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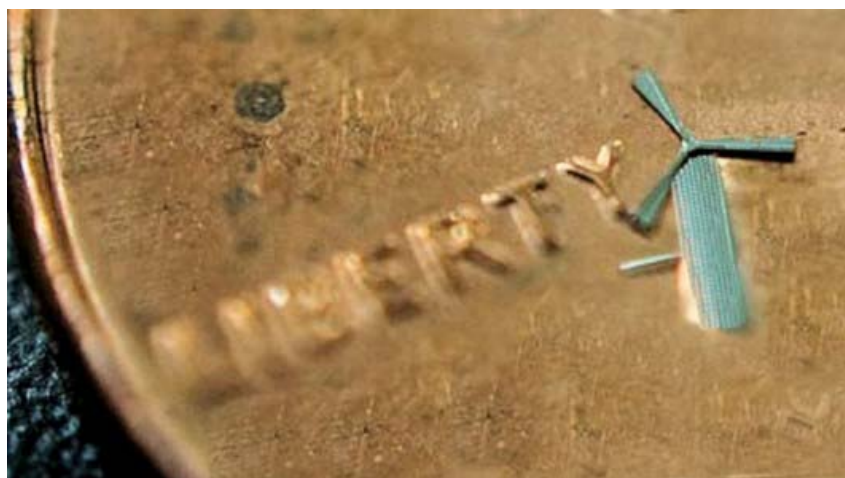
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[World's smallest windmills to power cell phones](#)



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Professor J.C. Chiao and his postdoc Dr. Smitha Rao of the University of Texas at Arlington have developed a MEMS-based nickel alloy windmill so small that 10 could be mounted on a single grain of rice. Aimed at very-small-scale energy harvesting applications, these windmills could recharge batteries for smartphones, and directly power ultra-low-power electronic devices...

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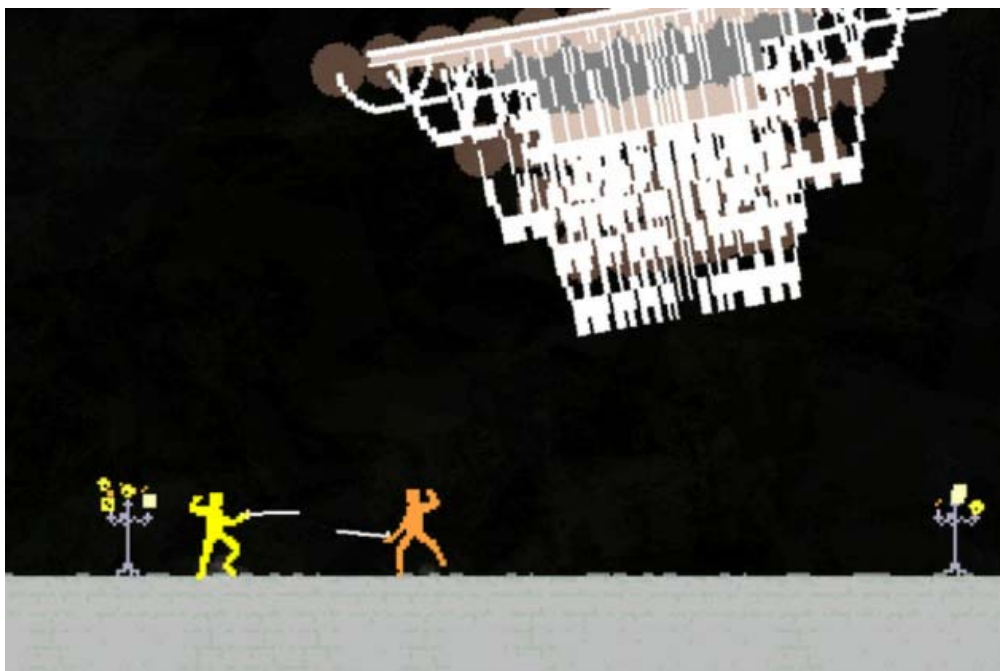
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[‘Nidhogg’ arrives on Steam](#)



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Nidhogg is here. [The insanely fast indie dueling video game](#) has arrived on Steam, over three years after it began winning accolades from the gaming press. Originally only playable at video game exhibitions where crowds would cheer as a pair of players faced off in the epic tug-of-war-like sword-fighting game, its creator Mark “Messhof” Essen is finally selling *Nidhogg* to the masses, complete with online multiplayer. For \$14.99 (or \$11.99 through January 20th) you can buy the game for Windows PC, which has been greatly expanded with new fighting moves, new animations, four distinct arenas, full PC gamepad support for Steam’s Big Picture mode, local tournament and arcade modes, and music that dynamically changes as you play.

