

Best of Last Week—Galactic matter found, happy monkeys play Pong, and Pfizer vaccine 90 percent effective after 1 shot

February 8 2021, by Bob Yirka



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It was a good week for space science as a team from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Gravitational Wave Discovery and CSIRO, spotted [bizarre, never-before-seen activity from one of the strongest magnets in the universe](#)—a rare kind of neutron star. Also, doctoral candidate at the University of Sydney, Yuanming Wang, [found missing galactic matter](#)—the other half of the baryonic matter that is believed to make up

approximately 5% of the Milky Way. And Harvard astronomer Avi Loeb argued that [an alien vessel paid us a visit back in 2017](#)—the 'Oumuamua object, he suggests, might have been like a buoy resting in the expanses of the universe, sent by intelligent life forms.

In technology news, Elon Musk announced that his Neuralink team had created ["happy monkeys" who played Pong with their minds](#), using implanted wireless chips that helped them play the old video game. Also, a team at Xi'an Jiaotong University introduced [a new bio-inspired joint model that could help with developing more stable and robust exoskeletons](#) for robots. And Boston Dynamics introduced its [newest iteration of Spot, the doglike robot](#)—it now has a usable arm and is able to charge itself when needed. Also, a team from Baidu Security and Pennsylvania State University created [a machine-learning algorithm that may be the key to timely, inexpensive cyber-defense](#).

In other news, a team at the University of Texas at Austin found [that the use of pronouns may show signs of an impending breakup](#)—they found that language use by those in a relationship changed up to three months prior to a breakup and lasted for six months after. Also, a team at the University of Copenhagen created [an AI-based computer model to determine whether someone will die from COVID-19](#).

And finally, if you are in the unique position of being able to choose which type of vaccine you are given to ward off COVID-19, you might want to check out the latest test of the version by Pfizer by a team at the University of East Anglia—[they found it to be 90% effective 21 days after a single dose](#).

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Citation: Best of Last Week—Galactic matter found, happy monkeys play Pong, and Pfizer vaccine 90 percent effective after 1 shot (2021, February 8) retrieved 5 July 2025 from <https://sciencex.com/news/2021-02-weekgalactic-happy-monkeys-pong-pfizer.html>

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