

DISCOVER

Science, Technology, and The Future

December FUN FACTS

In the latest edition of DISCOVER we get an exclusive audience with Stephen Hawking, talk to the smartest people in the world, and explore whether our existence is just one big coincidence. Editor-in-chief Corey S. Powell is available to discuss these stories from the December Issue, on newsstands now.

Dirty Truths About The Carbon Trade – Carbon trading has grown from virtually nothing a few years ago to a \$64 billion market, and cap-and-trade schemes may become much bigger business when President Obama takes office. But our reporter uncovered serious problems with carbon offsets. Offsets can generate huge profits without reducing carbon emissions. In fact, they can actually create incentives for polluters to produce *more* emissions and then collect payments for destroying those gases. (Pages 71—74)

Meet the 50 Greatest Minds in Science – DISCOVER has named 50 of the smartest people alive: from rising stars and genius kids to unsung heroes and self-styled outsiders. The Google guys made the most influential list. Young mathematician Terence Tao uncovered the magic of prime numbers, leading to the development of better digital cameras, telescopes and MRIs. And the notable outsiders John Kanzius, who used pots and hot dogs to try to cure cancer. (Pages 28—51)

The Private Side of Stephen Hawking – Despite being the most famous physicist in the world—and one of our Discover 50 award winners—Hawking rarely appears before the camera, in part because he is almost totally immobilized by ALS. Our editor in chief Corey Powell and noted photographer Mackenzie Stroh flew to England to capture Hawking in his element in a Cambridge University math classroom. The results show the master of black holes as he has never been seen before. (Pages 52—57)

Was Our Universe Designed for Life? – The laws of physics sure look like they were made just for us. How did that happen? Some physicists think coincidence got us here: Our universe is just one of a multitude, and so Nature had trillions of times to get one of them right. Without this “multiverse” theory, as one famous physicist suggested, there might not be another explanation for the laws of physics other than to invoke the will of God. (Pages 52—58)

Holiday Gift Guide to the Rescue! Love to sing? Want to play *American Idol* at home? Well, we've got the perfect gift for you: A Memorex SingStand (\$70) that lets you look your iPod into a karaoke machine with its own microphone. Also featured: a plug-in gadget that turns your laptop into a high-definition TV, and an exercise bike that plugs you directly into the Web. (Page 22)

Schizophrenia is from Venus, Autism is from Mars – There is a battle of the sexes raging in every person's brain, as genes from mom and dad fight for dominance. If the mother's genes rage out of control, the effect may be the excessive empathy of schizophrenia; if the father's run amok, the extreme detachment of autism may result. The whole range of personality in between is probably also colored by this process. (Page 24)

Is Shaken Baby Syndrome A Myth? – Journalist Mark Anderson has launched a deep investigation of people accused of injuring or killing their babies by violently shaking them. His shocking discoveries raise the question of whether "shaken baby syndrome" really exists. Medical experts argue it's a form of child abuse that causes bleeding in the brain. Skeptics think that sometimes other medical issues may be to blame. In the meantime, families are shattered by the outcomes of the court cases. (Pages 61—68)

20 Things You Didn't Know About Bacteria– Some things disinfectant just can't cure: Your body has 10 times as many bacterial cells as human ones. (Page 80)

If you decide to use these surprising facts, please cite the issue of **DISCOVER** magazine. To arrange an interview with Corey S. Powell, please contact Tricia Gately at 212-624-4779.

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