It’s hard to...

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[‘High-profile’ Google+ users will get better, more private email settings](#)



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A few days ago, Google [rolled out a potentially invasive new feature](#) — if you have both a Gmail address and Google+ account, other Google+ and Gmail users will soon be able to send messages right into your inbox, even if you never gave them your email address. By default, Google says it is letting anyone on Google+ send messages to your inbox, even if you don't have them in a circle, making the service completely opt-out rather than opt-in. However, we've just learned that isn't the case across the board.

For “high-profile” users who may have thousands of users following them, Google has decided to make the default more limited. Those users will only be able to receive messages from Google+ users that they have actively put in...

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January 13, 2014 [Tech News](#)

[‘Smart Parking’ In London Promises To Eliminate The Search For Parking Spots](#)

[From Quartz:](#)

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This week, the City of Westminster, one of London's local councils, will start embedding the first of 3,000 sensors into the streets. They will be in the ground by the end of March, making London the world's first major city to adopt the long-heralded “smart parking” revolution.

The idea is simple. According to the council, motorists spend an average of 15 minutes searching for a space in Westminster—which with Parliament, the main shopping district, and dozens of tourist sites, has a legitimate claim to be the heart of London. If drivers know where the empty spaces are, they won't have to cruise the streets looking for one.

More from Quartz:

- [Sorry Sweden, Luxembourg is now the most generous country in the world](#)
- [Western Australia's war on sharks won't make swimmers any safer](#)
- [The world's taste for whiskey, visualized](#)
- [Hobbyists are now building tablets using a \\$35 computer brain](#)

Other cities, most famously San Francisco, have experimented with “smart parking” and companies from [France](#) to America are developing the technology. But San Francisco [turned off its sensors](#) on 30 Dec. 2013, and is now evaluating the results of its pilot program. Westminster is going full steam ahead, bashing in 50 sensors a day with a team of three men. Boroughs in Manchester and Birmingham are also trying out the system.

Each sensor in the ground detects when a car is parked on the street above it. The council releases the data to the public through a smartphone app. Results from a pilot program in 2012 were encouraging: The proportion of occupied parking spots that weren't paid for dropped from 12% to under 10%, a sign that more people were paying for parking, says Kieran Fitsall, the parking services development manager for the council. (Some proportion

of spots will always be unpaid for, because some vehicles are loading or unloading, dropping people off, or have exemptions.)

The first generation of sensors protruded on the surface; the next will be flatter. Westminster has 10,000 parking bays that visitors can use (plus more for residents only). The first phase of the program will see 3,000 sensors, each with a battery life of five to seven years, installed in visitor bays in the most congested areas of Westminster, which include Mayfair, Soho and the theater district, at cost of £650,000 (\$1.07 million). Based on the results, the council will probably expand the program to the other 7,000 bays that visitors can use.

The list of benefits is long: Apart from reducing traffic, fuel consumption, and emissions from cars, it boosts the local economy as people spend more time in shops, restaurants and offices rather than on the street. Though the app could be used to catch drivers who've overstayed their paid parking time, Fitsall says Westminster has no intention of doing so. Nor does it plan to use the data to change parking prices in higher-demand areas, as San Francisco did.

Fitsall says the data will ultimately be fed into London's transport information network, so when commuters look up how to get into town, they'll be able to see driving and parking times just as they can now get train journey times and walking distances to stations. That could make London a model for other cities.

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[Katie Couric Makes Yahoo 'Global Anchor' Debut](#)

Katie Couric made her debut appearance as Yahoo's 'Global Anchor' Monday.

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Couric launched her new role with an interview with [former Defense Secretary Robert Gates](#), author of "Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War." Gates, who served under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, [has made quite a stir with his new memoir that makes several controversial criticisms](#) of Obama's foreign policy strategy, including [harsh attacks on Vice President Joe Biden](#). The memoir is set for release on Tuesday.

