

Best of Last Week—glaciation terminated by Earth tilt, a safer way to share online, small groups eat most of the beef

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It was a good week for Earth science as a trio of volcanologists and geologists from Lithium Americas Corporation, GNS Science and Oregon State University reported that the McDermitt Caldera, on the

Nevada/Oregon, border, may host some of the [largest known deposits of lithium on Earth](#). Also, a small team of Earth scientists with members from the University of California, Santa Barbara, Harvard University and Brown University found that the [Late Pleistocene glaciation was terminated by Earth's axial tilt rather than orbital eccentricity](#). And an international team of climate scientists found that [domestic fire lighters emit more black carbon than all biomass fuels put together](#).

In technology news, a team of computer scientists at the University of Massachusetts Amherst developed [an open-source tool that dramatically speeds up the programming language Python](#). Called Scalene, the new tool allows programs written in Python to run faster. And an international team of computer engineers developed [a decentralized, blockchain-based messaging network that provides safer communications](#), and also allows users to keep control of personal data and other information that is shared online. Also a team of robotics engineers at the University of Coimbra in Portugal designed, built and demonstrated [a soft and scalable robotic hand](#) that they claim would be less expensive and easier to produce than other types of robotic hands. And a team with members affiliated with multiple institutions in China developed [an affordable and scalable strategy to fabricate efficient silicon heterojunction solar cells](#).

In other news, a team of medical researchers at the Medical College of Wisconsin, found that [LDL is not the be-all, end all factor in heart disease, heart attacks and stroke](#). A team of internal medical specialists and dentists from around the globe conducted [a review of the evidence of associations between periodontitis and inflammatory bowel disease](#) and followed it up by proposing a multi-hit hypothesis to explain how it works. And finally, a team of researchers with varied backgrounds from Tulane University, the University of North Carolina and the University of Texas Health Science Center, found that [just 12% of the population eats approximately half of all beef consumed in the U.S. every day](#).

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