ECHO. *Access:* http://www.echo.gmu.edu.

Maintained by George Mason University's Center for History and New Media, ECHO (Exploring and Collecting History Online) is a Librarians' Internet Index-type portal containing more than 5,000 Web sites dealing with the history of science, industry, and technology.

Subjects covered by this site are aviation, life sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Searchers can browse by subject, historic time period, or by content (such as audio, images, and primary and secondary sources.) For easy reference, ECHO features a sample Web site that includes URL, author and the site's excerpt, as well as category and subject tags.

Basic searches of ECHO begin conveniently on the right side of the homepage; advanced searches can be narrowed down to media type, historical period, and, uniquely, a specific page, site, or story contained in the ECHO Web site. Google searches can be performed from the ECHO site by clicking the "Google" tab on the advanced search screen; according to the site, Google custom searches are performed and do not result in tens of thousands of hits.

History bloggers and history buffs will appreciate a continuously updated blog available on the site. IT gurus will appreciate the "Tools" section, a wiki that includes the software to create digital history Web sites and portals.

Despite the wealth and breadth of information and knowledge found on the ECHO site, there are a few drawbacks for users. When searching by category, the subject layouts are listed vertically and can be confusing and distracting to read. The

annotations of each Web site, however, are helpful and useful to researchers. Some of the Web site links are broken and need to be updated or removed.

Another drawback that will most likely be corrected in the future, is that only editors, not other searchers or researchers, can contribute Web links and Web sites to ECHO. Hopefully in the near future, ECHO will allow others who are interested to add material to the site.

Nevertheless, ECHO is a resourceful and easily navigable Web portal for researchers interested in the history, science and technology fields, whether professionals or novices. Highly recommended for searching, researching, and bookmarking.—*Larry Cooperman, Everglades University, lcooperman@evergladesuniversity.edu*

Radio Lingua Network. *Access:* http://www. radiolingua.com.

Language learning is taken to a new level at Radio Lingua Network, a network of podcasts aimed at independent language learners. Best known for its Coffee Break Spanish series, Radio Lingua features podcasting as the primary tool for engaging students in a variety of languages. It's well suited for supplementing classroom instruction or exploring the basics of a new language in a relaxed, fun, and interactive environment.

The network currently offers beginning language lessons in Spanish and French, in a series of 15- to 20-minute weekly segments—"language learning with your latte." Italian and German lessons are available in a "My Daily Phrase" series, with five-minute segments each weekday for five months. The programs are aimed at adult learners and focus on conversational skills needed for traveling to another country. In beginning lessons, students learn to greet others and talk about themselves, their family, their likes and dislikes. Later lessons deal with transactional language: ordering food

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and drink, asking for directions, going to a pharmacy. Coffee Break Spanish, the longest running podcast, now includes more than 60 lessons and tackles more complex aspects, such as past tenses and irregular verbs. Radio Lingua also offers a new series of "One-Minute Languages," including Irish, Polish, Russian, and German.

Lessons are free and can be accessed in several ways. The best way to experience the material is to subscribe to a weekly podcast in iTunes; subscribers automatically receive new lessons and can easily listen wherever they wish. Students can also listen online from the Radio Lingua site or download all of the past shows.

Mark Pentleton is the director of the Scotland-based network and also the teacher for the Spanish and French programs. In the Coffee Break series, the instructor provides clear guidance to a "student" who works along with the listener. The interaction between the two is relaxed and enjoyable, making practice fun. Discussion forums allow students to connect with other listeners around the world and ask questions about the material and the language in general. The site offers excellent technical support, making it easy for anyone to begin experiencing language instruction in this format.

Podcasting is a promising new development in language learning, and Radio Lingua Network is a great choice among many podcast options.—*Lori Robare, University of Oregon, lrobare@uoregon.edu*

Stem Cell Information. *Access:* http://stem-cells.nih.gov/.

Undergraduate students and others looking for background information on stem cells, as well as researchers looking for sources of stem cells or National Institutes of Heath (NIH) funding, will find the Stem Cell Information site a good place to start. The site is created by NIH as a "resource for stem cell research." Navigation is straightforward through four links at the top of the page or highlights, including current news items, linked directly on the front page.

"Info Center" leads to Stem Cell Basics, an overview of the biological properties of stem cells, NIH research questions, a comparison between embryonic and adult stems cells, and potential use of stem cells in research and treatment. This section has extensive textual links to a glossary, which provides useful definitions. There are two comprehensive reports in "Info Center" that cover the state of stem cell research; NIH will continue to add chapters in the future.

"Info Center" presents a brief overview of research ethics issues and a comprehensive list of online NIH and other ethics resources. Most of these links would be useful to a general audience. The most useful of the general stem cell resource links are to disease-specific organizations and advocacy groups, educational resources, international research, and professional organizations that have stem cell policy statements. Some of the initial pages of "Info Center" have not been modified since October 2006, but many of the linked pages have been updated more recently.

The other three links at the top of the page—"Research Topics," "Federal Policy," and "Announcements"—provide more focused information, which also could be used by researchers. "Research Topics" includes the Stem Cell Registry of cells that are available for federal funding, as well as programs, protocols, and clinical trials for stem cell research.

"Federal Policy" includes the federal stem cell research policy information and related testimony and legislation. "Announcements" is focused on upcoming stem cell-related meetings, NIH funding announcements, and includes an archive of news items from 1999 to 2007.

Although there are some links to international research on stem cells, the most valuable use of this page is as a gateway to background information on stem cells and the use of stem cells for federally funded research in the United States.— *Carol Mc-Culley, Linfield College, cmccull@linfield. edu* ✄