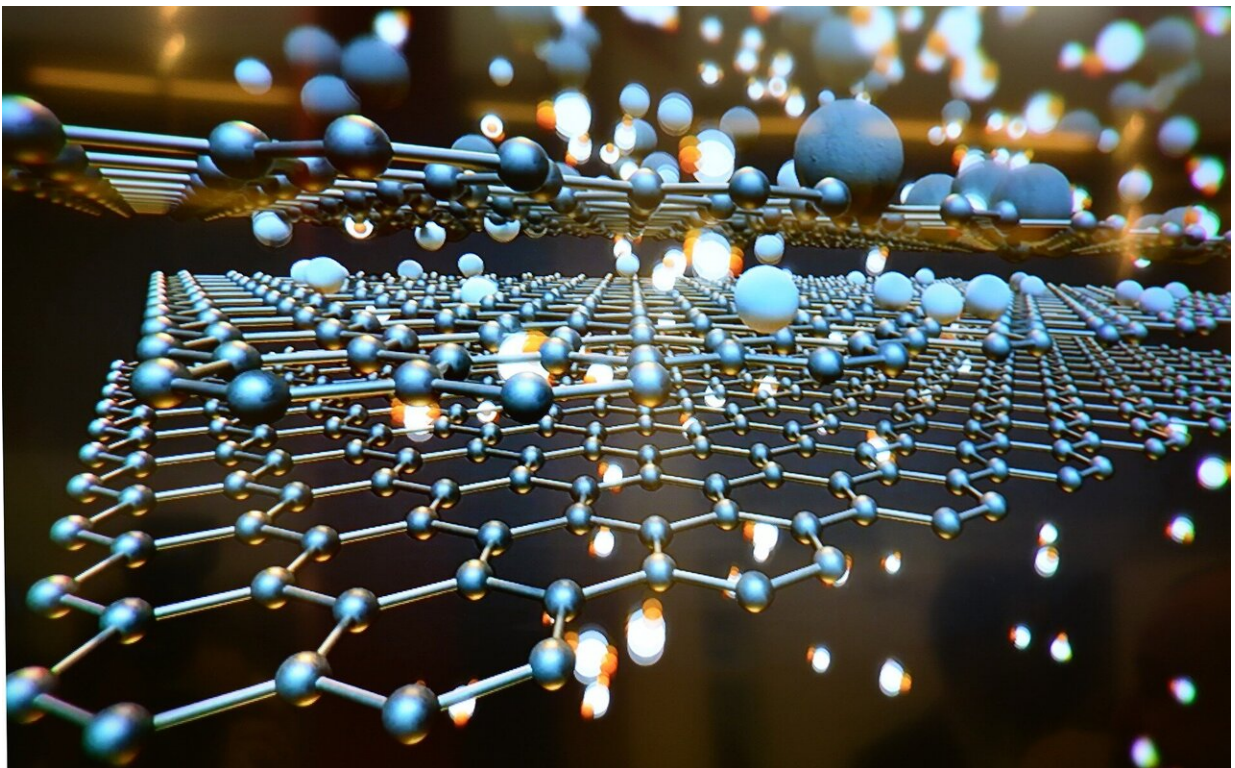


Best of Last Week: Harnessing hidden frequencies, the source of the coronavirus and switching off inflammation

February 10 2020, by Bob Yirka



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It was a good week for physics, as a team with members from China, Korea, Russia and the U.K. created a new type of optical transistor that [unlocked hidden frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum](#)—the

graphene-based device detected and amplified the terahertz waves that sit between microwaves and infrared in the light frequency spectrum. Also, a combined team of researchers from Poland and Australia proved that [the Heisenberg limit, as it is commonly stated, is not operationally meaningful, and differs from the correct limit by a factor of \$\pi\$](#) . And a team at the University of British Columbia developed [a new quantum switch that turns metals into insulators](#).

In technology news, a team of researchers from China and the U.S. created [a water droplet-based electricity generator](#) with a field-effect transistor-like structure that allowed for high energy conversion efficiency and instantaneous power density—and it was capable of generating 140V of power. And a team at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology developed [a concept for 6G communications](#). Also, a team at MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory created an external system that [improved phone signal strength 1000 percent](#) without the need for extra antennas. And a team from MIT and Shanghai Jiao Tong University used multiple layers of flat solar evaporators and condensers to create [a simple, solar-powered water desalination system](#).

In other news, a team at South China Agricultural University made headlines when they announced that [the pangolin is the No. 1 suspect as the source of the coronavirus](#). The pangolin, also known as the scaly anteater, is a small mammal covered with overlapping scales—it lives in Africa and Asia. An international team of researchers found new evidence that the 9,900-year-old female skeleton found in a cave in Tulum, Mexico, [was distinct from other early American settlers](#).

And finally, if you, like millions of others around the world, experience chronic inflammation, help may soon be on the way. A team at EPFL in Switzerland claimed to have found [a molecular 'switch' that can reverse the type of chronic inflammation that often comes with aging](#).

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