

SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY
MEDICINE

DOCUMENTARY
30 MIN.

VERSIONS

Arabic, English, Spanish:

71 x 30 min.

French: 08 x 30 min.

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The Quest for Knowledge

Humans have always had a thirst for knowledge – whether it be to improve their lives and circumstances or out of sheer curiosity and the urge to get to the bottom of things. Without scientific discoveries, humanity would not have evolved at such a rapid pace. Life as we know it today would be unthinkable without the knowledge we gain through science and scholarship. Innovations and new insights are integrated into our lives in ever quicker succession. We watch scientists, engineers and inventors as they look for ways to increase human knowledge. These fascinating films accompany them in their **Quest for Knowledge**.

**06 Making Artificial Blood –
The Race is On** [SD](#)

Scientists, research labs and pharmaceutical companies are currently vying with one another to become the first to create the first fully synthetic blood. The need is immense: This film relates the background to the pursuit of “tailor-made blood”, detailing both the positive and negative aspects of the process, the complexity and potential of blood, and the consequences of blood manipulation for the human body.

07 Ice Recession in the Alps [SD](#)

Global warming is not only affecting expanses of ice that are clearly visible, like the glaciers. The invisible ice of the mountains – the permafrost on peaks and in rock faces – is also receding, with dramatic consequences. This documentary accompanies researchers as they penetrate the interior of mountains to find out more about permafrost. A race against time has begun.

08 Is Wind Energy Still Viable? [SD](#)

Advocates and opponents are quite vocal about this regenerative form of energy. But that is not surprising, because wind energy has a lot to offer: for engineers, architects, and biologists.

**09 The Cyberhand – Giving Amputees
a Sense of Touch** [SD](#)

In this film a patient tests the cyberhand, as it is known, for the first time. Unlike other artificial limbs, this neuro-prosthesis is controlled not by electrical impulses from the muscles but directly by the nerves which control muscular contraction. The cyberhand is designed not only to serve the wearer as a gripping tool but also to impart a sense of touch.

10 Does Water Live? [SD](#)

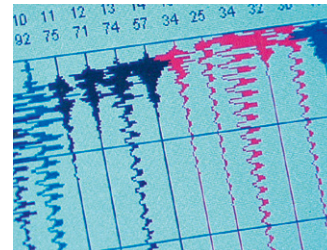
Water is the element of life. Without H₂O there would be no plants, no animals, and no micro-organisms. But could the elixir of life itself be alive? Can water store information? It is not only esoteric thinkers who believe that there is far more to water than has been thought.

**11 Surviving in the Mountains –
Altitude Sickness** [SD](#)

Climbers, skiers, and hikers are often plagued by the symptoms of altitude sickness which can result in fatal highaltitude cerebral or pulmonary oedema. Professor Peter Bärtsch from Heidelberg University is an internationally renowned expert on acute mountain sickness. His aim is to identify the exact causes of the condition and the best way of treating it.

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12 **Israel's Water Shortage – The Dead Sea is Dying** [SD](#)

The Promised Land is also an arid land. The shortage of fresh water has been a problem in Israel now for several decades. Modern-day Israel consumes some two billion cubic meters of water every year. Roughly two-thirds of this volume are pumped into agriculture. Water is a precious resource and, to a certain extent, lies at the heart of Israel's conflict with its neighboring states and with the Palestinians. Desalination plants and droplet irrigation will, it is hoped, provide a solution to the problem.

13 **The Hunt for Our Thoughts** [SD](#)

Our thoughts are free and, above all, private. At least that has been the belief up to now. But the time, it seems, has come to revise that belief, because brain researchers can now read our thoughts and identify our intentions, and even manipulate them. This new science can be helpful. But it also involves certain risks.

14 **The Enigma of the Lightning Strike**

[VoD](#) [SD](#)

Millions of lightning bolts hit the Earth every day. But we know very little about them. At temperatures of up to 30,000 °C nothing can match them for heat; they pack millions of volts and can carry thousands of amps of direct current. Scientists in the US and Germany are attempting to cast new light on the process that creates lightning.

