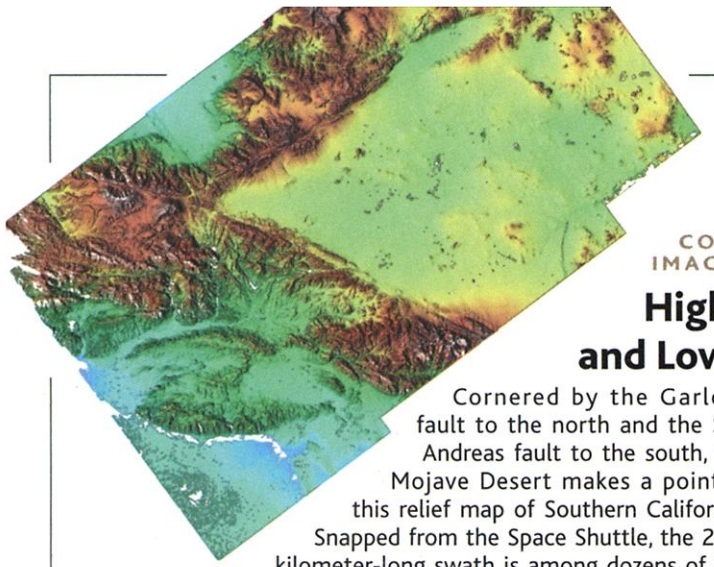


COOL IMAGES

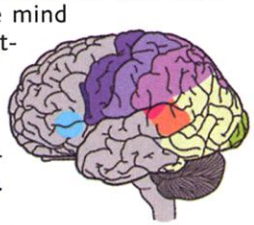
Highs and Lows

Cornered by the Garlock fault to the north and the San Andreas fault to the south, the Mojave Desert makes a point in this relief map of Southern California. Snapped from the Space Shuttle, the 250-kilometer-long swath is among dozens of images of Earth's craggy features linked to a world map at the Web site for the just-completed Shuttle Radar Topography Mission.* From 11 to 22 February, shuttle astronauts bounced microwaves off the planet and tracked the reflections with twin antennae—one in the shuttle's cargo bay and one on the end of a 60-meter-long mast. NASA scientists and their colleagues at the German Aerospace Center will use the stereo data to determine the altitude to within 10 meters of 80% of Earth's landmass, generating the most complete global topographical map ever—especially for remote regions such as Asia's Kamchatka Peninsula. It should give a leg up to everyone from geologists studying earthquakes to hikers wandering through the wilderness.

* www.jpl.nasa.gov/srtm. For more image sites, see www.nasa.gov/newsinfo/srtm_images.html

HOT PICKS

Brain browsing. Keep up on neuroscience news, learn how vision works, or listen to a radio show on the mind at Brainconnection, a free site aimed at getting the public interested in brain research. Other offerings include book reviews, illusions, brain anatomy drawings, and *neuroWire*, an online magazine covering topics such as how we navigate a room.
www.brainconnection.com



Good chemistry. Whether you're looking for a periodic table, a synchrotron lab, a chemical company, or a colleague who studies self-assembling molecules, you'll probably find it at this site boasting over 7300 chemistry links.
www.liv.ac.uk/Chemistry/Links/links.html

The scoop on bio databases. Find out the latest on your favorite bio database or learn about new ones at this online review article in *Nucleic Acids Research*. The curators of over 110 molecular biology databases—on everything from the rice genome to HIV proteases to mouse tumors—give status reports and plans.
www3.oup.co.uk/nar/Volume_28/Issue_01/introduction

NET NEWS

Blueprint for Cyber Health Care

A homebound elderly woman consults with her physician about her salt intake through a Web video connection, while a Miami mom with a wheezing baby gets a nurse's advice in Spanish using an Internet translator. That's part of the virtual medical world foreseen by a new report on cybermedicine from a committee of the Institute of Medicine. Getting there, however, will take more work on technologies such as high bandwidth and secure connections, the panel says.

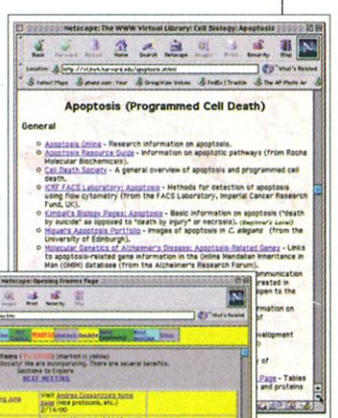
Requested by the National Library of Medicine, the report, Networking Health, concludes that the flood of Web sites offering health advice is just a "small sampling" of the Net's health care potential. With sufficient bandwidth, security, speed, and access, the possibilities are huge. For example, an emergency room physician could look at a patient's medical records from across town; and medical labs could electronically file test results with public health departments, speeding the tracking of infectious outbreaks. And collaborating researchers at distant universities could simultaneously manipulate a virtual image of a molecule.

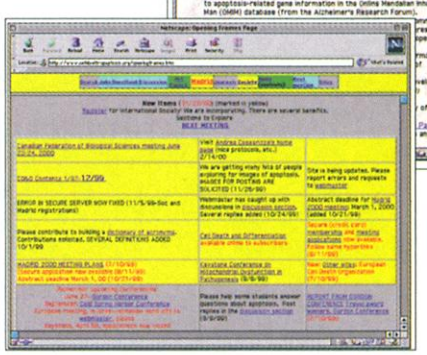
But "organizational impediments" may hamper cybermedicine's growth, the panel said. Health care providers, for instance, tend to keep records on internal networks because they are concerned that the Internet may not be secure. The report makes a host of recommendations for overcoming such problems, such as developing better cybersecurity schemes.

SITE VISIT

Self-Destructing Cells

Some cells die because they're injured, but others in good health are destined to go down a suicidal path in which they disintegrate and are eaten by other cells. Known as apoptosis, or programmed cell death, this process helped create the spaces between your fingers when you were in the womb. Apoptosis also plays a hotly studied role in diseases ranging from arthritis to Alzheimer's to cancer.





This page* at the WWW Virtual Library of Cell Biology is a good jumping-off point for apoptosis resources on the Internet. Its dozen links include tutorials aimed at various audiences—from students to physicians—and images of cells breaking up into membrane-bound fragments. Also listed is Roche Molecular Biochemicals' apoptosis site, where visitors can view a color poster showing a cell's apoptotic pathways and click to get info on particular molecules, such as the caspases, enzymes that cells use to chop themselves up. Active apoptosis researchers may not be able to resist checking out the New York City–based Cell Death Society site,† a sprawling collection of meeting information, links to journals, job lists, and other resources. For instance, one article plumbs the origin of the word "apoptosis." Conventional wisdom says the original Greek means falling leaves, but the author claims that Hippocrates first used it to describe decaying bones.

* vl.bwh.harvard.edu/apoptosis.shtml
† celldeath-apoptosis.org

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

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