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To learn more about password software and cryptography, see the additional resources at the following URL: www.medsitenavigator.com/tips.

—Robert Sikorski and Richard Peters

Digital Mailbox:

www.sciencemag.org/dmail.cgi?53464

Patents Online

Whether you are a laboratory scientist, an industry executive, or an attorney, chances are that

SITE FINDER

you will need to search patent and copyright databases or learn more about the application process for such intellectual property rights at one time or another. The World Wide Web offers several outstanding sites that are available free of charge. Below are three sites that should be part of the armamentarium of anyone interested in intellectual property.

IBM Patent Server

<http://patent.womplex.ibm.com/>

You can search, free of charge, more than 26 years of U.S. Patent and Trademark Office patent descriptions, representing over

2 million patents. The site, which is updated weekly, was developed by IBM's Almaden Research Center and uses IBM's own technology. Besides the depth of the database (24 gigabytes of patent text information), you can also view patent images from a 1.3 terabyte image repository. A complete copy of a patent can be ordered for a small fee. As an added bonus, there is even a gallery of obscure and bizarre patents (<http://patent.womplex.ibm.com/gallery.html>).

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

www.uspto.gov/

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office features a searchable database of the front page information from U.S. patents issued since 1 January 1976. Also available free of charge is the AIDS Patent Database: a database of the full text and images of AIDS-related patents issued by the U.S., Japanese, and European patent offices. In addition to searching for patents, the site offers forms to apply for patents, information on patent fees and review procedures, as well as legal information. Viewers should start with the site index to orient themselves to this very large Web site. Another section of the site that is very helpful is the International Intellectual Property Offices section (www.uspto.gov/web/menu/

other.html), which provides links to the Intellectual Property Office Web sites of 32 countries besides the United States.

The U.S. Copyright Office

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/>

Here, viewers will find all the necessary information to apply for U.S. copyrights. Information on what copyright is, the application process, and the forms to be used when applying is available online. You can also search U.S. copyright office records dating back to 1978 from the site, but only a "Telnet" option is available to connect to the Library of Congress Information System.

—Richard Peters and Robert Sikorski

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