

Integrated Circuits Chaotic Signals

Researchers at Tokyo Institute of Technology have found a simple, yet highly versatile way to generate "chaotic signals" with various features. [30]

In a new study, physicists at Radboud University have demonstrated that this could also be achieved by using chips whose operation is inspired by that of the human brain. [29]

A team of researchers from the University of Münster, the University of Oxford and the University of Exeter has built an all-optical neural network on a single chip. [28]

Physicists from Petrozavodsk State University have proposed a new method for oscillatory neural network to recognize simple images. Such networks with an adjustable synchronous state of individual neurons have, presumably, dynamics similar to neurons in the living brain. [27]

Navid Borhani, a research-team member, says this machine learning approach is much simpler than other methods to reconstruct images passed through optical fibers, which require making a holographic measurement of the output. [26]

Scientists from the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) have developed a way to use machine learning to dramatically accelerate the design of microbes that produce biofuel. [25]

AI combined with stem cells promises a faster approach to disease prevention. Andrew Masterson reports.

According to product chief Trystan Upstill, the news app "uses the best of artificial intelligence to find the best of human intelligence—the great reporting done by journalists around the globe." [23]

Artificial intelligence is astonishing in its potential. It will be more transformative than the PC and the Internet. Already it is poised to solve some of our biggest challenges. [22]

In the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI), we've often looked for signs of intelligence, technology and communication that are similar to our own. [21]

Call it an a-MAZE-ing development: A U.K.-based team of researchers has developed an artificial intelligence program that can learn to take shortcuts through a labyrinth to reach its goal. In the process, the program developed structures akin to those in the human brain. [20]

And as will be presented today at the 25th annual meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience networks to enhance their understanding of one of the most elusive intelligence systems, the human brain. [19]

U.S. Army Research Laboratory scientists have discovered a way to leverage emerging brain-like computer architectures for an age-old number-theoretic problem known as integer factorization. [18]

Now researchers at the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) and UC Berkeley have come up with a novel machine learning method that enables scientists to derive insights from systems of previously intractable complexity in record time. [17]

Quantum computers can be made to utilize effects such as quantum coherence and entanglement to accelerate machine learning. [16]

Neural networks learn how to carry out certain tasks by analyzing large amounts of data displayed to them. [15]

*Who is the better experimentalist, a human or a robot? When it comes to exploring synthetic and crystallization conditions for inorganic gigantic molecules, actively learning machines are clearly ahead, as demonstrated by British Scientists in an experiment with polyoxometalates published in the journal *Angewandte Chemie*. [14]*

Machine learning algorithms are designed to improve as they encounter more data, making them a versatile technology for understanding large sets of photos such as those accessible from Google Images. Elizabeth Holm, professor of materials science and engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, is leveraging this technology to better understand the enormous number of research images accumulated in the field of materials science. [13]

With the help of artificial intelligence, chemists from the University of Basel in Switzerland have computed the characteristics of about two million crystals made up of four chemical elements. The researchers were able to identify 90 previously unknown thermodynamically stable crystals that can be regarded as new materials. [12]

The artificial intelligence system's ability to set itself up quickly every morning and compensate for any overnight fluctuations would make this fragile technology much more useful for field measurements, said co-lead researcher Dr Michael Hush from UNSW ADFA. [11]

Quantum physicist Mario Krenn and his colleagues in the group of Anton Zeilinger from the Faculty of Physics at the University of Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Sciences have developed an algorithm which designs new useful quantum

experiments. As the computer does not rely on human intuition, it finds novel unfamiliar solutions. [10]

Researchers at the University of Chicago's Institute for Molecular Engineering and the University of Konstanz have demonstrated the ability to generate a quantum logic operation, or rotation of the qubit, that - surprisingly—is intrinsically resilient to noise as well as to variations in the strength or duration of the control. Their achievement is based on a geometric concept known as the Berry phase and is implemented through entirely optical means within a single electronic spin in diamond. [9]

New research demonstrates that particles at the quantum level can in fact be seen as behaving something like billiard balls rolling along a table, and not merely as the probabilistic smears that the standard interpretation of quantum mechanics suggests. But there's a catch - the tracks the particles follow do not always behave as one would expect from "realistic" trajectories, but often in a fashion that has been termed "surrealistic." [8]

Quantum entanglement—which occurs when two or more particles are correlated in such a way that they can influence each other even across large distances—is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon, but occurs in various degrees. The more a quantum state is entangled with its partner, the better the states will perform in quantum information applications. Unfortunately, quantifying entanglement is a difficult process involving complex optimization problems that give even physicists headaches. [7]

A trio of physicists in Europe has come up with an idea that they believe would allow a person to actually witness entanglement. Valentina Caprara Vivoli, with the University of Geneva, Pavel Sekatski, with the University of Innsbruck and Nicolas Sangouard, with the University of Basel, have together written a paper describing a scenario where a human subject would be able to witness an instance of entanglement—they have uploaded it to the arXiv server for review by others. [6]

The accelerating electrons explain not only the Maxwell Equations and the Special Relativity, but the Heisenberg Uncertainty Relation, the Wave-Particle Duality and the electron's spin also, building the Bridge between the Classical and Quantum Theories.

The Planck Distribution Law of the electromagnetic oscillators explains the electron/proton mass ratio and the Weak and Strong Interactions by the diffraction patterns. The Weak Interaction changes the diffraction patterns by moving the electric charge from one side to the other side of the diffraction pattern, which violates the CP and Time reversal symmetry.

The diffraction patterns and the locality of the self-maintaining electromagnetic potential explains also the Quantum Entanglement, giving it as a natural part of the relativistic quantum theory.

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Preface

Physicists are continually looking for ways to unify the theory of relativity, which describes largescale phenomena, with quantum theory, which describes small-scale phenomena. In a new proposed experiment in this area, two toaster-sized "nanosatellites" carrying entangled condensates orbit around the Earth, until one of them moves to a different orbit with different gravitational field strength. As a result of the change in gravity, the entanglement between the condensates is predicted to degrade by up to 20%. Experimentally testing the proposal may be possible in the near future. [5]

Quantum entanglement is a physical phenomenon that occurs when pairs or groups of particles are generated or interact in ways such that the quantum state of each particle cannot be described independently – instead, a quantum state may be given for the system as a whole. [4]

I think that we have a simple bridge between the classical and quantum mechanics by understanding the Heisenberg Uncertainty Relations. It makes clear that the particles are not point like but have a dx and dp uncertainty.

Creating integrated circuits that can generate chaotic signals

Researchers at Tokyo Institute of Technology have found a simple, yet highly versatile way to generate "chaotic signals" with various features. The technique consists of interconnecting three ring oscillators, effectively making them compete against each other, while controlling their respective strengths and their linkages. The resulting device is rather small and efficient, thus suitable for emerging applications such as realizing wireless networks of sensors.

The ability to recreate the signals found in [natural systems](#), such as those in brains, swarms, and the weather, is useful to understand the underlying principles. These signals can be very complex, as in the extreme case of the so-called chaotic signals. "Chaos" does not mean randomness; it represents a very complicated type of order. Minute changes in the parameters of a chaotic system can result in greatly different behaviors. Chaotic signals are difficult to predict, but they are present in many scenarios.

Unfortunately, the generation of chaotic signals with desired features is a difficult task. Creating them digitally is in some cases too power-intensive, and approaches based on [analog circuits](#) are required. Now, researchers in Japan, Italy and Poland propose a new approach for

creating integrated [circuits](#) that can generate chaotic signals. This research was the result of a collaboration between scientists from Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech), in part funded by the World Research Hub Initiative, the Universities of Catania and Trento, Italy, and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow, Poland.

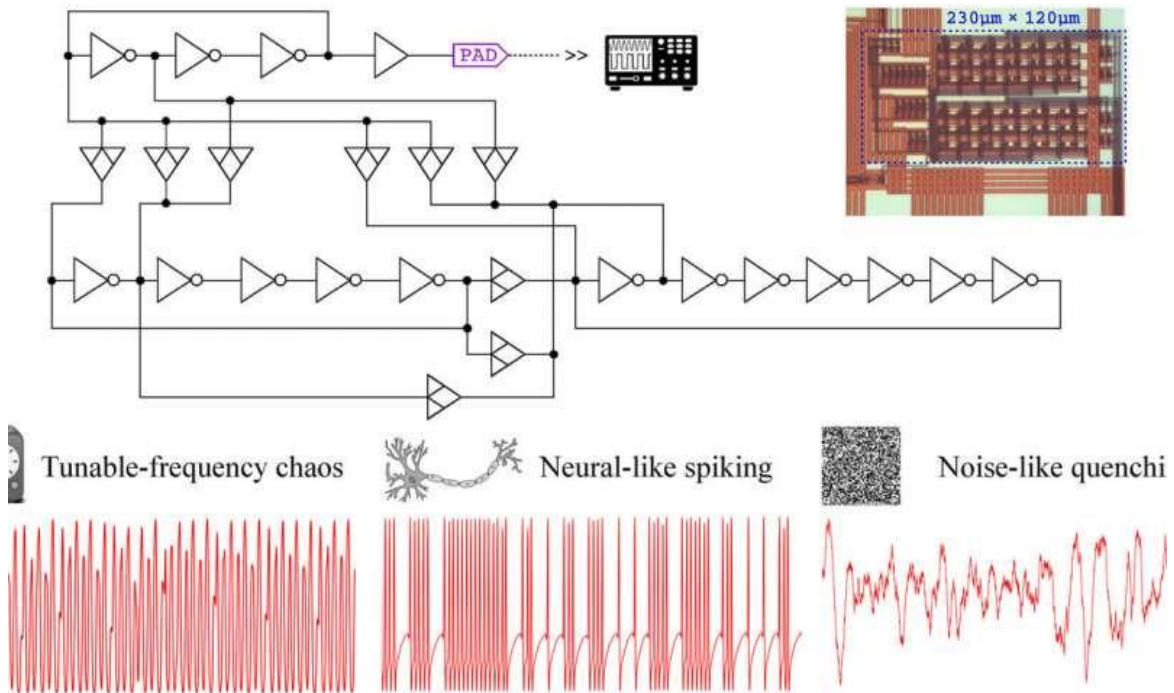
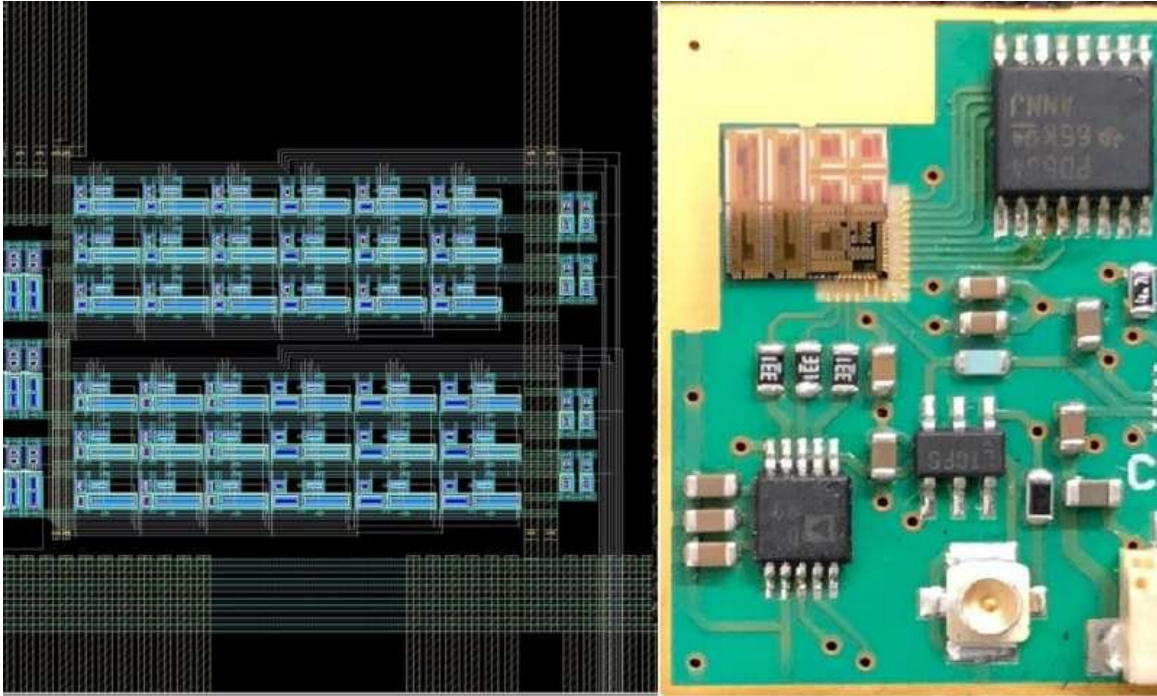


Diagram of the proposed chaotic oscillator circuit, wherein the strengths of the ring oscillators and their linkages are controlled independently, and its prototype layout (top). Examples of three generated signals having rather different qualities: cycle amplitude fluctuations, spike trains, and noise (bottom). Credit: Ludovico Minati

The research team started from the idea that cycles that have periods set by prime numbers cannot develop a fixed phase relationship. Surprisingly, this principle seems to have emerged in the evolution of several species of cicadas, whose life cycles follow prime numbers of years to avoid synchronizing with each other and with predators. For example, attempts to tie together oscillators with periods set to the first three prime numbers (3, 5 and 7) results in signals that are very complicated, and chaos can be readily generated (Fig. 1).

