

Best of Last Week: A new Rubik's Cube solution, a security flaw in credit cards, dealing with Zoom fatigue

March 1 2021, by Bob Yirka



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It was a good week for biological science as a team of researchers from Indonesia and Singapore [spotted a bird believed to be extinct for 170 years](#). The black-browed babbler was captured on film on the island of Borneo. Also, Texas A&M University professor Cody Prang suggested

that [a 4.4 million-year-old skeleton could reveal how early humans began to walk upright](#). The shape of its hand reveals it was used less use for walking than in close relatives like gorillas. And a team at the University of Buffalo led a study that found [an ancient bone fragment could hold clues about how dogs made their way to the Americas](#). Found in Southeast Alaska, the bone showed dogs living in the area 10,150 years ago.

In technology news, the University of Nottingham's Colin Johnson, developed [a deep learning technique to solve Rubik's Cube and other problems step-by-step](#), using a set of sample solutions. And a team with members from the University of California, Irvine, Stanford University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara, examined the idea of [using multilingual BERT \(Google's deep learning system\) models to encode grammatical features](#). Also, a pair of recent graduates from the VR Siddhartha Engineering College, Mani Babu Gorantla and Grandhi Sathya Venkata Krishna, built [a robot that allows users to virtually navigate remote environments](#). And a team of researchers at ETH Zurich [detected a security flaw in credit cards for the second time](#)—the new flaw was found in Mastercard and Maestro cards and involves bypassing the need for a user to enter a PIN code.

In other news, a team with members from the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the University of Washington and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found evidence showing that [record-high Arctic freshwater will flow to the Labrador Sea in the coming years](#), likely affecting local and global oceans. Also, a team with members from Swansea University, the University of Bristol and the Francis Crick Institute in London found evidence that suggested [a high fructose diet could cause immune system damage](#).

And finally, if you are like many other millions of people around the world trying to keep up with friends or to work remotely using Zoom,

you may want to take a look at the results of work done by Jeremy Bailenson, of the Stanford Virtual Human Interaction Lab, who [identified four causes of "Zoom fatigue" and came up with some simple fixes for them.](#)

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