

Chemical Forums - Q&A's and Chemical Resources



In time spent searching the net for a particular piece of chemical information, sometimes finding the right starting place is the toughest—and even worse, information may not be readily available to answer

your straightforward question. While listservs are useful, if somewhat dated, a newer iteration of the idea has become available. **Chemical Forums** (www.chemicalforums.com) offer the curious, from a wide range of educational levels, a way to ask (and answer) chemical queries from General, Analytical, Organic, and Physical Chemistry, with specialized sections on Radiochemistry, Chemical Biology, Education and Chemical Engineering. And the forums are strikingly active. On the day I visited, over 300 people had accessed the board covering a rather specialized subject matter. In addition to the forums, which can be a lot of fun, the Web site also offers a variety of unique tools and calculators. For instance, there are pKa tables for aqueous and DMSO solutions, Ka value tables, tables of physical constants (who remembers the Rydberg constant offhand?) and a very comprehensive list of chemical structures, including many drug molecules. Another set of resources is the job board, which seems to be well populated with company job postings and CVs. This is a fun site to browse and a good venue for asking and answering chemistry questions!

MIT Open Courseware - An Amazing Educational Resource

From time to time, the Internet lives up to its promise of education for all, and the **MIT Open Courseware** (<http://ocw.mit.edu>) site is definitely among the top in my book. This treasure chest of great information is based at the storied Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is organized very efficiently. This **open** courseware site is a free repository of many of MIT's courses. Browsing through the biology and chemistry departments, there are full sets of course material, including syllabi, lecture notes, problem sets, presentations, recommended reading lists, and even exam problems. Some of the courses offer basic introductions to a discipline, like General Chemistry or General Biology. Others are much more specialized, such as lectures on **G protein-coupled**

MIT Course	Course Title	Term
5.001	Introduction to Chemistry	Fall 2001
5.002	Introduction to Physics	Fall 2001
5.003	Introduction to Neuroscience	Fall 2004
5.004	Neuroscience and Behavior	Fall 2005
5.005	Basic Chemistry	Spring 2005
5.006	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.007	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.008	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.009	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.010	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.011	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.012	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.013	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.014	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.015	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.016	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.017	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.018	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.019	General Chemistry	Fall 2005
5.020	General Chemistry	Fall 2005

receptors: Vision and disease. Another offering is on **DNA Damage Checkpoints: The Emergency Brake on the Road to Cancer.** No matter which side of the teacher's desk you are on, there's something here for you—from ideas

for a new graduate level course to study materials for the latest Neurobiology final. The courses are rich with primary literature references, great slides, and top-notch scientific graphics. The site also deserves top marks for organizing large amounts of information for quick and easy access. **The MIT Open Courseware** is definitely worth your time!

iTunes University - Something a little different

Since the advent of the Internet and the iPod, the multimedia PodCast format has become extremely popular. Downloadable audio snippets have evolved into something much grander, and Apple Computer has created a niche for the biomedically inclined through its iTunes program. Although not a Web site per se, the **iTunes University** is accessible to PC and Mac computers, the only requirement being the iTunes software, which is freely available from www.apple.com/downloads. You can access iTunes University from the iTunes store, and check out online course offerings from quite a few universities, including **Stanford and Duke**, as well as individual educational downloads from popular press sources such as **National Public Radio**. Perhaps most striking, the format of these course materials includes audio, and the PodCasts can either be viewed and listened to on a computer or downloaded to an iPod for later listening on the go. One series of lectures, from Duke University, focuses on the topic featured on the cover of this issue of *Molecular Interventions*. The twelve-lecture series, entitled **Addressing Diabetes: The Role of Business in Confronting an Epidemic**, includes presentations from health care and food industry experts on what business is doing about the growing epidemic of obesity. In addition, **iTunes University** can serve as a host for recording course lectures, which can be a great service for distance learners and others who wish to review lecture materials before exams.



More Obesity

Both the public and researchers can benefit from an offering of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), the **Weight Control Information Network, or WIN**, (<http://win.niddk.nih.gov>). Publications are available with nutritional information, exercise programs, current treatment options, as well as in-depth statistics for weight-related health complications. In addition, the NIDDK supports a **National Diabetes Clearinghouse of Information** (<http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov>), an overview of the disease, complications, and treatments for a lay-audience, and also a literature resource for clinicians.