The design started from the most traditional oscillator found in integrated circuits, the ring [oscillator](#), which is small and does not require reactive components (capacitors and inductors). Such a circuit was modified so that the strengths of ring oscillators having three, five and seven stages could be controlled independently, along with the tightness of their linkages. The device could generate chaotic signals over a wide frequency spectrum, from audible frequencies to the radio band (1 kHz to 10 MHz). "Moreover, it could do so at a rather [low power consumption](#), below one-millionth of a watt," explains Dr. Hiroyuki Ito, head of the laboratory where the prototype was designed.

Even more remarkable was the discovery that totally different types of signals could be generated depending on the slightly different characteristics the individual prototypes (Fig. 2). For example, the researchers recorded trains of spikes quite similar to those found in biological neurons. They also found situations in which the rings "fought each other" to the point of almost completely suppressing their activity: This phenomenon is called "oscillation death."



The integrated circuit was designed as a tiny "cell" about 200-100 μm large (left), and its first prototype was accommodated on a test board providing all necessary support functions (right).
Credit: Hiroyuki Ito and Ludovico Minati

"This circuit draws its beauty from a really essential shape and principle, and simplicity is key to realizing large systems operating collectively in a harmonious manner, especially when it is enriched by small differences and imperfections, such as those found in the realized circuits," says Dr. Ludovico Minati, lead author of the study.

The finding has many possible applications. The researchers will work on integrating this circuit with sensors to measure [chemical properties](#) in the soil, for example. Additionally, they will create networks of these oscillators on single computer chips interconnected to resemble biological neural circuits. They hope to realize certain operations while consuming many times less power than a traditional computer. [30]

Learning magnets could lead to energy-efficient data processing

The power consumption of data centers around the world is increasing. This creates a high demand for new technologies that could lead to energy-efficient computers. In a new study, physicists at Radboud University have demonstrated that this could also be achieved by using chips whose

operation is inspired by that of the human brain. The study was published in the scientific journal *Applied Physics Letters* on 16 May.

Compared to our current computers, the [human brain](#) uses a fraction of the energy to process the same amount of data. This is possible due to the fact that our brains can process data in parallel and store it as well by making connections stronger or weaker.

"We wanted to see if we could implement this property of plasticity in an artificial system and combine it with the rapid and energy-efficient technique to control [magnetism](#) using light, which has been applied for some time already," say Johan Mentink and Theo Rasing, both physicists at Radboud University. "This should eventually lead to energy-efficient and smart computers."

Analogue instead of digital

The possibility of fast and energy-efficient data storage using magnetism has been known for some time. By firing short light pulses at magnetic material, the magnetic spins in the material are flipped, which changes a 0 into a 1, and vice-versa. "But to get these magnets to behave like synapses in the brain, which would allow to not only store data but also to process it, the magnets should be allowed to change continuously," Johan Mentink explains.

"We were able to give magnets this property by ensuring that the magnetic state of the material changes gradually under the influence of light, instead of doing a full flip at once. This could be compared to an analogue timepiece that moves gradually, in contrast to a digital clock."

Learning behaviour of magnets

This new plastic property paved the way for researchers to build a small artificial neural [network](#), in which two separate areas of the magnet—two artificial synapses—were linked. Rasing: "We have demonstrated that it is possible to build an artificial neural network using magnets, which not only stores data but is also truly able to classify patterns and show learning behavior."

The researchers now want to investigate whether they can build larger neural networks following this approach. "Right now, the [neural network](#) is learning from feedback which it receives from an external computer. In the longer term, we hope to find a physical principle to implement the feedback into the material itself. This would have a significant impact on the way in which [artificial neural networks](#) could be applied in our society," Mentink says. [29]

An all-optical neural network on a single chip

A team of researchers from the University of Münster, the University of Oxford and the University of Exeter has built an all-optical neural network on a single chip. In their paper published in the journal *Nature*, the group describes their chip, which has no optical-to-electronic conversions, and how well it worked. Geoffrey Burr with IBM Research – Almaden has published a News and Views [piece](#) discussing the work by the team in the same journal issue.

Modern computers run on electricity—it powers devices and serves as a storage and data medium. But for several decades, scientists have wondered if it might be possible to use light as the data medium—crunching photons instead of electrons. Engineers have many hurdles in attempting to create such a device, however, most prominently the bottlenecks that arise when converting between optical and [electrical systems](#). In more recent times, there has been a renewed interest in building an optically based computer—but now, the focus is energy conservation. Big modern computers used for heavy-duty applications require a lot of electricity. Logic suggests that computers based on light should be less energy intensive, most particularly because they would not generate as much heat, making cooling systems obsolete. In this new effort, the researchers have taken a step toward the creation of optically based computers by building an all-optical neural network on a [single chip](#).

The researchers noted that one type of computer system seemed most amenable to optics—[deep neural networks](#). This is because such networks rely on [artificial neurons](#) with synaptic connections that can be weighted based on past learning experiences. They noted also that crystalline phase change materials could also serve such a purpose. They are materials that experience a change in structure when heated—in this case, by a laser. Using such a material, the team built a chip with four neurons connected with 60 synapses using waveguides to control the flow of information represented by light. Testing showed the chip was capable of learning, recognizing patterns and performing computations. [28]

Physicists train the oscillatory neural network to recognize images

Physicists from Petrozavodsk State University have proposed a new method for oscillatory neural network to recognize simple images. Such networks with an adjustable synchronous state of individual neurons have, presumably, dynamics similar to neurons in the living brain.

AN oscillatory neural [network](#) is a complex interlacing of interacting elements (oscillators) that are able to receive and transmit oscillations of a certain frequency. Receiving signals of various frequencies from preceding elements, the artificial neuron oscillator can synchronize its rhythm with these fluctuations. As a result, in the network, some of the elements are synchronized with each other (periodically and simultaneously activated), and other elements are not synchronized. In this manner, a space-time picture of the [synchronization](#) distribution is formed. It has commonly been assumed that such processes are responsible for the processing and transmission of information in the human brain, and therefore are of particular interest for the study.

The scientists of the Department of Electronics and Power Engineering of Petrozavodsk State University have set the goal of pattern recognition based on coupled oscillator networks implemented on vanadium dioxide structures. Physicists have developed a synchronization registration method with [high sensitivity](#) and selectivity. By applying it in practice, it is possible to create a network capable of recognizing images in the same way that biological neural systems do.

In the study, the input images in the form of three-by-three dimension tables were transmitted to the network by changing the supply currents, and currents changed the oscillation frequencies of

oscillators. As a result, the network reacted to each received image with specific dynamics. The idea of the new method was selecting key network parameters to train the system to synchronize only for a specific input image, which means to recognize it.

The synchronization state of the output neuron-oscillator relative to the rhythm of the main neuron-oscillator was chosen as the output recorded signal. The authors demonstrated that synchronization can be observed not only at the fundamental frequencies, but also at their multiple parts (subharmonics). An increase in the number of synchronous states due to subharmonics is called a high order synchronization effect. Having simultaneously several states of synchronization, the neuron becomes a multilevel neuron. Therefore, an oscillatory network of a small number of neurons can perform complex operations such as speech, image and video recognition, and solving prediction, optimization and control problems.

Using this property, the researchers configured the network in such a way that different input images caused different synchronization patterns of the oscillatory network. They discovered that the network was able to recognize simultaneously up to 14 three-by-three figures out of 102 possible variants, while having only one oscillator at the output.

"In the future, compact neural network chips with nanoscale oscillators can be created on the basis of these networks. The distinctive feature of the neural network technology that we are developing is a fundamentally new information processing system. The effect of high-order synchronization of pulsed signals allows utilization of multilevel neurons with a high degree of functionality. The advantage of such oscillatory neural networks is the prospect of creating neural networks using a wide variety of physical oscillators, including magnetic and electrical oscillators. At the same time, the trained network no longer needs computer calculations, and operates independently as a separate neural organism," says associate professor Andrei Velichko. [27]

Machine learning technique reconstructs images passing through a multimode fiber

Through innovative use of a neural network that mimics image processing by the human brain, a research team reports accurate reconstruction of images transmitted over optical fibers for distances of up to a kilometer.

In the Optical Society's journal for high-impact research, *Optica*, the researchers report teaching a type of machine learning algorithm known as a deep neural network to recognize images of numbers from the pattern of speckles they create when transmitted to the far end of a fiber. The work could improve endoscopic imaging for medical diagnosis, boost the amount of information carried over fiber-optic telecommunication networks, or increase the optical power delivered by fibers.

"We use modern deep neural network architectures to retrieve the input images from the scrambled output of the fiber," said Demetri Psaltis, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne, who led the research in collaboration with colleague Christophe Moser. "We

demonstrate that this is possible for fibers up to 1 kilometer long" he added, calling the work "an important milestone."

Deciphering the blur

Optical fibers transmit information with light. Multimode fibers have much greater information-carrying capacity than single-mode fibers. Their many channels—known as spatial modes because they have different spatial shapes—can transmit different streams of information simultaneously.

While multimode fibers are well suited for carrying light-based signals, transmitting images is problematic. Light from the image travels through all of the channels and what comes out the other end is a pattern of speckles that the [human eye](#) cannot decode.

To tackle this problem, Psaltis and his team turned to a deep neural network, a type of machine learning algorithm that functions much the way the brain does. Deep neural networks can give computers the ability to identify objects in photographs and help improve speech recognition systems. Input is processed through several layers of artificial neurons, each of which performs a small calculation and passes the result on to the next layer. The machine learns to identify the input by recognizing the patterns of output associated with it.

"If we think about the origin of neural networks, which is our very own brain, the process is simple," explains Eirini Kakkava, a doctoral student working on the project. "When a person stares at an object, neurons in the brain are activated, indicating recognition of a familiar object. Our brain can do this because it gets trained throughout our life with images or signals of the same category of objects, which changes the strength of the connections between the neurons." To train an [artificial neural network](#), researchers follow essentially the same process, teaching the network to recognize certain images (in this case, handwritten digits) until it is able to recognize images in the same category as the training images that it has not seen before.

Learning by the numbers

To train their system, the researchers turned to a database containing 20,000 samples of handwritten numbers, 0 through 9. They selected 16,000 to be used as training data, and kept aside 2,000 to validate the training and another 2,000 for testing the validated system. They used a laser to illuminate each digit and sent the light beam through an [optical fiber](#), which had approximately 4,500 channels, to a camera on the far end. A computer measured how the intensity of the output light varied across the captured image, and they collected a series of examples for each digit.

Although the speckle patterns collected for each digit looked the same to the human eye, the neural network was able to discern differences and recognize patterns of intensity associated with each digit. Testing with the set-aside images showed that the algorithm achieved 97.6 percent accuracy for images transmitted through a 0.1 meter long fiber and 90 percent accuracy with a 1 kilometer length of fiber.

A simpler method

Navid Borhani, a research-team member, says this machine learning approach is much simpler than other methods to reconstruct images passed through optical fibers, which require making a holographic measurement of the output. The neural network was also able to cope with distortions caused by environmental disturbances to the fiber such as temperature fluctuations or movements

caused by air currents that can add noise to the image—a situation that gets worse with fiber length.

"The remarkable ability of [deep neural networks](#) to retrieve information transmitted through multimode fibers is expected to benefit medical procedures like endoscopy and communications applications," Psaltis said. Telecommunication signals often have to travel through many kilometers of fiber and can suffer distortions, which this method could correct. Doctors could use ultrathin fiber probes to collect images of the tracts and arteries inside the human body without needing complex holographic recorders or worrying about movement. "Slight movements because of breathing or circulation can distort the images transmitted through a multimode fiber," Psaltis said. The deep neural networks are a promising solution for dealing with that noise.

Psaltis and his team plan to try the technique with biological samples, to see if that works as well as reading handwritten numbers. They hope to conduct a series of studies using different categories of images to explore the possibilities and limits of their technique. [26]

New machine learning approach could accelerate bioengineering

Scientists from the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) have developed a way to use machine learning to dramatically accelerate the design of microbes that produce biofuel.

Their computer algorithm starts with abundant data about the proteins and metabolites in a biofuel-producing microbial [pathway](#), but no information about how the pathway actually works. It then uses data from previous experiments to learn how the pathway will behave. The scientists used the technique to automatically predict the amount of biofuel produced by pathways that have been added to *E. coli* bacterial cells.

The new approach is much faster than the current way to predict the behavior of pathways, and promises to speed up the development of biomolecules for many applications in addition to commercially viable biofuels, such as drugs that fight antibiotic-resistant infections and crops that withstand drought.

The research was published May 29 in the journal *Nature Systems Biology and Applications*.

In biology, a pathway is a series of chemical reactions in a cell that produce a specific compound. Researchers are exploring ways to re-engineer pathways, and import them from one microbe to another, to harness nature's toolkit to improve medicine, energy, manufacturing, and agriculture. And thanks to new synthetic biology capabilities, such as the gene-editing tool CRISPR-Cas9, scientists can conduct this research at a precision like never before.

"But there's a significant bottleneck in the development process," said Hector Garcia Martin, group lead at the DOE Agile BioFoundry and director of Quantitative Metabolic Modeling at the Joint BioEnergy Institute (JBEI), a DOE Bioenergy Research Center funded by DOE's Office of Science and led by Berkeley Lab. The research was performed by Zak Costello (also with the Agile BioFoundry

and JBEI) under the direction of Garcia Martin. Both researchers are also in Berkeley Lab's Biological Systems and Engineering Division.

