

edited by Mitch Leslie



RESOURCES

Earthquake Info Epicenter

Whether you're looking for a map of earthquake risk in the United States or a rundown of recent global seismic action, check out the Earthquake Information Network (EQNET). The government site's more than 100 annotated links come mainly from federal and state organizations, including the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Reports on recent temblors link to assessments by USGS and other quake-measuring organizations and to news stories. Ten galleries include images such as this shot (above) of a flattened freeway in Oakland, California, the result of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. You can dig up plenty of other information, from job listings to instructions for building a simple shake table to test the stability of model structures.

www.eqnet.org

DATABASE

Cancer Report Card

More Americans are surviving breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancer, but a steady decline in overall cancer death and incidence rates leveled off in the 1990s, according to the latest status report from the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) and other organizations. Explore these and other cancer stats at SEER, an epidemiology storehouse from NCI. SEER, which stands for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results program, began caching cancer information in 1973 and now garners data from more than a dozen state and local cancer registries, covering about 26% of the U.S. population.

The site offers two kinds of statistics. For an overview of cancer trends, try the Fast Stats feature, which furnishes measures such as incidence and mortality for more than 30 cancer types. For instance, although the overall death rate from lung cancer has fallen, it has not declined for women. Completing a patient confidentiality agreement gives researchers access to information on tumor diagnosis and treatment for each of the more than 3 million cancer cases held in the database. SEER plans to add new features to celebrate its 30th anniversary in October, including a set of landmark papers and a bibliography of works that use the program's data.

seer.cancer.gov

LINKS

Keeping It Confidential

The Internet makes harvesting and sharing data a snap, but it also boosts the risk that private information, such as patient identities, can fall into the wrong hands. Concerned that such disclosures could undermine research, the American Statistical Association rounded up these resources on safeguarding confidential health and other electronic data. The site presents annotated links to more than 100 sets of guidelines, recommendations, papers, conference proceedings, and reports. For instance, you can find out what laws and rules govern data disclosure and privacy for various agencies of the U.S. government and for international information-gathering organizations such as the United Nations. Another section explores statistical tricks for ensuring data anonymity, such as inserting noise into measurements to blur their origin.

www.amstat.org/comm/cmtepc

IMAGES



Island of Disappearing Flora

China's Hainan Island nurtures an estimated 13,500 plant species, including this graceful orchid *Arundina stenopetala*. But the unique plants of this biodiversity hot spot are under

pressure from a sprawling human population, deforestation, and invasive weeds. Biflora, a new taxonomic database sponsored by Bicoll Biotechnology of Shanghai and the German Investment and Development Company (DEG), aims to document the island's little-known and imperiled plants for researchers, teachers, and decision-makers. The site has just sprouted and offers a handful of species accounts so far, mainly written by Chinese scientists, with more to come.

www.biflora.org

DISTRIBUTED COMPUTING

Climate Modeling@Home

Now you can put your idle computer to work helping to refine estimates of global climate change. Climateprediction.net, organized by researchers at the University of Oxford and several other institutions, aims to reduce the uncertainty of climate forecasts by running models on personal computers yoked together to form a virtual supercomputer. Like similar projects that are scanning for extraterrestrial signals and evaluating potential cancer drugs, climateprediction.net multiplies computing power by parceling out a small part of the analysis to each participating machine. Download the software at:

www.climateprediction.net