

"Million Dollar Homepage" Hits the Mark

Alex Tew, the money-minded student, has hit his goal of raising one million dollars for his college education. His Million Dollar Homepage features a page of one million pixels, which he sold off for a dollar a piece in blocks of ten. Tew decided to flog the last remaining 1,000 pixels on eBay. And, when the auction closed yesterday evening, the bidding for the last available space on this giant pixel billboard stood at \$38,100. It means Tew's site has succeeded in generating just over a million dollars - since its launch in September. If you've got that sinking feeling like you missed out on something spectacular, don't worry. Pixel blocks are still available at other "flog sites" like Pink Million Dollars and The Million Pixel Page. Then, of course, there is the Zero Dollar Homepage for all of us cheap types. Heck, why not just create your own?



Gene therapy stops Parkinson's mutation

Northwestern University scientists say they're developing a therapy to selectively turn off a gene involved in Parkinson's disease development. The therapy was designed by Martha Bohn and colleagues at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. Bohn is director of the neurobiology program at Northwestern's Children's Memorial Research Centre and professor of paediatrics, molecular pharmacology and biological chemistry. The technique removes a protein known as alpha-synuclein from the diseased dopamine-producing neurons that die in Parkinson's disease. Alpha-synuclein is abundant in structures known as Lewy bodies - a diagnostic hallmark of Parkinson's disease. This is the first step in developing a new therapy for Parkinson's disease based on molecular knowledge of the disease, said Mohan Sapru, research assistant professor of paediatrics and co-inventor of the gene therapy technology. It may also be useful for other diseases of the brain, such as dementia with Lewy bodies, a disease also characterised by Lewy bodies in the brain.

Mice may hold clues to schizophrenia

By deleting a single gene in the brains of mice, Texas scientists say they've found the animals behaved in a manner resembling schizophrenia in humans. After the gene was removed, researchers said the animals - trained to use external cues to look for chocolate treats buried in sand - couldn't learn a similar task. The scientists at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre deleted the gene, which codes for a part of a protein involved in passing signals between nerve cells needed for learning and memory. When a similar protein is blocked by drugs in humans it leads to a psychotic state similar to schizophrenia. We think that both our genetic rodent model, as well as a new learning and memory test we developed, may provide valuable tools in the investigation of schizophrenia, said Dr. Robert Greene, professor of psychiatry and senior author of the study.

As if getting jostled awake by the screeches, alarms and hollering of a city that never sleeps isn't bad enough, a web-based art project wants you to make Lower East Side noises into audible art. But the noises are much less annoying when you can control them. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum has commissioned an online exhibit called Folk Songs for the Five Points. It starts with an interactive map of Manhattan's downtown neighbourhood. Coloured circles dot the grid of streets, marking spots where the museum's artist-in-residence David Gunn recorded an assortment of audio clips. Each hue represents a different genre of sound, ranging from spoken to musical to ambient. Up to five clips can play at once, each with its own playback controls at the bottom of the page. Vectors on the map can be shifted with the click of a mouse, layering various sounds. "When I moved to New York, the Lower East Side really intrigued me," said Gunn, who is a recent British import. "There are all these different cultural contexts that have collided over time, and I wanted to create a reflection of that diversity by using



music as the main focus. When you walk around Manhattan, there are an awful lot of ambient sounds," he said. "It's one of the noisiest cities I've ever been to." Gunn sees Folk Songs for the Five Points as an ongoing documentation of the neighbourhood and hopes to further promote the idea by setting locals loose with their own DAT recorders. "You could do this almost anywhere and it would be interesting," he said, "because every city has its own fluxes and changes."

Your
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Art