



For Release December 27, 2007

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Top 10 Darwin and Design News Stories for 2007

Colorado Springs, CO (Dec 27, 2007) – Following are the Top 10 Darwin and Design news stories for 2007 as selected by the News Staff at Access Research Network.

1. Complexity of Molecular Machines. [Science Daily](#) reported on remarkable molecular "machines" in living cells, the ribosomes. These "factories" are giving scientists clues to the development of new antibiotics and revealing secrets about how cells use the genetic information encoded in DNA. The full story is in a February 19, 2007 article in Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN), American Chemical Society's weekly newsmagazine.

2. The Genomic Jungle Unveiled. On September 24, 2007 [The Boston Globe](#) reported that the science of life is undergoing changes so jolting that even its top researchers are feeling something akin to shell-shock. Just four years after scientists finished mapping the human genome - the full sequence of 3 billion DNA "letters" folded within every cell - they find themselves confronted by a biological jungle deeper, denser, and more difficult to penetrate than anyone imagined. "Science is just starting to probe the wilderness between genes," said John M. Greally, molecular biologist at New York's Albert Einstein School of Medicine. "Already we're surprised and confounded by a lot of what we're seeing." A slew of recent but unrelated studies of everything from human disease to the workings of yeast suggest that mysterious swaths of molecules - long dismissed as "junk DNA" -- may be more important to health than genes themselves. [Several articles](#) in *Science News* and *Genomic Research* describe the new level of cell complexity that is being unraveled.

3. The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism by Michael Behe. The top intelligent design book honors for 2007 goes to Michael Behe's [The Edge of Evolution](#). Biochemist Behe reviews the scientific data and lays out clearly what evolution can and cannot do which he identifies as the "Edge of Evolution." The genomes of many organisms have been sequenced, and the machinery of the cell has been analyzed in great detail. The evolutionary responses of microorganisms to antibiotics and humans to parasitic infections have been traced over tens of thousands of generations. As a result, for the first time in history Darwin's theory can be rigorously evaluated. The results are shocking. Although it can explain marginal changes in evolutionary history, random mutation and natural selection explain very little of the basic machinery of life. The "edge" of evolution, a line that defines the border between random and non-random mutation, lies very far from where Darwin pointed. Behe argues convincingly that most of the mutations that have defined the history of life on earth have been non-random.

4. Jellyfish Fossil Find Provides More Evidence for the Complexity of Early Life. New [jellyfish fossils from Utah](#) have very well preserved soft tissue, which the scientists interpret as evidence that representatives of modern jellyfish existed by the middle Cambrian period. The specimens show the same complexity as modern orders and families of jellyfish. These finds pushes the known occurrence of definitive jellyfish back from 300 million to 505 million years in the standard geologic column, a huge jump, and show more detail than anything previously described that is younger.

5. Academic Persecution Continues. Last year Richard Sternberg lost his job at the Smithsonian for “allowing” a pro-intelligent design paper to be published. This year noted astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez was [denied tenure](#) at Iowa State University because of his intelligent design affiliations and the Baylor University administration [shut down](#) Robert Marks's Evolutionary Informatics Lab and website for similar reasons. These three tragic stories and others will be exposed in the Ben Stein documentary [Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed](#) to appear in theaters nationwide next spring.

6. Politicians Continue to Suppress Free Thinking. What do the [Kansas State Board of Education](#), the [Council of Europe](#), and the [UK Department of Children, Schools and Families](#) have in common? They are all political bodies that decided their citizens should not be subjected to “free thought” when it comes to contemplating their origins. The typical approach is to label intelligent design a “religious concept” and ban it from the public square (completely disregarding the scientific debate of the issues). The Council of Europe went so far as to call intelligent design a “threat to human rights” in its resolution.

7. Broken Molecular Clock. In a [paper](#) that challenges the Darwinian model of evolution, University of Pittsburgh professor, Jeffrey H. Schwartz, contends that evolutionary changes occur suddenly as opposed to the Darwinian model of evolution, which is characterized by gradual and constant change. Schwartz’s paper, “Do Molecular Clocks Run at All? A Critique of Molecular Systematics,” appears in the journal *Biological Theory*.

8. Biological Big Bang Model Proposed. Eugene Koonin, a senior research scientist at the National Center for Biotechnology Information published a paper that claims: “The relationships between major groups within an emergent new class of biological entities are hard to decipher and do not seem to fit the tree pattern that, following Darwin's original proposal, remains the dominant description of biological evolution.” The [paper](#) is entitled: “The Biological Big Bang model for the major transitions in evolution.” Reinforcing the growing scientific criticism of Darwin’s Tree of Life, W. Ford Doolittle and Eric Bapteste from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dalhousie University in Canada published a [discussion paper](#) suggesting its time to give up on Darwin’s Tree of Life illustration because it doesn’t fit the data.

9. “Truth be told” about Chimp-Human DNA comparisons. For over 30 years, the public have been led to believe that human and chimpanzee genetics differ by mere 1%. This “fact” of science has been used on innumerable occasions to silence anyone who offered the thought that humans are special among the animal kingdom. However, this “fact” is about to be discarded. Apparently, it is now OK to openly acknowledge that those who are involved in this research have never been comfortable that the 1% figure was an accurate summary of the scientific information. [Recent studies](#) have made it impossible to sustain the old orthodoxy. They have raised the question of whether the 1% truism should be retired.

10. Purpose of Human Appendix Discovered. Evolutionists from Charles Darwin in 1871 to Ernst Mayer in 2001 described the human appendix as a useless leftover vestige of the evolutionary process. The newly discovered function of the appendix is related to the large amount of bacteria populating the human digestive system, according to a [recent study](#) in the *Journal of Theoretical Biology*. There are more bacteria than human cells in the typical body. Most of it is good and helps digest food. But sometimes the bacteria in the intestines die or are purged. Diseases such as cholera or amoebic dysentery would clear the gut of useful bacteria. The appendix's job is to reboot the digestive system in that case. The appendix “acts as a good safe house for bacteria,” said Duke professor Bill Parker, a study co-author.

These stories and many more about the Darwin and Design debate can be found on the Access Research Network website www.arn.org.

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Access Research Network is a 501(c)3 scientific and educational organization dedicated to providing accessible information on science, technology and society issues from an intelligent design perspective.