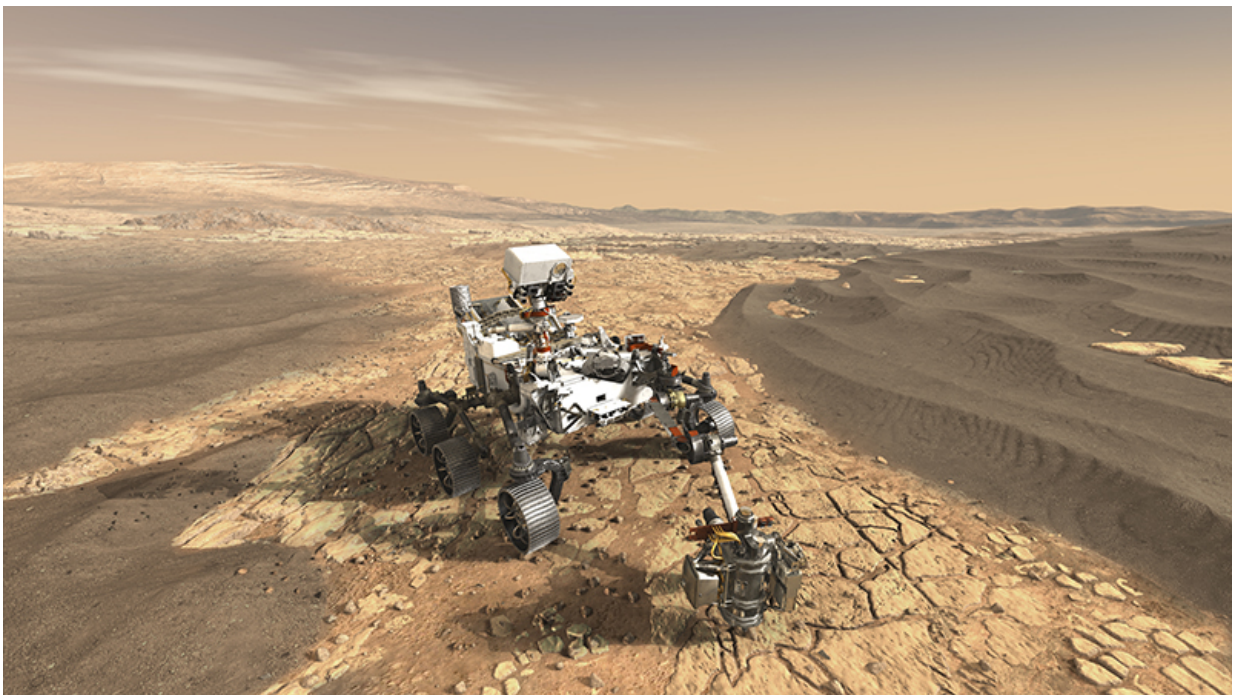


# Best of Last Week – New type of guitar string, looking for vanadium on Mars and US teens behind those of the 70s

September 25 2017, by Bob Yirka

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A rendering of the Mars 2020 Rover, courtesy of NASA.

(ScienceX)—It was an interesting week for Earth science as a team of geochemists with the University of Chicago conducted [an analysis of titanium in ancient rocks that could create upheaval in the history of early Earth](#)—they found evidence of tectonic activity as far back as 3.5

billion years ago. Also, a team with members from Italy and the U.S. reported that they located [a potential magma source in an Italian supervolcano](#), which suggests it might be close to erupting. And a professor at MIT claimed that [by 2100, the oceans may hold enough carbon to launch a sixth mass extermination of species](#)—he used math to identify "thresholds of catastrophe" in the carbon cycle.

In space news, a team of researchers in Germany reported that [Hubble had discovered a unique type of object in the solar system](#)—two asteroids orbiting one another exhibiting comet-like attributes. And an international team of researchers concluded that researchers looking for signs of life on Mars should [look for the element vanadium](#).

In other news, Dr. Jonathan Kemp at the University of St Andrews announced that he had invented [a revolutionary type of guitar string](#)—one that allows for balancing strings by sensitivity in ways never before achievable. Also, a team at the University of Toronto found [that higher levels of fluoride in pregnant woman could be linked to lower offspring intelligence](#). And a team at the University of Sydney reported that they have [turned optical data into readable soundwaves](#)—a critical step for the development of photonic integrated circuits. A team at the University of Manchester announced that they had created [the world's first 'molecular robot' capable of building molecules](#). The robots are a millionth of a millimeter in size, but can be programmed to build things such as molecules from atoms.

And finally, if you have children of a certain age, you might be interested in a study conducted by a pair of researchers, one at San Diego State University and the other Bryn Mawr College—they found that [today's U.S. teens are about three years behind the '70s generation](#) in starting to have sex, drink alcohol and work for pay.

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