15 **Expedition to the Bleeding Lake** [SD](#)

Lake Alat in southern Germany may not appear to be anything special – but descend 16 meters below the surface and you will see a deadly purple-colored cloud. This is a layer of sulphur-processing bacteria. There is no oxygen below this layer, and the water is extremely acidic. An expedition takes a closer look at the causes of this unique natural phenomenon.

16 **The Secret Reserves of Top Athletes**

[SD](#)

“Faster, higher, further” is the motto of world-class sport. But in many disciplines, the unrelenting drive to break records appears to be exceeding the limits of human capacity. The last reserves of sportsmen and women are mobilized by the latest high-tech methods of performance appraisal and optimization – but also by gene doping and other illegal practices.

17 **The History of the Climate** [SD](#)

A lot of research is going on into the history of the climate – to understand the past and even to try to predict the future. Researchers are analyzing samples taken from the heart of Greenland's glaciers, ice that serves as an environmental archive stretching back more than 100,000 years. Scientists are also looking for records in libraries and archives – and scouting some of the oldest cities in Europe for telling clues.

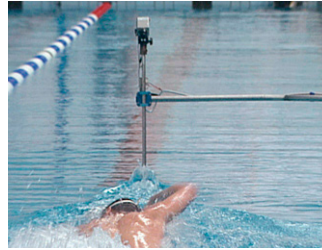
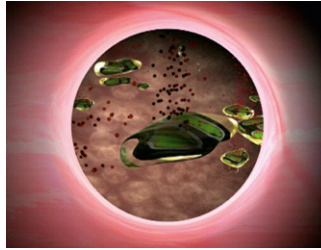
18 **The End of the Line for the Fishing Industry?**

[SD](#)

The global demand for fish has doubled since 1980. Now half of the world's stocks have been fished to their limits, while a quarter is thought to have been over-fished. If things carry on like this, commercial fishing could grind to a halt by 2050. Scientists are looking for ways to avert such a scenario – but policy makers rarely heed their advice.

19 **Light at the Speed Limit** [VoD](#) [SD](#)

Light is crucial for life on Earth, yet it remains very hard to understand. Exhibiting properties of both waves and particles, it travels at 300,000 kilometers per second. It provides us with energy, allows us to observe the world around us, and is set to be the basis for devices and computers of the future.



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20 Radiation from Space [VoD](#) [SD](#)

The Earth is under incessant fire from cosmic radiation, which consists of all manner of particles. Scientists from around the world are working on solving its mysteries. They pool their knowledge, piecing it together like a puzzle, and keep a close eye on outer space in a bid to fathom the origins of our existence: What effect does this tide of cosmic particles have on us? Where does life come from? How did the Universe come about?

21 Energy from the Oceans [SD](#)

Two-thirds of the Earth's surface is covered by ocean. The seas represent gigantic sources of energy, which scientists aim to harness to produce electricity. Their work focuses primarily on tides and currents, waves and the salt contained in seawater. The sea could meet the growing human demand for energy, without destroying the Earth.

22 Death from the Laboratory? [SD](#)

Rice farmers in Thailand are at high risk of contracting melioidosis. The disease is caused by bacteria that are found mostly in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Some progress has been made in efforts to combat the disease. But there are fears that the pathogen could also be used by terrorists planning a biological attack.

23 How Food Shapes Our Bodies [VoD](#) [SD](#)

How does a newborn baby develop its immune system? Is there a link between experiences of smell in early childhood and later eating habits? How does diet influence the ageing process? These are some of the questions being investigated by scientists wanting to know how the human body responds to food. Their goal is to find the formula for a long and healthy life.

24 The Weather Makers – Can We Control the Climate? [SD](#)

It is currently common practice to influence local weather systems in more than 30 countries. Techniques are used to generate rainfall or sunshine, or to prevent dangerous hailstorms. But not enough research has been conducted into the consequences of such intervention in the climate. Despite the potential risks, weather manipulation is occurring with greater frequency throughout the world.