"It's very difficult to predict how a pathway will behave when it's re-engineered. Trouble-shooting takes up 99% of our time. Our approach could significantly shorten this step and become a new way to guide bioengineering efforts," Garcia Martin added.

The current way to predict a pathway's dynamics requires a maze of differential equations that describe how the components in the system change over time. Subject-area experts develop these "kinetic models" over several months, and the resulting predictions don't always match experimental results.

Machine learning, however, uses data to train a computer algorithm to make predictions. The algorithm learns a system's behavior by analyzing data from related systems. This allows scientists to quickly predict the function of a pathway even if its mechanisms are poorly understood—as long as there are enough data to work with.

The scientists tested their technique on pathways added to E. coli cells. One pathway is designed to produce a bio-based jet fuel called limonene; the other produces a gasoline replacement called isopentenol. Previous experiments at JBEI yielded a trove of data related to how different versions of the pathways function in various E. coli strains. Some of the strains have a pathway that produces small amounts of either limonene or isopentenol, while other strains have a version that produces large amounts of the biofuels.

The researchers fed this data into their algorithm. Then machine learning took over: The algorithm taught itself how the concentrations of metabolites in these pathways change over time, and how much biofuel the pathways produce. It learned these dynamics by analyzing data from the two experimentally known pathways that produce small and large amounts of biofuels.

The algorithm used this knowledge to predict the behavior of a third set of "mystery" pathways the algorithm had never seen before. It accurately predicted the biofuel-production profiles for the mystery pathways, including that the pathways produce a medium amount of fuel. In addition, the machine learning-derived prediction outperformed kinetic models.

"And the more data we added, the more accurate the predictions became," said Garcia Martin. "This approach could expedite the time it takes to design new biomolecules. A project that today takes ten years and a team of experts could someday be handled by a summer student." [25]

Robots are making tiny human organs

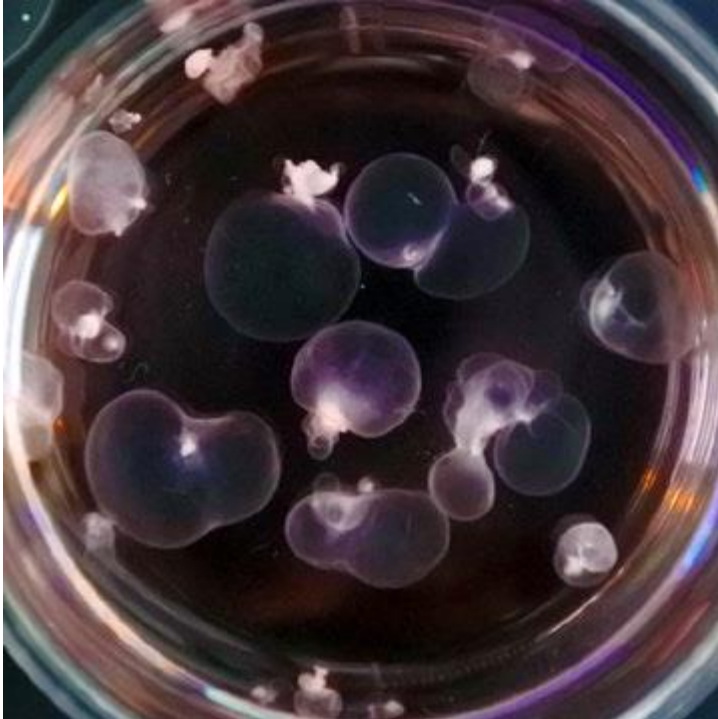
At first thought, it sounds like something straight from a science-fiction dystopian novel. Right now, while you read this, robots are creating thousands of miniature human kidneys out of stem cells.

In reality, however, it is a novel and exceptionally efficient way to boost biomedical research.

“This is a new 'secret weapon' in our fight against disease,” says one of the system’s designers, Benjamin Freeman from the University of Washington in the US.

[In a paper](#) published in the journal *Cell Stem Cell*, Freeman and a large group of collaborators describe a successful method for automating the creation of organoids – groups of cells that function like human organs.

RECOMMENDED



Stem cell kidneys prompt treatment hope

[BIOLOGY](#)

The organoids are made from pluripotent stem cells, and are ideal for a form of computer-moderated testing known as high-throughput screening (HTS). This involves the rapid conduct of up to millions of genetic, pharmacological or chemical tests, and is a key technique for assessing the efficacy of potential medications.

Growing organoids using stem cells is a [very recent development](#) in medical research. Originally, the cells were cultured in two-dimensional sheets which, by definition, lacked the complex matrix of connections inherent in a three-dimensional shape.

The resulting models, therefore, were considered too simplistic and of limited value. Forming the cells into three-dimensional organoids allows much more coherent research, but poses major problems for mass production, requiring a lot of time and delicate human input.

The system created by Freeman and his colleagues employs liquid-handling robots. The machines place stem cells onto plates, each of which contains as many as 384 tiny wells. Over the course of 21 days, the robots coax the cells to link up and form miniature kidneys – with as many as 10 organoids per well and thus almost 4000 per plate.

“Ordinarily, just setting up an experiment of this magnitude would take a researcher all day, while the robot can do it in 20 minutes,” says Freedman.

“On top of that, the robot doesn’t get tired and make mistakes. There’s no question. For repetitive, tedious tasks like this, robots do a better job than humans.”

But the robots are far more than simply highly-engineered, super-fast lab technicians. They have also been trained to conduct an automated analysis of the organoids, called [single cell RNA sequencing](#).

The approach is already producing surprises. The researchers report that although organoid kidneys do resemble the full-size organ, the robots also detected other types of cells within them that had not previously been noted.

The discovery allowed the scientists to quickly tweak the culturing process to produce more accurate models.

“These findings give us a better idea of the nature of these organoids and provide a baseline from which we can make improvements,” explains Freedman.

“The value of this high-throughput platform is that we can now alter our procedure at any point, in many different ways, and quickly see which of these changes produces a better result.” [24]

Google pushes artificial intelligence for upgraded news app

For its updated news application, Google is doubling down on the use of artificial intelligence as part of an effort to weed out disinformation and help users get viewpoints beyond their own “filter bubble.”

Google chief Sundar Pichai, who unveiled the updated Google News earlier this month, said the app now “surfaces the [news](#) you care about from trusted sources while still giving you a full range of perspectives on events.”

It marks Google's latest effort to be at the center of online news and includes a new push to help publishers get paid subscribers through the tech giant's platform.

According to product chief Trystan Upstill, the news app “uses the best of [artificial intelligence](#) to find the best of human intelligence—the great reporting done by journalists around the globe.”

While the app will enable users to get “personalized” news, it will also include top stories for all readers, aiming to break the so-called filter bubble of information designed to reinforce people's biases.

"Having a productive conversation or debate requires everyone to have access to the same information," Upstill said.

He said the "full coverage" feed would be the same for everyone—"an unpersonalized view of events from a range of trusted news sources."

Some journalism industry veterans were skeptical about the effort to replace human editors with machine curators.

"There's been a fantasy of (algorithmic) personalized news for a long time," said New York University journalism professor Meredith Broussard.

"Nobody has ever gotten it right. I think that news designers and home page editors do a good job of curating already."

Google and Facebook have also been criticized for scooping up most online ad revenues and for enabling false information to spread.

Recently, News Corp. CEO Robert Thomson called for an "algorithm review board" that would "oversee these historically influential digital platforms and ensure that there is no algorithmic abuse or censorship."

Changing news ecosystem

In the new app, Google's "newsstand" addresses some concerns by allowing users to sign up for subscriptions using their Google accounts, and will enable publishers to connect with readers directly.

Dan Kennedy, a Northeastern University journalism professor, said the revamped news app appears to be positive for the news ecosystem.

"For many years, Google refused to share ad revenues with news organizations on the grounds that Google was driving traffic to them, and that it was up to those organizations to figure out how to monetize that traffic," Kennedy said.

"Now, with more than 90 percent of all new digital ad revenues going to Google and Facebook, Google is finally acknowledging that it's time to try something else."

Nicholas Diakopoulos, a Northwestern University professor specializing in computational and data journalism, said the impact of Google's changes remain to be seen.

Diakopoulos said algorithmic and personalized news can be positive for "engagement" but may only benefit a handful of news organizations.

His research found that "Google concentrates its attention on a relatively small number of publishers, it's quite concentrated."

Google's effort to identify and prioritize "trusted" [news sources](#) may also be problematic, according to Diakopoulos.

"Maybe it's good for the big guys, or the (publishers) who have figured out how to game the algorithm," he said. "But what about the local news sites, what about the new news sites that don't have a long track record?"

Diakopoulos said that while AI can offer some advantages in news curation, "you still need people involved in many different ways. you need to reflect human values, editorial values... you can't quantify every aspect that might be important to an editorial decision."

The growing importance of the platforms raise the questions of whether Google and Facebook are "media" companies and not simply technology firms, a moniker both have resisted.

Diakopoulos said Google "is becoming more and more like a media company," although that is sometimes difficult to define.

"Yahoo started as a tech company and became a media company, and maybe Google is headed in that direction," he said. [23]

The U.S. needs a national strategy on artificial intelligence

China, India, Japan, France and the European Union are crafting bold plans for artificial intelligence (AI). They see AI as a means to economic growth and social progress. Meanwhile, the U.S. disbanded its AI taskforce in 2016. Without an AI strategy of its own, the world's technology leader risks falling behind.

The U.S. technology sector has long been a driver of global economic growth. From the PC to the Internet, the greatest advancements of the past 50 years were spawned in the U.S. This country's unique approach to limited regulation combined with public-private partnerships creates an environment for innovation generally unmatched in the free world. A national AI strategy can build on this history of economic and technological leadership.

Artificial intelligence is astonishing in its potential. It will be more transformative than the PC and the Internet. Already it is poised to solve some of our biggest challenges. As examples, AI has been used to more precisely detect and diagnose cancer, treat depression, improve crop yields, save energy, increase supply chain efficiencies and protect our financial systems. These are remarkable successes for such a young technology.

Governments can and should help build on these successes. A national strategy for AI will provide the necessary guideposts that enable [industry](#) and academia to innovate. When the regulatory environment is known and understood, businesses and government researchers can maximize their impact by pursuing the same goals.

In this context, it will also be important to address concerns about AI's impact on individuals. Privacy, cybersecurity, ethics and potential employment impact are all worthy of careful analysis. Governments and industry can and should work together to better understand these concerns before any new regulation is enacted.

As evidenced by their AI plans, governments around the world see AI as a catalyst for [economic growth](#) and a means to improve the lives of their citizens. They are prioritizing research and development and the establishment of a strong and diverse ecosystem to bring AI to fruition.

China's plan, for example, includes measurable objectives and detailed direction on specific areas of focus. This is backed by significant public-private funding commitments as well as industry-government alignment on direction.

The EU's strategy provides deliberate direction to avoid regulation while investing in R&D. It offers a clear focus on greater investment, preparation for socio-economic changes, and formation of an ethical and legal framework. Japan, India, France and others are adopting similar strategies.

Industry has partnered with many of these governments to develop their plans; we stand ready to work with the U.S. government in the same way. A good model for success is the semiconductor sector, where industry and the U.S. government partnered in the early 1980s to build the vast ecosystem that is considered the North Star for technology success today. AI can be history's greatest economic engine. Governments can – and should – help make this real.

Before disbandment, the U.S. Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Taskforce defined seven strategic objectives and two specific recommendations for AI. This report called on the government to develop a more detailed AI R&D plan, and study the creation of an AI R&D workforce. These recommendations can be the starting point for a definitive U.S. national strategy for AI.

This is not a call for a swarm of new laws and regulations. Rather, a U.S. national strategy can provide the structure for researchers and industry to follow as they develop [artificial intelligence](#). Such direction provides operating certainty that lessens risk.

A national [strategy](#) therefore should aim to foster innovation across the industry and academia, and prepare society for changes to come. It can also provide operating clarity that lessens business risk. Two areas of focus should be prioritized: government funding of R&D to augment the great work being done by industry and the availability of [government](#) data for innovators to use in developing artificial intelligence capabilities. AI needs data to learn, and there are ways to do this without compromising privacy and security.

AI is too big for one company – or one country – to realize alone. The transformative potential of AI has been likened to electricity and the steam engine. Ensuring a role for the U.S. in this global revolution is critical to not just the U.S. economic engine but that of our entire world. [22]

Can artificial intelligence help find alien intelligence?

In the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI), we've often looked for signs of intelligence, technology and communication that are similar to our own.

But as astronomer and SETI trailblazer Jill Tarter [points out](#), that approach means searching for detectable [technosignatures](#), like radio transmissions, not searching for [intelligence](#).

Now scientists are considering whether artificial intelligence (AI) could help us search for alien intelligence in ways we haven't even thought of yet.

'Decoding' intelligence

As we think about [extraterrestrial intelligence](#) it's helpful to remember [humans are not the only intelligent life](#) on Earth.

[Chimpanzees have culture and use tools](#), spiders [process information with webs](#), [cetaceans have dialects](#), crows [understand analogies](#) and [beavers are great engineers](#). Non-human intelligence, language, culture and technology are all around us.

Alien intelligence could look like an octopus, an ant, a dolphin or [a machine](#) —or be radically different from anything on Earth.

We often imagine extraterrestrial life relative to our ideas about difference, but those ideas aren't even universal on Earth and are [unlikely to be universal across interstellar space](#).

If some of us have only recently recognized non-human intelligence on Earth, what could we be missing when we imagine extraterrestrial life?

