

COOL
IMAGES

Tour de l'Oreille

With its Rube Goldberg-like assembly of jostling bones, quivering membranes, spiraling channels, and tiny swaying hairs, perhaps no part of the body is as intriguingly designed as the machinery of hearing. A visually rich tour of the inner ear awaits at Promenade 'round the Cochlea,* a site for medical and biology students created by cell imaging and cochlear expert Remy Pujol's group at the French biomedical research agency INSERM and the University of Montpellier in Montpellier, France. Along with cartoon cutaways of the spiral-shaped cochlea, animations, and a sound clip or two, the site features exquisite electron micrographs from Pujol's lab and others—such as these shots of stereocilia-tipped "hair cells" lining a rat cochlea (above). About 16,000 hair cells help convert sounds to nerve impulses in the human ear. The site's English version will soon be upgraded to match the French site. See "related links" for more Web tours of the ear.

* www.iurc.montp.inserm.fr/cric/audition/english/start.htm

HOT PICKS

Molecular explosion. Want to see what testosterone looks like, or the profile of lactose or the drug epinephrine? You can pull up 3D models for over 210,000 biomolecules, catalysts, drugs, toxins, and other molecules at this free company-sponsored site. www.webmolecules.com

Secret code basics. Learn how to make your e-mail snoop-proof and other cryptography tricks at this site offering free access (for educational purposes) to the 1999 *Handbook of Applied Cryptography*. Its 800 pages cover everything from cryptohistory and public key encryption to digital signatures, patents, and standards. www.cacr.math.uwaterloo.ca/hac

NET NEWS

Journal Crusade Goes Online

Librarians and researchers have taken their revolt against rising journal prices to the Internet. A trio of groups last week launched Create Change,* a take-no-prisoners Web site that calls on academics to "reclaim scholarly communication" by doing everything from refusing to referee for high-price for-profit journals to starting their own low-cost competitors.

Create Change is the latest salvo in a long-running international fire fight between librarians at large universities and some commercial journal publishers. While the publishers—including giants like Elsevier—say high journal prices reflect costs, the librarians claim they've jacked up charges to fortify profits, forcing universities to spend more on fewer titles. As a result, "the lifeblood of scholarly inquiry and creativity is being interrupted," says the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) in Washington, D.C. Some researchers have joined the fray as well: Two years ago, the editors of one ecological journal jumped ship to start their own publication to protest price rises (*Science*, 30 October 1998, p. 853).

NETWATCH

edited by JOCELYN KAISER

To incite more such actions, SPARC and two research librarian associations have launched Create Change. The site offers boilerplate letters for resigning from editorial boards, refusing to review papers, or just protesting prices. There's a list of the editors of the 100 priciest journals, ranging from several \$3000 physics titles to the \$16,000-a-year *Brain Research*. Create Change also details efforts to create upstart journals, the pros and cons of Internet subscriptions, and the economic implications of authors retaining copyright. The goal, says SPARC's Alison Buckholtz, is to give researchers "the resources they need to evaluate the crisis and take action to change the status quo."

* www.createchange.org

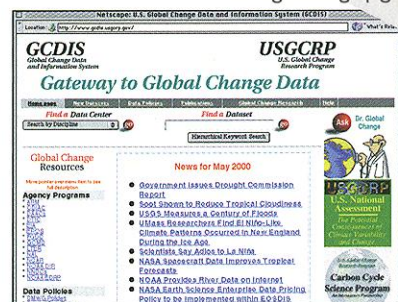
SITE VISIT

Winds of Change

Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide belched by cars and power plants soar, while amphibian populations plummet and glaciers dwindle like an ice cube in your palm. These are just three examples of global change, a term used to describe climate trends and other environmental transformations. Disbursing the U.S. government's sprawling Earth data stockpile is the aim of the federal Global Change Data and Information System.

The centerpiece of the site is a catalog, organized by key words like a Yahoo directory, of some 8000 databases spanning earth sciences to ecology. They range from LANDSAT images of land use in the Chesapeake Basin, to fish catches off California since the 1920s, to 400,000 years of global temperature estimates from antarctic ice cores. Visitors can also leaf through new government reports, such as one on the water shortages that greenhouse warming could bring; or follow links to field projects, such as a long-term ecological monitoring station in the New Mexico desert. The site also offers links to journal articles and press releases on new research. Or the curious can direct a question to Dr. Climate Change, the site's most popular feature. While dealing with the occasional bizarre query—one recent visitor asked about the feasibility of building a dam across the Strait of Gibraltar—agency specialists aim to answer each serious question within 3 days.

www.gcdis.usgcrp.gov



Science ONLINE

The staff of *Science* Online has put together a Web supplement for this week's special issue, Understanding Earth's Dynamics. Included is a selection of related articles in *Science* from the past 2 decades. There's also a review of some interesting Web sites that demonstrate the uses of the dynamic online medium in studying a dynamic planet. See www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/earthdynamics/main.shl

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