25 Dangerous Debris in Space [SD](#)

Since the beginnings of space travel, man has left a trail of debris behind him: burned out rocket stages, and disused and damaged satellites, for example. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of space debris are orbiting the Earth. Some scientists say the danger of collision is now so great that the era of space travel may already be nearing its end.

26 The World's Highest Clinical Laboratory [SD](#)

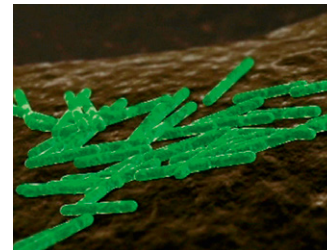
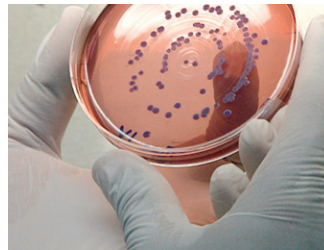
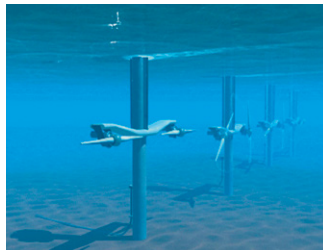
There can be few places on earth as hostile to life as Mount Everest. The human body is simply not made for the icy, thin air found at such altitudes, air that makes blood more viscous and alters brain and lung functions. But by studying the changes in the body caused by conditions on the world's tallest mountain, a European team of doctors is convinced it can develop new treatments for the critically ill.

27 Hidden Poison [SD](#)

You cannot see, smell or taste them, but they can have a serious impact on your health: toxins in food and everyday objects from clothing to toys. Harmful substances lurk at every turn, and primarily pose a threat to children. In a bid to protect consumers, scientists have been working for years on enhanced toxin detection methods.

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28 Research in the Rain Forest – Are Lianas Taking Over? [SD](#)

As lianas continue their apparently inexorable advance, the equilibrium of the rain forests of Guyana is under threat. As they strive to reach light, the vines suppress everything in their path. Scientists take to the skies in a hot air balloon to investigate the causes and the consequences of this large-scale growth.

29 Climate Change – A Threat for Historic Buildings [SD](#)

Climate change is a threat not only to people, animals and plants, but also to monuments. By conducting a series of complex experiments, scientists hope to discover more about the effects of extreme temperature fluctuations and to find new ways to protect murals, valuable furniture and other historical objects.

30 Mars Mission – Inside the Isolation Pod [SD](#)

Not to see the sun, not to feel the wind, and to have no contact with their families for 105 days: That is part of the challenge facing six test astronauts in the service of science. An experiment at the Moscow Institute of Biomedical Problems simulates a flight to Mars in order to study the psychological and physical effects of such a long period of isolation.

31 Communication Without Words – The Language of Facial Expressions [SD](#)

A furrowed brow, a beaming smile, a twitch of the nose – our face is talking every second, even if we are not saying anything. It can produce more than 10,000 different expressions – with just eight facial muscles.

32 The Wonderful World of Mushrooms [SD](#)

Mushrooms are masters of chemistry and cooperation. They cooperate with microscopic algae to become robust hybrids, lichens, which can withstand both Arctic cold and blistering heat. Some of the substances they produce are poisonous to humans, some have a healing or hallucinogenic effect, and others are a source of flavor and aroma.

33 Don't Panic! – How to Control Crowds of People [SD](#)

If crowds of people start to panic, this can quickly become dangerous. Scientists, engineers and rescue services are teaming up to find ways to evacuate public places as swiftly as possible in the event of an emergency.

34 Stradivari's Legacy [HD](#)

Stradivari's violins are famous for their incomparable tone. Scientists, violin makers and musicians have long been trying to discover the secret of this very special sound. It would appear that Stradivari selected wood of a particular density to make his violins. And this density, it turns out, can be influenced with the help of a fungus.

