Best of Last Week–Extraterrestrial radioactive isotope, Wi-Fi devices vulnerable to FragAttacks and COVID-19 vaccine

May 17 2021, by Bob Yirka

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It was a good week for space science as an international team of researchers found the first-ever example of an extraterrestrial radioactive isotope on Earth—found in ocean crust, the find has

implications for Earth's origins. Also, a combined team from Cornell University and the University of Iowa announced that Voyager 1 has detected a plasma "hum" from beyond the edges of the solar system. And an international team of researchers conducted a study that revealed hidden processes at work in the hearts of large stars—internal mixing within an ensemble of stars that have no clear dependence on a star's mass or age.

In technology news, a team at Princeton University found that old mobile phone numbers could compromise consumer's cybersecurity, as carriers recycle numbers. And a team at Aalto University and the Finnish Center for Artificial Intelligence created the first artificial intelligence model that is able to predict how people move their eyes and fingers while typing, possibly leading to improvements in typing on mobile devices. Also, a team of engineers at Purdue University announced that they had made a breakthrough in reverse osmosis that could lead to the most energy-efficient seawater desalination ever. And several studies found that a series of design flaws made Wi-Fi devices vulnerable to FragAttacks, putting all mobile devices at risk.

In other news, a group of 18 scientists from some of the world's most prestigious research institutions published an open letter in the journal *Science* suggesting that the idea of the SARS-COV-2 virus escaping from a research lab be revisited. Also, a team of researchers affiliated with several institutions in Mexico reported on a newly discovered type of dinosaur that was possibly communicative—named *Tlatolophus galorum*, it was found to have a hollow crest capable of making sounds similar to modern elephants.

And finally, if you are concerned about the next strain of COVID-19 making current vaccinations useless, you might want to check out the work of a team at the Duke Human Vaccine Institute—they announced that they had developed a vaccine that blocks COVID-19 and variants

and also other coronaviruses.

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