faculty members can get their hackles up when they see administrators trying to force online instruction into the curriculum. At the University of Washington, Seattle, 2 years ago, 900 professors signed a protest letter to the governor (*Science*, 26 June 1998, p. 2019). At York University in Toronto, Canada, at about the same time, they struck for 2 months. Taking a gentler approach, University of Illinois (UI) faculty members held a seminar.

After a year of talk among themselves and with outside experts, 16 professors from the three UI campuses issued a report* last week offering recommendations and precautions for universities planning to add online classes. Although the committee came to no classroom-shattering conclusions, they do give some commonsense advice. Paramount, says chemical engineer John Regalbuto, the seminar's chair, is to have good teachers involved in the development of online instruction every step of the way. "We don't want technology to get ahead of pedagogy," he says.

The seminar participants warn that get-rich-quick schemes for Internet teaching are doomed to fail. Effective online teaching requires a lot of technical support and instructor time spent interacting with students one on one, they say. The most successful online teaching programs, Regalbuto points out, are those in which students pay extra to take a course with flexible hours, such as full-time workers taking graduate business classes. But historian David Noble of York University warns that the distance learning industry is not about education: "It's about money." For a school to make money on online classes, he argues, it has to ignore the kinds of recommendations that the Illinois group makes.

www.vpaa.uillinois.edu/tid/report

CREDIT: M. MORWOOD

NETWATCH

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HOT PICKS

The darndest places. Searchlight, a University of California (UC) search engine that combs scores of databases, can save time and find info you might not have even known you needed. Enter key words and it prowls the usual joints—MEDLINE, the UC catalogs, specialty databases for AIDS or cancer research. But it also digs up hits from more obscure sources. If your topic is covered in Department of Energy technical reports, National Science Foundation grant write-ups, the Patent Office, Fish and Wildlife databases, or congressional reports, Searchlight will take you there. searchlight.cdlib.org/cgi-bin/searchlight

The turn of the screw. Archimedes groupies can learn more about the Greek mathematician's breakthroughs at this site. In addition to biographical and bibliographical information, it offers descriptions of his most famous discoveries—including the eponymous water-pumping device and his work with levers—as well as tidbits on less memorable inventions, such as a mirror that focused sunlight to burn enemy ships.

www.mcs.drexel.edu/~crrorres/Archimedes/contents.html

Pharmacokinetics unbound. Need to know how tightly your drug candidate binds to a particular G-protein receptor, a class of proteins through which many pharmaceutical agents exert their therapeutic effects? This new database from a psychoactive drug screening program offers thousands of affinity constants (k) for ligand binding to over 125 receptors. PDSP.cwru.edu/PDSP.asp

SITE VISIT

The Great Hormone Mimic Debate

You've heard the stories about declining sperm counts, feminized male alligators, and falcons whose eggshells are too weak to protect their young. Now check out the data on environmental estrogens, a subject that is about to become all the more contentious with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) poised to order tests on thousands of synthetic compounds for their ability to mimic hormones. A site called Environmental Estrogens and Other Hormones gives a balanced account of what's known, and unknown, about the biological effects of endocrine disruptors.

www.tmc.tulane.edu/ecme/eehome

Hosted by the Center for Bioenvironmental Research at Tulane and Xavier Universities in New Orleans, Louisiana, the site's advisory board includes scientists, clinicians, and industry reps from around the country. It offers backgrounders on where environmental estrogens are found, from soybeans to pesticides, and their observed effects on wildlife and people. Reports

from recent conferences, summaries of new pubs, and news stories make the site an excellent source for up-to-date information. It also posts announcements of EPA meetings and draft rules on which the government is accepting public comments.

Send Internet news and great Web site suggestions to network@aaaas.org