35 Intelligent Creatures [VoD](#) [SD](#)

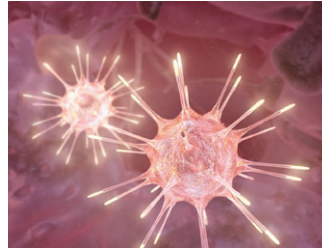
Until recently, behavioral research deemed an animal to be intelligent if it is aware of itself. But intelligence manifests itself in many different ways, and recent studies identify intelligent behavior in all kinds of creatures. Is it time to revise our understanding of animals?

36 Europe's Giant Elephants – Exploring a Lost Biotope [HD](#)

120,000 years ago, giant elephants roamed the plains of Europe. A spectacular archaeological find in Germany reveals a great deal about the fauna and climate of that era, during which early humans tried to assert themselves over the animal kingdom.

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37 The Earth's Sensitive Surface [HD](#)

Biological crusts of mosses, lichens and cyanobacteria cover vast areas of the Earth's surface like a skin. They protect against erosion and destruction – and act as a brake on global warming to a much greater extent than previously thought. But much too little is known about these sensitive layers.

38 Bionics – Is Nature the Better Architect? [SD](#)

Scientists are increasingly examining how complex technical problems are solved in the natural world. Their field of research is known as bionics. Looking at nature's solutions is especially worthwhile when exploring durability and load-bearing structures. How, for example, can sensitive electronic products be transported to customers in a secure and environmentally-friendly way?

39 Barriers to Knowledge [VoD](#) [SD](#)

Scientific progress has made the world more fathomable. But in many cases, researchers find themselves up against fundamental limitations on their knowledge. The transition between life and death, for example, or the question of human consciousness. The concept of time also presents science with puzzles it has so far been unable to solve.

40 The Numbers Game [VoD](#) [SD](#)

Mathematics enables us to make complex forecasts and calculations that are of great use in our everyday lives. But maths has a hard time getting a handle on certain complex natural phenomena. What is the relationship between physical reality and the laws of mathematics?

41 The Essential Conundrum [VoD](#) [SD](#)

Is a vacuum really empty? What are Black Holes? Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics provide precise answers, but they contradict each other. Physicists are searching for the formula that unites both theories.

42 The Neanderthal in Us [VoD](#) [HD](#)

We are more closely related to Neanderthal Man than previously thought. This is the astonishing conclusion of scientists working on a project to decode the Neanderthal genome. Their research, carried out over a number of years, has revolutionized our understanding of prehistoric man and his evolution.

43 Water – The Emergent Energy Source [SD](#)

Hydropower is the most reliable form of regenerative energy. Engineers are currently testing completely new concepts for its use. For example, they are designing power stations that harness mountain streams or that run effectively on small amounts of water falling from low drop heights.

44 The Silent Demise of a Species [VoD](#) [M](#) [HD](#)

Around a third of the world's 5,000 species of amphibian are endangered. Scientists only have a limited understanding of why this might be the case. In Cameroon, two German tropical marine ecologists have spent years conducting research into around 100 indigenous species of frog.

45 Southern Italy – Understanding Volcanoes [VoD](#) [HD](#)

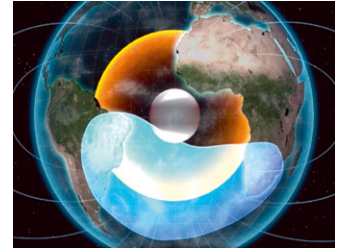
Vesuvius, Etna and Stromboli are among the most intensively explored and monitored volcanoes in the world. Researchers want to be able to predict eruptions more precisely, but this is proving to be difficult. Nevertheless, their work on the volcanoes of southern Italy is helping colleagues in other regions.

