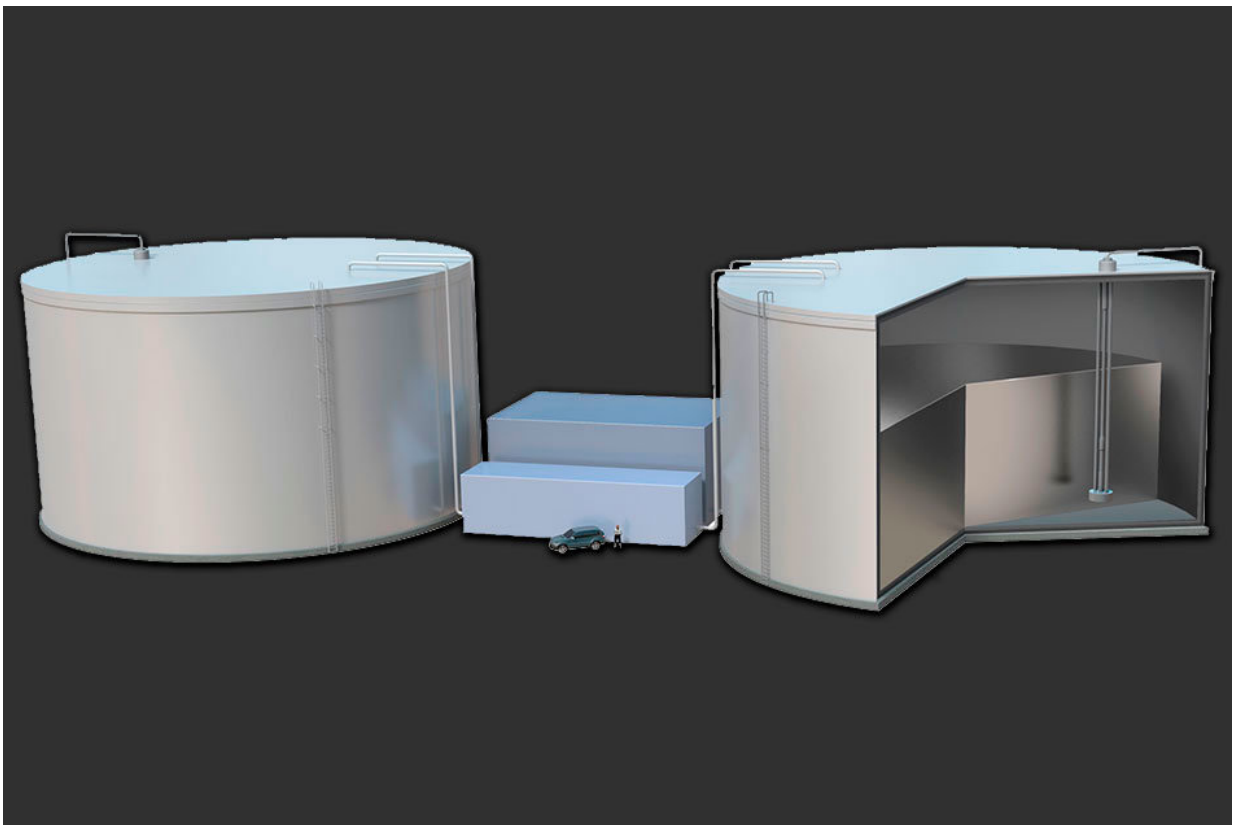


# Best of Last Week – Sun in a box, new dark matter theory and metabolism boost after exercise lasts longer than thought

December 10 2018, by Bob Yirka

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MIT researchers propose a concept for a renewable storage system, pictured here, that would store solar and wind energy in the form of white-hot liquid silicon, stored in heavily insulated tanks. Credit: Duncan MacGruer

It was a good week for technology as a team at MIT unveiled what they described as a ['sun in a box' to store renewable energy for the grid](#)—it is based on storing excess electricity collected from solar cells and wind farms in large tanks of white-hot molten silicon. Also, a team at the MIT Media Lab described building [a plant cyborg that could move toward a preferred light source](#)—they put the plant on a wheeled base with electronics that converted plant communications to movement commands. And Till Hartman, from Harvard Medical School, carried out a study to improve [computer vision in the dark using classical convolution neural networks](#). Also, a team that included members from Caltech, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the Honda Research Institute and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory outlined [a new battery concept based on fluoride ions that may increase battery lifespans](#).

There were also a couple of stories that made headlines around the world. In the first, a team at the University of Oxford suggested they may have solved one of the biggest questions in physics: What is the nature of dark matter? They came up with [a new theory that could explain the missing 95 percent of the cosmos](#) by unifying dark matter with dark energy as a fluid that possesses negative mass. And a study by researchers from Yale University of Oviedo in Spain, the Galapagos Conservancy and the Galapagos National Park Service reported that [the death of Lonesome George may have helped reveal the mystery of why giant tortoises live so long](#).

In other news, University of Kent researcher Robin Mackenzie explored [the ethical implications of creating sentient and self-aware sexbots](#) in considerable detail and discovered there may be more at stake than previously thought. And a team at the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer at Université de Montréal announced [a major breakthrough in the quest for a cancer vaccine](#). Also, an international team of space scientists reported on [the detection of the biggest known](#)

[black-hole collision](#) to date.

And finally, if you are worried that taking a day or two off from your fitness routine will ruin your efforts, you may not need to worry—a team at UT Southwestern Medical Center found that [a single workout can your boost metabolism for days](#).

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Citation: Best of Last Week – Sun in a box, new dark matter theory and metabolism boost after exercise lasts longer than thought (2018, December 10) retrieved 12 July 2025 from <https://sciencex.com/news/2018-12-week-sun-dark-theory-metabolism.html>

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