

DATABASE

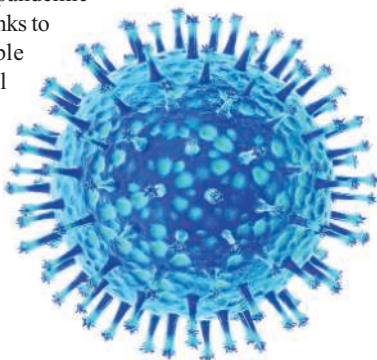
Monkey See, Monkey Age

Researchers studying aging, primate physiology, and related topics will find a trove of baseline data at this site from the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center in Madison. The internet Primate Aging Database (iPAD) stockpiles measurements of putative aging biomarkers—variables such as blood glucose level, bone thickness, and white blood cell count that might clock the ravages of time. Eleven U.S. labs have contributed information on 16 types of primates, from the Western lowland gorilla to the cotton-top tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*; above). Searches serve up some of the 400,000 data points or provide statistical summaries. You can sift the results by the animals' age, diet, sex, or housing conditions. The free database is open to academics and commercial researchers, but potential users must apply for access. >> ipad.primate.wisc.edu

RESOURCES

The Encyclopedia Influenzae

A solid source of information about the deadly H5N1 avian influenza virus and its potential to trigger a human pandemic is the Flu Wiki, a user-written collaboration in the spirit of Wikipedia. A primer dissects the influenza virus and follows it into the body to see how it damages the respiratory system. Other pages discuss the limitations of anti-flu drugs such as Tamiflu and theorize about what deadly traits the 1918 flu strain and H5N1 share. These viruses might unleash a flood of immune system messengers termed a cytokine storm. Visitors can scan different countries' pandemic influenza plans. The site also links to resources on the flu's possible economic, legal, and ethical implications. For example, a recent white paper estimates that even a mild pandemic would cut the world's economic output by \$330 billion and kill 1.4 million people. >> www.fluwiki.com



TOOLS

Meta Analysis

Metazome from the U.S. Department of Energy and the University of California, Berkeley, lets researchers compare animal genomes to tease out gene lineages. The site currently holds complete genome sequences for 11 species—including *Homo sapiens*, the zebrafish, and the malaria-spreading *Anopheles gambiae* mosquito—that represent branch points in animal, or metazoan, evolution. Searching “jawed vertebrates” for a particular gene, for instance, returns all the genes in that group descended from an ancestral gene. Links provide more information about the genes and their proteins. >> www.metazome.net

IMAGES

Fossils on Parade >>

The bones and shells on display at the new 3D Museum are about as close to hands-on as the Internet gets. Hosted by the Vertebrate Paleobiology Lab at the University of California, Davis, the growing exhibit houses remains of more than 20 extinct and living animals, from branching coral to a woolly mammoth tooth. Java windows let you rotate and zoom in on three-dimensional scans of objects such as the shell of the ammonite *Toxoceratoides taylori* (above), a squid relative from the Cretaceous period. >> 3dmuseum.org



FUN

Still Life, With Test Tube

The dearth of well-rounded scientific characters in the arts and popular culture provided one inspiration for LabLit. Jennifer Rohn, a London-based microbiology Ph.D., edits the Web magazine and writes some of the content. The title refers to realistic fiction about scientists at work and to Rohn's hope to shed light on “a largely unknown or obscure world ... the culture of science.”

To illuminate that world, Rohn posts everything from reviews of science-themed plays and novels to a profile of an ex-Massachusetts Institute of Technology mathematician whose company offers advice to screenwriters. In one “Lab Rats” feature, a postdoc writes up his anecdotal evidence that “My specialty is neuroscience” isn't such a bad a pickup line. The LabLit List tallies movies, books, plays, and TV shows that pass the reality test. It's longer than you might expect and includes works by writers such as Tom Stoppard and Barbara Kingsolver. >> www.lablit.com

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