This is not Couric's first encounter with Gates. She had previously interviewed him [on "60 Minutes"](#) while he was still Defense Secretary.

Couric announced in November that she would be [leaving ABC News early](#) to begin [a new partnership with Yahoo](#). Couric continues to host her daytime talk show "Katie" for now, but the network [has confirmed](#) that the show will not be continuing for a third season.

Yahoo said [Couric's responsibilities](#) as 'Global Anchor' will include "groundbreaking interviews" to be featured on the website's homepage, while Couric said that what most excites her about the new venture is that "there are no rules right now." The Gates interview gives viewers a first look into what Couric's online journalism career will look like.

Fascinating read from Robert Gates, who I got to know profiling for 60 Minutes: <http://t.co/e61j3LNH6t> pic.twitter.com/3aisfxM4MA

— Katie Couric (@katiecouric) [January 8, 2014](#)

Recapping [#TheWeekThatWas](#) w [@JohnFugelsang](#) [@TheReidReport](#) [@Chloe_Melas](#) today! Chris Christie Dennis Rodman Bob Gates- who had a better week?

— Katie Couric (@katiecouric) [January 10, 2014](#)

Watch the video for a preview of the interview.

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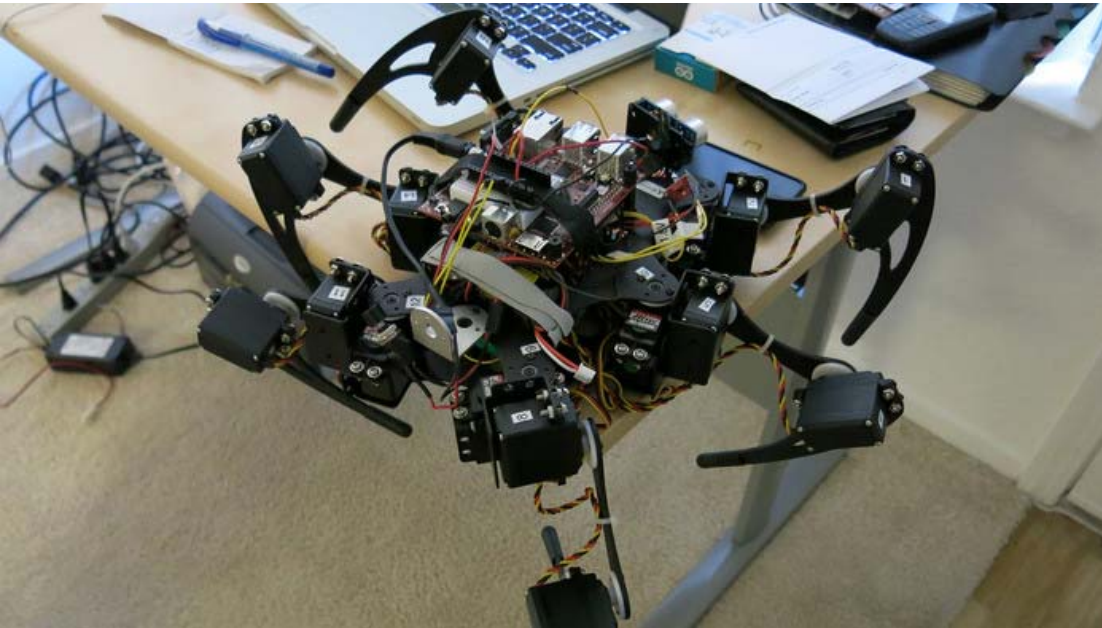
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[Rex Gives Your Robot A Brain](#)

Thanks to microcontrollers and mini computers it's become far easier to build intelligent robots. But, until recently, you've had to jury-rig most of your off-the-shelf components to work in unison. That's why Rex, a new "robot brain" is so important. Like Hardware Battlefield finalist [ModBot](#), Rex offers one important part of your robot project and streamlines the process of implementing intelligence into your robotic projects.

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Created by former Carnegie Mellon Master's students Mike Lewis and Kartik Tiwari, Rex is a cross between a Raspberry Pi and an Arduino. Not



unlike [Udoo](#) before it, Rex allows hobbyists to add powerful hardware control I/O to a powerful on-board processor without connecting multiple shields together with various tools.

