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Dr Eleanor Hayes

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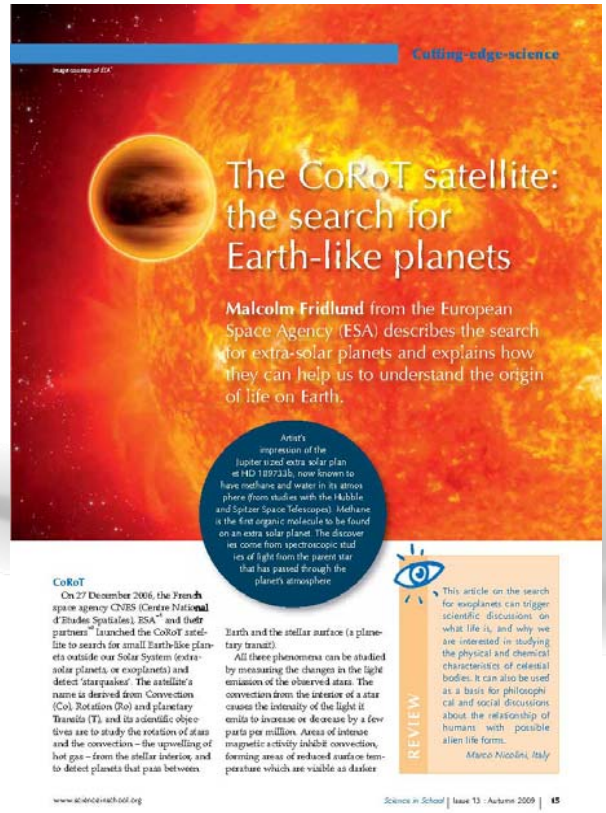
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Appealing but serious

Layout:
colourful, attractive

Written style:
simple, engaging

Content:
interesting, current, relevant topics


Cutting-edge-science

The CoRoT satellite: the search for Earth-like planets

Malcolm Fridlund from the European Space Agency (ESA) describes the search for extra-solar planets and explains how they can help us to understand the origin of life on Earth.

Artist's impression of the Jupiter sized extra solar planet HD 189733b, now known to have methane and water in its atmosphere (from studies with the Hubble and Spitzer Space Telescopes). Methane is the first organic molecule to be found on an extra solar planet. The discoveries come from spectroscopic studies of light from the parent star that has passed through the planet's atmosphere

CoRoT

On 27 December 2006, the French space agency CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales), ESA[1] and their partners[2] launched the CoRoT satellite to search for small Earth-like planets outside our Solar System (extra-solar planets, or exoplanets) and detect 'starquakes'. The satellite's name is derived from Convection (Co), Rotation (Ro) and planetary Transits (T), and its scientific objectives are to study the rotation of stars and the convection – the upwelling of hot gas – from the stellar interior, and to detect planets that pass between Earth and the stellar surface (a planetary transit).

All three phenomena can be studied by measuring the changes in the light emission of the observed stars. The convection from the interior of a star causes the intensity of the light it emits to increase or decrease by a few parts per million. Areas of intense magnetic activity inhibit convection, forming areas of reduced surface temperature which are visible as darker

REVIEW

This article on the search for exoplanets can trigger scientific discussions on what life is, and why we are interested in studying the physical and chemical characteristics of celestial bodies. It can also be used as a basis for philosophical and social discussions about the relationship of humans with possible alien life forms.

Marco Nicolini, Italy

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accurate, cutting edge, includes 'hard' topics

Written by experts:
scientists and teachers

Contents

Science: cutting-edge research, important science topics

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Careers: bringing scientific jobs to life

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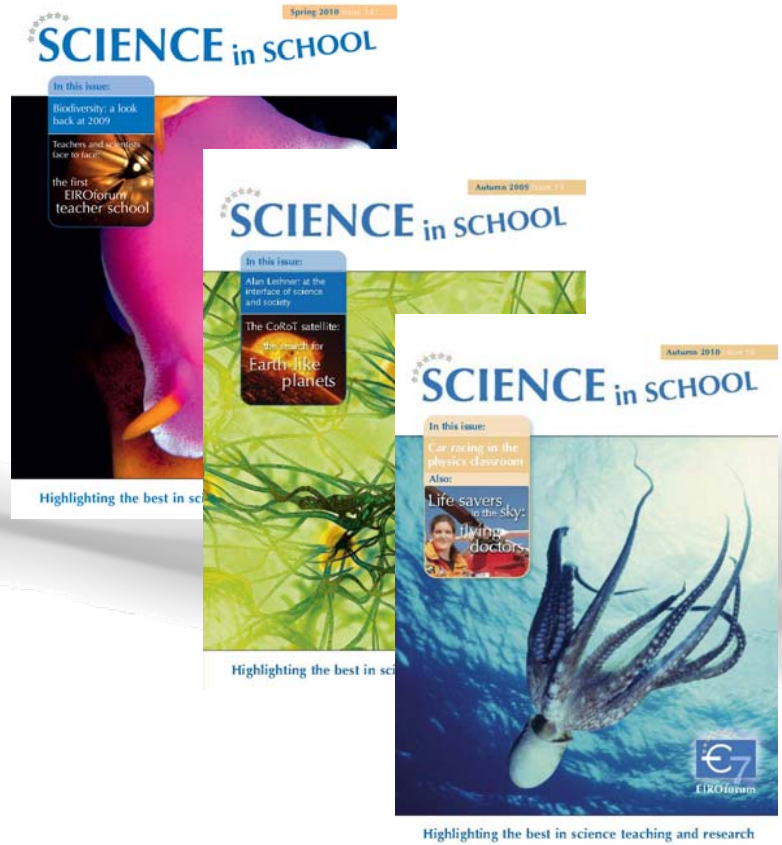
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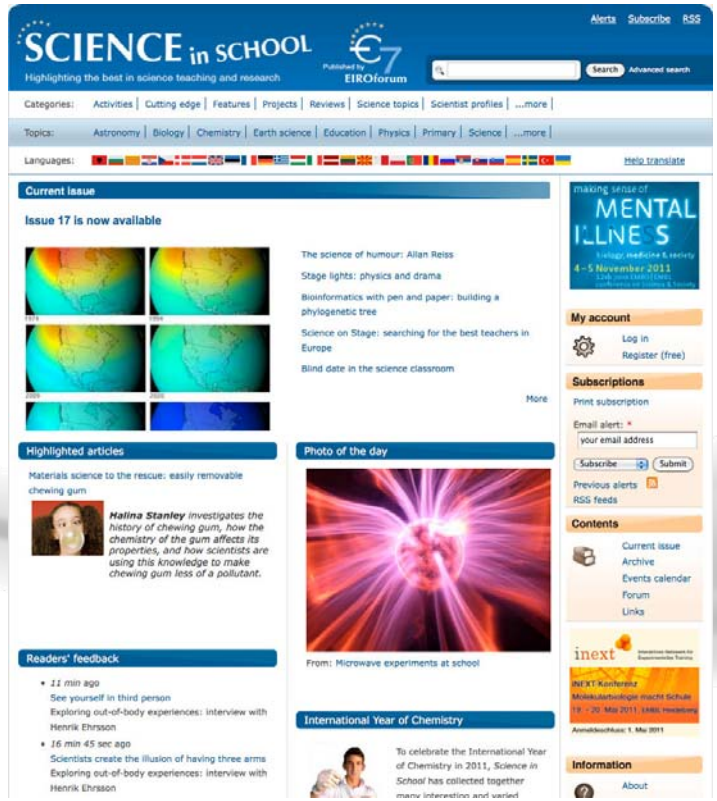
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