

Best of Last Week – Giant Stratolaunch flies, first ever photo of a black hole and zapping the brain to improve memory

April 15 2019, by Bob Yirka

Credit: NSF

Last week, an international collaborative of astronomers released [the first-ever photo of a black hole](#)—an event that led to major headlines around the world. The Event Horizon Telescope, a planetary-scale array

of eight radio telescopes, coordinated to capture light from the center of the galaxy Messier 87. The scientists spent years processing the petabytes of data gathered by the telescopes into the image.

It was a big week for [physics research](#), as a team with members from Griffith University and Nanyang Technological University reported [a machine to generate a quantum superposition of possible futures](#) represented by the locations of photons. And Jaideep Taggart Singh, assistant professor of physics at Michigan State University suggested that [a time-reversal violation may explain the abundance of matter over antimatter in the universe](#). Also, an international team of researchers found [a quantum simulation more stable than expected](#), leading them to suggest that an increase in accuracy in solving quantum many-body problems might be possible using quantum computers.

In technology news, a team at Stratolaunch Systems Corporation announced that its [giant Stratolaunch jet flew for the first time](#)—it has the longest wingspan of any aircraft, and the company plans to use it for launching rockets into space. And a combined team from the University of Bordeaux and the University of Tokyo created [a snake robot controlled by biomimetic central pattern generators](#)—neuronal circuits that produce rhythmic motor patterns.

Also, a team at the University of East Anglia announced that they had found unique oil-eating bacteria in the world's deepest ocean trench—the Mariana Trench. And an international team of researchers concluded that [a future 'human brain/cloud interface' will give people instant access to vast knowledge via thought alone](#). Also, a team led by a group at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory claimed their research had shown that [carbon lurking in the deep ocean threw an ancient climate switch](#)—forcing a slowdown of a key Atlantic Ocean current system approximately a million years ago.

And finally, if you are near [retirement age](#) and worried about losing your memory, you might want to check out a study conducted by a team at Boston University—they found that [brain zaps boosted memory in people over 60](#)—they report that small doses of electrical current greatly improve one type of memory.

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