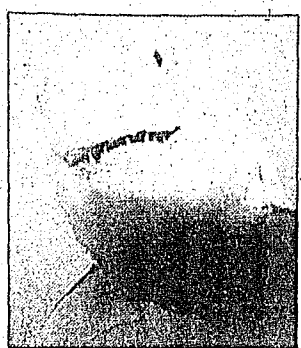


elemental



GREAT WHITE WANDERER

A new study suggests that male great white sharks roam the oceans far more widely than females. This has implications for conservation strategies for the infamous fish, say scientists at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Biologist Andrew Martin and a research team studied differences in two types of DNA collected from 95 male and female great whites. The team concluded that while males disperse widely across ocean basins, females tend to stay in a particular region, possibly returning to their birth site to reproduce.

Tissue samples were collected over 10 years from great white sharks caught in nets of commercial fishermen and live ones that were biopsied using a "pole dart."

"These are very rare fish because they are perched at the top of the food chain and they have been fished very heavily," Martin says. "The nice thing about this study is that we were able to overlay genetic differences on the oceanic geography."

KEEP IT CLEAN

Wind-powered turbines might be an up-and-coming form of renewable energy, but the devices have a drawback: bugs. Insects splattering against the blades are causing enough drag to hinder efficiency, according to a study by the Energy Center of The Netherlands. The study says that the bugs roughen the leading edges of the blades, causing them to slow down. The solution is simple: Keep them clean.

LASERS IMPROVE ARC WELDING

Arc welding has changed little since World War II, but engineers have devised a way to improve its precision using low-powered lasers. A team at Ohio State University found a way to guide the position of welds in a technique called Laser Assisted Arc Welding.

It requires only 7 watts — little more than a Christmas-tree light bulb — far less energy than the lasers used in automobile and aerospace industries.

News briefs compiled by Kurt Loft, Media General News Service.

