

Best of Last Week—Earth's leaking atmosphere, stopping ransomware and marijuana found to dull reward response

July 11 2016, by Bob Yirka

Artist's impression of the plasmasphere in Earth's magnetosphere. Credit: ESA/ATG medialab

(Science X)—It was a good week for space exploration as a team of researchers from the U.S. and Italy [detected radio emissions from a](#)

[nearby brown dwarf](#)—which made it one of the most faint, ultra-cool dwarfs yet discovered. And a team led by researchers at the University of Arizona discovered [a planet with three suns](#)—called HD 131399Ab, it is unique in another way too: It has the widest orbit of all known multi-star systems. And Tanya Hill, honorary fellow with the University of Melbourne, wrote a piece compiling [what we know about Jupiter](#) as a follow-up to NASA successfully putting the Juno spacecraft into orbit around the gas giant. Also, a team at the European Space Agency described [the curious case of Earth's leaking atmosphere](#)—every day, 90 tonnes of material (out of a total of five quadrillion tonnes) escapes the pull of gravity into space.

In other news, a team of researchers at the University of Florida announced that they had developed [a way to stop ransomware](#) by detecting when it starts to work and then stopping it after it has encrypted just one or two files. And another team at the same school announced that they were [the first to use light to make gold crystal nanoparticles](#), which they believe will have a big impact on the construction of solar panels and medical equipment and perhaps the way pharmaceuticals are made. Meanwhile, another team of engineers at MIT announced that [they had designed programmable RNA vaccines](#) shown to be effective against the flu, Ebola and the parasite that causes malaria. A team led by Cédric Blanpain and Ben Simons announced that they had [identified the 'cell of origin' in a type of skin cancer](#)—basal cell carcinoma—and it was a type of stem cell. And a team of archeologists led by Wheaton College professor Daniel Master, announced that a find in Israel [may help solve the mystery of the biblical Philistines](#)—where did they actually come from?

And finally, if you are one of the millions of recreational weed smokers around the world, you might be interested in the results of a study by a team of researchers at the University of Michigan Medical School, they found that [marijuana use dampens the brain's response to reward over](#)

[time](#), which means a loss of that rush of pleasure or excitement that typically comes with the discovery of something new.

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