46 Swarm Intelligence – Mysteries of Natural Collectives [SD](#)

Whether birds, fish or insects – when animals pool their resources as a group, their problem-solving capabilities far exceed those of any one single creature. This is why engineers and cyberneticists are so interested in swarms and are trying to transfer their collective approach to robots.

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47 Tree Protection – Finding Ways of “Fingerprinting” Wood [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Illegal logging and the illegal trade in timber are destroying many of the world’s forests. Scientists are trying to develop ways of identifying wood according to its type and origin. They hope that this will help to crack down on the destructive activities of crooks and smugglers.

48 Storm Research – How Meteorologists are Working to Make Flying Safer [HD](#)

Extreme weather represents a risk to aeroplanes and those on board. Researchers are trying to gain a better understanding of storms in order to try to minimize the danger. German scientists have developed software that is able to predict storms at short notice. The next big step will be to convey these warnings directly to the cockpit via datalink.

49 Eco-Friendly Chemistry [VoD](#) [M](#) [HD](#)

Almost 90 percent of all chemical industry products are derived from mineral oil. But what will happen when oil reserves run out? Since the early 1980s, the German chemist and entrepreneur Hermann Fischer has focused his attention on the potential of plants. His research has shown that the resins, oils, starches and pigments in plants can replace all petrochemical products.

50 When the Earth’s Magnetic Field Waxes and Wanes [SD](#)

The earth’s magnetic field doesn’t just help us to navigate with a compass, it also protects our planet from space radiation and cosmic storms. But the field has weakened significantly in recent years. What are the potential consequences of this for humankind? Is there reason to fear a catastrophe?

51 Over Land and Sea – The Mystery of Bird Migration [VoD](#) [HD](#)

The annual migration of billions of birds is a mystery to science. Why do these creatures travel thousands of kilometers? How and when did such migration begin? Using up-to-the-minute technology, researchers hope to discover more about the lives of migratory birds – and thereby improve air traffic safety.

52 Self-Drive Cars for Safer Roads [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Human error is the most frequent cause of car accidents. For this reason, assistance systems and autopilots are playing an increasing role on the roads. Expectations of the new technology are high: enhanced safety, lower emissions and fewer traffic jams. Even cars that drive themselves are no longer simply a futuristic vision.

53 Bioacoustics – Investigating Animal Language [VoD](#) [HD](#)

The sounds animals make are astonishingly diverse. Scientists working in the new discipline of bioacoustics are using extraordinary methods to investigate a huge variety of noises produced by animals. Could these be described as a kind of language? Will it one day be possible to enter into dialogue with animals such as dolphins or elephants?

54 The Inscrutable World of Clouds [VoD](#) [HD](#)

While research into the nature of clouds continues to yield fascinating new insights, it is also throwing up a number of questions. For example, there are clouds that cool the Earth, and others that cause temperatures to rise. One thing is clear: More information about clouds is needed if we are to make any reliable climate predictions.

55 High-Tech Animal Research [VoD](#) [HD](#)

How do kites choose their route over the Straits of Gibraltar? How do tiny butterflies manage to clear mountain altitudes of 3,000 meters and cover distances of more than 2,500 kilometers? In a bid to answer such questions, as many animals as possible are fitted out with small, extremely powerful transmitters by an international team of researchers.

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56 **Adrenaline – The Addictive, Lifesaving Hormone** [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Adrenaline is a multifaceted hormone. At times of great physical or psychological stress, it swiftly adjusts our cardiovascular system and metabolism to the new situation. But it can also be addictive. In the case of extreme sportsmen and women, some even put their lives on the line in pursuit of new heights of stimulation.

57 **Ticks – Danger in the Woods** [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Just one bite from a tick can be enough to infect a person with dangerous pathogens. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of these parasites in Europe. By finding out more about ticks, researchers hope to improve their ability to predict when and where the dangers are lurking.

