

Best of Last Week: Missing law of nature, a solar-power tipping point and powerful signals in brain white matter

October 23 2023, by Bob Yirka

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It was a good week for evolutionary and historical research, as a multi-institutional, international collaboration showed that [Neanderthals inherited at least 6% of their genome from a now-extinct lineage of early](#)

[modern humans](#). Also, a team of scientists and philosophers described a ["missing" law of nature](#), stating that evolution is not limited to life on Earth. And an anthropologist with the University of Delaware, Sarah Lacy, found evidence showing that [in prehistoric times, women were hunters, too](#).

In technology news, a study by a group involved with the Economics of Energy Innovation and System Transition project reported evidence that [the world may have crossed a solar power "tipping point."](#) where solar power will become our main source of energy. And a team at MIT showed that [deep neural networks do not see the world the way we do](#)—they see it as a jumble of random-looking pixels and sounds that, to humans, resemble unintelligible noise. A team at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado found that groups resistant to the idea of adopting solar panels as an energy source base their findings on inaccurate information—they claim that [such technology has been proven to be both efficient and economical](#). And a team at Sungkyunkwan University developed [a Hebbian memory model that achieves human-like results on sequential processing tasks](#).

In other news, a combined team from City University of Hong Kong and Inner Mongolia Agricultural University report that two probiotics, Lactobacillus rhamnosus and Bifidobacterium lactis, [reduced symptoms of hypertension in test mice](#). Researchers working at the U.S. Geological Survey found that [groundwater in the U.S. has been growing saltier over the past several decades](#) and outlined what this implies for infrastructure, ecosystems and human health in the coming years. Finally, a team at Vanderbilt University recorded [powerful signals in the brain's white matter](#)—a sign of brain activity that is not yet understood.

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