In early 2018, astronomers, neuroscientists, anthropologists, AI researchers, historians and others gathered for a "[Decoding Alien Intelligence](#)" workshop at the SETI Institute in Silicon Valley. Astrobiologist Nathalie Cabrol organized the workshop around her 2016 paper "[Alien mindscapes](#)," where she calls for a new SETI road map and a long-term vision for "the search for life as we do not know it."

In her paper, Cabrol asks how SETI can move past "looking for other versions of ourselves" and think "outside of our own brains" to imagine truly different extraterrestrial intelligence.

Thinking differently

Silicon Valley is famous for valuing "disruptive" thinking and this culture intersects with SETI research. Ever since the U.S. government [stopped funding SETI in the mid-1990s](#), Silicon Valley ideas, technology and funding have been increasingly important.



A capuchin (*Sapajus libidinosus*) using a stone tool (T. Falótico). An octopus (*Amphioctopus marginatus*) carrying shells as shelter (N. Hobgood). (Wikimedia/Tiago Falótico, Nick Hobgood), CC BY-NC-SA

For example, the SETI Institute's [Allen Telescope Array](#) is named after Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, who contributed over US\$25 million to the project. And, in 2015, technology investor Yuri Milner announced [Breakthrough Listen](#), a 10-year US\$100 million SETI initiative.

Now, the SETI Institute, NASA, Intel, IBM and other partners are tackling space science problems through an AI research and development program called the [Frontier Development Lab](#).

Lucianne Walkowicz, the [Astrobiology Chair at the Library of Congress](#), described one AI-based method as "signal agnostic searching" at [Breakthrough Discuss](#) in 2017.

Walkowicz explained that this means using machine learning methods to look at any set of data without predetermined categories and instead let that data cluster into their "natural categories." The software then lets us know what stands out as outliers. These outliers could then be the target of additional investigations.

It turns out that SETI researchers think AI might be useful in their work because they believe machine learning is good at spotting difference.

But its success depends on how we —and the AI we create —conceptualize the idea of difference.

Smarter than slime mould?

Thinking outside our brains also means thinking outside our scientific, social and cultural systems. But how can we do that?

AI has been used to look for simulations of what researchers imagine alien radio signals might look like, but now SETI researchers hope it can find things we aren't yet looking for.

Graham Mackintosh, an AI consultant at the SETI Institute workshop, said extraterrestrials might be doing things we can't even imagine, using technologies so different we don't even think to look for them. AI, he proposed, might be able to do that advanced thinking for us.

We may not be able to make ourselves smarter, but perhaps, Mackintosh suggested, we can make machines that are smarter for us.

In a keynote at this year's Breakthrough Discuss conference, astrophysicist Martin Rees shared a similar hope, that AI could lead to "intelligence which surpasses humans as much as we intellectually surpass slime mould."



Parts of the *Armillaria ostoyae* organism include the mushrooms, the black rhizomorphs and the white mycelial felts. Credit: USDA/Forest Service/Pacific Northwest Region

First contact

If we met extraterrestrial slime mould, what could we assume about its intelligence? One challenge of SETI is that we don't know the limits of life or intelligence, so we need to be open to all possible forms of difference.

We might find intelligence in forms that Euro-American science has historically disregarded: Microbial communities, insects or other complex systems like the symbiotic plant-fungus relationships in mycorrhizal networks that learn from experience.

Intelligence might appear in atmospheres or geology at a planetary scale, or as astrophysical phenomena. What appears to be a background process in the universe, or just part of what we think of as nature, could turn out to be intelligence.

Consider that the largest living thing on Earth may be an *Armillaria ostoyae* fungus in Eastern Oregon's Blue Mountains, which extends to 10 square kilometres and is between 2,000 and 9,000 years old.

While this fungus may not be what most people think of as intelligence, it reminds us to think about the unexpected when searching for life and intelligence, and of what we might be missing right under our feet.

Thinking differently about intelligence means understanding that anything we encounter could be first contact with intelligent life. This might include our first encounter with artificial general intelligence (AGI), also called Strong AI, something closer to the sentient computer HAL 9000 from 2001: A Space Odyssey or Data from Star Trek: The Next Generation.

As we work with machine learning to expand the SETI search, we also need social sciences to understand how our ideas shape the future of AI —and how AI will shape the future of our ideas.

Interdisciplinary futures

To avoid a human-centred point of view in SETI we need to consider how we encode ideas about difference into AI and how that shapes the outcomes. This is vital for finding and recognizing intelligence as we don't yet know it.

Some of the methods used in anthropology can help us identify ideas about difference that we've naturalized —concepts so familiar they seem invisible, like the divides many still see between nature and culture or biology and technology, for example.

Recent research on algorithms reveals how our naturalized ideas shape the technology we create and how we use it. And Microsoft's infamous AI chat bot Tay reminds us the AI we create can easily reflect the worst of those ideas.

We may never entirely stop building bias into search engines and search strategies for SETI, or coding it into AI. But through collaborations between scientists and social scientists we can think critically about how we conceptualize difference.

A critical, interdisciplinary approach will help us understand how our ideas about difference impact lives, research and possibilities for the future both here on Earth and beyond. [21]

Scientists make a maze-running artificial intelligence program that learns to take shortcuts

Call it an a-MAZE-ing development: A U.K.-based team of researchers has developed an artificial intelligence program that can learn to take shortcuts through a labyrinth to reach its goal. In the process, the program developed structures akin to those in the human brain.

The emergence of these computational "[grid cells](#)," described in the journal *Nature*, could help scientists design better navigational software for future robots and even offer a new window through which to probe the mysteries of the mammalian brain.

In recent years, AI researchers have developed and fine-tuned deep-learning networks—layered programs that can come up with novel solutions to achieve their assigned goal. For example, a deep-learning network can be told which face to identify in a series of different photos, and through several rounds of training, can tune its algorithms until it spots the right face virtually every time.

These networks are inspired by the brain, but they don't work quite like them, said Francesco Savelli, a neuroscientist at Johns Hopkins University who was not involved in the paper. So far, AI systems don't come close to emulating the brain's architecture, the diversity of real neurons, the complexity of individual neurons or even the rules by which they learn.

"Most of the learning is thought to occur with the strengthening and weakening of these synapses," Savelli said in an interview, referring to the connections between neurons. "And that's true of these AI systems too—but exactly how you do it, and the rules that govern that kind of learning, might be very different in the brain and in these systems."

Regardless, AI has been really useful for a number of functions, from facial recognition to deciphering handwriting and translating languages, Savelli said. But higher-level activities—such as navigating a complex environment—have proved far more challenging.

One aspect of navigation that our brains seem to perform without conscious effort is path integration. Mammals use this process to recalculate their position after every step they take by accounting for the distance they've traveled and the direction they're facing. It's thought to be key to the brain's ability to produce a map of its surroundings.

Interview with Caswell Barry about grid cells. Credit: DeepMind

Among the neurons associated with these "cognitive maps": [place cells](#), which light up when their owner is in some particular spot in the environment; head-direction [cells](#), which tell their owner what direction they're facing; and grid cells, which appear to respond to an imaginary hexagonal grid mapped over the surrounding terrain. Every time a person steps on a "node" in this grid, the neuron fires.

"Grid cells are thought to endow the cognitive map with geometric properties that help in planning and following trajectories," Savelli and fellow Johns Hopkins neuroscientist James Knierim wrote in

a commentary on the paper. The discovery of grid cells earned three scientists the 2014 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine.

Humans and other animals seem to have very little trouble moving through space because all of these highly specialized neurons work together to tell us where we are and where we're going.

Scientists at DeepMind, which is owned by Google and University College London, wondered whether they could develop a program that could also perform path integration. So they trained the network with simulations of paths used by rodents looking for food. They also gave it data for a rodent's movement and speed as well as feedback from simulated place cells and head-direction cells.

During this training, the researchers noticed something strange: The simulated rodent appeared to develop patterns of activity that looked remarkably like grid cells—even though grid cells had not been part of their training system.

"The emergence of grid-like units is an impressive example of deep learning doing what it does best: inventing an original, often unpredicted internal representation to help solve a task," Savelli and Knierim wrote.

Interview with Matt Botvinick about neuroscience and AI. Credit: DeepMind

Grid cells appear to be so useful for path integration that this faux-rodent came up with a solution eerily similar to a real rodent brain. The researchers then wondered: Could grid cells also be useful in another crucial aspect of mammal navigation?

That aspect, called vector-based navigation, is basically the ability to calculate the straight-shot, "as the crow flies" distance to a goal even if you originally took a longer, less-direct route. That's a useful skill for finding shortcuts to your destination, Savelli pointed out.

To test this, researchers challenged the grid-cell-enabled faux-rodent to solve a maze, but blocked off most of the doorways so the program would have to take the long route to its goal. They also modified the program so it was rewarded for actions that brought it closer to the goal. They trained the network on a given maze and then opened shortcuts to see what happened.

Sure enough, the simulated rodent with grid cells quickly found and used the shortcuts, even though those pathways were new and unknown. And it performed far better than a faux-rodent whose start point and goal point were tracked only by place cells and head-direction cells. It even beat out a "human expert," the study authors said.

The findings eventually could prove useful for robots making their way through unknown territory, Savelli said. And from a neuroscientific perspective, they could help researchers better understand how these neurons do their job in the mammalian brain.

Of course, this program was highly simplified compared to its biological counterpart, Savelli pointed out. In the simulated rodent, the "place cells" didn't change—even though place cells and grid cells influence each other in complex ways in real brains.

"By developing the network such that the place-cell layer can be modulated by grid-like inputs, we could begin to unpack this relationship," Savelli and Knierim wrote.

Developing this AI program further could help scientists start to understand all the complex relationships that come into play in living neural systems, they added.

But whether they want to hone the technology or use it to understand biology, scientists will have to get a better handle on their own deep-learning programs, whose solutions to problems are often hard to decipher even if they consistently get results, scientists said.

"Making deep-learning systems more intelligible to human reasoning is an exciting challenge for the future," Savelli and Knierim wrote. [20]

Dissecting artificial intelligence to better understand the human brain

In the natural world, intelligence takes many forms. It could be a bat using echolocation to expertly navigate in the dark, or an octopus quickly adapting its behavior to survive in the deep ocean. Likewise, in the computer science world, multiple forms of artificial intelligence are emerging - different networks each trained to excel in a different task. And as will be presented today at the 25th annual meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society (CNS), cognitive neuroscientists increasingly are using those emerging artificial networks to enhance their understanding of one of the most elusive intelligence systems, the human brain.

"The fundamental questions cognitive neuroscientists and computer scientists seek to answer are similar," says Aude Oliva of MIT. "They have a complex system made of components - for one, it's called neurons and for the other, it's called units - and we are doing experiments to try to determine what those components calculate."

In Oliva's work, which she is presenting at the CNS symposium, neuroscientists are learning much about the role of contextual clues in human image recognition. By using "artificial neurons" - essentially lines of code, software - with neural network models, they can parse out the various elements that go into recognizing a specific place or object.

"The brain is a deep and complex neural network," says Nikolaus Kriegeskorte of Columbia University, who is chairing the symposium. "Neural network models are brain-inspired models that are now state-of-the-art in many artificial intelligence applications, such as computer vision."

In one recent study of more than 10 million images, Oliva and colleagues taught an artificial network to recognize 350 different places, such as a kitchen, bedroom, park, living room, etc. They expected the network to learn objects such as a bed associated with a bedroom. What they didn't expect was that the network would learn to recognize people and animals, for example dogs at parks and cats in living rooms.

The machine intelligence programs learn very quickly when given lots of data, which is what enables them to parse contextual learning at such a fine level, Oliva says. While it is not possible to

dissect human neurons at such a level, the computer [model](#) performing a similar task is entirely transparent. The [artificial neural networks](#) serve as "mini-brains that can be studied, changed, evaluated, compared against responses given by human neural networks, so the cognitive neuroscientists have some sort of sketch of how a real brain may function."

Indeed, Kriegeskorte says that these models have helped neuroscientists understand how people can recognize the objects around them in the blink of an eye. "This involves millions of signals emanating from the retina, that sweep through a sequence of layers of neurons, extracting semantic information, for example that we're looking at a street scene with several people and a dog," he says. "Current neural network models can perform this kind of task using only computations that biological neurons can perform. Moreover, these neural network models can predict to some extent how a neuron deep in the brain will respond to any image."

Using computer science to understand the human brain is a relatively new field that is expanding rapidly thanks to advancements in computing speed and power, along with neuroscience imaging tools. The artificial networks cannot yet replicate human visual abilities, Kriegeskorte says, but by modeling the human brain, they are furthering understanding of both cognition and [artificial intelligence](#). "It's a uniquely exciting time to be working at the intersection of neuroscience, cognitive science, and AI," he says.

Indeed, Oliva says; "Human cognitive and computational neuroscience is a fast-growing area of research, and knowledge about how the [human brain](#) is able to see, hear, feel, think, remember, and predict is mandatory to develop better diagnostic tools, to repair the [brain](#), and to make sure it develops well." [19]

Army's brain-like computers moving closer to cracking codes

U.S. Army Research Laboratory scientists have discovered a way to leverage emerging brain-like computer architectures for an age-old number-theoretic problem known as integer factorization.

By mimicking the brain functions of mammals in computing, Army scientists are opening up a new solution space that moves away from traditional computing architectures and towards devices that are able to operate within extreme size-, weight-, and power-constrained environments.

