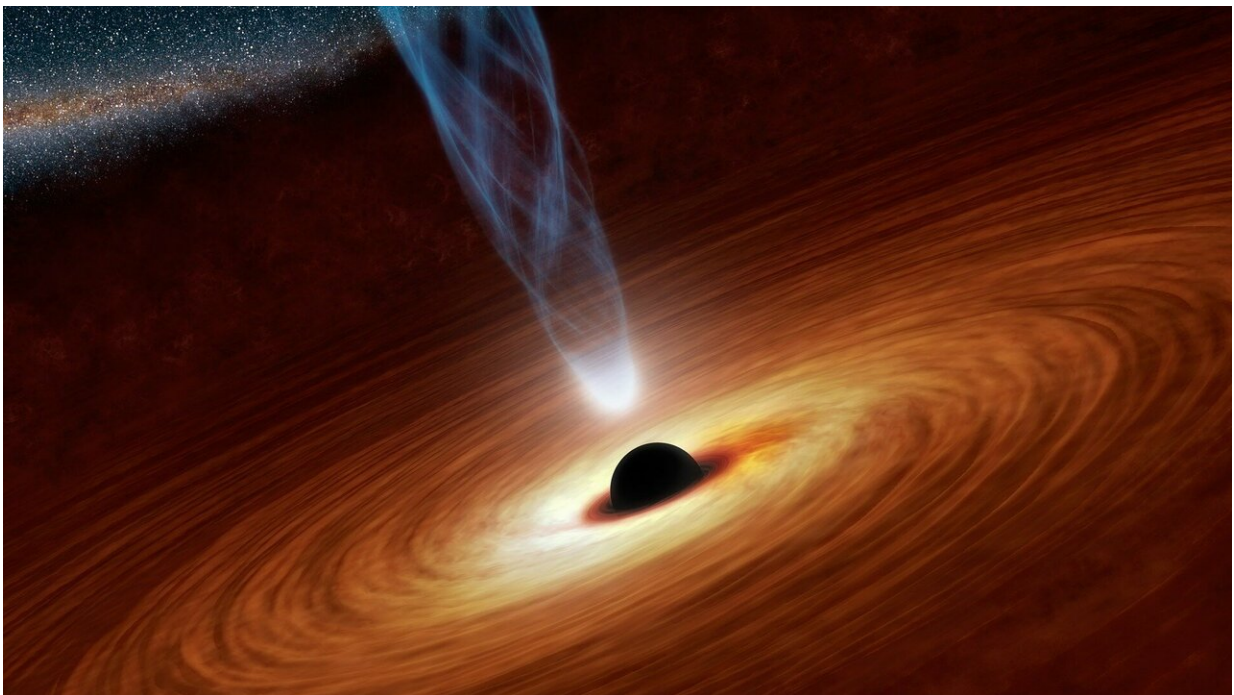


Best of Last Week – Estimating black holes, a personable CyberDog, treating people with cerebral venous thrombosis

August 16 2021, by Bob Yirka



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

It was another good week for space science, as a team with members from multiple institutions in the U.S. and the U.K. found that [the size of black holes can be estimated by studying their eating patterns](#) and some of the characteristic light-flickering patterns that occur in their

timescale. Also, the team working on NASA's Dragonfly mission announced their plans for [the first rotorcraft relocatable lander to be sent to Saturn's moon Titan](#), and they include looking for chemical biosignatures, studying the active methane cycle and looking into prebiotic chemistry. And a team at the University of Hong Kong found evidence that suggests [NASA's Curiosity rover has been exploring surface sediments, not lake deposits, for the past eight years](#). They found that the sedimentary rocks studied by the rover may have been blown there by the wind.

In technology news, artificial intelligence research company OpenAI announced the development of [an AI system that can translate natural language to programming code](#) called Codex. The system is currently available as a free API. Also, Chinese electronics company Xiaomi unveiled [CyberDog, a quadruped robot that the company describes as more personable than others in its class](#)—and a lot cheaper. And a team at the University of Southern California's Viterbi School of Engineering working with a group at Princeton University asked [whether mobile providers were tracking user locations](#). And when they found that they might be, the researchers developed an app to stop it.

In other news, a combined team from Rady Children's Institute of Genomic Medicine and the University of California San Diego School of Medicine [identified some of the human sperm mutations that can cause disease in children](#). And a team at Princeton University found that [planting forests may cool the planet more than thought](#) because of the denser cloud formations that develop over and around forests.

And finally, if you suffered an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, you may be interested in the results of a study conducted by a combined team from University College London and University College London Hospital. They found [possible ways to treat people who experienced cerebral venous thrombosis following a COVID-19 vaccination](#).

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