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## Virtual Labs Win International Prize

Virtual labs produced by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) have won top honors in the Pirelli INTERNETional Award competition. More than 1,200 multimedia entries were entered in the competition for the Top Pirelli Prize, which recognizes the best multimedia products designed to use the internet to educate about science and technology.

The HHMI virtual labs were designed by Dennis Liu, program director of HHMI's public science education initiatives, and Satoshi Amagai, a member of Liu's staff, with support from the rest of the Institute's educational materials team. They are fully interactive biomedical laboratory simulations and include a bacterial identification lab, a cardiology lab, a neurophysiology lab and a virtual ELISA (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay), using human antibodies to diagnose disease.

"This award is tremendous validation of our work in educational media," said Liu. "I am grateful to both HHMI and Pirelli for recognizing the importance of science education and the role that interactive media can play in learning. I think the key to our success is a skilled team that blends scientific accuracy, beautiful graphics, and highly interactive explorations."

The Pirelli Awards include the Top Prize of €25,000, awards of €15,000 for the best multimedia educational product targeting schools, universities and research centers and the best environmental education multimedia product, a €10,000 information and communication technologies award and a junior award for those under the age of 21.

Winners were honored at ceremonies in Rome, Italy, attended by Marco Tronchetti Provera, chairman of the Pirelli Group; Maurizio Gasparri, the Italian minister of communications; Umberto Colombo, president of the awards jury; Andrea Mondello, president of the Rome Chamber of Commerce; and Carlo Massarini, a Web journalist and Italian TV anchorman.