

# Best of Last Week—Earthquakes may form gold nuggets, IQ limits computer prowess, elephant seals caught foraging

September 9 2024, by Bob Yirka

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A young, male northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*) chases an offscreen sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*) at Ocean Networks Canada's NEPTUNE's Barkley Canyon observatory site off the west coast of Vancouver Island, Canada. Credit: Ocean Networks Canada

It was a good week for geology research as a team of geologists at

Monash University found evidence that the electricity generated by earthquakes might be the secret behind the [formation of giant gold nuggets](#) around the globe. And a team of tectonics specialists from China and Australia created [an animation](#) showing 1.8 billion years of Earth's land mass changes due to tectonic plate shifting.

In technology news, a team of researchers at Aalto University found evidence that a person's intelligence [limits their computer proficiency](#) more than previously thought—cognitive ability, they found, has a significant, independent and wide-ranging effect on people's ability to use a computer for ordinary, everyday purposes. And a team of engineers at the Indian Institute of Science's Department of Instrumentation and Applied Physics developed [a light-charged supercapacitor](#) to self-power devices, including streetlights, sensors and portable electronic devices. Also, an international team of sustainable energy engineers developed [a personalized cooling apparatus](#) based on radiative cooling to replace traditional air-conditioning. And an international team of engineers developed an approach to [fabricating highly performing transistors](#) based on 2D semiconductors. It entails the use of hexagonal boron nitride dielectrics and metal gate electrodes with a high cohesive energy.

In other news, a team of medical researchers led by a group at the University of Texas at Austin discovered [an antibody](#) that protects against all COVID-19 variants, which the team suggests could protect the world's population against current and future versions of the virus behind COVID-19. And a team of physicists and engineers at ETH Zurich found a way to make sound waves [travel in one direction only](#), a discovery that could have major implications for electromagnetic wave technology. Also, a collaboration of medical researchers from across the U.S. announced that a [recent gene therapy trial](#) resulted in a 100-fold improvement in sight for patients with Leber congenital amaurosis. And finally, a small international team of marine scientists found that

northern elephant seals were [using deep-sea sonar-emitting devices](#) deployed by research teams as a dinner bell.

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