

Best of Last Week: Windows 10X preview, breakthrough in smoking cessation, and new assistive robots at CES

January 18 2021, by Bob Yirka

This is a long-exposure image from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope of massive galaxy cluster Abell 2744. It shows some of the faintest and youngest galaxies detected in space. Credit: NASA/ESA/STScI

It was a good week for space science as an international team of researchers found that [a presumed supernova was actually something](#)

[much rarer](#)—periodic flaring from a galaxy where a supermassive black hole was emitting energy bursts every 114 days. Also, a team of researchers from the U.S. and Canada used what they referred to as [a "galaxy-sized space observatory"](#) to help them find possible clues surrounding a unique signal related to gravitational waves. And an examination of Theia 456 by a small team of researchers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico led them to find that [500 stars in the Milky Way were born at the same time](#).

In technology news, a team of researchers at Stanford University developed [an AI algorithm that proved to be slightly over 70% accurate at guessing a person's political affiliation after studying a single photograph](#). Also, a team at Korea University developed what they described as [evolvable neural units that can mimic the brain's synaptic plasticity](#)—possibly allowing for the development of better machine-learning systems. And several outlets reported that sneak previews of Windows 10X showed that [Microsoft was aiming for simplicity](#) in the next iteration of the operating system. Samsung unveiled three new robots the company has been working on at this year's CES show, which is being held online due to the pandemic. All three robots were geared toward serving home users, accomplishing tasks such as [feeding those who need help and laundry assistance](#).

In other news, a combined team from the University of Michigan and Western Michigan University developed what they described as groundbreaking research that they claimed could provide [a key to kicking the smoking habit for good](#). And a team with members from Northern Arizona University, the Woodwell Climate Research Center and the University of Waikato found evidence that [the Earth could reach its temperature tipping point in the next 20 to 30 years](#).

And finally, a team with members from the U.S., China and Canada found they could [target a specific protein pathway in mice](#), increasing

production of a protein that halts cartilage degeneration over time.

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