"With more computing power in the battlefield, we can process information and solve computationally-hard problems quicker," said Dr. John V. "Vinnie" Monaco, an ARL computer scientist. "Programming the type of devices that fit these criteria, for example, brain-inspired computers, is challenging, and cracking crypto codes is just one application that shows we know how to do this."

The problem itself can be stated in simple terms. Take a composite integer N and express it as the product of its prime components. Most people have completed this task at some point in grade school, often an exercise in elementary arithmetic. For example, 55 can be expressed as $5 \cdot 11$ and 63 as $3 \cdot 3 \cdot 7$. What many didn't realize is they were performing a task that if completed quickly enough for large numbers, could break much of the modern day internet.

Public key encryption is a method of secure communication used widely today, based on the RSA algorithm developed by Rivest, Shamir, and Adleman in 1978. The security of the RSA algorithm relies on the difficulty of factoring a large composite integer N , the public key, which is distributed by the receiver to anyone who wants to send an encrypted message. If N can be factored into its prime components, then the private key, needed to decrypt the message, can be recovered. However, the difficulty in factoring large integers quickly becomes apparent.

As the size of N increases by a single digit, the time it would take to factor N by trying all possible combinations of prime factors is approximately doubled. This means that if a number with ten digits takes 1 minute to factor, a number with twenty digits will take about 17 hours and a number with 30 digits about two years, an exponential growth in effort. This difficulty underlies the security of the RSA algorithm.

Challenging this, Monaco and his colleague Dr. Manuel Vindiola, of the lab's Computational Sciences Division, demonstrated how brain-like computers lend a speedup to the currently best known algorithms for factoring integers.

The team of researchers have devised a way to factor large composite integers by harnessing the massive parallelism of novel computer architectures that mimic the functioning of the mammalian brain. So called [neuromorphic computers](#) operate under vastly different principles than conventional computers, such as laptops and mobile devices, all based on an architecture described by John von Neumann in 1945.

In the von Neumann architecture, memory is separate from the central processing unit, or CPU, which must read and write to memory over a bus. This bus has a limited bandwidth, and much of the time, the CPU is waiting to access memory, often referred to as the von Neumann bottleneck.

Neuromorphic computers, on the other hand, do not suffer from a von Neumann bottleneck. There is no CPU, memory, or bus. Instead, they incorporate many individual computation units, much like neurons in the brain.

These units are connected by physical or simulated pathways for passing data around, analogous to synaptic connections between neurons. Many neuromorphic devices operate based on the physical response properties of the underlying material, such as graphene lasers or magnetic tunnel junctions. Because of this, these devices consume orders of magnitude less energy than their von Neumann counterparts and can operate on a molecular time scale. As such, any algorithm capable of running on these devices stands to benefit from their capabilities.

The speedup acquired by the ARL researchers is due to the formulation of a method for integer factorization with the help of a neuromorphic co-processor. The current fastest algorithms for factoring integers consist primarily of two stages, sieving and a matrix reduction, and the sieving stage comprises most of the computational effort.

Sieving involves searching for many integers that satisfy a certain property called B-smooth, integers that don't contain a prime factor greater than B . Monaco and Vindiola were able to construct a neural network that discovers B-smooth numbers quicker and with greater accuracy than on a von

Neumann architecture. Their algorithm leverages the massive parallelism of brain-inspired computers and the innate ability of individual neurons to perform arithmetic operations, such as addition. As neuromorphic architectures continue to increase in size and speed, not limited by Moore's Law, their ability to tackle larger integer factorization problems also grows. In their work, it's estimated that 1024-bit keys could be broken in about a year, a task once thought to be out of reach. For comparison, the current record, a 232 decimal digit number (RSA-768) took about 2,000 years of computing time over the course of several years.

From a broader perspective, this discovery pushes us to question how a shift in computing paradigm might affect some of our most basic security assumptions. As emerging devices shift to incorporate massive parallelism and harness material physics to compute, the computational hardness underlying some security protocols may be challenged in ways not previously imagined. This work also opens the door to new research areas of emerging computer architectures, in terms of algorithm design and function representation, alongside low-power machine learning and artificial intelligence applications.

"Encrypted messages in warfare often have an expiration date, when their contents become un-actionable," Monaco said. "There is an urgency to decrypt enemy communications, especially those at the field level, since these expire the quickest, compared to communication at higher echelons. In field conditions, power and connectivity are extremely limited. This is a strong motivating factor for using a brain-inspired [computer](#) for such a task where conventional computers are not practical."
[18]

Teaching computers to guide science: Machine learning method sees forests and trees

While it may be the era of supercomputers and "big data," without smart methods to mine all that data, it's only so much digital detritus. Now researchers at the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) and UC Berkeley have come up with a novel machine learning method that enables scientists to derive insights from systems of previously intractable complexity in record time.

In a paper published recently in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, the researchers describe a technique called "iterative Random Forests," which they say could have a transformative effect on any area of [science](#) or engineering with [complex systems](#), including biology, precision medicine, materials science, environmental science, and manufacturing, to name a few.

"Take a human cell, for example. There are 10^{170} possible molecular interactions in a single cell. That creates considerable computing challenges in searching for relationships," said Ben Brown, head of Berkeley Lab's Molecular Ecosystems Biology Department. "Our method enables the identification of interactions of high order at the same computational cost as main effects - even when those interactions are local with weak marginal effects."

Brown and Bin Yu of UC Berkeley are lead senior authors of "Iterative Random Forests to Discover Predictive and Stable High-Order Interactions." The co-first authors are Sumanta Basu (formerly a joint postdoc of Brown and Yu and now an assistant professor at Cornell University) and Karl Kumbier (a Ph.D. student of Yu in the UC Berkeley Statistics Department). The paper is the culmination of three years of work that the authors believe will transform the way science is done. "With our method we can gain radically richer information than we've ever been able to gain from a learning machine," Brown said.

The needs of [machine learning](#) in science are different from that of industry, where machine learning has been used for things like playing chess, making self-driving cars, and predicting the stock market.

"The machine learning developed by industry is great if you want to do high-frequency trading on the [stock market](#)," Brown said. "You don't care why you're able to predict the stock will go up or down. You just want to know that you can make the predictions."

But in science, questions surrounding why a process behaves in certain ways are critical. Understanding "why" allows scientists to model or even engineer processes to improve or attain a desired outcome. As a result, machine learning for science needs to peer inside the black box and understand why and how computers reached the conclusions they reached. A long-term goal is to use this kind of information to model or engineer systems to obtain desired outcomes.

In highly complex systems - whether it's a single cell, the human body, or even an entire ecosystem - there are a large number of variables interacting in nonlinear ways. That makes it difficult if not impossible to build a model that can determine cause and effect. "Unfortunately, in biology, you come across interactions of order 30, 40, 60 all the time," Brown said. "It's completely intractable with traditional approaches to statistical learning."

The method developed by the team led by Brown and Yu, iterative Random Forests (iRF), builds on an algorithm called random forests, a popular and effective predictive modeling tool, translating the internal states of the black box learner into a human-interpretable form. Their approach allows researchers to search for complex interactions by decoupling the order, or size, of interactions from the computational cost of identification.

"There is no difference in the computational cost of detecting an interaction of order 30 versus an interaction of order two," Brown said. "And that's a sea change."

In the PNAS paper, the scientists demonstrated their method on two genomics problems, the role of gene enhancers in the fruit fly embryo and alternative splicing in a human-derived cell line. In both cases, using iRF confirmed previous findings while also uncovering previously unidentified higher-order interactions for follow-up study.

Brown said they're now using their method for designing phased array laser systems and optimizing sustainable agriculture systems.

"We believe this is a different paradigm for doing science," said Yu, a professor in the departments of Statistics and Electrical Engineering & Computer Science at UC Berkeley. "We do prediction, but

we introduce stability on top of prediction in iRF to more reliably learn the underlying structure in the predictors."

"This enables us to learn how to engineer systems for goal-oriented optimization and more accurately targeted simulations and follow-up experiments," Brown added.

In a [PNAS commentary](#) on the technique, Danielle Denisko and Michael Hoffman of the University of Toronto wrote: "iRF holds much promise as a new and effective way of detecting interactions in a variety of settings, and its use will help us ensure no branch or leaf is ever left unturned." [17]

Rise of the quantum thinking machines

Quantum computers can be made to utilize effects such as quantum coherence and entanglement to accelerate machine learning.

Although we typically view information as being an abstract or virtual entity, information, of course, must be stored in a physical medium. Information processing devices such as computers and phones are therefore fundamentally governed by the laws of physics. In this way, the fundamental physical limits of an agent's ability to learn are governed by the laws of physics. The best known theory of physics is quantum theory, which ultimately must be used to determine the absolute physical limits of a machine's ability to learn.

A quantum algorithm is a stepwise procedure performed on a quantum computer to solve a problem such as searching a database. Quantum machine learning software makes use of quantum algorithms to process information in ways that classical computers cannot. These quantum effects open up exciting new avenues which can, in principle, outperform the best known classical algorithms when solving certain machine learning problems. This is known as quantum enhanced machine learning.

Machine learning methods use mathematical algorithms to search for certain patterns in large data sets. Machine learning is widely used in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, particle physics and many other fields. Thanks to the ability to adapt to new data, machine learning greatly exceeds the ability of people. Despite this, machine learning cannot cope with certain difficult tasks.

Quantum enhancement is predicted to be possible for a host of machine learning tasks, ranging from optimization to quantum enhanced deep learning.

In the new paper published in Nature, a group of scientists led by Skoltech Associate Professor Jacob Biamonte produced a feasibility analysis outlining what steps can be taken for practical quantum enhanced machine learning.

The prospects of using quantum computers to accelerate machine learning has generated recent excitement due to the increasing capabilities of quantum computers. This includes a commercially available 2000 spin quantum accelerated annealing by the Canada-based company D-Wave

Systems Inc. and a 16 qubit universal quantum processor by IBM which is accessible via a (currently free) cloud service.

The availability of these devices has led to increased interest from the machine learning community. The interest comes as a bit of a shock to the traditional quantum physics community, in which researchers have thought that the primary applications of quantum computers would be using quantum computers to simulate chemical physics, which can be used in the pharmaceutical industry for drug discovery. However, certain quantum systems can be mapped to certain machine learning models, particularly deep learning models. Quantum machine learning can be used to work in tandem with these existing methods for quantum chemical emulation, leading to even greater capabilities for a new era of quantum technology.

"Early on, the team burned the midnight oil over Skype, debating what the field even was—our synthesis will hopefully solidify topical importance. We submitted our draft to Nature, going forward subject to significant changes. All in all, we ended up writing three versions over eight months with nothing more than the title in common," said lead study author Biamonte. [16]

A Machine Learning Systems That Called Neural Networks Perform Tasks by Analyzing Huge Volumes of Data

Neural networks learn how to carry out certain tasks by analyzing large amounts of data displayed to them. These machine learning systems continually learn and readjust to be able to carry out the task set out before them. Understanding how neural networks work helps researchers to develop better applications and uses for them.

At the 2017 Conference on Empirical Methods on Natural Language Processing earlier this month, MIT researchers demonstrated a new general-purpose technique for making sense of neural networks that are able to carry out natural language processing tasks where they attempt to extract data written in normal text opposed to something of a structured language like database-query language.

The new technique works great in any system that reads the text as input and produces symbols as the output. One such example of this can be seen in an automatic translator. It works without the need to access any underlying software too. Tommi Jaakkola is Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT and one of the authors on the paper. He says, "I can't just do a simple randomization. And what you are predicting is now a more complex object, like a sentence, so what does it mean to give an explanation?"

As part of the research, Jaakkola, and colleague David Alvarez-Melis, an MIT graduate student in electrical engineering and computer science and first author on the paper, used a black-box neural net in which to generate test sentences to feed black-box neural nets. The duo began by teaching the network to compress and decompress natural sentences. As the training continues the encoder and decoder get evaluated simultaneously depending on how closely the decoder's output matches up with the encoder's input.

Neural nets work on probabilities. For example, an object-recognition system could be fed an image of a cat, and it would process that image as it saying 75 percent probability of being a cat,

while still having a 25 percent probability that it's a dog. Along with that same line, Jaakkola and Alvarez-Melis' sentence compressing network has alternative words for each of those in a decoded sentence along with the probability that each is correct. So, once the system has generated a list of closely related sentences they're then fed to a black-box natural language processor. This then allows the researchers to analyze and determine which inputs have an effect on which outputs.

During the research, the pair applied this technique to three different types of a natural language processing system. The first one inferred the way in which words were pronounced; the second was a set of translators, and the third was a simple computer dialogue system which tried to provide adequate responses to questions or remarks. In looking at the results, it was clear and pretty obvious that the translation systems had strong dependencies on individual words of both the input and output sentences. A little more surprising, however, was the identification of gender biases in the texts on which the machine translation systems were trained. The dialogue system was too small to take advantage of the training set.

"The other experiment we do is in flawed systems," says Alvarez-Melis. "If you have a black-box model that is not doing a good job, can you first use this kind of approach to identify problems? A motivating application of this kind of interpretability is to fix systems, to improve systems, by understanding what they're getting wrong and why." [15]

Active machine learning for the discovery and crystallization of gigantic polyoxometalate molecules

Who is the better experimentalist, a human or a robot? When it comes to exploring synthetic and crystallization conditions for inorganic gigantic molecules, actively learning machines are clearly ahead, as demonstrated by British Scientists in an experiment with polyoxometalates published in the journal *Angewandte Chemie*.

Polyoxometalates form through self-assembly of a large number of metal atoms bridged by oxygen atoms. Potential uses include catalysis, electronics, and medicine. Insights into the self-organization processes could also be of use in developing functional chemical systems like "molecular machines".

Polyoxometalates offer a nearly unlimited variety of structures. However, it is not easy to find new ones, because the aggregation of complex inorganic molecules to gigantic molecules is a process that is difficult to predict. It is necessary to find conditions under which the building blocks aggregate and then also crystallize, so that they can be characterized.

A team led by Leroy Cronin at the University of Glasgow (UK) has now developed a new approach to define the range of suitable conditions for the synthesis and crystallization of polyoxometalates. It is based on recent advances in machine learning, known as active learning. They allowed their trained machine to compete against the intuition of experienced experimenters. The test example was $\text{Na}_6[\text{Mo}_{120}\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_{366}\text{H}_{12}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{78}]\cdot 200 \text{H}_2\text{O}$, a new, ring-shaped polyoxometalate cluster that was recently discovered by the researchers' automated chemical robot.

In the experiment, the relative quantities of the three necessary reagent solutions were to be varied while the protocol was otherwise prescribed. The starting point was a set of data from

successful and unsuccessful crystallization experiments. The aim was to plan ten experiments and then use the results from these to proceed to the next set of ten experiments - a total of one hundred crystallization attempts.

Although the flesh-and-blood experimenters were able to produce more successful crystallizations, the far more "adventurous" machine algorithm was superior on balance because it covered a significantly broader domain of the "crystallization space". The quality of the prediction of whether an experiment would lead to crystallization was improved significantly more by the machine than the human experimenters. A series of 100 purely random experiments resulted in no improvement. In addition, the machine discovered a range of conditions that led to crystals which would not have been expected based on pure intuition. This "unbiased" automated method makes the discovery of novel compounds more probably than reliance on human intuition. The researchers are now looking for ways to make especially efficient "teams" of man and machine. [14]

Using machine learning to understand materials

Whether you realize it or not, machine learning is making your online experience more efficient. The technology, designed by computer scientists, is used to better understand, analyze, and categorize data. When you tag your friend on Facebook, clear your spam filter, or click on a suggested YouTube video, you're benefitting from machine learning algorithms.

Machine learning algorithms are designed to improve as they encounter more data, making them a versatile technology for understanding large sets of photos such as those accessible from Google Images. Elizabeth Holm, professor of materials science and engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, is leveraging this technology to better understand the enormous number of research images accumulated in the field of materials science. This unique application is an interdisciplinary approach to machine learning that hasn't been explored before.

"Just like you might search for cute cat pictures on the internet, or Facebook recognizes the faces of your friends, we are creating a system that allows a computer to automatically understand the visual data of materials science," explains Holm.

The field of materials science usually relies on human experts to identify research images by hand. Using machine learning algorithms, Holm and her group have created a system that automatically recognizes and categorizes microstructural images of materials. Her goal is to make it more efficient for materials scientists to search, sort, classify, and identify important information in their visual data.

"In materials science, one of our fundamental data is pictures," explains Holm. "Images contain information that we recognize, even when we find it difficult to quantify numerically."

Holm's machine learning system has several different applications within the materials science field including research, industry, publishing, and academia. For example, the system could be used to create a visual search of a scientific journal archives so that a researcher could find out whether a similar image had ever been published. Similarly, the system can be used to automatically search and categorize image archives in industries or research labs. "Big companies can have archives of 600,000 or more research images. No one wants to look through those, but they want to use that

data to better understand their products," explains Holm. "This system has the power to unlock those archives."

Holm and her group have been working on this research for about three years and are continuing to grow the project, especially as it relates to the metal 3-D printing field. For example, they are beginning to compile a database of experimental and simulated metal powder micrographs in order to better understand what types of raw materials are best suited for 3-D printing processes.

Holm published an article about this research in the December 2015 issue of Computational Materials Science titled "A computer vision approach for automated analysis and classification of microstructural image data." [13]

Artificial intelligence helps in the discovery of new materials

With the help of artificial intelligence, chemists from the University of Basel in Switzerland have computed the characteristics of about two million crystals made up of four chemical elements. The researchers were able to identify 90 previously unknown thermodynamically stable crystals that can be regarded as new materials.

They report on their findings in the scientific journal Physical Review Letters.

Elpasolite is a glassy, transparent, shiny and soft mineral with a cubic crystal structure. First discovered in El Paso County (Colorado, USA), it can also be found in the Rocky Mountains, Virginia and the Apennines (Italy). In experimental databases, elpasolite is one of the most frequently found quaternary crystals (crystals made up of four chemical elements). Depending on its composition, it can be a metallic conductor, a semi-conductor or an insulator, and may also emit light when exposed to radiation.

These characteristics make elpasolite an interesting candidate for use in scintillators (certain aspects of which can already be demonstrated) and other applications. Its chemical complexity means that, mathematically speaking, it is practically impossible to use quantum mechanics to predict every theoretically viable combination of the four elements in the structure of elpasolite.

Machine learning aids statistical analysis

Thanks to modern artificial intelligence, Felix Faber, a doctoral student in Prof. Anatole von Lilienfeld's group at the University of Basel's Department of Chemistry, has now succeeded in solving this material design problem. First, using quantum mechanics, he generated predictions for thousands of elpasolite crystals with randomly determined chemical compositions. He then used the results to train statistical machine learning models (ML models). The improved algorithmic strategy achieved a predictive accuracy equivalent to that of standard quantum mechanical approaches.

ML models have the advantage of being several orders of magnitude quicker than corresponding quantum mechanical calculations. Within a day, the ML model was able to predict the formation energy – an indicator of chemical stability – of all two million elpasolite crystals that theoretically can be obtained from the main group elements of the periodic table. In contrast, performance of

the calculations by quantum mechanical means would have taken a supercomputer more than 20 million hours.

Unknown materials with interesting characteristics

An analysis of the characteristics computed by the model offers new insights into this class of materials. The researchers were able to detect basic trends in formation energy and identify 90 previously unknown crystals that should be thermodynamically stable, according to quantum mechanical predictions.

On the basis of these potential characteristics, elpasolite has been entered into the Materials Project material database, which plays a key role in the Materials Genome Initiative. The initiative was launched by the US government in 2011 with the aim of using computational support to accelerate the discovery and the experimental synthesis of interesting new materials.

Some of the newly discovered elpasolite crystals display exotic electronic characteristics and unusual compositions. "The combination of artificial intelligence, big data, quantum mechanics and supercomputing opens up promising new avenues for deepening our understanding of materials and discovering new ones that we would not consider if we relied solely on human intuition," says study director von Lilienfeld. [12]

Physicists are putting themselves out of a job, using artificial intelligence to run a complex experiment

The experiment, developed by physicists from The Australian National University (ANU) and UNSW ADFA, created an extremely cold gas trapped in a laser beam, known as a Bose-Einstein condensate, replicating the experiment that won the 2001 Nobel Prize.

"I didn't expect the machine could learn to do the experiment itself, from scratch, in under an hour," said co-lead researcher Paul Wigley from the ANU Research School of Physics and Engineering.

"A simple computer program would have taken longer than the age of the Universe to run through all the combinations and work this out."

Bose-Einstein condensates are some of the coldest places in the Universe, far colder than outer space, typically less than a billionth of a degree above absolute zero.

They could be used for mineral exploration or navigation systems as they are extremely sensitive to external disturbances, which allows them to make very precise measurements such as tiny changes in the Earth's magnetic field or gravity.

The artificial intelligence system's ability to set itself up quickly every morning and compensate for any overnight fluctuations would make this fragile technology much more useful for field measurements, said co-lead researcher Dr Michael Hush from UNSW ADFA.

"You could make a working device to measure gravity that you could take in the back of a car, and the artificial intelligence would recalibrate and fix itself no matter what," he said.

"It's cheaper than taking a physicist everywhere with you."

The team cooled the gas to around 1 microkelvin, and then handed control of the three laser beams over to the artificial intelligence to cool the trapped gas down to nanokelvin.

Researchers were surprised by the methods the system came up with to ramp down the power of the lasers.

"It did things a person wouldn't guess, such as changing one laser's power up and down, and compensating with another," said Mr Wigley.

"It may be able to come up with complicated ways humans haven't thought of to get experiments colder and make measurements more precise.

The new technique will lead to bigger and better experiments, said Dr Hush.

"Next we plan to employ the artificial intelligence to build an even larger Bose-Einstein condensate faster than we've seen ever before," he said.

The research is published in the Nature group journal Scientific Reports. [11]

Quantum experiments designed by machines

The idea was developed when the physicists wanted to create new quantum states in the laboratory, but were unable to conceive of methods to do so. "After many unsuccessful attempts to come up with an experimental implementation, we came to the conclusion that our intuition about these phenomena seems to be wrong. We realized that in the end we were just trying random arrangements of quantum building blocks. And that is what a computer can do as well - but thousands of times faster", explains Mario Krenn, PhD student in Anton Zeilinger's group and first author research.

After a few hours of calculation, their algorithm - which they call Melvin - found the recipe to the question they were unable to solve, and its structure surprised them. Zeilinger says: "Suppose I want build an experiment realizing a specific quantum state I am interested in. Then humans intuitively consider setups reflecting the symmetries of the state. Yet Melvin found out that the most simple realization can be asymmetric and therefore counterintuitive. A human would probably never come up with that solution."

The physicists applied the idea to several other questions and got dozens of new and surprising answers. "The solutions are difficult to understand, but we were able to extract some new experimental tricks we have not thought of before. Some of these computer-designed experiments are being built at the moment in our laboratories", says Krenn.

Melvin not only tries random arrangements of experimental components, but also learns from previous successful attempts, which significantly speeds up the discovery rate for more complex solutions. In the future, the authors want to apply their algorithm to even more general questions in quantum physics, and hope it helps to investigate new phenomena in laboratories. [10]

Moving electrons around loops with light: A quantum device based on geometry

Researchers at the University of Chicago's Institute for Molecular Engineering and the University of Konstanz have demonstrated the ability to generate a quantum logic operation, or rotation of the qubit, that - surprisingly—is intrinsically resilient to noise as well as to variations in the strength or duration of the control. Their achievement is based on a geometric concept known as the Berry phase and is implemented through entirely optical means within a single electronic spin in diamond.

Their findings were published online Feb. 15, 2016, in *Nature Photonics* and will appear in the March print issue. "We tend to view quantum operations as very fragile and susceptible to noise, especially when compared to conventional electronics," remarked David Awschalom, the Liew Family Professor of Molecular Engineering and senior scientist at Argonne National Laboratory, who led the research. "In contrast, our approach shows incredible resilience to external influences and fulfills a key requirement for any practical quantum technology."

Quantum geometry

When a quantum mechanical object, such as an electron, is cycled along some loop, it retains a memory of the path that it travelled, the Berry phase. To better understand this concept, the Foucault pendulum, a common staple of science museums helps to give some intuition. A pendulum, like those in a grandfather clock, typically oscillates back and forth within a fixed plane. However, a Foucault pendulum oscillates along a plane that gradually rotates over the course of a day due to Earth's rotation, and in turn knocks over a series of pins encircling the pendulum.

The number of knocked-over pins is a direct measure of the total angular shift of the pendulum's oscillation plane, its acquired geometric phase. Essentially, this shift is directly related to the location of the pendulum on Earth's surface as the rotation of Earth transports the pendulum along a specific closed path, its circle of latitude. While this angular shift depends on the particular path traveled, Awschalom said, it remarkably does not depend on the rotational speed of Earth or the oscillation frequency of the pendulum.

"Likewise, the Berry phase is a similar path-dependent rotation of the internal state of a quantum system, and it shows promise in quantum information processing as a robust means to manipulate qubit states," he said.

A light touch

In this experiment, the researchers manipulated the Berry phase of a quantum state within a nitrogen-vacancy (NV) center, an atomic-scale defect in diamond. Over the past decade and a half, its electronic spin state has garnered great interest as a potential qubit. In their experiments, the team members developed a method with which to draw paths for this defect's spin by varying the applied laser light. To demonstrate Berry phase, they traced loops similar to that of a tangerine slice within the quantum space of all of the potential combinations of spin states.

"Essentially, the area of the tangerine slice's peel that we drew dictated the amount of Berry phase that we were able to accumulate," said Christopher Yale, a postdoctoral scholar in Awschalom's laboratory, and one of the co-lead authors of the project.

This approach using laser light to fully control the path of the electronic spin is in contrast to more common techniques that control the NV center spin, through the application of microwave fields. Such an approach may one day be useful in developing photonic networks of these defects, linked and controlled entirely by light, as a way to both process and transmit quantum information.

A noisy path

A key feature of Berry phase that makes it a robust quantum logic operation is its resilience to noise sources. To test the robustness of their Berry phase operations, the researchers intentionally added noise to the laser light controlling the path. As a result, the spin state would travel along its intended path in an erratic fashion.

However, as long as the total area of the path remained the same, so did the Berry phase that they measured.

"In particular, we found the Berry phase to be insensitive to fluctuations in the intensity of the laser. Noise like this is normally a bane for quantum control," said Brian Zhou, a postdoctoral scholar in the group, and co-lead author.

"Imagine you're hiking along the shore of a lake, and even though you continually leave the path to go take pictures, you eventually finish hiking around the lake," said F. Joseph Heremans, co-lead author, and now a staff scientist at Argonne National Laboratory. "You've still hiked the entire loop regardless of the bizarre path you took, and so the area enclosed remains virtually the same."

