

Net Results

by Linda Wang

Science News on the Net

For the busy science editor, the Web can be a fine way to keep up with science news and to put that news into context. But which sites are most comprehensive? Which seem most reliable? Which are most graphically pleasing, conveniently designed, or entertaining? Those are some of the factors I considered when reviewing science-news sites. Here, in alphabetical order, are some of my top picks.

Environmental News Network— www.enn.com

This attractive site can help you stay abreast of environmental issues ranging from global warming to the preservation of wetlands. Creatively designed, the site looks like a file cabinet with clickable folders. And it's as easy to navigate as a neat-and-tidy file cabinet. For breaking news, click on the "News" tab. The site also has daily newscasts, information on environmental shows, and archives. Click on the "In-depth" tab for feature stories, special reports, and slide shows. And the "Interact" tab sends you to a page where you can join in a live chat with experts or participate in an online forum. Through the site you can also take a quiz, write to Congress about an environmental issue, or pick up environmental tips.

HealthScout— www.healthscout.com

If you want to find out about the latest developments in health and medicine, HealthScout is my recommendation. Its "Today's News" section is constantly being updated, and all the news is written by its own reporters. Other features of this site include encyclopedias, information on drugs, wellness videos, tests that will check your cholesterol and protein concentrations, and tips on how to stay in shape. It is fun to explore the "Diet & Fitness Calculators", which help you calculate your ideal weight, body-mass index, and target heart rate. Another section features weekly reviews of the best and worst health-related sites on the Internet.

Artigen Science Newswire— www.artigen.com/newswire/scitech.html

What this site lacks in layout and design, it more than makes up for in the amount of information it provides. This no-nonsense site offers a huge compilation of science and technology news from various sources, including *ABCNEWS.com*, *CNN.com*, *Scientific American*, and *New Scientist*. Stories can be grouped by date or news source. The site is updated hourly and there's a searchable archive. Visit the "CoolSites" link to check out the featured site of the day or take a look at previously featured sites, which have included recipe collections, popular Web sites, and e-books.

Science & Technology News Network—www.stn2.com

If you missed the evening news, chances are the science stories covered will be on this site. The site was originally designed as a source of science news for television and radio producers. But that makes this an ideal site for the public as well. The contents are broken down nicely into "Environment", "General Science", "Genetics", "Health/Medicine", "Space", and "Technology" sections. Articles are all of feature length and accompanied by lots of pictures; some have animated graphics. There are also links to related stories and Web resources. Live footage accompanies some articles.

Science in the Headlines—www.nationalacademies.org/headlines/

Science in the Headlines is a service of the National Academies Office of News and Public Information. The site is an excellent place to find a roundup of issues in the news. Topics have ranged from nuclear waste to AIDS to science education. Each story is linked to press releases, commentaries, and related reports published by the National Academies. If you're getting bogged down by some of the acronyms in these reports, just click on "About the National Academies" for a link to its glossary of organizational acronyms.

UniSci—www.unisci.com

UniSci is a unified source of research news compiled mainly from university press releases. The releases are reviewed and edited by a panel of experts from various disciplines and universities. The site is updated daily and has an archive searchable by keyword. The site's simple layout makes it easy to navigate. One service to note is the UniSci Daily Java News Ticker, which can be embedded in your homepage or, if you have Windows 95 or higher, added to your desktop. Once embedded the ticker will scroll the top headlines throughout the day.

The Why Files—whyfiles.org

The Why Files is based at and funded by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Each week it features a story that explains in depth the science behind the headlines. For example, when the 747 crashed in Taiwan, the site provided a simple yet thorough explanation of why planes go down. Because the site was originally

created for students and teachers as an educational tool, it is particularly rich in graphics and pleasing to the eye. There's also a section of breathtaking photos from astronomy, biology, the environmental sciences, technology, health, and the physical sciences. And the site lists people who can answer questions about science and mathematics.

World Scientist—worldscientist.com

World Scientist is a science-news service that posts stories from news sources around the world. From this site, you can access news from the *Jerusalem Post*, *Belfast Telegraph*, *Tokyo Globe*, and others. This site also contains links to various science magazines, such as *Nature*, *Scientific American*, and *Issues in Science and Technology*. And if there's a topic you're particularly interested in, the site is also a great portal to subsites on the environment, energy, nuclear waste, technology, space, and other topics.

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