NETWATCH

edited by JOCELYN KAISER

IMAGES

Canadian Field Trip

Want to see what a tombolo looks like, or perhaps a pingo? These two geologic formations (the first a land-linking sandbar, the second a rock mound pushed up by permafrost) are among many examples illustrated at a site called Canadian Landscapes. The 700-some photographs—taken by scientists with the Geological Survey of Canada over the last 30 years—can be viewed by geologic type, province, or by clicking an interactive map. In this picture from the northern territory of Nunavut, a 30-meter-high dike (and a smaller one across the waterfall) formed when magma was injected into bedrock that subsequently eroded away. The site will continue to expand its geographic coverage to "illustrate the great diversity of Canadian scenery."

sts.gsc.nrcan.gc.ca/tsdweb/landf_new.asp

RESOURCES

Making Body Parts

Engineered skin, plastic joints, artificial organs, and the like are the focus of Biomaterials Network, a portal run by scientists in Portugal with help from BioMedNet, the well-known free commercial site. Biomat.net offers links to journals, popular articles, and books, as well as a somewhat unfocused list of Web sites. But its meeting page is international and up-to-date, and a catalog of 550-and-counting researchers' profiles may also prove useful. Sign up for a weekly newsletter to get Web links to newly added sites and articles.

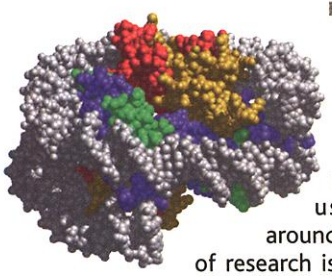
www.biomat.net

DATABASES

Cancer Clues

Tumor cell chromosomes often bear telltale alterations that provide clues to the genetic and cellular pathways leading to uncontrolled growth. Last week, the Cancer Genome Anatomy Project and John Wiley & Sons Inc. put a key resource on these chromosomal changes on a free Web site. Compiled by Swedish researchers over the past 17 years, the Mitelman Database of Chromosome Aberrations in Cancer holds data on karyotype (abnormalities in chromosomes) for over 35,000 human cancer cases. Linked to MEDLINE abstracts, the database can be searched by terms such as organ, morphology, country, and race.

cgap.nci.nih.gov/Chromosomes/Mitelman



LINKS

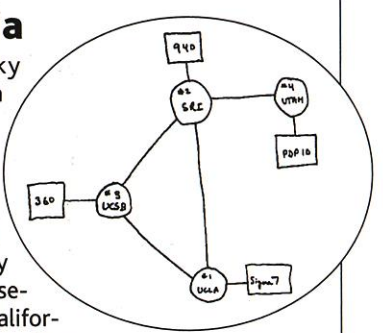
Unwrapping Packages

We often picture DNA as free-floating strands, but in the nucleus it's actually tightly wound around proteins called histones. A flurry of research is probing how chemical messengers coax this balled-up stuff, called chromatin, to unravel and send signals for making proteins. The Chromatin Structure & Function Page, run by University of Virginia postdoc Jim Bone, offers a host of useful links including backgrounders, protein sequences, researchers' lab pages, and protocols. The site's most popular feature, says Bone, is a hot papers listserv of abstracts that he compiles each month from major journals.

www.cstone.net/~jrb7q/chrom.html

EXHIBITS

Computer Nostalgia



Remember that first clunky Hewlett-Packard calculator with its glowing red numbers, the sturdy Commodore PET with its cassette drives, the personal computer you built from a kit? If those 1970s devices bring fond memories, then you might enjoy the Web site of the Computer Museum History Center in Palo Alto, California. A clickable timeline runs through computing history from John von Neumann's 1945 vision of electronic storage to replace punch cards, through Tim Berners-Lee's 1990 outline of the Web. It stops there because "there's not enough perspective" on events until a decade has passed, explains museum curator Dag Spicer.

Among the landmarks are such pop culture factoids as Walter Cronkite's distrust of a UNIVAC computer's prediction, based on early returns, that Eisenhower would defeat Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 presidential election. Cronkite delayed his report, but you don't have to wait to see nifty artifacts such as a 1969 scrawling of the first four nodes of ARPANET (above), the Internet's precursor.

www.computerhistory.org/timeline/index.page

Science ONLINE

As this week's special section on biodiversity informatics suggests (p. 2305), the Web has seen an explosion of sites dishing out data on the globe's abundance of species. For an online guide to some key Web stops in the biodiversity-informatics game, visit www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/biodiversity2000.shl

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

CREDITS: (TOP) LYNDA DREDGE/NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA; (MOLECULE) K. LUGER/COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY