

Quantum-based Encryption

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The neural structure we use to store and process information in verbal working memory is more complex than previously understood, finds a new study by researchers at New York University. [26]

Surviving breast cancer changed the course of Regina Barzilay's research. The experience showed her, in stark relief, that oncologists and their patients lack tools for data-driven decision making. [25]

New research, led by the University of Southampton, has demonstrated that a nanoscale device, called a memristor, could be used to power artificial systems that can mimic the human brain. [24]

Scientists at Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf conducted electricity through DNA-based nanowires by placing gold-plated nanoparticles on them. In this way it could become possible to develop circuits based on genetic material. [23]

Researchers at the Nanoscale Transport Physics Laboratory from the School of Physics at the University of the Witwatersrand have found a technique to improve carbon superlattices for quantum electronic device applications. [22]

The researchers have found that these previously underestimated interactions can play a significant role in preventing heat dissipation in microelectronic devices. [21]

LCLS works like an extraordinary strobe light: Its ultrabright X-rays take snapshots of materials with atomic resolution and capture motions as fast as a few femtoseconds, or millionths of a billionth of a second. For comparison, one femtosecond is to a second what seven minutes is to the age of the universe. [20]

A 'nonlinear' effect that seemingly turns materials transparent is seen for the first time in X-rays at SLAC's LCLS. [19]

Leiden physicists have manipulated light with large artificial atoms, so-called quantum dots. Before, this has only been accomplished with actual atoms. It is an important step toward light-based quantum technology. [18]

In a tiny quantum prison, electrons behave quite differently as compared to their counterparts in free space. They can only occupy discrete energy levels, much like the electrons in an atom - for this reason, such electron prisons are often called "artificial atoms". [17]

When two atoms are placed in a small chamber enclosed by mirrors, they can simultaneously absorb a single photon. [16]

Optical quantum technologies are based on the interactions of atoms and photons at the single-particle level, and so require sources of single photons that are highly indistinguishable – that is, as identical as possible. Current single-photon sources using semiconductor quantum dots inserted into photonic structures produce photons that are ultrabright but have limited indistinguishability due to charge noise, which results in a fluctuating electric field. [14]

A method to produce significant amounts of semiconducting nanoparticles for light-emitting displays, sensors, solar panels and biomedical applications has gained momentum with a demonstration by researchers at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory. [13]

A source of single photons that meets three important criteria for use in quantum-information systems has been unveiled in China by an international team of physicists. Based on a quantum dot, the device is an efficient source of photons that emerge as solo particles that are indistinguishable from each other. The researchers are now trying to use the source to create a quantum computer based on "boson sampling". [11]

With the help of a semiconductor quantum dot, physicists at the University of Basel have developed a new type of light source that emits single photons. For the first time, the researchers have managed to create a stream of identical photons. [10]

Optical photons would be ideal carriers to transfer quantum information over large distances. Researchers envisage a network where information is processed in certain nodes and transferred between them via photons. [9]

While physicists are continually looking for ways to unify the theory of relativity, which describes large-scale phenomena, with quantum theory, which describes small-scale phenomena, computer scientists are searching for technologies to build the quantum computer using Quantum Information.

In August 2013, the achievement of "fully deterministic" quantum teleportation, using a hybrid technique, was reported. On 29 May 2014, scientists announced a reliable way of transferring data by quantum teleportation. Quantum teleportation of data had been done before but with highly unreliable methods.

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 rate 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 and making possible to build the Quantum Computer with the help of Quantum Information.

Contents

Preface.....	6
Ultra-small nanocavity advances technology for secure quantum-based data encryption	6
Trapping light in a small space	6
Making the tiny cavity	7
Even better nanocavities	7
The world's first demonstration of spintronics-based artificial intelligence	8
Researchers' discovery of new verbal working memory architecture has implications for AI	8
Meeting of the minds for machine intelligence	10
Machine senses	11
Decision helpers	11
To our health.....	12
First demonstration of brain-inspired device to power artificial systems	12
Computers made of genetic material? Researchers conduct electricity using DNA-based Nanowires	13
Golden Bridges Between Electrodes.....	14
Scientists find technique to improve carbon superlattices for quantum electronic devices.....	15
Study shows particle collisions may explain overheated circuits, improve thermoelectric devices....	16

Blocking flow	17
Scatter and decay	17
X-ray laser glimpses how electrons dance with atomic nuclei in materials.....	18
Turning Heat into Electricity and Vice Versa	19
Controlling Materials by Stimulating Charged Waves	19
A Bright Future for Studies of the Electron-Phonon Dance	20
A 'nonlinear' effect that seemingly turns materials transparent is seen for the first time in X-rays at SLAC's LCLS	20
A Milestone in Understanding How Light Interacts with Matter.....	21
A Most Puzzling Result.....	21
Researchers use quantum dots to manipulate light	22
Quantum dots	22
Quantum cryptography	23
'Artificial atom' created in graphene	23
Building Artificial Atoms.....	23
Cutting edge is not enough	23
Two atoms in an optical cavity can absorb one photon	24
One for two?	24
Quantum switch	24
Quantum processor for single photons	25
The path to perfection: Quantum dots in electrically-controlled cavities yield bright, nearly identical photons.....	27
Team demonstrates large-scale technique to produce quantum dots	31
Superfast light source made from artificial atom	32
Quantum speed up	32
Increasing the light-matter interaction	33
Single-photon source is efficient and indistinguishable	33
Exciting dots	33
Quantum sandwich	34
Semiconductor quantum dots as ideal single-photon source	35
Noise in the semiconductor.....	35
How to Win at Bridge Using Quantum Physics	35
Quantum Information	36
Heralded Qubit Transfer.....	36

Quantum Teleportation	37
Quantum Computing	37
Quantum Entanglement	38
The Bridge	38
Accelerating charges	38
Relativistic effect	38
Heisenberg Uncertainty Relation	39
Wave – Particle Duality	39
Atomic model	39
The Relativistic Bridge	39
The weak interaction	40
The General Weak Interaction	41
Fermions and Bosons	41
Van Der Waals force	41
Electromagnetic inertia and mass	42
Electromagnetic Induction	42
Relativistic change of mass	42
The frequency dependence of mass	42
Electron – Proton mass rate	42
Gravity from the point of view of quantum physics	42
The Gravitational force	42
The Higgs boson	43
Higgs mechanism and Quantum Gravity	43
What is the Spin?	44
The Graviton	44
Conclusions	44
References	45

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Preface

While physicists are continually looking for ways to unify the theory of relativity, which describes large-scale phenomena, with quantum theory, which describes small-scale phenomena, computer scientists are searching for technologies to build the quantum computer.

Australian engineers detect in real-time the quantum spin properties of a pair of atoms inside a silicon chip, and disclose new method to perform quantum logic operations between two atoms. [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 Δx and Δp uncertainty.

Ultra-small nanocavity advances technology for secure quantum-based data encryption

Researchers have developed a new type of light-enhancing optical cavity that is only 200 nanometers tall and 100 nanometers across. Their new nanoscale system represents a step toward brighter single-photon sources, which could help propel quantum-based encryption and a truly secure and future-proofed network.

Quantum encryption techniques, which are seen as likely to be central to future data encryption methods, use individual photons as an extremely secure way to encode data. A limitation of these techniques has been the ability to emit photons at high rates. "One of the most important figures of merit for single-photon sources is brightness—or collected photons per second—because the brighter it is, the more data you can transmit securely with quantum encryption," said Yousif Kelaita, Nanoscale and Quantum Photonics Lab, Stanford University, California.

In the journal *Optical Materials Express*, Kelaita and his colleagues show that their new nanocavity significantly increased the emission brightness of quantum dots—nanometer-scale semiconductor particles that can emit single photons.

The researchers created the new nanocavity by using highly reflective silver to coat the sides of a nanoscale semiconductor pillar sitting on a substrate. The silver makes the light bounce around inside the nanopillar, turning it into a very small optical cavity. The researchers say that the same design concept could be used to build nanocavities from other materials that are tailored for different single-photon emitters.

Trapping light in a small space

At nanometer scales, light interacts with materials in unique ways. One example is the Purcell effect, which enhances the emission efficiency of a quantum dot or other light emitter confined in a small cavity. Systems showing Purcell enhancement will emit more photons over a given amount of time, which could enable quantum encryption systems that operate faster than is possible now.

Achieving Purcell enhancement benefits from extremely small cavities because energy is transferred between the light emitter and the cavity more quickly. It is also desirable to have a sufficiently high quality factor, meaning that the cavity's reflection allows the light to bounce around for a long time.

"We demonstrated a new type of cavity with a volume multiple orders of magnitude lower than the current state of the art in solid-state systems," said Kelaita. "The system produces strong Purcell enhancement and high light collection efficiency at the same time, which leads to an overall increase in the brightness of the single-photon source."

When the researchers tested the new nanocavities, they found that the quantum dots placed inside the nanocavities emitted more photons per second than quantum dots not located inside such a cavity.

Because the nanocavities are open on top, emitted light can travel directly into air. Similar nanocavities created previously were topped with a metal coating that was undesirable for collecting emitted photons. The emission profile from the new nanocavities also matches well with standard microscope objective lenses, allowing a high percentage of the light to enter the lens. A mismatch between the emission profile and microscope objective lenses has caused problematic light loss in nanocavity systems developed previously.

Making the tiny cavity

The team used a modified fabrication technique to overcome the challenge of coating the nanopillars with metal. Nanostructures that are tall and skinny tend to experience what are called shadowing effects because nanofabrication techniques use a process in which metal falls straight down onto the device much like snow.

"If you imagine snow falling on a tree, the snow will cling to itself and pile up on a branch in a way that it forms a larger width, or mound, than the branch itself," said Kelaita. "This also happens as metal is deposited on top of something like a pillar. As the metal clings to itself, it creates a larger mound than the pillar underneath it, preventing metal from falling underneath the parts that eclipse the pillar. In the end, this shadowing effect creates an air gap in the device."

To solve this problem, the researchers simultaneously rotated and tilted the sample to coat all sides of the pillar at once. Even with this new approach, they had to be careful about the angle at which they deposited the metal to avoid forming a connection between the metal coating the sides of the pillar and the metal on top. If a connection was formed, the final step of ultrasonically removing the metal cap on top would be difficult or impossible.

"Other groups working with metal should be interested in this technique because this shadowing effect occurs even for features that are completely encapsulated in metal," said Kelaita.

Even better nanocavities

The researchers are now working to create other kinds of nanocavities with even better characteristics. For example, they want to try to make nanocavities in diamond, which could allow single-photon sources that operate at room temperature, a key requirement for incorporating quantum encryption into consumer devices.

They also want to combine the knowledge gained from this new work with an inverse design algorithm they recently developed to automatically design photonic devices integrated onto silicon chips. With the algorithm, engineers specify a desired function and the software provides instructions for making a structure that performs that function. [28]

The world's first demonstration of spintronics-based artificial intelligence

Researchers at Tohoku University have, for the first time, successfully demonstrated the basic operation of spintronics-based artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence, which emulates the information processing function of the brain that can quickly execute complex and complicated tasks such as image recognition and weather prediction, has attracted growing attention and has already been partly put to practical use.

The currently-used artificial intelligence works on the conventional framework of semiconductor-based integrated circuit technology. However, this lacks the compactness and low-power feature of the human brain. To overcome this challenge, the implementation of a single solid-state device that plays the role of a synapse is highly promising.

The Tohoku University research group of Professor Hideo Ohno, Professor Shigeo Sato, Professor Yoshihiko Horio, Associate Professor Shunsuke Fukami and Assistant Professor Hisanao Akima developed an artificial neural network in which their recently-developed spintronic devices, comprising micro-scale magnetic material, are employed (Fig. 1). The used spintronic device is capable of memorizing arbitrary values between 0 and 1 in an analogue manner unlike the conventional magnetic devices, and thus perform the learning function, which is served by synapses in the brain.

Using the developed network (Fig. 2), the researchers examined an associative memory operation, which is not readily executed by conventional computers. Through the multiple trials, they confirmed that the spintronic devices have a learning ability with which the developed artificial neural network can successfully associate memorized patterns (Fig. 3) from their input noisy versions just like the human brain can.

The proof-of-concept demonstration in this research is expected to open new horizons in artificial intelligence technology - one which is of a compact size, and which simultaneously achieves fast-processing capabilities and ultralow-power consumption. These features should enable the artificial intelligence to be used in a broad range of societal applications such as image/voice recognition, wearable terminals, sensor networks and nursing-care robots. [27]

Researchers' discovery of new verbal working memory architecture has implications for AI

The neural structure we use to store and process information in verbal working memory is more complex than previously understood, finds a new study by researchers at New York University. It shows that processing information in working memory involves two different networks in the brain rather than one—a discovery that has implications for the creation of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, such as speech translation tools.

"Our results show there are at least two brain networks that are active when we are manipulating speech and language information in our minds," explains Bijan Pesaran, an associate professor at New York University's Center for Neural Science and the senior author of the research.

The work appears in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

Past studies had emphasized how a single "Central Executive" oversaw manipulations of information stored in working memory. The distinction is an important one, Pesaran observes, because current AI systems that replicate human speech typically assume computations involved in verbal working memory are performed by a single neural network.

"Artificial intelligence is gradually becoming more human like," says Pesaran. "By better understanding intelligence in the human brain, we can suggest ways to improve AI systems. Our work indicates that AI systems with multiple working memory networks are needed."

The paper's first author was Greg Cogan, an NYU postdoctoral fellow at the time of the study and now a postdoctoral fellow at Duke University; other co-authors were Professor Orrin Devinsky, director of the Comprehensive Epilepsy Center at NYU Langone Medical Center, Werner Doyle, an associate professor at NYU Langone's Department of Neurosurgery, Dan Friedman, an associate professor at NYU Langone's Department of Neurology, and Lucia Melloni, an assistant professor at NYU Langone's Department of Neurology.

The study focused on a form of working memory critical for thinking, planning, and creative reasoning and involves holding in mind and transforming the information necessary for speech and language.

The researchers examined human patients undergoing brain monitoring to treat drug-resistant epilepsy. Specifically, they decoded neural activity recorded from the surface of the brain of these patients as they were listening to speech sounds and speaking after a short delay. This method required the study's subjects to use a rule provided by the researchers to transform speech sounds they heard into different spoken utterances—for example, the patients were told to repeat the same sound they had heard while at other times the researchers instructed the patients to listen to the sound and make a different utterance.

The researchers decoded the neural activity in each patient's brain as the patients applied the rule to convert what they heard into what they needed to say. The results revealed that manipulating information held in working memory involved the operation of two brain networks. One network encoded the rule that the patients were using to guide the utterances they made (the rule network). Surprisingly, however, the rule network did not encode the details of how the subjects converted what they heard into what they said. The process of using the rule to transform the sounds into speech was handled by a second, transformation network. Activity in this network could be used to track how the input (what was heard) was being converted into the output (what was spoken) moment-by-moment.

Translating what you hear in one language to speak in another language involves applying a similar set of abstract rules. People with impairments of verbal working memory find it difficult to learn new languages. Modern intelligent machines also have trouble learning languages, the researchers add.

"One way we can enhance the development of more intelligent systems is with a fuller understanding of how the human brain and mind works," notes Pesaran. "Diagnosing and treating working memory impairments in people involves psychological assessments. By analogy, machine psychology may one day be useful for diagnosing and treating impairments in the intelligence of our

machines. This research examines a uniquely human form of intelligence, verbal working memory, and suggests new ways to make machines more intelligent." [26]

Meeting of the minds for machine intelligence

Surviving breast cancer changed the course of Regina Barzilay's research. The experience showed her, in stark relief, that oncologists and their patients lack tools for data-driven decision making. That includes what treatments to recommend, but also whether a patient's sample even warrants a cancer diagnosis, she explained at the Nov. 10 Machine Intelligence Summit, organized by MIT and venture capital firm Pillar.

"We do more machine learning when we decide on Amazon which lipstick you would buy," said Barzilay, the Delta Electronics Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT. "But not if you were deciding whether you should get treated for cancer."

Barzilay now studies how smarter computing can help patients. She wields the powerful predictive approach called machine learning, a technique that allows computers, given enough data and training, to pick out patterns on their own—sometimes even beyond what humans are capable of pinpointing.

Machine learning has long been vaunted in consumer contexts—Apple's Siri can talk with us because machine learning enables her to understand natural human speech—yet the summit gave a glimpse of the approach's much broader potential. Its reach could offer not only better Siris (e.g., Amazon's "Alexa"), but improved health care and government policies.

Machine intelligence is "absolutely going to revolutionize our lives," said Pillar co-founder Jamie Goldstein '89. Goldstein and Anantha Chandrakasan, head of the MIT Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS) and the Vannevar Bush Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, organized the conference to bring together industry leaders, venture capitalists, students, and faculty from the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence (CSAIL), Institute for Data, Systems, and Society (IDSS), and the Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems (LIDS) to discuss real-world problems and machine learning solutions.

Barzilay is already thinking along those lines. Her group's work aims to help doctors and patients make more informed medical decisions with machine learning. She has a vision for the future patient in the oncologist's office: "If you're taking this treatment, [you'll see] how your chances are going to be changed."

Machine senses

Machine learning has already proven powerful. But Antonio Torralba, professor of electrical engineering and computer science, believes that machines can learn faster, and thereby do more. His team's approach mimics the way humans learn in infancy. "We just start playing with things and seeing how they feel," Torralba said. To illustrate, he showed the room a video of a baby turning over squeaky bubble wrap in her hands. Importantly, we notice the noises things make when we move them around, he said.

To give machines a similar sensory experience of the world, a student of Torralba's recorded himself tapping more than a thousand objects with a wooden drumstick. Called "Greatest Hits," the sound collection captured the drumstick clanging ceramic cups, ruffling bushes, and splashing water. After feasting on these videos, a computer could start predicting the sounds of the world—essentially reflecting a grasp of its physics—all without explicit instruction.

Videos of everyday scenes (sans drumstick) also prove deft teachers. Machines are usually guided to pick out objects by training them on annotated images. That means people would meticulously outline a photograph's individual objects, such as people, lamps, and bar stools, so that computers could learn to identify them. But Torralba and his team have found that by giving computers video complete with objects' sounds—such as a street's ambient noise or people talking—a machine's neural network could begin to pick out objects without any guidance at all.

Torralba recounted how a machine trained this way begins to identify water, the sky, and people's faces. Machines become remarkably adroit at identifying infants, because "they make a very special noise," Torralba said. The recognition of sounds resides in a machine's artificial neurons called units. He continued: "There were a lot of units devoted to babies."

Decision helpers

Once a machine is educated, it can help experts make better decisions.

Stefanie Jegelka, an assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer science, presented how to make machines learn faster and make predictions more reliably, by identifying maximally informative data. Her team has recently developed new techniques that make this process much more practical.

Alternatively, savvy machines can help us evaluate policies. Tamara Broderick, an assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer science, showed how this works. In collaboration with MIT economist Rachael Meager, her team focused on the question of quickly and accurately quantifying uncertainty. For instance, is microlending, or giving people small loans to jumpstart businesses, is actually helping alleviate poverty. We need to understand the variation in returns on these loans to say.

When we ask a computer to tell us how much more value a loan creates—for instance, \$4 made for \$3 invested—we can also use machine learning to evaluate how robust that outcome is. What would happen if we were to tweak the model? Broderick asked. "Are we going to get the same number out at the end? Or are we going to get fundamentally different numbers and therefore fundamentally different decisions about what to do—what policy to make?" Machine learning can guide the way.

To our health

But the application of machine intelligence most discussed at the summit was in health care. Mandy Korpusik, a graduate student in CSAIL who shared her work during a pitch session, described an app called Lana that serves as a personal nutritionist. You can tell her what you ate for lunch, and she can recommend what nutrient-rich foods to have in your next meal.

Barzilay, the cancer survivor, wants not only to feed computers clinical reports, but medical scans. These images contain a wealth of information humans alone might be unable to articulate, she said.

For example, a machine might be able to discern that given your mammogram, a particular treatment might be 90 percent likely to be effective.

With colleague Tommi Jaakkola, professor of computer science and engineering, Barzilay is also working on extracting the machine's reasoning, a murkier but necessary endeavor. "Doctors, at least the ones at [Massachusetts General Hospital], are not happy just getting a number at the end," Barzilay said. "They need to know why."

Intelligent machines can aid decision making beyond the doctor's office. Data scientists capable of implementing machine learning have become ubiquitous in government agencies, said Aman Bhandari in a fireside chat-style interview with Ash Ashutoush, CEO of information technology firm Actifio. Bhandari is now at pharmaceutical developer Merck, but worked at the White House in President Barack Obama's Office of Science and Technology Policy. During his tenure, the administration heavily pushed digitizing all medical records.

"If you think about health care, we've moved from—and we're still moving from—this stone age of data collection, capture, production, and analysis into this possibly 'industrial era' of all of those things," Bhandari said. "So, the first phase is digitizing the system. The next phase is unleashing data from the U.S. government across every single sector."

Jacqueline Xi, an electrical engineering and computer science senior, came away feeling enthusiastic about machine learning's possibilities. "Just to see everyone in the same room, and people who are founding startups, all here discussing these bigger ideas about how we can connect machine learning across all these groups, is really eye-opening," she said. "It's inspiring." [25]

First demonstration of brain-inspired device to power artificial systems

New research, led by the University of Southampton, has demonstrated that a nanoscale device, called a memristor, could be used to power artificial systems that can mimic the human brain.

Artificial neural networks (ANNs) exhibit learning abilities and can perform tasks which are difficult for conventional computing systems, such as pattern recognition, on-line learning and classification. Practical ANN implementations are currently hampered by the lack of efficient hardware synapses; a key component that every ANN requires in large numbers.

In the study, published in Nature Communications, the Southampton research team experimentally demonstrated an ANN that used memristor synapses supporting sophisticated learning rules in order to carry out reversible learning of noisy input data.

Memristors are electrical components that limit or regulate the flow of electrical current in a circuit and can remember the amount of charge that was flowing through it and retain the data, even when the power is turned off.

Lead author Dr Alex Serb, from Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, said: "If we want to build artificial systems that can mimic the brain in function and power we need to use hundreds of billions, perhaps even trillions of artificial synapses, many of which must be able to implement learning rules of varying degrees of complexity. Whilst currently available electronic

components can certainly be pieced together to create such synapses, the required power and area efficiency benchmarks will be extremely difficult to meet -if even possible at all- without designing new and bespoke 'synapse components'.

"Memristors offer a possible route towards that end by supporting many fundamental features of learning synapses (memory storage, on-line learning, computationally powerful learning rule implementation, two-terminal structure) in extremely compact volumes and at exceptionally low energy costs. If artificial brains are ever going to become reality, therefore, memristive synapses have to succeed."

Acting like synapses in the brain, the metal-oxide memristor array was capable of learning and re-learning input patterns in an unsupervised manner within a probabilistic winner-take-all (WTA) network. This is extremely useful for enabling low-power embedded processors (needed for the Internet of Things) that can process in real-time big data without any prior knowledge of the data.

Co-author Dr Themis Prodromakis, Reader in Nanoelectronics and EPSRC Fellow in Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, said: "The uptake of any new technology is typically hampered by the lack of practical demonstrators that showcase the technology's benefits in practical applications. Our work establishes such a technological paradigm shift, proving that nanoscale memristors can indeed be used to formulate in-silico neural circuits for processing big-data in real-time; a key challenge of modern society.

"We have shown that such hardware platforms can independently adapt to its environment without any human intervention and are very resilient in processing even noisy data in real-time reliably. This new type of hardware could find a diverse range of applications in pervasive sensing technologies to fuel real-time monitoring in harsh or inaccessible environments; a highly desirable capability for enabling the Internet of Things vision." [24]

Computers made of genetic material? Researchers conduct electricity using DNA-based Nanowires

Tinier than the AIDS virus—that is currently the circumference of the smallest transistors. The industry has shrunk the central elements of their computer chips to fourteen nanometers in the last sixty years. Conventional methods, however, are hitting physical boundaries. Researchers around the world are looking for alternatives. One method could be the self-organization of complex components from molecules and atoms. Scientists at the Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf (HZDR) and Paderborn University have now made an important advance: the physicists conducted a current through gold-plated nanowires, which independently assembled themselves from single DNA strands. Their results have been published in the scientific journal *Langmuir*.

At first glance, it resembles wormy lines in front of a black background. But what the electron microscope shows up close is that the nanometer-sized structures connect two electrical contacts. Dr. Artur Erbe from the Institute of Ion Beam Physics and Materials Research is pleased about what he sees. "Our measurements have shown that an electrical current is conducted through these tiny wires." This is not necessarily self-evident, the physicist stresses. We are, after all, dealing with components made of modified DNA. In order to produce the nanowires, the researchers combined a

long single strand of genetic material with shorter DNA segments through the base pairs to form a stable double strand. Using this method, the structures independently take on the desired form.

"With the help of this approach, which resembles the Japanese paper folding technique origami and is therefore referred to as DNA-origami, we can create tiny patterns," explains the HZDR researcher. "Extremely small circuits made of molecules and atoms are also conceivable here." This strategy, which scientists call the "bottom-up" method, aims to turn conventional production of electronic components on its head. "The industry has thus far been using what is known as the 'top-down' method. Large portions are cut away from the base material until the desired structure is achieved. Soon this will no longer be possible due to continual miniaturization." The new approach is instead oriented on nature: molecules that develop complex structures through self-assembling processes.

Golden Bridges Between Electrodes

The elements that thereby develop would be substantially smaller than today's tiniest computer chip components. Smaller circuits could theoretically be produced with less effort. There is, however, a problem: "Genetic matter doesn't conduct a current particularly well," points out Erbe. He and his colleagues have therefore placed gold-plated nanoparticles on the DNA wires using chemical bonds. Using a "top-down" method - electron beam lithography—they subsequently make contact with the individual wires electronically. "This connection between the substantially larger electrodes and the individual DNA structures have come up against technical difficulties until now. By combining the two methods, we can resolve this issue. We could thus very precisely determine the charge transport through individual wires for the first time," adds Erbe.

As the tests of the Dresden researchers have shown, a current is actually conducted through the gold-plated wires—it is, however, dependent on the ambient temperature. "The charge transport is simultaneously reduced as the temperature decreases," describes Erbe. "At normal room temperature, the wires function well, even if the electrons must partially jump from one gold particle to the next because they haven't completely melded together. The distance, however, is so small that it currently doesn't even show up using the most advanced microscopes." In order to improve the conduction, Artur Erbe's team aims to incorporate conductive polymers between the gold particles. The physicist believes the metallization process could also still be improved.

He is, however, generally pleased with the results: "We could demonstrate that the gold-plated DNA wires conduct energy. We are actually still in the basic research phase, which is why we are using gold rather than a more cost-efficient metal. We have, nevertheless, made an important stride, which could make electronic devices based on DNA possible in the future." [23]

Scientists find technique to improve carbon superlattices for quantum electronic devices

Researchers at the Nanoscale Transport Physics Laboratory from the School of Physics at the University of the Witwatersrand have found a technique to improve carbon superlattices for quantum electronic device applications. Superlattices are made up of alternating layers of very thin semiconductors, just a few nanometers thick. These layers are so thin that the physics of these devices is governed by quantum mechanics, where electrons behave like waves. In a paradigm shift

from conventional electronic devices, exploiting the quantum properties of superlattices holds the promise of developing new technologies.

The group, headed by Professor Somnath Bhattacharyya has been working for the past 10 years on developing carbon-based nano-electronic devices.

"Carbon is the future in the electronics field and it soon will be challenging many other semiconductors, including silicon," says Bhattacharyya.

The physics of carbon superlattices is more complex than that of crystalline superlattices (such as gallium arsenide), since the material is amorphous and carbon atoms tend to form chains and networks. The Wits group, in association with researchers at the University of Surrey in the UK, has developed a detailed theoretical approach to understand the experimental data obtained from carbon devices. The paper has been published in Scientific Reports on 19 October.

"This work provides an understanding of the fundamental quantum properties of carbon superlattices, which we can now use to design quantum devices for specific applications," says lead author, Wits PhD student, Ross McIntosh. "Our work provides strong impetus for future studies of the high-frequency electronic and optoelectronic properties of carbon superlattices".

Through their work, the group reported one of the first theoretical models that can explain the fundamental electronic transport properties in disordered carbon superlattices.

Bhattacharyya started looking at the use of carbon for semiconductor applications almost 10 years ago, before he joined Wits University, when he and co-authors from the University of Surrey developed and demonstrated negative differential resistance and excellent high-frequency properties of a quantum device made up of amorphous carbon layers. This work was published in Nature Materials in 2006.

McIntosh undertook the opportunity at honours level to measure the electrical properties of carbon superlattice devices. Now, as a PhD student and having worked extensively with theoretician Dr. Mikhail V. Katkov, he has extended the theoretical framework and developed a technique to calculate the transport properties of these devices.

Bhattacharyya believes this work will have immense importance in developing Carbon-based high-frequency devices.

"It will open not only fundamental studies in Carbon materials, but it will also have industrial applications in the electronic and optoelectronic device sector," he says.

Superlattices are currently used as state of the art high frequency oscillators and amplifiers and are beginning to find use in optoelectronics as detectors and emitters in the terahertz regime. While the high frequency electrical and optoelectronic properties of conventional semiconductors are limited by the dopants used to modify their electronic properties, the properties of superlattices can be tuned over a much wider range to create devices which operate in regimes where conventional devices cannot.

Superlattice electronic devices can operate at higher frequencies and optoelectronic devices can operate at lower frequencies than their conventional counterparts.

The lack of terahertz emitters and detectors has resulted in a gap in that region of the electromagnetic spectrum (known as the "terahertz gap"), which is a significant limitation, as many biological molecules are active in this regime. This also limits terahertz radio astronomy.

Amorphous Carbon devices are extremely strong, can operate at high voltages and can be developed in most laboratories in the world, without sophisticated nano-fabrication facilities. New Carbon-based devices could find application in biology, space technology, science infrastructure such as the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope in South Africa, and new microwave detectors.

"What was lacking earlier was an understanding of device modelling. If we have a model, we can improve the device quality, and that is what we now have," says Bhattacharyya. [22]

Study shows particle collisions may explain overheated circuits, improve thermoelectric devices

In the coming years, as more transistors are packed into ever smaller areas within computer chips, MIT engineers say cellphones, laptops, and other electronic devices may face a higher risk of overheating, as a result of interactions between electrons and heat-carrying particles called phonons.

The researchers have found that these previously underestimated interactions can play a significant role in preventing heat dissipation in microelectronic devices.

Their results are published today in the journal Nature Communications.

In their experiments, the team used precisely timed laser pulses to measure the interactions between electrons and phonons in a very thin silicon wafer. As the concentration of electrons in the silicon increased, the more these electrons scattered phonons and prevented them from carrying heat away.

"When your computer is running, it generates heat, and you want this heat to dissipate, to be carried out by phonons," says lead author Bolin Liao, a former graduate student in mechanical engineering at MIT. "If phonons are scattered by electrons, they're not as good as we thought they were in carrying heat out. This will create a problem that we have to solve as chips become smaller."

On the other hand, Liao says this same effect may benefit thermoelectric generators, which convert heat directly into electrical energy. In such devices, scattering phonons, and thereby reducing heat leakage, would significantly improve their performance.

"Now we know this effect can be significant when the concentration of electrons is high," Liao says. "We now have to think of how to engineer the electron-phonon interaction in more sophisticated ways to benefit both thermoelectric and microelectronic devices."

Liao's co-authors include Gang Chen, the Carl Richard Soderberg Professor in Power Engineering and the head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering; Alexei Maznev, a senior research scientist in the Department of Chemistry; and Keith Nelson, the Haslam and Dewey Professor of Chemistry.

Blocking flow

In transistors made from semiconductor materials such as silicon, and electrical cables made from metals, electrons are the main agents responsible for conducting electricity through a material. A main reason why such materials have a finite electrical resistance is the existence of certain roadblocks to electrons' flow—namely, interactions with the heat-carrying phonons, which can collide with electrons, throwing them off their electricity-conducting paths.

Scientists have long studied the effect of such electron-phonon interactions on electrons themselves, but how these same interactions affect phonons—and a material's ability to conduct heat—is less well-understood.

"People hardly studied the effect on phonons because they used to think this effect was not important," Liao says. "But as we know from Newton's third law, every action has a reaction. We just didn't know under what circumstances this effect can become significant."

Scatter and decay

Liao and his colleagues had previously calculated that in silicon, the most commonly used semiconductor material, when the concentration of electrons is above 10^{19} per cubic centimeter, the interactions between electrons and phonons would strongly scatter phonons. And, they would reduce the material's ability to dissipate heat by as much as 50 percent when the concentration reaches 10^{21} per cubic centimeter.

"That's a really significant effect, but people were skeptical," Liao says. That's mainly because in previous experiments on materials with high electron concentrations they assumed the reduction of heat dissipation was due not to electron-phonon interaction but to defects in materials. Such defects arise from the process of "doping," in which additional elements such as phosphorous and boron are added to silicon to increase its electron concentration.

"So the challenge to verify our idea was, we had to separate the contributions from electrons and defects by somehow controlling the electron concentration inside the material, without introducing any defects," Liao says.

The team developed a technique called three-pulse photoacoustic spectroscopy to precisely increase the number of electrons in a thin wafer of silicon by optical methods, and measure any effect on the material's phonons. The technique expands on a conventional two-pulse photoacoustic spectroscopy technique, in which scientists shine two precisely tuned and timed lasers on a material. The first laser generates a phonon pulse in the material, while the second measures the activity of the phonon pulse as it scatters, or decays.

Liao added a third laser, which when shone on silicon precisely increased the material's concentration of electrons, without creating defects. When he measured the phonon pulse after introducing the third laser, he found that it decayed much faster, indicating that the increased concentration of electrons acted to scatter phonons and dampen their activity.

"Very happily, we found the experimental result agrees very well with our previous calculation, and we can now say this effect can be truly significant and we proved it in experiments," Liao says. "This is among the first experiments to directly probe electron-phonon interactions' effect on phonons."

Interestingly, the researchers first started seeing this effect in silicon that was loaded with 10¹⁹ electrons per cubic centimeter—comparable or even lower in concentration than some current transistors.

"From our study, we show that this is going to be a really serious problem when the scale of circuits becomes smaller," Liao says. "Even now, with transistor size being a few nanometers, I think this effect will start to appear, and we really need to seriously consider this effect and think of how to use or avoid it in real devices." [21]

X-ray laser glimpses how electrons dance with atomic nuclei in materials

From hard to malleable, from transparent to opaque, from channeling electricity to blocking it: Materials come in all types. A number of their intriguing properties originate in the way a material's electrons "dance" with its lattice of atomic nuclei, which is also in constant motion due to vibrations known as phonons.

This coupling between electrons and phonons determines how efficiently solar cells convert sunlight into electricity. It also plays key roles in superconductors that transfer electricity without losses, topological insulators that conduct electricity only on their surfaces, materials that drastically change their electrical resistance when exposed to a magnetic field, and more.

At the Department of Energy's SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, scientists can study these coupled motions in unprecedented detail with the world's most powerful X-ray laser, the Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS). LCLS is a DOE Office of Science User Facility.

"It has been a long-standing goal to understand, initiate and control these unusual behaviors," says LCLS Director Mike Dunne. "With LCLS we are now able to see what happens in these materials and to model complex electron-phonon interactions. This ability is central to the lab's mission of developing new materials for next-generation electronics and energy solutions."

LCLS works like an extraordinary strobe light: Its ultrabright X-rays take snapshots of materials with atomic resolution and capture motions as fast as a few femtoseconds, or millionths of a billionth of a second. For comparison, one femtosecond is to a second what seven minutes is to the age of the universe.

Two recent studies made use of these capabilities to study electron-phonon interactions in lead telluride, a material that excels at converting heat into electricity, and chromium, which at low temperatures has peculiar properties similar to those of high-temperature superconductors.

Turning Heat into Electricity and Vice Versa

Lead telluride, a compound of the chemical elements lead and tellurium, is of interest because it is a good thermoelectric: It generates an electrical voltage when two opposite sides of the material have different temperatures.

"This property is used to power NASA space missions like the Mars rover Curiosity and to convert waste heat into electricity in high-end cars," says Mariano Trigo, a staff scientist at the Stanford PULSE Institute and the Stanford Institute for Materials and Energy Sciences (SIMES), both joint

institutes of Stanford University and SLAC. "The effect also works in the opposite direction: An electrical voltage applied across the material creates a temperature difference, which can be exploited in thermoelectric cooling devices."

Mason Jiang, a recent graduate student at Stanford, PULSE and SIMES, says, "Lead telluride is exceptionally good at this. It has two important qualities: It's a bad thermal conductor, so it keeps heat from flowing from one side to the other, and it's also a good electrical conductor, so it can turn the temperature difference into an electric current. The coupling between lattice vibrations, caused by heat, and electron motions is therefore very important in this system. With our study at LCLS, we wanted to understand what's naturally going on in this material."

In their experiment, the researchers excited electrons in a lead telluride sample with a brief pulse of infrared laser light, and then used LCLS's X-rays to determine how this burst of energy stimulated lattice vibrations.

"Lead telluride sits at the precipice of a coupled electronic and structural transformation," says principal investigator David Reis from PULSE, SIMES and Stanford.

"It has a tendency to distort without fully transforming – an instability that is thought to play an important role in its thermoelectric behavior. With our method we can study the forces involved and literally watch them change in response to the infrared laser pulse."

The scientists found that the light pulse excites particular electronic states that are responsible for this instability through electron-phonon coupling. The excited electrons stabilize the material by weakening certain long-range forces that were previously associated with the material's low thermal conductivity.

"The light pulse actually walks the material back from the brink of instability, making it a worse thermoelectric," Reis says. "This implies that the reverse is also true – that stronger long-range forces lead to better thermoelectric behavior."

The researchers hope their results, published July 22 in Nature Communications, will help them find other thermoelectric materials that are more abundant and less toxic than lead telluride.

Controlling Materials by Stimulating Charged Waves

The second study looked at charge density waves – alternating areas of high and low electron density across the nuclear lattice – that occur in materials that abruptly change their behavior at a certain threshold. This includes transitions from insulator to conductor, normal conductor to superconductor, and from one magnetic state to another.

These waves don't actually travel through the material; they are stationary, like icy waves near the shoreline of a frozen lake.

"Charge density waves have been observed in a number of interesting materials, and establishing their connection to material properties is a very hot research topic," says Andrej Singer, a postdoctoral fellow in Oleg Shpyrko's lab at the University of California, San Diego. "We've now shown that there is a way to enhance charge density waves in crystals of chromium using laser light, and this method could potentially also be used to tweak the properties of other materials."

This could mean, for example, that scientists might be able to switch a material from a normal conductor to a superconductor with a single flash of light. Singer and his colleagues reported their results on July 25 in *Physical Review Letters*.

The research team used the chemical element chromium as a simple model system to study charge density waves, which form when the crystal is cooled to about minus 280 degrees Fahrenheit. They stimulated the chilled crystal with pulses of optical laser light and then used LCLS X-ray pulses to observe how this stimulation changed the amplitude, or height, of the charge density waves.

"We found that the amplitude increased by up to 30 percent immediately after the laser pulse," Singer says. "The amplitude then oscillated, becoming smaller and larger over a period of 450 femtoseconds, and it kept going when we kept hitting the sample with laser pulses. LCLS provides unique opportunities to study such process because it allows us to take ultrafast movies of the related structural changes in the lattice."

Based on their results, the researchers suggested a mechanism for the amplitude enhancement: The light pulse interrupts the electron-phonon interactions in the material, causing the lattice to vibrate. Shortly after the pulse, these interactions form again, which boosts the amplitude of the vibrations, like a pendulum that swings farther out when it receives an extra push.

A Bright Future for Studies of the Electron-Phonon Dance

Studies like these have a high priority in solid-state physics and materials science because they could pave the way for new materials and provide new ways to control material properties.

With its 120 ultrabright X-ray pulses per second, LCLS reveals the electron-phonon dance with unprecedented detail. More breakthroughs in the field are on the horizon with LCLS-II – a next-generation X-ray laser under construction at SLAC that will fire up to a million X-ray flashes per second and will be 10,000 times brighter than LCLS.

"LCLS-II will drastically increase our chances of capturing these processes," Dunne says. "Since it will also reveal subtle electron-phonon signals with much higher resolution, we'll be able to study these interactions in much greater detail than we can now." [20]

A 'nonlinear' effect that seemingly turns materials transparent is seen for the first time in X-rays at SLAC's LCLS

Imagine getting a medical X-ray that comes out blank – as if your bones had vanished. That's what happened when scientists cranked up the intensity of the world's first X-ray laser, at the Department of Energy's SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, to get a better look at a sample they were studying: The X-rays seemed to go right through it as if it were not there.

This result was so weird that the leader of the experiment, SLAC Professor Joachim Stöhr, devoted the next three years to developing a theory that explains why it happened. Now his team has published a paper in *Physical Review Letters* describing the 2012 experiment for the first time.

What they saw was a so-called nonlinear effect where more than one photon, or particle of X-ray light, enters a sample at the same time, and they team up to cause unexpected things to happen.

"In this case, the X-rays wiggled electrons in the sample and made them emit a new beam of X-rays that was identical to the one that went in," said Stöhr, who is an investigator with the Stanford Institute for Materials and Energy Sciences at SLAC. "It continued along the same path and hit a detector. So from the outside, it looked like a single beam went straight through and the sample was completely transparent."

This effect, called "stimulated scattering," had never been seen in X-rays before. In fact, it took an extremely intense beam from SLAC's Linac Coherent Light Source (LCLS), which is a billion times brighter than any X-ray source before it, to make this happen.

A Milestone in Understanding How Light Interacts with Matter

The observation is a milestone in the quest to understand how light interacts with matter, Stöhr said.

"What will we do with it? I think we're just starting to learn. This is a new phenomenon and I don't want to speculate," he said. "But it opens the door to controlling the electrons that are closest to the core of atoms – boosting them into higher orbitals, and driving them back down in a very controlled manner, and doing this over and over again."

Nonlinear optical effects are nothing new. They were discovered in the 1960s with the invention of the laser – the first source of light so bright that it could send more than one photon into a sample at a time, triggering responses that seemed all out of proportion to the amount of light energy going in. Scientists use these effects to shift laser light to much higher energies and focus optical microscopes on much smaller objects than anyone had thought possible.

The 2009 opening of LCLS as a DOE Office of Science User Facility introduced another fundamentally new tool, the X-ray free-electron laser, and scientists have spent a lot of time since then figuring out exactly what it can do. For instance, a SLAC-led team recently published the first report of nonlinear effects produced by its brilliant pulses.

"The X-ray laser is really a quantum leap, the equivalent of going from a light bulb to an optical laser," Stöhr said. "So it's not just that you have more X-rays. The interaction of the X-rays with the sample is very different, and there are effects you could never see at other types of X-ray light sources."

A Most Puzzling Result

Stöhr stumbled on this latest discovery by accident. Then director of LCLS, he was working with Andreas Scherz, a SLAC staff scientist, who is now with the soon-to-open European XFEL in Hamburg, Germany, and Stanford graduate student Benny Wu to look at the fine structure of a common magnetic material used in data storage.

To enhance the contrast of their image, they tuned the LCLS beam to a wavelength that would resonate with cobalt atoms in the sample and amplify the signal in their detector. The initial results looked great. So they turned up the intensity of the laser beam in the hope of making the images even sharper.

That's when the speckled pattern they'd been seeing in their detector went blank, as if the sample had disappeared.

"We thought maybe we had missed the sample, so we checked the alignment and tried again," Stöhr said. "But it kept happening. We knew this was strange – that there was something here that needed to be understood."

Stöhr is an experimentalist, not a theorist, but he was determined to find answers. He and Scherz dove deeply into the scientific literature. Meanwhile Wu finished his PhD thesis, which described the experiment and its unexpected result, and went on to a job in industry. But the team held off on publishing their experimental results in a scientific journal until they could explain what happened.

Stöhr and Scherz published their explanation last fall in *Physical Review Letters*.

"We are developing a whole new field of nonlinear X-ray science, and our study is just one building block in this field," Stöhr said. "We are basically opening Pandora's box, learning about all the different nonlinear effects, and eventually some of those will turn out to be more important than others." [19]

Researchers use quantum dots to manipulate light

Leiden physicists have manipulated light with large artificial atoms, so-called quantum dots. Before, this has only been accomplished with actual atoms. It is an important step toward light-based quantum technology. The study was published on August 30th in *Nature Communications*.

When you point a laser pointer at the screen during a presentation, an immense number of light particles races through the air at a billion kilometers per hour. They don't travel in a continuous flow, but in packages containing varying numbers of particles. Sometimes as many as four so-called photons pass by, and other times none at all. You won't notice this during your presentation, but for light-based quantum technology, it is crucial that scientists have control over the number of photons per package.

Quantum dots

In theory, you can manipulate photons with real individual atoms, but because of their small size, it is extremely hard to work with them. Now, Leiden physicists have discovered that the same principle goes for large artificial atoms—so-called quantum dots—that are much easier to handle. In fact, they managed to filter light beams with one photon per package out of a laser. "Another big advantage of quantum dots is that the system already works within nanoseconds," says first author Henk Snijders. "With atomic systems, you need microseconds, so a thousand times longer. This way, we can manipulate photons much faster."

Quantum cryptography

The ultimate goal for the research group led by Prof. Dirk Bouwmeester is to entangle many photons using quantum dots. This is essential, for example, in techniques like quantum cryptography. Snijders: "This research shows that we are already able to manipulate individual photons with our system. And the beauty is that in principle, we don't need large experimental setups. We can just integrate our quantum dots in small microchips." [18]

'Artificial atom' created in graphene

In a tiny quantum prison, electrons behave quite differently as compared to their counterparts in free space. They can only occupy discrete energy levels, much like the electrons in an atom - for this reason, such electron prisons are often called "artificial atoms". Artificial atoms may also feature properties beyond those of conventional ones, with the potential for many applications for example in quantum computing. Such additional properties have now been shown for artificial atoms in the carbon material graphene. The results have been published in the journal Nano Letters, the project was a collaboration of scientists from TU Wien (Vienna, Austria), RWTH Aachen (Germany) and the University of Manchester (GB).

Building Artificial Atoms

"Artificial atoms open up new, exciting possibilities, because we can directly tune their properties", says Professor Joachim Burgdörfer (TU Wien, Vienna). In semiconductor materials such as gallium arsenide, trapping electrons in tiny confinements has already been shown to be possible. These structures are often referred to as "quantum dots". Just like in an atom, where the electrons can only circle the nucleus on certain orbits, electrons in these quantum dots are forced into discrete quantum states.

Even more interesting possibilities are opened up by using graphene, a material consisting of a single layer of carbon atoms, which has attracted a lot of attention in the last few years. "In most materials, electrons may occupy two different quantum states at a given energy. The high symmetry of the graphene lattice allows for four different quantum states. This opens up new pathways for quantum information processing and storage" explains Florian Libisch from TU Wien. However, creating well-controlled artificial atoms in graphene turned out to be extremely challenging.

Cutting edge is not enough

There are different ways of creating artificial atoms: The simplest one is putting electrons into tiny flakes, cut out of a thin layer of the material. While this works for graphene, the symmetry of the material is broken by the edges of the flake which can never be perfectly smooth. Consequently, the special four-fold multiplicity of states in graphene is reduced to the conventional two-fold one.

Therefore, different ways had to be found: It is not necessary to use small graphene flakes to capture electrons. Using clever combinations of electrical and magnetic fields is a much better option. With the tip of a scanning tunnelling microscope, an electric field can be applied locally. That way, a tiny region is created within the graphene surface, in which low energy electrons can be trapped. At the same time, the electrons are forced into tiny circular orbits by applying a magnetic field. "If we would only use an electric field, quantum effects allow the electrons to quickly leave the trap" explains Libisch.

The artificial atoms were measured at the RWTH Aachen by Nils Freitag and Peter Nemes-Incze in the group of Professor Markus Morgenstern. Simulations and theoretical models were developed at TU Wien (Vienna) by Larisa Chizhova, Florian Libisch and Joachim Burgdörfer. The exceptionally clean graphene sample came from the team around Andre Geim and Kostya Novoselov from Manchester (GB) - these two researchers were awarded the Nobel Prize in 2010 for creating graphene sheets for the first time.

The new artificial atoms now open up new possibilities for many quantum technological experiments: "Four localized electron states with the same energy allow for switching between different quantum states to store information", says Joachim Burgdörfer. The electrons can preserve arbitrary superpositions for a long time, ideal properties for quantum computers. In addition, the new method has the big advantage of scalability: it should be possible to fit many such artificial atoms on a small chip in order to use them for quantum information applications. [17]

Two atoms in an optical cavity can absorb one photon

When two atoms are placed in a small chamber enclosed by mirrors, they can simultaneously absorb a single photon. So says an international team of researchers, which has found that the reverse process – two excited atoms emitting a single photon – is also possible. According to the team, this process could be used to transmit information in a quantum circuit or computer.

Physicists have long known that a single atom can absorb or emit two photons simultaneously. These two-photon, one-atom processes are widely used for spectroscopy and for the production of entangled photons used in quantum devices. However, Salvatore Savasta of the University of Messina in Italy, together with colleagues at the RIKEN Institute in Japan, wondered if two atoms could absorb one photon. Savasta asked his PhD student at the time, Luigi Garziano, to simulate the process. When Garziano's simulation showed that the phenomenon was possible, Savasta was so excited that he "punched the wall," he told physicsworld.com.

One for two?

Their simulation found that the phenomenon occurs when the resonant frequency of the optical cavity containing the atoms is twice the transition frequency of an individual atom. For example, in a cavity whose resonant frequency is three times that of the atomic transition, three atoms can simultaneously absorb or emit a single photon. The optical-cavity's dimensions are determined by this resonant frequency, which must be a standing wave. According to the researchers' calculations, the two atoms would oscillate back and forth between their ground and excited states. Indeed, the atoms would first jointly absorb the photon, ending up in their excited states, before jointly emitting a single photon to return to their ground states. The cycle would then repeat. In addition, they found that the joint absorption and emission can occur with more than just two atoms.

Quantum switch

A two-atom, one-photon system could be used as a switch to transmit information in a quantum circuit, Savasta says. One atom would act as a qubit, encoding information as a superposition of the ground and excited states. To transmit the information outside of the cavity, the qubit would need to transfer the information to a photon in the cavity. The second atom would be used to control whether the qubit transmits the information. If the second atom's transition frequency is tuned to half the resonance frequency of the cavity, the two atoms could jointly absorb and emit a single photon, which would contain the encoded information to be transmitted.

To ensure that the atoms do not re-adsorb the photon, the atom's resonant frequency can be changed by applying an external magnetic field.

Savasta's group has begun to look for experimental collaborators to produce its theoretical prediction in the lab. While the experiment could be performed using actual atoms, Savasta plans to

use artificial atoms: superconducting particles that have quantized energy levels and behave analogously as atoms, but whose transition energies can be more easily tuned by the experimentalist. In addition, controlling real atoms involves expensive technology, while artificial atoms can be created cheaply on solid-state chips. "Real atoms are only good for proof-of-principle experiments," he says.

Savasta anticipates that their collaborators will be able to successfully perform the experiment in about a year. "We think that, especially if using superconducting qubits, that this experiment is well within the reach of present technology," he says.

According to Tatjana Wilk at the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics in Garching, who was not involved in the current research, speaking to the American Physical Society's Physics Focus, she cautions that the excited states of the atoms may not last long enough to be useful in an actual quantum device.

The research is published in Physical Review Letters. [16]

Quantum processor for single photons

"Nothing is impossible!" In line with this motto, physicists from the Quantum Dynamics Division of Professor Gerhard Rempe (director at the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics) managed to realise a quantum logic gate in which two light quanta are the main actors. The difficulty of such an endeavour is that photons usually do not interact at all but pass each other undisturbed. This makes them ideal for the transmission of quantum information, but less suited for its processing. The scientists overcame this steep hurdle by bringing an ancillary third particle into play: a single atom trapped inside an optical resonator that takes on the role of a mediator. "The distinct feature of our gate implementation is that the interaction between the photons is deterministic", explains Dr. Stephan Ritter. "This is essential for future, more complex applications like scalable quantum computers or global quantum networks."

In all modern computers, data processing is based on information being binary-coded and then processed using logical operations. This is done using so-called logic gates which assign predefined output values to each input via deterministic protocols. Likewise, for the information processing in quantum computers, quantum logic gates are the key elements. To realise a universal quantum computer, it is necessary that every input quantum bit can cause a maximal change of the other quantum bits. The practical difficulty lies in the special nature of quantum information: in contrast to classical bits, it cannot be copied. Therefore, classical methods for error correction cannot be applied, and the gate must function for every single photon that carries information.

Because of the special importance of photons as information carriers – for example, for communicating quantum information in extended quantum networks – the realisation of a deterministic photon-photon gate has been a long-standing goal. One of several possibilities to encode photonic quantum bits is the use of polarisation states of single photons. Then the states "0" and "1" of a classical bit correspond to two orthogonal polarisation states. In the two-photon gate, the polarisation of each photon can influence the polarisation of the other photon. As in the classical logic gate it is specified beforehand which input polarisation leads to which output polarisation. For example, a linear polarisation of the second photon is rotated by 90° if the first one is in the logic

state "1", and remains unchanged if the first one is in "0". In contrast to classical logic gates, which would be fully specified by such a description, a quantum gate can take on an infinite number of possible input states. The quantum logic gate has to create the correct combination of output states for each one of these.

In the experiment presented here two independently polarised photons impinge, in quick succession, onto a resonator which is made of two high-reflectivity mirrors.

Inside a single rubidium atom is trapped forming a strongly coupled system with the resonator. The resonator amplifies the light field of the impinging photon at the position of the atom enabling a direct atom-photon interaction. As a result, the atomic state gets manipulated by the photon just as it is being reflected from the mirror. This change is sensed by the second photon when it arrives at the mirror shortly thereafter.

After their reflection, both photons are stored in a 1.2-kilometre-long optical fibre for some microseconds. Meanwhile, the atomic state is measured. A rotation of the first photon's polarisation conditioned on the outcome of the measurement enables the back action of the second photon on the first one. "The two photons are never at the same place at the same time and thus they do not see each other directly. Nevertheless, we achieve a maximal interaction between them", explains Bastian Hacker, PhD student at the experiment.

The scientists could prove experimentally that – depending on the choice of the photons' polarisations – either the first photon affects the second or vice versa. To this end, they measured the polarisation states of the two outgoing photons for different input states. From these, they generated "truth tables" which correspond to the expected gate operations and thus demonstrate the diverse operational modes of the photon-photon gate.

The case when the input polarisation of the two photons is chosen such that they influence each other is of particular interest: Here the two outgoing photons form an entangled pair. "The possibility to generate entanglement fundamentally distinguishes a quantum gate from its classical counterpart. One of the applications of entangled photons is in the teleportation of quantum states", explains Stephan Welte, PhD student at the experiment.

The scientists envision that the new photon-photon gate could pave the way towards all-optical quantum information processing. "The distribution of photons via an optical quantum network would allow linking any number of network nodes and thus enable the setup of a scalable optical quantum computer in which the photon-photon gate plays the role of a central processing unit (CPU)", explains Professor Gerhard Rempe. [15]

The path to perfection: Quantum dots in electrically-controlled cavities yield bright, nearly identical photons

Optical quantum technologies are based on the interactions of atoms and photons at the single-particle level, and so require sources of single photons that are highly indistinguishable – that is, as identical as possible. Current single-photon sources using semiconductor quantum dots inserted into photonic structures produce photons that are ultrabright but have limited indistinguishability due to charge noise, which results in a fluctuating electric field. Conversely, parametric down conversion

sources yield photons that while being highly indistinguishable have very low brightness. Recently, however, scientists at CNRS - Université Paris-Saclay, Marcoussis, France; Université Paris Diderot, Paris, France; University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia; and Université Grenoble Alpes, CNRS, Institut Néel, Grenoble, France; have developed devices made of quantum dots in electrically-controlled cavities that provide large numbers of highly indistinguishable photons with strongly reduced charge noise that are 20 times brighter than any source of equal quality. The researchers state that by demonstrating efficient generation of a pure single photon with near-unity indistinguishability, their novel approach promises significant advances in optical quantum technology complexity and scalability.

Dr. Pascale Senellart and Phys.org discussed the paper, Near-optimal single-photon sources in the solid state, that she and her colleagues published in Nature Photonics, which reports the design and fabrication of the first optoelectronic devices made of quantum dots in electrically controlled cavities that provide bright source generating near-unity indistinguishability and pure single photons. "The ideal single photon source is a device that produces light pulses, each of them containing exactly one, and no more than one, photon. Moreover, all the photons should be identical in spatial shape, wavelength, polarization, and a spectrum that is the Fourier transform of its temporal profile," Senellart tells Phys.org. "As a result, to obtain near optimal single photon sources in an optoelectronic device, we had to solve many scientific and technological challenges, leading to an achievement that is the result of more than seven years of research."

While quantum dots can be considered artificial atoms that therefore emit photons one by one, she explains, due to the high refractive index of any semiconductor device, most single photons emitted by the quantum dot do not exit the semiconductor and therefore cannot be used. "We solved this problem by coupling the quantum dot to a microcavity in order to engineer the electromagnetic field around the emitter and force it to emit in a well-defined mode of the optical field," Senellart points out. "To do so, we need to position the quantum dot with nanometer-scale accuracy in the microcavity."

Senellart notes that this is the first challenge that the researchers had to address since targeting the issue of quantum dots growing with random spatial positions.

"Our team solved this issue in 2008¹ by proposing a new technology, in-situ lithography, which allows measuring the quantum dot position optically and drawing a pillar cavity around it. With this technique, we can position a single quantum dot with 50 nm accuracy at the center of a micron-sized pillar." In these cavities, two distributed Bragg reflectors confine the optical field in the vertical direction, and the contrast of the index of refraction between the air and the semiconductor provides the lateral confinement of the light. "Prior to this technology, the fabrication yield of quantum dot cavity devices was in the 10⁻⁴ – but today it is larger than 50%." The scientists used this technique to demonstrate the fabrication of bright single photon sources in 2013², showing that the device can generate light pulses containing a single photon with a probability of 80% – but while all photons had the same spatial shape and wavelength, they were not perfectly identical.

"Indeed, for the photons to be fully indistinguishable, the emitter should be highly isolated from any source of decoherence induced by the solid-state environment.

However, our study showed that collisions of the carriers with phonons and fluctuation of charges around the quantum dot were the main limitations." To solve this problem, the scientists added an electrical control to the device, such that the application of an electric field stabilized the charges around the quantum dot by sweeping out any free charge. This in turn removed the noise. Moreover, she adds, this electrical control allows tuning the quantum dot wavelength – a process that was previously done by increasing temperature at the expense of increasing vibration.

"I'd like to underline here that the technology described above is unique worldwide," Senellart stresses. "Our group is the only one with such full control of all of the quantum dot properties. That is, we control emission wavelength, emission lifetime and coupling to the environment, all in a fully deterministic and scalable way."

Specifically, implementing control of the charge environment for quantum dots in connected pillar cavities, and applying an electric field on a cavity structure optimally coupled to a quantum dot, required significant attention. "We had strong indications back in 2013 that the indistinguishability of our photons was limited by some charge fluctuations around the quantum dot: Even in the highest-quality semiconductors, charges bound to defects fluctuate and create a fluctuating electric field³. In the meantime, several colleagues were observing very low charge noise in structures where an electric field was applied to the quantum dot – but this was not combined with a cavity structure." The challenge, Senellart explains, was to define a metallic contact on a microcavity (which is typically a cylinder with a diameter of 2-3 microns) without covering the pillar's top surface.

"We solved this problem by proposing a new kind of cavity – that is, we showed that we can actually connect the cylinder to a bigger frame using some one-dimensional bridges without modifying too much the confinement of the optical field." This geometry, which the researchers call connected pillars, allows having the same optical confinement as an isolated pillar while defining the metallic contact far from the pillar itself. Senellart says that the connected pillars geometry was the key to both controlling the quantum wavelength of dot and efficiently collecting its emission⁴.

In demonstrating the efficient generation of a pure single photon with near-unity indistinguishability, Senellart continues, the researchers had one last step – combining high photon extraction efficiency and perfect indistinguishability – which they did by implementing a resonant excitation scheme of the quantum dot. "In 2013, Prof. Chao-Yang Lu's team in Hefei, China showed that one could obtain photons with 96% indistinguishability by exciting the quantum dot state in a strictly resonant way⁵. Their result was beautiful, but again, not combined with an efficient extraction of the photons. The experimental challenge here is to suppress the scattered light from the laser and collect only the single photons radiated by the quantum dot."

Senellart adds that while removing scattered photons when transmitting light in processed microstructures is typically complicated, in their case this step was straightforward. "Because the quantum dot is inserted in a cavity, the probability of the incident laser light to interact with the quantum dot is actually very high. It turns out that we send only a few photons – that is, less than 10 – on the device to have the quantum dot emitting one photon. This beautiful efficiency, also demonstrated in the excitation process, which we report in another paper⁶, made this step quite easy."

The devices reported in the paper have a number of implications for future technologies, one being the ability to achieve strongly-reduced charge noise by applying an electrical bias. "Charge noise has been extensively investigated in quantum dot structures," Senellart says, "especially by Richard Warburton's group."

Warburton and his team demonstrated that in the best quantum dot samples, the charge noise could take place on a time scale of few microseconds – which is actually very good, since the quantum dot emission lifetime is around 1 nanosecond⁷. However, this was no longer the case in etched structures, where a strong charge noise is always measured on very short time scale – less than 1 ns – that prevents the photon from being indistinguishable. "I think the idea we had – that this problem would be solved by applying an electric field – was an important one," Senellart notes. "The time scale of this charge noise does not only determine the degree of indistinguishability of the photons, it also determines how many indistinguishable photon one can generate with the same device. Therefore, this number will determine the complexity of any quantum computation or simulation scheme one can implement." Senellart adds that in a follow-up study⁷ the scientists generated long streams of photons that can contain more than 200 being indistinguishable by more than 88%.

In addressing how these de novo devices may lead to new levels of complexity and scalability in optical quantum technologies, Senellart first discusses the historical sources used develop optical quantum technologies. She makes the point that all previous implementations of optical quantum simulation or computing have been implemented using Spontaneous Parametric Down Conversion (SPDC) sources, in which pairs of photons are generated by the nonlinear interaction of a laser on a nonlinear crystal, wherein one photon of the pair is detected to announce the presence of the other photon. This so-called heralded source can present strongly indistinguishable photons, but only at the cost of extremely low brightness. "Indeed, the difficulty here is that the one pulse does not contain a single pair only, but some of the time several pairs," Senellart explains. "To reduce the probability of having several pairs generated that would degrade the fidelity of a quantum simulation, calculation or the security of a quantum communication, the sources are strongly attenuated, to the point where the probability of having one pair in a pulse is below 1%. Nevertheless, with these sources, the quantum optics community has demonstrated many beautiful proofs of concept of optical quantum technologies, including long-distance teleportation, quantum computing of simple chemical or physical systems, and quantum simulations like BosonSampling." (A BosonSampling device is a quantum machine expected to perform tasks intractable for a classical computer, yet requiring minimal non-classical resources compared to full-scale quantum computers.) "Yet, the low efficiency of these sources limits the manipulation to low photon numbers: It takes typically hundreds of hours to manipulate three photons, and the measurement time increases exponentially with the number of photons. Obviously, with the possibility to generate more many indistinguishable photons with an efficiency more than one order of magnitude greater than SPDC sources, our devices have the potential to bring optical quantum technologies to a whole new level."

