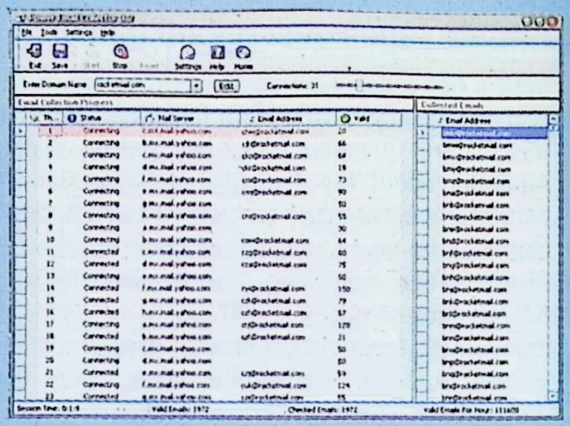
Religion a figment of the imagination?

Humans alone practice religion because they're the only creatures to have evolved imagination. That's the argument of anthropologist Maurice Bloch of the London School of Economics. Bloch challenges the popular notion that religion evolved and spread because it promoted social bonding, as has been argued by some anthropologists. Instead, he argues that first, we had to evolve the necessary brain architecture to imagine things and beings that don't physically exist, and the possibility that people somehow live on after they've died.





What does your email address reveal?

Think twice about the email address you pick: it may speak volumes about your personality, say researchers at the University of Leipzig in Germany who asked a panel of 100 students to guess the personalities of 600 teenagers simply by looking at their email addresses. The panels' guesses agreed most with a personality survey the teenagers had completed when it came to qualities like openness, conscientiousness and narcissism, and diverged most on the trait of extroversion. Addresses that gave away personality often contained full stops, numbers or a name that was obviously not genuine.

Black holes reveal more secrets

Scientists say they have unlocked some of the secrets behind black holes, the gravitational fields known for sucking up light and stars from the Universe. In a report in the journal Nature, US researchers say they have worked out how black holes emit jet streams of particles at close to light speed. The Boston University team say the streams originate in the magnetic field near the edge of the black hole. Despite the fact that it is probable that a black hole lurks at the centre of our Milky Way galaxy, astronomers still know very little about these celestial monsters which vacuum up almost everything in their path, even light.

