

edited by Mitch Leslie

## DATABASE

### Another Day, Another Genome

For genome sequencers, it's just over 300 down and at least 1300 to go. Keep tabs on the progress of DNA sequencing projects at Genomes OnLine Database (GOLD), maintained by Nikos Kyrpides of the Joint Genome Institute in Walnut Creek, California, and colleagues. As of last week, scientists had polished off 319 genomes, including that of the sea squirt *Ciona intestinalis* (above), a close relative of vertebrates. The site lists information on these efforts, such as who performed the sequencing, where the results are housed, and whether they are public or proprietary. GOLD also tracks more than 1300 ongoing projects.



[www.genomesonline.org](http://www.genomesonline.org)

## ONLINE JOURNAL

### Bioethics Views From the Campus

This online journal lets undergraduate students intrigued by the interplay between science, society, and the law reach a national audience. *The Triple Helix* involves student chapters from Cornell University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Pennsylvania, and other schools. The site offers student-written features and news updates on topics such as the recently proposed home HIV tests. You can also download a PDF of the first print issue of the journal, which included articles on the Vioxx recall and the ethics of xenotransplantation. The next issue will appear on several campuses this month and online.

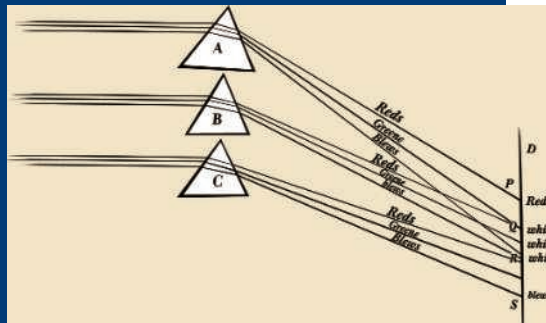
[www.thetriplehelix.org](http://www.thetriplehelix.org)

## EXHIBITS

### Newton Confidential

Isaac Newton was up to something that he concealed from his scientific contemporaries. He was experimenting with alchemy—a mystical endeavor that sought to turn base metals into gold. To explore this little-known side of the great physicist, drop by *The Chymistry of Isaac Newton*, run by science historian William Newman of Indiana University, Bloomington.

Newton pursued "chymistry," the 17th century term for alchemy, for some 30 years. At the time, alchemists undertook genuine chemistry but also pursued dubious projects such as transmuting metals, and the practice fell into disrepute. The site publishes the first complete transcript of one of Newton's key lab notebooks, which shows that his alchemy and science intertwined. The pages brim with alchemical recipes but also record some of his pioneering optical observations, such as his discovery that white light comprises a spectrum of colors (above). Newman plans to add annotated versions of all of Newton's writings on chymistry. To browse one of these manuscripts, link to the site for a PBS NOVA program on Newton that aired earlier this month.



[webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/index.jsp](http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/index.jsp)

## FUN

### Turn That Down!

Brace yourself if you tune in to Bad Vibes from the University of Salford, U.K. The site is canvassing netizens to determine which noise people find most horrible. Visitors get to rate some 30 annoying, sickening, or grating recordings, from scraping Styrofoam to the yowls of Tasmanian devils. The results will not only nail down the most noisome sound, but they also might help scientists understand why we find some sounds offensive. So far, the top vote getter is audio of somebody retching, followed by microphone feedback and bawling babies.



[www.sound101.org](http://www.sound101.org)

## WEB LOGS

### The Darwin Brigade

Darwin's contemporaries Thomas Huxley and Joseph Hooker championed his theory in print and in lectures. If they were alive today and had a little attitude, they might craft something like *The Panda's Thumb*, a Web log in which a cadre of Darwin's modern-day defenders pummels antievolution pseudoscience such as "intelligent design" (ID). The site gets its name from a Stephen

Jay Gould essay about the giant panda's adaptation for stripping bamboo leaves—it's a jury-rigged feature a clever designer wouldn't engineer. *Panda's Thumb* regulars—who range from Ph.D.s and grad students to a businessman and a lawyer—comb the news media for follies to expose and errors to correct. The site provided blanket coverage of the recent trial on the Dover, Pennsylvania, school board's decision to require teaching of ID (*Science*, 18 November, p. 1105). *Panda's Thumb* also highlights evolution-related research, such as a study showing that the antibiotics produced by our immune systems may not be a panacea for drug-resistant bacteria.

[www.pandasthumb.org](http://www.pandasthumb.org)

Send site suggestions to [netwatch@aaas.org](mailto:netwatch@aaas.org). Archive: [www.sciencemag.org/netwatch](http://www.sciencemag.org/netwatch)

Downloaded from [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org) on November 28, 2009

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