Other potential applications of the newly-demonstrated devices will focus on meeting near-future challenges in optical quantum technologies, including scalability of photonic quantum computers and intermediate quantum computing tasks. "The sources presented here can be used immediately to implement quantum computing and intermediate quantum computing tasks. Actually, very

recently – in the first demonstration of the superiority of our new single photon sources – our colleagues in Brisbane made use of such bright indistinguishable quantum dot-based single photon sources to demonstrate a three photon BosonSampling experiment⁸, where the solid-state multi-photon source was one to two orders-of-magnitude more efficient than downconversion sources, allowing to complete the experiment faster than those performed with SPDC sources. Moreover, this is a first step; we'll progressively increase the number of manipulated photons, in both quantum simulation and quantum computing tasks."

Another target area is quantum communications transfer rate. "Such bright single photon sources could also drastically change the rate of quantum communication protocols that are currently using attenuated laser sources or SPDC sources. Yet, right now, our sources operate at 930 nm when 1.3 μm or 1.55 μm sources are needed for long distance communications. Our technique can be transferred to the 1.3 μm range, a range at which single photon emission has been successfully demonstrated – in particular by the Toshiba research group – slightly changing the quantum dot material. Reaching the 1.55 μm range will be more challenging using quantum dots, as it appears that the single photon emission is difficult to obtain at this wavelength. Nevertheless, there's a very promising alternative possibility: the use of a 900 nm bright source, like the one we report here, to perform quantum frequency conversion of the single photons. Such efficient frequency conversion of single photons has recently been demonstrated, for example, in the lab of Prof. Yoshie Yamamoto at Stanford⁹."

Regarding future research, Senellart says "There are many things to do from this point. On the technology side, we will try to improve our devices by further increasing the source brightness. For that, a new excitation scheme will be implemented to excite the device from the side, as was done by Prof. Valia Voliotis and her colleagues on the Nanostructures and Quantum Systems team at Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris and Prof. Glenn Solomon's group at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Applying this technique to our cavities should allow gaining another factor of four on source brightness. In addition, operating at another wavelength would be another important feature for our devices, since as discussed above, this would allow using the source for quantum telecommunication. For example, a shorter wavelength, in the visible/near infrared range, would open new possibilities to interconnect various quantum systems, including ions or atoms through their interaction with photons, as well as applications in quantum imaging and related fields."

The researchers also want to profit from the full potential of these sources and head to high photon number manipulation in, for instance, quantum simulation schemes. "We're aiming at performing BosonSampling measurements with 20-30 photons, with the objective of testing the extended Church Turing thesis and proving the superiority of a quantum computer over a classical one." The original Church Turing thesis, based on investigations of Alonzo Church and Alan Turing into computable functions, states that, ignoring resource limitations, a function on the natural numbers is computable by a human being following an algorithm, if and only if it is computable by a Turing machine.

Another promising impact on future optical quantum technologies is the generation of entangled photon pairs. "A quantum dot can also generate entangled photon pairs, and in 2010 we demonstrated that we could use the in situ lithography to obtain the brightest source of entangled

photon pairs¹⁰. That being said, photon indistinguishability needs to be combined with high pair brightness – and this is the next challenge we plan to tackle. Such a device would play an important role in developing quantum relays for long distance communication and quantum computing tasks."

Senellart tells Phys.org that other areas of research might well benefit from their findings, in that devices similar to the one the scientists developed to fabricate single photon sources could also provide nonlinearities at the low photon count scale. This capability could in turn allow the implementation of deterministic quantum gates, a new optical quantum computing paradigm in which reversible quantum logic gates – for example, Toffoli or CNOT (controlled NOT) gates– can simulate irreversible classical logic gates, thereby allowing quantum computers to perform any computation which can be performed by a classical deterministic computer. "Single photons can also be used to probe the mechanical modes of mechanical resonator and develop quantum sensing with macroscopic objects. Other applications," she concludes, "could benefit from the possibility to have very efficient single photon sources, such as an imaging system with single photon sources that could allow dramatically increased imaging sensitivity. Such technique could have applications in biology where the lower the photon flux, the better for exploring in vivo samples." [14]

Team demonstrates large-scale technique to produce quantum dots

A method to produce significant amounts of semiconducting nanoparticles for light-emitting displays, sensors, solar panels and biomedical applications has gained momentum with a demonstration by researchers at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

While zinc sulfide nanoparticles - a type of quantum dot that is a semiconductor - have many potential applications, high cost and limited availability have been obstacles to their widespread use. That could change, however, because of a scalable ORNL technique outlined in a paper published in *Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology*.

Unlike conventional inorganic approaches that use expensive precursors, toxic chemicals, high temperatures and high pressures, a team led by ORNL's Ji-Won Moon used bacteria fed by inexpensive sugar at a temperature of 150 degrees Fahrenheit in 25- and 250-gallon reactors. Ultimately, the team produced about three-fourths of a pound of zinc sulfide nanoparticles - without process optimization, leaving room for even higher yields.

The ORNL biomanufacturing technique is based on a platform technology that can also produce nanometer-size semiconducting materials as well as magnetic, photovoltaic, catalytic and phosphor materials. Unlike most biological synthesis technologies that occur inside the cell, ORNL's biomanufactured quantum dot synthesis occurs outside of the cells. As a result, the nanomaterials are produced as loose particles that are easy to separate through simple washing and centrifuging.

The results are encouraging, according to Moon, who also noted that the ORNL approach reduces production costs by approximately 90 percent compared to other methods.

"Since biomanufacturing can control the quantum dot diameter, it is possible to produce a wide range of specifically tuned semiconducting nanomaterials, making them attractive for a variety of applications that include electronics, displays, solar cells, computer memory, energy storage, printed electronics and bio-imaging," Moon said.

Successful biomanufacturing of light-emitting or semiconducting nanoparticles requires the ability to control material synthesis at the nanometer scale with sufficiently high reliability, reproducibility and yield to be cost effective. With the ORNL approach, Moon said that goal has been achieved.

Researchers envision their quantum dots being used initially in buffer layers of photovoltaic cells and other thin film-based devices that can benefit from their electro-optical properties as light-emitting materials. [13]

Superfast light source made from artificial atom

All light sources work by absorbing energy – for example, from an electric current – and emit energy as light. But the energy can also be lost as heat and it is therefore important that the light sources emit the light as quickly as possible, before the energy is lost as heat. Superfast light sources can be used, for example, in laser lights, LED lights and in single-photon light sources for quantum technology. New research results from the Niels Bohr Institute show that light sources can be made much faster by using a principle that was predicted theoretically in 1954. The results are published in the scientific journal, Physical Review Letters.

Researchers at the Niels Bohr Institute are working with quantum dots, which are a kind of artificial atom that can be incorporated into optical chips. In a quantum dot, an electron can be excited (i.e. jump up), for example, by shining a light on it with a laser and the electron leaves a 'hole'. The stronger the interaction between light and matter, the faster the electron decays back into the hole and the faster the light is emitted.

But the interaction between light and matter is naturally very weak and it makes the light sources very slow to emit light and this can reduce energy efficiency.

Already in 1954, the physicist Robert Dicke predicted that the interaction between light and matter could be increased by having a number of atoms that 'share' the excited state in a quantum superposition.

Quantum speed up

Demonstrating this effect has been challenging so far because the atoms either come so close together that they bump into each other or they are so far apart that the quantum speed up does not work. Researchers at the Niels Bohr Institute have now finally demonstrated the effect experimentally, but in an entirely different physical system than Dicke had in mind. They have shown this so-called superradiance for photons emitted from a single quantum dot.

"We have developed a quantum dot so that it behaves as if it was comprised of five quantum dots, which means that the light is five times stronger. This is due to the attraction between the electron and the hole. But what is special is that the quantum dot still only emits a single photon at a time. It is an outstanding single-photon source," says Søren Stobbe, who is an associate professor in the Quantum Photonic research group at the Niels Bohr Institute at the University of Copenhagen and led the project. The experiment was carried out in collaboration with Professor David Ritchie's research group at the University of Cambridge, who have made the quantum dots.

Petru Tighineanu, a postdoc in the Quantum Photonics research group at the Niels Bohr Institute, has carried out the experiments and he explains the effect as such, that the atoms are very small and light is very 'big' because of its long wavelength, so the light almost cannot 'see' the atoms – like a lorry that is driving on a road and does not notice a small pebble. But if many pebbles become a larger stone, the lorry will be able to register it and then the interaction becomes much more dramatic. In the same way, light interacts much more strongly with the quantum dot if the quantum dot contains the special superradiant quantum state, which makes it look much bigger.

Increasing the light-matter interaction

"The increased light-matter interaction makes the quantum dots more robust in regards to the disturbances that are found in all materials, for example, acoustic oscillations. It helps to make the photons more uniform and is important for how large you can build future quantum computers," says Søren Stobbe.

He adds that it is actually the temperature, which is only a few degrees above absolute zero, that limits how fast the light emissions can remain in their current experiments. In the long term, they will study the quantum dots at even lower temperatures, where the effects could be very dramatic.

[12]

Single-photon source is efficient and indistinguishable

Devices that emit one – and only one – photon on demand play a central role in light-based quantum-information systems. Each photon must also be emitted in the same quantum state, which makes each photon indistinguishable from all the others. This is important because the quantum state of the photon is used to carry a quantum bit (qubit) of information.

Quantum dots are tiny pieces of semiconductor that show great promise as single-photon sources. When a laser pulse is fired at a quantum dot, an electron is excited between two distinct energy levels. The excited state then decays to create a single photon with a very specific energy. However, this process can involve other electron excitations that result in the emission of photons with a wide range of energies – photons that are therefore not indistinguishable.

Exciting dots

This problem can be solved by exciting the quantum dot with a pulse of light at the same energy as the emitted photon. This is called resonance fluorescence, and has been used to create devices that are very good at producing indistinguishable single photons. However, this process is inefficient, and only produces a photon about 6% of the time.

Now, Chaoyang Lu, Jian-Wei Pan and colleagues at the University of Science and Technology of China have joined forces with researchers in Denmark, Germany and the UK to create a resonance-fluorescence-based source that emits a photon 66% of the time when it is prompted by a laser pulse. Of these photons, 99.1% are solo and 98.5% are in indistinguishable quantum states – with both figures of merit being suitable for applications in quantum-information systems.

Lu told physicsworld.com that nearly all of the laser pulses that strike the source produce a photon, but about 34% of these photons are unable to escape the device. The device was operated at a

laser-pulse frequency of 81 MHz and a pulse power of 24 nW, which is a much lower power requirement than other quantum-dot-based sources.