58 **Running for the Rush** [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Endurance sport is becoming a mass phenomenon. But medical professionals observe the trend with mixed feelings. On the one hand, they welcome the fact that more people are leading active lifestyles. But on the other, many recreational athletes are pushing themselves too hard. The intensive pursuit of sport requires good health and regular, long-term periods of training. Otherwise, the strain can damage tendons, ligaments and joints and, in the worst case scenario, cause a heart attack.

59 **Animals as Early Warning Systems**

[VoD](#) [HD](#)

Scientists have observed changes in the behavior of goats close to the volcano Mount Etna in Italy several hours before an eruption. This would give the local authorities enough time to warn people living nearby. Can the behavior of other animals in other parts of the world serve as reliable predictor of dangers or even epidemics?

60 **How Animals Feel** [VoD](#) [HD](#)

A rat frees another rat from a cage. An elderly chimpanzee adopts an orphaned baby monkey. Two elephants help one another find food. Do such displays of empathy and altruism show that animals are capable of moral behavior? And if this gives them advantages in the battle for survival – does this mean morality is a product of evolution? Behavioral biologists are taking a fresh look at how animals feel, and how they act upon their feelings.

61 **Merapi – Java's Mountain of Fire**

[VoD](#) [HD](#)

Mount Merapi on the Indonesian island of Java is one of the most active and dangerous volcanoes in the world. It has claimed the lives of thousands of people over the past 100 years. The risk of a major new eruption with potentially global consequences is high. Researchers are trying to understand Merapi's dynamic system.

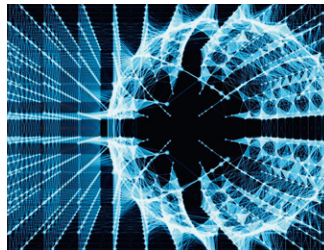
62 **A Vision of a Zoo to Preserve**

Wildlife [VoD](#) [M](#) [HD](#)

Zoos are often viewed as “animal prisons”, even though these days most zoo animals are born in captivity and many zoos take great care to ensure the enclosures are spacious and emulate natural habitats as far as possible. The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums works to ensure that nature conservation and biodiversity are a priority, and that zoos keep the public informed and aware of these issues. Are modern-day zoos managing to meet these challenges?

63 **Rare Earth Metals – The Future of High-Tech Elements** [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Modern life would be inconceivable without rare earth metals. These are an essential component of high-tech products such as smartphones and hybrid cars. But mining these 17 elements is usually both expensive and damaging to the environment. Efforts are underway to find greener ways to produce the problematic metals, to recycle them intelligently and to replace them altogether.



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64 Medicine of the Apes – The Jungle Pharmacy [VoD](#) [M](#) [HD](#)

Animals tend to eat particular plants when they are ill. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a German biologist has analyzed what bonobos choose to eat. Her findings are of interest to the pharmaceuticals industry, as these plants could yield substances with which to create new drugs. But the bonobos are a species under threat, and what we can learn from them might soon be lost forever.

65 Black Holes – Investigating the Phenomenon [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Black holes are not only fascinating to sci-fi writers, but also beguiling to scientists. They are mysterious and they cannot be observed directly. Increasingly sophisticated technology is enabling astronomers to explore uncharted areas of space, giving them new and profound insights into the universe and its history.

66 Light Pollution – The Disappearing Darkness [VoD](#) [M](#) [HD](#)

The Earth is becoming ever brighter. But too much artificial light at night can negatively affect the wellbeing of people and animals. Scientists are concerned at what they say are rising levels of light pollution. Is there anything that can be done, without plunging us into darkness? What steps can be taken to make our artificial lighting more sustainable and kinder to our health?

67 Mining on the Ocean Floor [VoD](#) [HD](#)

On the floor of the Pacific Ocean, at a depth of four kilometers, there are vast reserves of manganese nodules. These contain many rare metals used in the manufacture of electronic devices. There are fears that extracting these metals could disrupt natural marine rhythms and threaten an ecosystem that we still don't really understand. Scientists are hoping that their research will ease the impact of deep-sea mining on the environment.