site

BYTES

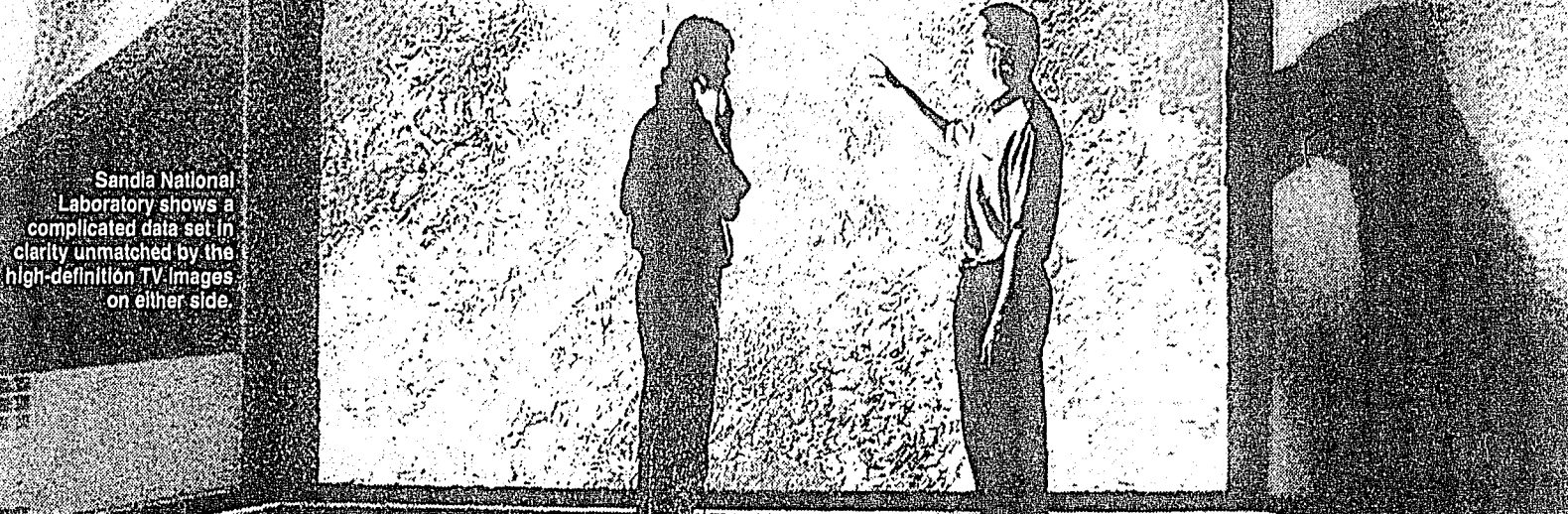
NOT JUST FOR LOOKS

Whiskers on seals are more than an adornment — they actually help the flippers mammals find dinner. Seals feed on live fish and often must forage in dark, murky water where their prey cannot be seen or smelled. Because seals lack the natural sonar of some other marine mammals, such as dolphins, scientists have long puzzled about how a seal finds his food. Now researchers in Germany have the answer: the whiskers sense the swirling wake left by swimming fish. For more information on all sorts of seals, check out www.pinnipeds.org.

science technology

Resolution Revolution

Sandia National Laboratory shows a complicated data set in clarity unmatched by the high-definition TV images on either side.



Engineers take screen clarity to a new level

By Kurt Loft
Media General News Service

personal computers, for instance, is 720 pixels across by 350 pixels down.

This translates to 72 dots per inch, compared to 200 on Shandia's system. When viewing the screen from 18 inches away, 200 dpi matches the acuity of human sight. A goal of researchers is to create this degree of clarity on large panels that can be sold commercially.

"We're moving toward wallpaper-like displays," Heermann adds. "So instead of a computer monitor, you might have a large wall display in your home. The image would become part of your environment, and it would be very real."

Sandia's system works on what engineers call massive parallel imaging — a method of orchestrating a large number of individual computers

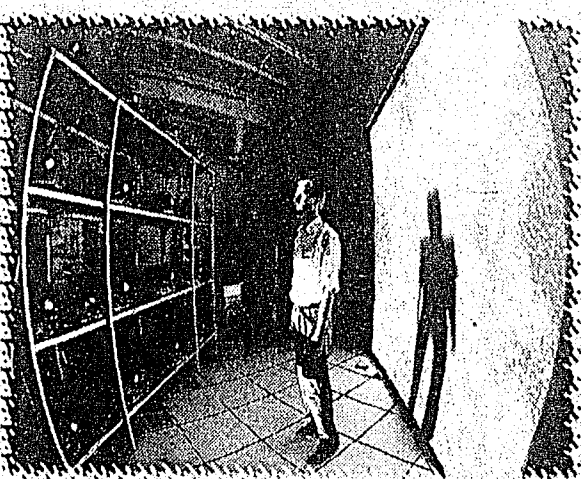


Photo by RANDY MONTANO/Sandia National Laboratory
Sandia's David Logsted checks the alignment of 16 digitized projectors that create an image on a 20 million-pixel screen.

rather than a single super computer. In this case, the image doesn't come from a single source, such as a computer graphics card, but from 64 computers that split data among 16 projectors.

Clusters of computers, or "render farms," have been used for years to make high-tech movies. But they are tedious, requiring a half-hour or more to render a frame. The Sandia system can handle huge amounts of information in seconds. Scientists hope that the images will give them a better view of complex systems, particularly in the fields of nanotechnology, microsystems and biology. The technology also could be used to study simulated nuclear-weapons tests, which is one reason the project is funded by the Department of Energy's Accelerated Strategic Computing Initiative.

Complex calculations on a normal video monitor usually require the person to pan and zoom in order to see all the details. On a large, high-resolution display wall, things can be found easily in one view.

"It doesn't make sense to view a 100 million-cell simulation on a 1 million-pixel display," Heermann says. "The technology could one day find its way into theaters, although it would complicate the craft of moviemaking."