Quantum sandwich

The factor-of-ten improvement in efficiency was achieved by sandwiching a quantum dot in the centre of a "micropillar" created by stacking 40 disc-like layers (see figure). Each layer is a "distributed Bragg reflector", which is a pair of mirrors that together have a thickness of one quarter the wavelength of the emitted photons.

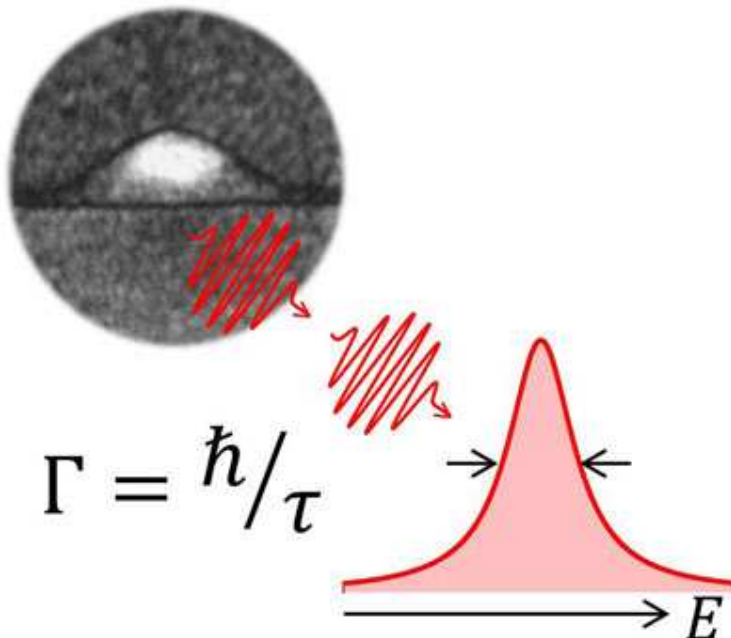
The micropillar is about 2.5 μm in diameter and about 10 μm tall, and it allowed the team to harness the "Purcell effect", whereby the rate of fluorescence is increased significantly when the emitter is placed in a resonant cavity.

Lu says that the team is already thinking about how the photon sources could be used to perform boson sampling (see "'Boson sampling' offers shortcut to quantum computing"). This involves a network of beam splitters that converts one set of photons arriving at a number of parallel input ports into a second set leaving via a number of parallel outputs. The "result" of the computation is the probability that a certain input configuration will lead to a certain output. This result cannot be easily calculated using a conventional computer, and this has led some physicists to suggest that boson sampling could be used to solve practical problems that would take classical computers vast amounts of time to solve.

Other possible applications for the source are the quantum teleportation of three properties of a quantum system – the current record is two properties and is held by Lu and Pan – or quantum cryptography.

The research is described in Physical Review Letters. [11]

Semiconductor quantum dots as ideal single-photon source



A single-photon source never emits two or more photons at the same time. Single photons are important in the field of quantum information technology where, for example, they are used in quantum computers. Alongside the brightness and robustness of the light source, the indistinguishability of the photons is especially crucial. In particular, this means that all photons must be the same color. Creating such a source of identical single photons has proven very difficult in the past.

However, quantum dots made of semiconductor materials are offering new hope. A quantum dot is a collection of a few hundred thousand atoms that can form itself into a semiconductor under certain conditions. Single electrons can be captured in these quantum dots and locked into a very small area. An individual photon is emitted when an engineered quantum state collapses.

Noise in the semiconductor

A team of scientists led by Dr. Andreas Kuhlmann and Prof. Richard J. Warburton from the University of Basel have already shown in past publications that the indistinguishability of the photons is reduced by the fluctuating nuclear spin of the quantum dot atoms. For the first time ever, the scientists have managed to control the nuclear spin to such an extent that even photons sent out at very large intervals are the same color.

Quantum cryptography and quantum communication are two potential areas of application for single-photon sources. These technologies could make it possible to perform calculations that are far beyond the capabilities of today's computers. [10]

How to Win at Bridge Using Quantum Physics

Contract bridge is the chess of card games. You might know it as some stuffy old game your grandparents play, but it requires major brainpower, and preferably an obsession with rules and strategy. So how to make it even geekier? Throw in some quantum mechanics to try to gain a competitive advantage. The idea here is to use the quantum magic of entangled photons—which are essentially twins, sharing every property—to transmit two bits of information to your bridge partner for the price of one. Understanding how to do this is not an easy task, but it will help elucidate some basic building blocks of quantum information theory. It's also kind of fun to consider whether or not such tactics could ever be allowed in professional sports. [6]

Quantum Information

In quantum mechanics, quantum information is physical information that is held in the "state" of a quantum system. The most popular unit of quantum information is the qubit, a two-level quantum system. However, unlike classical digital states (which are discrete), a two-state quantum system can actually be in a superposition of the two states at any given time.

Quantum information differs from classical information in several respects, among which we note the following:

However, despite this, the amount of information that can be retrieved in a single qubit is equal to one bit. It is in the processing of information (quantum computation) that a difference occurs.

The ability to manipulate quantum information enables us to perform tasks that would be unachievable in a classical context, such as unconditionally secure transmission of information. Quantum information processing is the most general field that is concerned with quantum information. There are certain tasks which classical computers cannot perform "efficiently" (that is, in polynomial time) according to any known algorithm. However, a quantum computer can compute the answer to some of these problems in polynomial time; one well-known example of this is Shor's factoring algorithm. Other algorithms can speed up a task less dramatically - for example, Grover's search algorithm which gives a quadratic speed-up over the best possible classical algorithm.

Quantum information, and changes in quantum information, can be quantitatively measured by using an analogue of Shannon entropy. Given a statistical ensemble of quantum mechanical systems with the density matrix S , it is given by.

Many of the same entropy measures in classical information theory can also be generalized to the quantum case, such as the conditional quantum entropy. [7]

Heralded Qubit Transfer

Optical photons would be ideal carriers to transfer quantum information over large distances. Researchers envisage a network where information is processed in certain nodes and transferred between them via photons. However, inherent losses in long-distance networks mean that the information transfer is subject to probabilistic errors, making it hard to know whether the transfer of a qubit of information has been successful. Now Gerhard Rempe and colleagues from the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics in Germany have developed a new protocol that solves this problem through a strategy that "heralds" the accurate transfer of quantum information at a network node.

The method developed by the researchers involves transferring a photonic qubit to an atomic qubit trapped inside an optical cavity. The photon-atom quantum information transfer is initiated via a quantum "logic-gate" operation, performed by reflecting the photon from the atom-cavity system, which creates an entangled atom-photon state. The detection of the reflected photon then collapses the atom into a definite state. This state can be one of two possibilities, depending on the photonic state detected: Either the atom is in the initial qubit state encoded in the photon and the transfer process is complete, or the atom is in a rotated version of this state. The authors were able to show that the roles of the atom and photon could be reversed. Their method could thus be used as a quantum memory that stores (photon-to-atom state transfer) and recreates (atom-to-photon state transfer) a single-photon polarization qubit. [9]

Quantum Teleportation

Quantum teleportation is a process by which quantum information (e.g. the exact state of an atom or photon) can be transmitted (exactly, in principle) from one location to another, with the help of

classical communication and previously shared quantum entanglement between the sending and receiving location. Because it depends on classical communication, which can proceed no faster than the speed of light, it cannot be used for superluminal transport or communication of classical bits. It also cannot be used to make copies of a system, as this violates the no-cloning theorem. Although the name is inspired by the teleportation commonly used in fiction, current technology provides no possibility of anything resembling the fictional form of teleportation. While it is possible to teleport one or more qubits of information between two (entangled) atoms, this has not yet been achieved between molecules or anything larger. One may think of teleportation either as a kind of transportation, or as a kind of communication; it provides a way of transporting a qubit from one location to another, without having to move a physical particle along with it.

The seminal paper first expounding the idea was published by C. H. Bennett, G. Brassard, C. Crépeau, R. Jozsa, A. Peres and W. K. Wootters in 1993. Since then, quantum teleportation has been realized in various physical systems. Presently, the record distance for quantum teleportation is 143 km (89 mi) with photons, and 21 m with material systems. In August 2013, the achievement of "fully deterministic" quantum teleportation, using a hybrid technique, was reported. On 29 May 2014, scientists announced a reliable way of transferring data by quantum teleportation. Quantum teleportation of data had been done before but with highly unreliable methods. [8]

Quantum Computing

A team of electrical engineers at UNSW Australia has observed the unique quantum behavior of a pair of spins in silicon and designed a new method to use them for "2-bit" quantum logic operations.

These milestones bring researchers a step closer to building a quantum computer, which promises dramatic data processing improvements.

Quantum bits, or qubits, are the building blocks of quantum computers. While many ways to create a qubits exist, the Australian team has focused on the use of single atoms of phosphorus, embedded inside a silicon chip similar to those used in normal computers.

The first author on the experimental work, PhD student Juan Pablo Dehollain, recalls the first time he realized what he was looking at.

"We clearly saw these two distinct quantum states, but they behaved very differently from what we were used to with a single atom. We had a real 'Eureka!' moment when we realized what was happening – we were seeing in real time the `entangled' quantum states of a pair of atoms." [5]

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 delta x position difference and with a delta p momentum difference such a way that they product is about the half Planck reduced constant. For the proton this delta x much less in the nucleon, than in the orbit of the electron in the atom, the delta p is much higher because of the greater proton mass.

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

Wave – Particle Duality

The accelerating electrons explains the wave – particle duality of the electrons and photons, since the elementary charges are distributed on delta x position with delta p impulse and creating a wave packet of the electron. The photon gives the electromagnetic particle of the mediating force of the electrons 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 the 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 $1/2$ 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 Big 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 ratio $M_p=1840 M_e$. 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.

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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]

Conclusions

The method developed by the researchers involves transferring a photonic qubit to an atomic qubit trapped inside an optical cavity. The photon-atom quantum information transfer is initiated via a quantum "logic-gate" operation, performed by reflecting the photon from the atom-cavity system, which creates an entangled atom-photon state. [9]

In August 2013, the achievement of "fully deterministic" quantum teleportation, using a hybrid technique, was reported. On 29 May 2014, scientists announced a reliable way of transferring data by quantum teleportation. Quantum teleportation of data had been done before but with highly unreliable methods. [8]

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 their movement.

The accelerated charges self-maintaining potential shows the locality of the relativity, working on the quantum level also. [1]

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.

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]

The key breakthrough to arrive at this new idea to build qubits was to exploit the ability to control the nuclear spin of each atom. With that insight, the team has now conceived a unique way to use the nuclei as facilitators for the quantum logic operation between the electrons. [5]

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 also.

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