68 Leaving Nothing to Chance? [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Researchers base a whole variety of prognoses on the tide of data generated by advancing digitalisation. Predictive analytics uses data mining to create algorithms to predict trends in society and individual preferences. Such algorithms are of great interest both to the business world and to governments and their intelligence agencies.

69 Trust Your Gut [VoD](#) [HD](#)

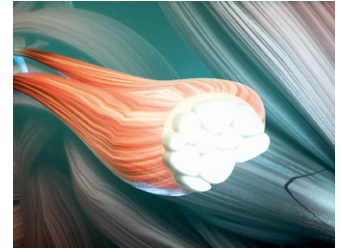
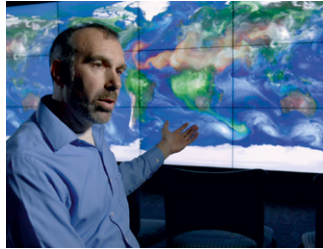
Our intestine is like a second brain: What's known as the enteric nervous system surrounds the entire organ, permanently sending information to the brain and influencing our emotions. Now researchers have discovered that humans fall into three different intestinal groups or enterotypes. Like blood groups, these are not linked to gender, age or ethnicity. The discovery has led to promising developments in the treatment of intestinal disorders and in nutrition research.

70 The Decline of Alpine Glaciers [HD](#)

Glaciers are places where the effects of climate change can be seen and measured on a daily basis. The retreat of glaciers in the Alps has been far more rapid than scientists had predicted. This is due to the exacerbation of global warming by local factors. The changes not only impact the Alpine ecosystem. Permafrost holds rocks and scree in place. If it melts, the results could be devastating.

71 Dangerous Dust from the Desert [VoD](#) [M](#) [HD](#)

Dust storms occur primarily in arid regions of the world. As much as five billion tons of fine particles are whipped up into the air by high winds every year. This results in the affected soil losing its fertility. Dust storms are a danger to human health, crops, transport and technical equipment. Why do dust storms happen? And is there anything we can do to stop them?



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72 The Hidden World of Fasciae [VoD](#) [HD](#)

For a long while, fasciae were considered insignificant – but today we know that the soft connective tissue encases the parts of the human body like a fine mesh, interpenetrating and surrounding all internal organs, even veins and the brain. It forms a whole-body network that helps stabilize the body and keep it upright. Interest in the role of fasciae in a range of ailments is growing. They are also central to some new approaches to medical therapy.

73 Microplastics in the Ocean [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Most plastics never disintegrate, but are simply broken down into increasingly smaller particles until they are invisible to the naked eye. In the oceans, microplastics present a particular problem: What happens to them? Are they eaten by marine organisms? Are they buried beneath the seabed? And what are the effects if they enter the food chain?

74 Measuring Emotion [VoD](#) [HD](#)

Scientists are working on technology to analyze and interpret facial expressions, language and gestures. They are developing avatars that can register emotions in humans and respond “sensitively”. “Empathetic” robots already serve as teachers’ aids. Data goggles convey their wearer’s feelings in real time. What impact will such technologies have?

75 Expedition to the Arctic [VoD](#) [HD](#)

The “Vagabond” is a 15-meter research vessel with a shallow draught. The little yacht is home to the French captain Eric Brossier and his family. Scientists from all over the world charter it for their projects. For example, the climatologist Jochen Halfar, who researches the development of sea ice over the last millennium in the Arctic Ocean between Greenland and Canada.

76 The Secrets of the Molnár János Cave [VoD](#) [HD](#)

There’s an extraordinary and little-known subterranean realm in the heart of the Hungarian capital Budapest – a system of water-filled caves known as the Molnár János Cave, which extends over several kilometers. Only experienced divers are allowed to enter. The cave is prized by scientists in several fields because it contains fossils, rare and even unique species of flora and fauna, as well as intriguing mineral deposits. The cave provides an insight into the region’s geological past and poses interesting questions about evolution.