"You could drive this with 16 DVD players, so a movie theater could do it," Heermann says. "But there probably isn't enough added value in it, because it would cost so much more to produce all this, with 16 cameras needed to capture a scene."

Kurt Loft is a staff writer for The Tampa Tribune.

Yahoo! is the first to offer streaming video option for its instant messaging

Beating rivals America Online and Microsoft, Yahoo! becomes the first of the big players in instant messaging to give users the ability to broadcast streaming video.

Yahoo! Messenger users with video cameras connected to their computers can choose to broadcast video as they exchange text or voice messages with friends, family or colleagues.

To guard against accidental broadcasts, users have to choose Start My Webcam from the Tools menu once connected to the IM service.

plugged

with Doug Stanley

Users have the option of assigning viewing rights to the users they like. On the viewing end of a conversation, users similarly choose whether to watch the video.

Video quality is fine for a conversation with a long-distance friend or colleague, but too small and choppy for teaching someone how to — say — tie a necktie. Messenger works with most Webcams and is a snap to set up. It's free and available at messenger.yahoo.com.

Once dismissed as little more than a playground for teens and the lonely, the popularity of instant messaging is exploding.

More than 60 million people worldwide are regular IM users, and that figure is projected to skyrocket as the technology spreads to offices.

Research firm IDC estimates that the number of corporate IM users worldwide will grow at an annual rate of 140 percent, reaching more than 180 million by 2004.

Find Pictures Fast: Google is beta testing a specialty search engine that lets you search and browse more than 150 million digital images on the World Wide Web. To use Google's Image Search, type your query into the search box and click the Search button or hit Enter on your keyboard. Results are displayed as thumbnail

as file size and location on the Web. Click on the thumbnail version of the picture you want to view. A larger version of the image and the original Web page where it's located are displayed.

Try out the Google image search at images.google.com.

The Best and the Rest: Dell is building a dynasty among readers of PC Magazine, pulling down top marks for overall desktop service and reliability for the 10th time in 11 years.

The Texas-based manufacturer and direct seller of PCs also topped the rankings in the office and home machines subcategories.

Micron and locally built, or "white box,"

in the magazine's 14th annual survey. Dell, trading on its well-regarded technical support, also dominated the notebook computer category in the survey of more than 5,000 PC Magazine readers.

Among Internet-service providers, AT&T WorldNet, Excite@Home and Road Runner were judged significantly better than average by the magazine's readers. Details and ratings of other computer-related products are in the August issue of PC Magazine or online at www.pcmag.com.

Doug Stanley writes about computers and the Internet. Write him at dstanley@tampatrib.com or The Tampa Tribune.

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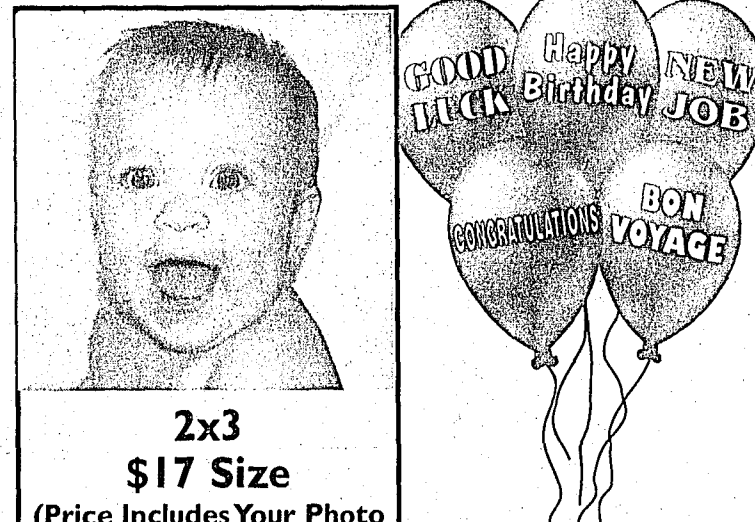
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