These optically controlled Berry phases within diamond suggest a route toward robust and fault-tolerant quantum information processing, noted Guido Burkard, professor of physics at the University of Konstanz and theory collaborator on the project.

"Though its technological applications are still nascent, Berry phases have a rich underlying mathematical framework that makes them a fascinating area of study," Burkard said. [9]

Researchers demonstrate 'quantum surrealism'

In a new version of an old experiment, CIFAR Senior Fellow Aephraim Steinberg (University of Toronto) and colleagues tracked the trajectories of photons as the particles traced a path through one of two slits and onto a screen. But the researchers went further, and observed the "nonlocal" influence of another photon that the first photon had been entangled with.

The results counter a long-standing criticism of an interpretation of quantum mechanics called the De Broglie-Bohm theory. Detractors of this interpretation had faulted it for failing to explain the behaviour of entangled photons realistically. For Steinberg, the results are important because they give us a way of visualizing quantum mechanics that's just as valid as the standard interpretation, and perhaps more intuitive.

"I'm less interested in focusing on the philosophical question of what's 'really' out there. I think the fruitful question is more down to earth. Rather than thinking about different metaphysical interpretations, I would phrase it in terms of having different pictures. Different pictures can be useful. They can help shape better intuitions."

At stake is what is "really" happening at the quantum level. The uncertainty principle tells us that we can never know both a particle's position and momentum with complete certainty. And when we do interact with a quantum system, for instance by measuring it, we disturb the system. So if we fire a photon at a screen and want to know where it will hit, we'll never know for sure exactly where it will hit or what path it will take to get there.

The standard interpretation of quantum mechanics holds that this uncertainty means that there is no "real" trajectory between the light source and the screen. The best we can do is to calculate a "wave function" that shows the odds of the photon being in any one place at any time, but won't tell us where it is until we make a measurement.

Yet another interpretation, called the De Broglie-Bohm theory, says that the photons do have real trajectories that are guided by a "pilot wave" that accompanies the particle. The wave is still probabilistic, but the particle takes a real trajectory from source to target. It doesn't simply "collapse" into a particular location once it's measured.

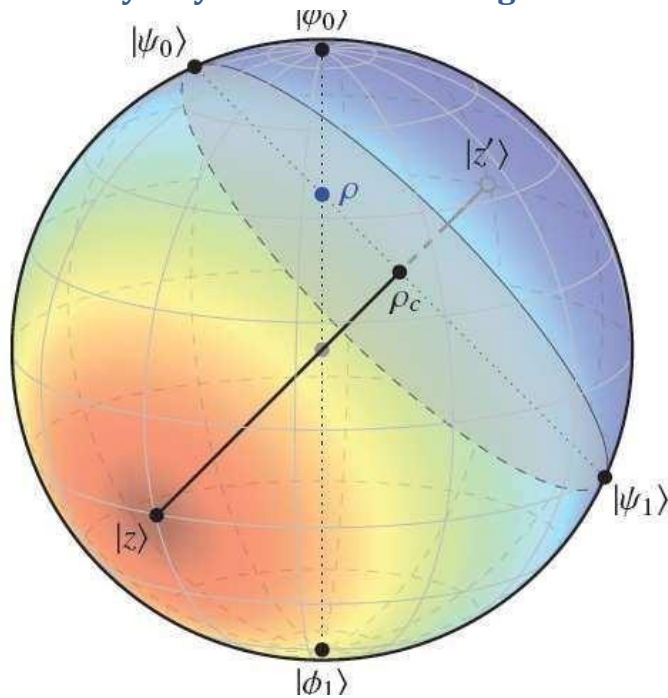
In 2011 Steinberg and his colleagues showed that they could follow trajectories for photons by subjecting many identical particles to measurements so weak that the particles were barely disturbed, and then averaging out the information. This method showed trajectories that looked similar to classical ones - say, those of balls flying through the air.

But critics had pointed out a problem with this viewpoint. Quantum mechanics also tells us that two particles can be entangled, so that a measurement of one particle affects the other. The critics complained that in some cases, a measurement of one particle would lead to an incorrect prediction of the trajectory of the entangled particle. They coined the term "surreal trajectories" to describe them.

In the most recent experiment, Steinberg and colleagues showed that the surrealism was a consequence of non-locality - the fact that the particles were able to influence one another instantaneously at a distance. In fact, the "incorrect" predictions of trajectories by the entangled photon were actually a consequence of where in their course the entangled particles were measured. Considering both particles together, the measurements made sense and were consistent with real trajectories.

Steinberg points out that both the standard interpretation of quantum mechanics and the De Broglie-Bohm interpretation are consistent with experimental evidence, and are mathematically equivalent. But it is helpful in some circumstances to visualize real trajectories, rather than wave function collapses, he says. [8]

Physicists discover easy way to measure entanglement—on a sphere



Entanglement on a sphere: This Bloch sphere shows entanglement for the one-root state ρ and its radial state ρ_c . The color on the sphere corresponds to the value of the entanglement, which is determined by the distance from the root state z , the point at which there is no entanglement (red); the further from z , the greater the entanglement (blue). Credit: Regula and Adesso. ©2016 American Physical Society

Now in a new paper to be published in *Physical Review Letters*, mathematical physicists Bartosz Regula and Gerardo Adesso at The University of Nottingham have greatly simplified the problem of measuring entanglement.

To do this, the scientists turned the difficult analytical problem into an easy geometrical one. They showed that, in many cases, the amount of entanglement between states corresponds to the distance between two points on a Bloch sphere, which is basically a normal 3D sphere that physicists use to model quantum states.

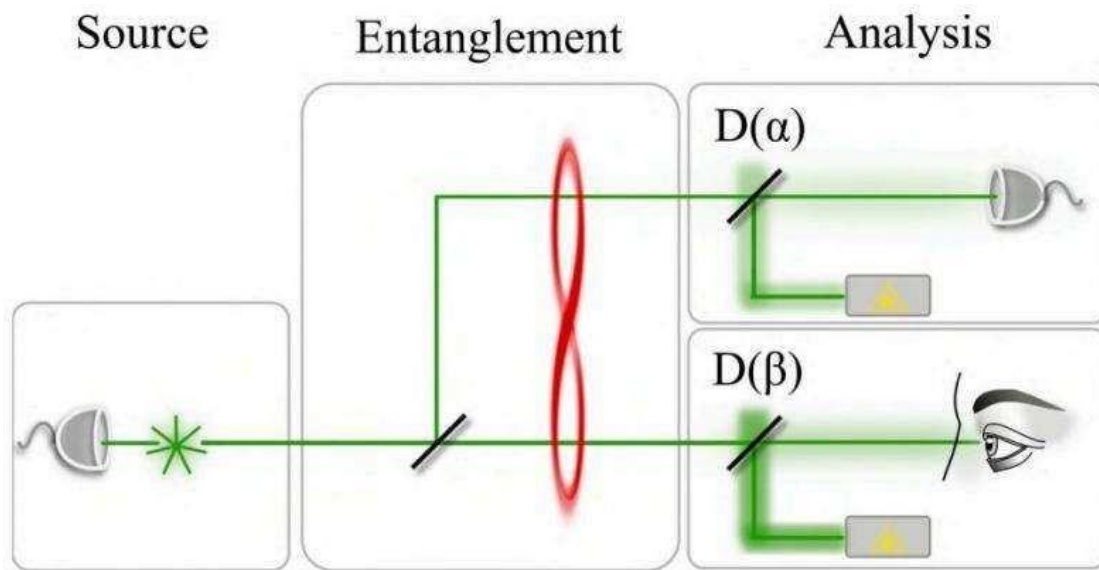
As the scientists explain, the traditionally difficult part of the math problem is that it requires finding the optimal decomposition of mixed states into pure states. The geometrical approach completely eliminates this requirement by reducing the many possible ways that states could decompose down to a single point on the sphere at which there is zero entanglement. The approach requires that there be only one such point, or "root," of zero entanglement, prompting the physicists to describe the method as "one root to rule them all."

The scientists explain that the "one root" property is common among quantum states and can be easily verified, transforming a formidable math problem into one that is trivially easy. They demonstrated that the new approach works for many types of two-, three- and four-qubit entangled states.

"This method reveals an intriguing and previously unexplored connection between the quantum features of a state and classical geometry, allowing all one-root states to enjoy a convenient visual representation which considerably simplifies the study and understanding of their properties," the researchers explained.

The simple way of measuring a state's entanglement could have applications in many technological areas, such as quantum cryptography, computation, and communication. It could also provide insight into understanding the foundations of thermodynamics, condensed matter physics, and biology. [7]

An idea for allowing the human eye to observe an instance of entanglement



Scheme of the proposal for detecting entanglement with the human eye. Credit: arXiv:1602.01907

Entanglement, is of course, where two quantum particles are intrinsically linked to the extent that they actually share the same existence, even though they can be separated and moved apart. The idea was first proposed nearly a century ago, and it has not only been proven, but researchers routinely cause it to occur, but, to date, not one single person has ever actually seen it happen—they only know it happens by conducting a series of experiments. It is not clear if anyone has ever actually tried to see it happen, but in this new effort, the research trio claim to have found a way to make it happen—if only someone else will carry out the experiment on a willing volunteer.

The idea involves using a beam splitter and two beams of light—an initial beam of coherent photons fired at the beam splitter and a secondary beam of coherent photons that interferes with the photons in the first beam causing a change of phase, forcing the light to be reflected rather than transmitted. In such a scenario, the secondary beam would not need to be as intense as the first, and could in fact be just a single coherent photon—if it were entangled, it could be used to allow a person to see the more powerful beam while still preserving the entanglement of the original photon.

The researchers suggest the technology to carry out such an experiment exists today, but also acknowledge that it would take a special person to volunteer for such an assignment because to prove that they had seen entanglement taking place would involve shooting a large number of photons in series, into a person's eye, whereby the resolute volunteer would announce whether they had seen the light on the order of thousands of times. [6]

Quantum entanglement

Measurements of physical properties such as position, momentum, spin, polarization, etc. performed on entangled particles are found to be appropriately correlated. For example, if a pair of particles is generated in such a way that their total spin is known to be zero, and one particle is found to have clockwise spin on a certain axis, then the spin of the other particle, measured on the same axis, will be found to be counterclockwise. Because of the nature of quantum measurement, however, this behavior gives rise to effects that can appear paradoxical: any measurement of a property of a particle can be seen as acting on that particle (e.g. by collapsing a number of superimposed states); and in the case of entangled particles, such action must be on the entangled system as a whole. It thus appears that one particle of an entangled pair "knows" what measurement has been performed on the other, and with what outcome, even though there is no known means for such information to be communicated between the particles, which at the time of measurement may be separated by arbitrarily large distances. [4]

The Bridge

The accelerating electrons explain not only the Maxwell Equations and the Special Relativity, but the Heisenberg Uncertainty Relation, the wave particle duality and the electron's spin also, building the bridge between the Classical and Quantum Theories. [1]

Accelerating charges

The moving charges are self maintain the electromagnetic field locally, causing their movement and this is the result of their acceleration under the force of this field. In the classical physics the charges will distributed along the electric current so that the electric potential lowering along the current, by linearly increasing the way they take every next time period because this accelerated motion. The same thing happens on the atomic scale giving a dp impulse difference and a dx way difference between the different part of the not point like particles.

Relativistic effect

Another bridge between the classical and quantum mechanics in the realm of relativity is that the charge distribution is lowering in the reference frame of the accelerating charges linearly: $ds/dt = at$ (time coordinate), but in the reference frame of the current it is parabolic: $s = a/2 t^2$ (geometric coordinate).

Heisenberg Uncertainty Relation

In the atomic scale the Heisenberg uncertainty relation gives the same result, since the moving electron in the atom accelerating in the electric field of the proton, causing a charge distribution on Δx position difference and with a Δp momentum difference such a way that their product is about the half Planck reduced constant. For the proton this Δx is much less in the nucleon, than in the orbit of the electron in the atom, the Δp is much higher because of the greater proton mass.

This means that the electron and proton are not point like particles, but have a real charge distribution.

Wave – Particle Duality

The accelerating electrons explain the wave – particle duality of the electrons and photons, since the elementary charges are distributed on Δx position with Δp impulse and creating a wave packet of the electron. The photon gives the electromagnetic particle of the mediating force of the electron's electromagnetic field with the same distribution of wavelengths.

Atomic model

The constantly accelerating electron in the Hydrogen atom is moving on the equipotential line of the proton and its kinetic and potential energy will be constant. Its energy will change only when it is changing its way to another equipotential line with another value of potential energy or getting free with enough kinetic energy. This means that the Rutherford-Bohr atomic model is right and only that changing acceleration of the electric charge causes radiation, not the steady acceleration. The steady acceleration of the charges only creates a centric parabolic steady electric field around the charge, the magnetic field. This gives the magnetic moment of the atoms, summing up the proton and electron magnetic moments caused by their circular motions and spins.

