

Best of Last Week: Moon ark, nanomaterial transistors, and an update for the Antikythera Mechanism

March 15 2021, by Bob Yirka



Side view of the crater Moltke taken from Apollo 10. Credit: Public Domain

It was a good week for space exploration as [Perseverance rover's SuperCam science instrument delivered its first results](#)—three audio files recorded by the Mars rover just hours after landing. Also, a team at the University of Arizona made headlines when they proposed [a solar-powered lunar ark as a "modern global insurance policy"](#)—they suggested sending cryogenically frozen seed, spore, sperm and egg samples from 6.7 million people to the moon in case of a global disaster. And a team from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics [detected a black hole on the move](#)—a supermassive black hole wandering through space.

In technology news, a team affiliated with several institutions in China created [a new transistor based on metal nanoparticles and ionic gradients](#). Also, a combined team from École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne and IBM Research Europe announced [a hybrid technology that combines III-V tunnel FETs and MOSFETs](#). And Elon Musk company OpenAI discovered that their newly developed [neural network, CLIP, mirrored human brain neurons when conducting image recognition](#). Also, a team from University College London recreated [a mechanical cosmos for the world's first computer](#)—the ancient Greek astronomical calculator known as the Antikythera Mechanism.

In other news, a team at Colorado State University found that [the insatiable demand for cannabis has created a giant carbon footprint](#)—mostly due to the electricity and natural gas used for cultivation. And a team at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden found that it may be possible to [eliminate metabolic derangements caused by a high-fat diet](#)—by

lowering the levels of a key regulator of lipid metabolism.

And finally, people who have already received the first dose of one of the COVID-19 vaccines may want to check out a study by a team at Mount Sinai Hospital—they found that [a second shot of COVID-19 vaccine may not be necessary in previously infected individuals](#). In their study testing the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, they found that those who had been infected with COVID-19 prior to vaccination developed antibodies 10 to 20 times higher than those who had not been vaccinated.

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Citation: Best of Last Week: Moon ark, nanomaterial transistors, and an update for the Antikythera Mechanism (2021, March 15) retrieved 15 July 2025 from <https://sciencex.com/news/2021-03-week-moon-ark-nanomaterial-transistors.html>

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