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Bet You Missed It-PubMed and Walmart

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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Why Is This Section B News?

by **Bruce Strauch** (the Citadel)

Renegade programmers at AOL created a tiny computer program called **Gnutella** that lets you share files—especially music—over the Net. AOL shut it down, but it was too late. And now all intellectual property may be up for grabs. **Gnutella** operates the opposite of the Web. There is no central server that can be shut down. **Gnutella** is a “distributed or peer-to-peer system” that requires unplugging every machine hooked to it. This would be like trying to stop every phone conversation in the world. Which means it’s unstoppable.

Ian Clark and other programmers in London have spent 18 months creating **FreeNet** as an alternative to the Web. Their manifesto is found at <http://freenet.sourceforge.net>. A version of this called **Napster** was developed to trade music in MP3 format. **Napster** buffs are now swapping full-length movies and copies of **Microsoft Word**. See — **Thomas Weber**, “Maverick Programmers Prepare to Unleash Anarchy on the Web,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 2000, p.B1.

High Grant Anxiety

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

Processors and writers of academic department grant applications get a helping hand from **GrantSlam** software, by **Cayuse, Inc.** (Portland, OR, 503-297-2108, www.cayuse.com). **NIH** grant submissions requiring PHS forms 398 and 1250 are simplified once the user enters initial grant data. The software keeps templates and separate files for biographical data available for reuse whenever required, and integrates with **Microsoft Word** and **Corel WordPerfect**. Some limitations include no spell checker, an inability to copy or paste formatted text, unique keystroke combinations for special characters, and an inability to handle graphic material. Com-

patible with **Windows 3.1** and later, **Pentium** recommended, **Mac** users must emulate Windows with the bundled **Connectix Virtual PC**. See — **J. Bruce McCallum**, “e-Grants?,” *Techsighting Software* — Compass section, in *Science*, p. 453, Jan. 21, 2000.

PubMed Rival

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

Research articles from the **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)** December 21, 1999 issue and the full contents of the **Molecular Biology of the Cell (MBC)** Nov. 1, 1999 issue are now fully accessible online. The **NIH**’s controversial project to provide free fulltext life science articles through the Web is up and running (www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov) albeit with a few minor

bumps to be smoothed before eight more journals are added this Spring. Meanwhile, a separate preprint project, the **Sante Fe Convention**, a way of coding e-print databases so search engines can scan scattered archives all at once, is forging ahead (www.openarchives.org).

See — “PubMed Central Debuts, Global Archive Plan Released” in *Science*, p.1359, Feb. 25, 2000.

Splitting Up the Gene Pie

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

deCODE, the company given exclusive rights to run Iceland’s database of the country’s medical records (see the **BYMI** abstract in the December 1999-January 2000 **ATG**, p.71), has some competition. A small biotech start-up is teaming up with several scientists (who fiercely oppose the national database) to work with small groups of volunteer patients to gather what they say is still valu-

able data. To date, only about 5% of Icelanders have asked to have their data excluded from **deCODE**, whose CEO is not worried about the competition. “For me, it’s a relief to have another company, so I’m not accused of monopolizing,” says **Kari Stefansson**. See — **Martin Enserink**, “Start-Up Claims Piece of Iceland’s Gene Pie,” in *Science*, p.951, Feb. 11, 2000.

Winner Take All

by **Bruce Strauch** (the Citadel)

Barrons and the **Times** are all saying **Amazon** is doomed. It is, after all, losing tons of money. Or so goes the accepted wisdom. But in fact, **Amazon** has lost only about \$60 million. And it has a tight inventory control plus all the hard assets of the companies it’s bought. Bookseller **WalMart** spent \$4 billion last year alone building new stores and paving

parking lots. **Amazon** is planning on giant regional distribution centers that will cost \$580 million total when it finishes in 2001. *Of course the author doesn’t note that WalMart sells a whole bunch of other stuff in its stores.* See — **James Surowiecki**, “The Financial Page: Have Amazon’s Critics Misread the Books?,” *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2000, p.38.

An Animal By Any Other Name

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

With the newly revised 4th edition of the **International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN)**, the **International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature** has given “individual scientists a lot more authority to sidestep priority,” and relaxed rules for the Latin spellings of names. Researchers may also publish new names on CDs (but not on the Web or in elec-

tronic journals), not just in print journals, as long as at least five “identical and durable copies” are put in libraries and accessible to the public. Although this opens the door to establishing official species lists, no agreement exists on standards as yet. See — **Elizabeth Pennisi**, “Zoology Naming Rules Eased,” in *Science*, p.26, Jan. 7, 2000.

A Thief’s Shopping List

by **Pamela M. Rose** (Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of NY)

Someone is collecting rare 16th and 17th century books in an unsocial manner. Experts suspect that some of the 23 rare books heisted from the **Russian Academy of Sciences** in St. Petersburg over the last 2 years were “stolen to order.” In particular one of the stolen items was one of 107 known copies of

Copernicus’ De revolutionibus orbium coelestium. **Interpol** is helping track the thefts which occurred from vaults that only library employees could access.

See — “Copernicus Heist in Russia,” Random Samples section edited by **Constance Holden**, in *Science*, p.1395, Feb. 25, 2000.