The Relativistic Bridge

Commonly accepted idea that the relativistic effect on the particle physics is the fermions' spin - another unresolved problem in the classical concepts. If the electric charges can move only with accelerated motions in the self-maintaining electromagnetic field, once upon a time they would reach the velocity of the electromagnetic field. The resolution of this problem is the spinning particle, constantly accelerating and not reaching the velocity of light because the acceleration is radial. One origin of Quantum Physics is the Planck Distribution Law of the electromagnetic oscillators, giving equal intensity for 2 different wavelengths on any temperature. Any of these two wavelengths will give equal intensity diffraction patterns, building different asymmetric constructions, for example proton - electron structures (atoms), molecules, etc. Since the particles are centers of diffraction patterns they also have particle – wave duality as the electromagnetic waves have. [2]

The weak interaction

The weak interaction transforms an electric charge in the diffraction pattern from one side to the other side, causing an electric dipole momentum change, which violates the CP and time reversal symmetry. The Electroweak Interaction shows that the Weak Interaction is basically electromagnetic in nature. The arrow of time shows the entropy grows by changing the temperature dependent diffraction patterns of the electromagnetic oscillators.

Another important issue of the quark model is when one quark changes its flavor such that a linear oscillation transforms into plane oscillation or vice versa, changing the charge value with 1 or -1. This kind of change in the oscillation mode requires not only parity change, but also charge and time changes (CPT symmetry) resulting a right handed anti-neutrino or a left handed neutrino.

The right handed anti-neutrino and the left handed neutrino exist only because changing back the quark flavor could happen only in reverse, because they are different geometrical constructions, the u is 2 dimensional and positively charged and the d is 1 dimensional and negatively charged. It needs also a time reversal, because anti particle (anti neutrino) is involved.

The neutrino is a $1/2$ spin creator particle to make equal the spins of the weak interaction, for example neutron decay to 2 fermions, every particle is fermions with $1/2$ spin. The weak interaction changes the entropy since more or less particles will give more or less freedom of movement. The entropy change is a result of temperature change and breaks the equality of oscillator diffraction intensity of the Maxwell–Boltzmann statistics. This way it changes the time coordinate measure and makes possible a different time dilation as of the special relativity.

The limit of the velocity of particles as the speed of light appropriate only for electrical charged particles, since the accelerated charges are self maintaining locally the accelerating electric force. The neutrinos are CP symmetry breaking particles compensated by time in the CPT symmetry, that is the time coordinate not works as in the electromagnetic interactions, consequently the speed of neutrinos is not limited by the speed of light.

The weak interaction T-asymmetry is in conjunction with the T-asymmetry of the second law of thermodynamics, meaning that locally lowering entropy (on extremely high temperature) causes the weak interaction, for example the Hydrogen fusion.

Probably because it is a spin creating movement changing linear oscillation to 2 dimensional oscillation by changing d to u quark and creating anti neutrino going back in time relative to the proton and electron created from the neutron, it seems that the anti neutrino fastest then the velocity of the photons created also in this weak interaction?

A quark flavor changing shows that it is a reflection changes movement and the CP- and T-symmetry breaking!!! This flavor changing oscillation could prove that it could be also on higher level such as atoms, molecules, probably big biological significant molecules and responsible on the aging of the life.

Important to mention that the weak interaction is always contains particles and antiparticles, where the neutrinos (antineutrinos) present the opposite side. It means by Feynman's interpretation that these particles present the backward time and probably because this they seem to move faster than the speed of light in the reference frame of the other side.

Finally since the weak interaction is an electric dipole change with $\frac{1}{2}$ spin creating; it is limited by the velocity of the electromagnetic wave, so the neutrino's velocity cannot exceed the velocity of light.

The General Weak Interaction

The Weak Interactions T-asymmetry is in conjunction with the T-asymmetry of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, meaning that locally lowering entropy (on extremely high temperature) causes for example the Hydrogen fusion. The arrow of time by the Second Law of Thermodynamics shows the increasing entropy and decreasing information by the Weak Interaction, changing the temperature dependent diffraction patterns. A good example of this is the neutron decay, creating more particles with less known information about them.

The neutrino oscillation of the Weak Interaction shows that it is a general electric dipole change and it is possible to any other temperature dependent entropy and information changing diffraction pattern of atoms, molecules and even complicated biological living structures.

We can generalize the weak interaction on all of the decaying matter constructions, even on the biological too. This gives the limited lifetime for the biological constructions also by the arrow of time. There should be a new research space of the Quantum Information Science the 'general neutrino oscillation' for the greater than subatomic matter structures as an electric dipole change. There is also connection between statistical physics and evolutionary biology, since the arrow of time is working in the biological evolution also.

The Fluctuation Theorem says that there is a probability that entropy will flow in a direction opposite to that dictated by the Second Law of Thermodynamics. In this case the Information is growing that is the matter formulas are emerging from the chaos. So the Weak Interaction has two directions, samples for one direction is the Neutron decay, and Hydrogen fusion is the opposite direction.

Fermions and Bosons

The fermions are the diffraction patterns of the bosons such a way that they are both sides of the same thing.

Van Der Waals force

Named after the Dutch scientist Johannes Diderik van der Waals – who first proposed it in 1873 to explain the behaviour of gases – it is a very weak force that only becomes relevant when atoms and molecules are very close together. Fluctuations in the electronic cloud of an atom mean that it will have an instantaneous dipole moment. This can induce a dipole moment in a nearby atom, the result being an attractive dipole–dipole interaction.

Electromagnetic inertia and mass

Electromagnetic Induction

Since the magnetic induction creates a negative electric field as a result of the changing acceleration, it works as an electromagnetic inertia, causing an electromagnetic mass. [1]

Relativistic change of mass

The increasing mass of the electric charges the result of the increasing inductive electric force acting against the accelerating force. The decreasing mass of the decreasing acceleration is the result of the inductive electric force acting against the decreasing force. This is the relativistic mass change explanation, especially importantly explaining the mass reduction in case of velocity decrease.

The frequency dependence of mass

Since $E = h\nu$ and $E = mc^2$, $m = h\nu/c^2$ that is the m depends only on the ν frequency. It means that the mass of the proton and electron are electromagnetic and the result of the electromagnetic induction, caused by the changing acceleration of the spinning and moving charge! It could be that the m_0 inertial mass is the result of the spin, since this is the only accelerating motion of the electric charge. Since the accelerating motion has different frequency for the electron in the atom and the proton, they masses are different, also as the wavelengths on both sides of the diffraction pattern, giving equal intensity of radiation.

Electron – Proton mass rate

The Planck distribution law explains the different frequencies of the proton and electron, giving equal intensity to different lambda wavelengths! Also since the particles are diffraction patterns they have some closeness to each other – can be seen as a gravitational force. [2]

There is an asymmetry between the mass of the electric charges, for example proton and electron, can understood by the asymmetrical Planck Distribution Law. This temperature dependent energy distribution is asymmetric around the maximum intensity, where the annihilation of matter and antimatter is a high probability event. The asymmetric sides are creating different frequencies of electromagnetic radiations being in the same intensity level and compensating each other. One of these compensating ratios is the electron – proton mass ratio. The lower energy side has no compensating intensity level, it is the dark energy and the corresponding matter is the dark matter.

Gravity from the point of view of quantum physics

The Gravitational force

The gravitational attractive force is basically a magnetic force.

The same electric charges can attract one another by the magnetic force if they are moving parallel in the same direction. Since the electrically neutral matter is composed of negative and positive charges they need 2 photons to mediate this attractive force, one per charges. The Bing Bang caused parallel moving of the matter gives this magnetic force, experienced as gravitational force.

Since graviton is a tensor field, it has spin = 2, could be 2 photons with spin = 1 together.

You can think about photons as virtual electron – positron pairs, obtaining the necessary virtual mass for gravity.

The mass as seen before a result of the diffraction, for example the proton – electron mass rate $M_p=1840 Me$. In order to move one of these diffraction maximum (electron or proton) we need to intervene into the diffraction pattern with a force appropriate to the intensity of this diffraction maximum, means its intensity or mass.

The Big Bang caused acceleration created radial currents of the matter, and since the matter is composed of negative and positive charges, these currents are creating magnetic field and attracting forces between the parallel moving electric currents. This is the gravitational force experienced by the matter, and also the mass is result of the electromagnetic forces between the charged particles. The positive and negative charged currents attracts each other or by the magnetic forces or by the much stronger electrostatic forces!?

The gravitational force attracting the matter, causing concentration of the matter in a small space and leaving much space with low matter concentration: dark matter and energy.

There is an asymmetry between the mass of the electric charges, for example proton and electron, can understood by the asymmetrical Planck Distribution Law. This temperature dependent energy distribution is asymmetric around the maximum intensity, where the annihilation of matter and antimatter is a high probability event. The asymmetric sides are creating different frequencies of electromagnetic radiations being in the same intensity level and compensating each other. One of these compensating ratios is the electron – proton mass ratio. The lower energy side has no compensating intensity level, it is the dark energy and the corresponding matter is the dark matter.

The Higgs boson

By March 2013, the particle had been proven to behave, interact and decay in many of the expected ways predicted by the Standard Model, and was also tentatively confirmed to have + parity and zero spin, two fundamental criteria of a Higgs boson, making it also the first known scalar particle to be discovered in nature, although a number of other properties were not fully proven and some partial results do not yet precisely match those expected; in some cases data is also still awaited or being analyzed.

Since the Higgs boson is necessary to the W and Z bosons, the dipole change of the Weak interaction and the change in the magnetic effect caused gravitation must be conducted. The Wien law is also important to explain the Weak interaction, since it describes the T_{max} change and the diffraction patterns change. [2]

Higgs mechanism and Quantum Gravity

The magnetic induction creates a negative electric field, causing an electromagnetic inertia. Probably it is the mysterious Higgs field giving mass to the charged particles? We can think about the photon as an electron-positron pair, they have mass. The neutral particles are built from negative and positive charges, for example the neutron, decaying to proton and electron. The wave – particle duality makes sure that the particles are oscillating and creating magnetic induction as an inertial mass, explaining also the relativistic mass change. Higher frequency creates stronger magnetic induction, smaller frequency results lesser magnetic induction. It seems to me that the magnetic induction is the secret of the Higgs field.

In particle physics, the Higgs mechanism is a kind of mass generation mechanism, a process that gives mass to elementary particles. According to this theory, particles gain mass by interacting with the Higgs field that permeates all space. More precisely, the Higgs mechanism endows gauge bosons in a gauge theory with mass through absorption of Nambu–Goldstone bosons arising in spontaneous symmetry breaking.

The simplest implementation of the mechanism adds an extra Higgs field to the gauge theory. The spontaneous symmetry breaking of the underlying local symmetry triggers conversion of components of this Higgs field to Goldstone bosons which interact with (at least some of) the other fields in the theory, so as to produce mass terms for (at least some of) the gauge bosons. This mechanism may also leave behind elementary scalar (spin-0) particles, known as Higgs bosons.

In the Standard Model, the phrase "Higgs mechanism" refers specifically to the generation of masses for the W^\pm , and Z weak gauge bosons through electroweak symmetry breaking. The Large Hadron Collider at CERN announced results consistent with the Higgs particle on July 4, 2012 but stressed that further testing is needed to confirm the Standard Model.

What is the Spin?

So we know already that the new particle has spin zero or spin two and we could tell which one if we could detect the polarizations of the photons produced. Unfortunately this is difficult and neither ATLAS nor CMS are able to measure polarizations. The only direct and sure way to confirm that the particle is indeed a scalar is to plot the angular distribution of the photons in the rest frame of the centre of mass. A spin zero particles like the Higgs carries no directional information away from the original collision so the distribution will be even in all directions. This test will be possible when a much larger number of events have been observed. In the mean time we can settle for less certain indirect indicators.

The Graviton

In physics, the graviton is a hypothetical elementary particle that mediates the force of gravitation in the framework of quantum field theory. If it exists, the graviton is expected to be massless (because the gravitational force appears to have unlimited range) and must be a spin-2 boson. The spin follows from the fact that the source of gravitation is the stress-energy tensor, a second-rank tensor (compared to electromagnetism's spin-1 photon, the source of which is the four-current, a first-rank tensor). Additionally, it can be shown that any massless spin-2 field would give rise to a force indistinguishable from gravitation, because a massless spin-2 field must couple to (interact with) the stress-energy tensor in the same way that the gravitational field does. This result suggests

that, if a massless spin-2 particle is discovered, it must be the graviton, so that the only experimental verification needed for the graviton may simply be the discovery of a massless spin-2 particle. [3]

The Secret of Quantum Entanglement

The Secret of Quantum Entanglement that the particles are diffraction patterns of the electromagnetic waves and this way their quantum states every time is the result of the quantum state of the intermediate electromagnetic waves. [2] When one of the entangled particles wave function is collapses by measurement, the intermediate photon also collapses and transforms its state to the second entangled particle giving it the continuity of this entanglement. Since the accelerated charges are self-maintaining their potential locally causing their acceleration, it seems that they entanglement is a spooky action at a distance.

Conclusions

The accelerated charges self-maintaining potential shows the locality of the relativity, working on the quantum level also.

The Secret of Quantum Entanglement that the particles are diffraction patterns of the electromagnetic waves and this way their quantum states every time is the result of the quantum state of the intermediate electromagnetic waves.

One of the most important conclusions is that the electric charges are moving in an accelerated way and even if their velocity is constant, they have an intrinsic acceleration anyway, the so called spin, since they need at least an intrinsic acceleration to make possible they movement .

The bridge between the classical and quantum theory is based on this intrinsic acceleration of the spin, explaining also the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. The particle – wave duality of the electric charges and the photon makes certain that they are both sides of the same thing. Basing the gravitational force on the accelerating Universe caused magnetic force and the Planck Distribution Law of the electromagnetic waves caused diffraction gives us the basis to build a Unified Theory of the physical interactions.

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