“It’s designed specifically for robots,” said Lewis. “It’s a higher price than the RPi, but the experience of building a robot is less of a pain – no hassles for wiring, it has built-in battery inputs, and it boots up directly into a robot programming environment.”

The team is also offering online support and a fully featured help site for robot builders who are

using their platform. The basic model starts at \$99 for a fully-featured board with OS preloaded and a power supply. It also includes a serial cable. They [are looking for \\$90,000 in pledges](#).

“Kartik and I knew we were both interested in consumer robotics and building things that could solve problems for regular people,” said Lewis. “Robotics is such a complicated field where the requirements for a system depend so much on what the system will be used for, that none of the platforms out there were really what I wanted, so I proposed that we attack this issue directly. As we continued to think about it, Rex seemed to make more and more sense for people who had already built Arduino-based robots but were having a difficult time stepping up to a more advanced platform.”

Interestingly, the team built their own OS, Alphalem OS, to run their boards and by building a developers platform right into the board they were able to offer a way to program your robot directly without uploading to a microcontroller. Most importantly these boards are about as big as an Arduino Uno, one of the smallest general-purpose micro controllers available. The board also includes a DSP and camera and microphone inputs, making it far more powerful for the robotics hobbyist and engineer.

The team isn’t stopping at basic motor controls, however.

“The OS will offer an easy-to-use development environment that is similar to Arduino’s ‘sketches’ and a task manager (MCP) that will allow you to launch multiple ‘sketch’-style processes in parallel for different tasks. It will have built-in drivers for devices that are useful for robots, like cameras and USB WiFi adapters. In the future, we will also be adding a layer for AI and Machine Learning applications.”

There’s also a motor kill switch in case your robot becomes sentient. In short, Rex has it all. It makes it easy to build great robot projects and, at about the same price as a few really nice stepper motors, the total cost isn’t very high. Now if only there were pneumatic controls so I could finally build my robotic soup taster.

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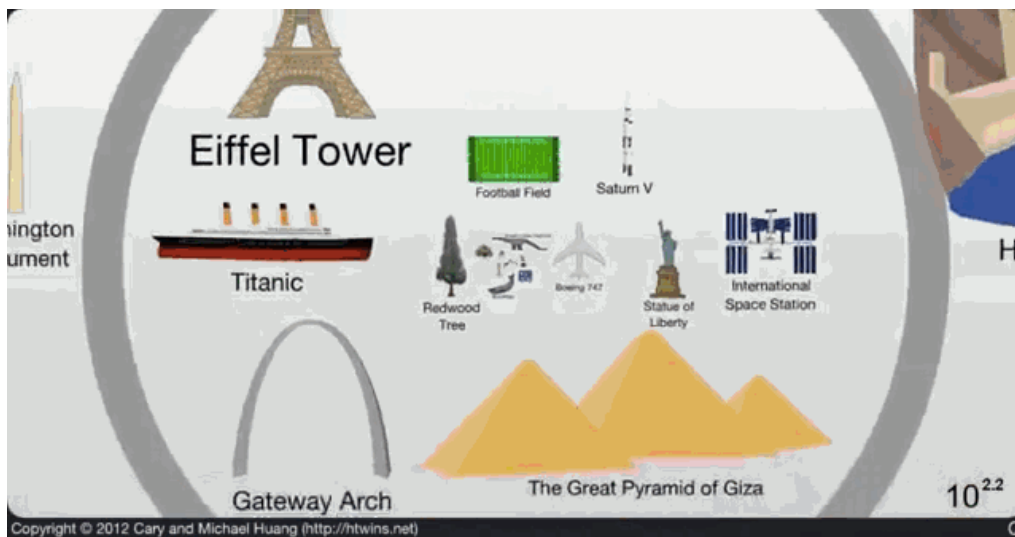
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January 13, 2014 [Space & Science](#)

[A scale for the size of the universe, from quarks to quasars](#)

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Imagining the smallest of the small and the largest of the large in the universe can be a mind-bendingly difficult task. This awesome interactive graphic, that let's you slide from an infinitesimally tiny strange quark all the way out to the gigantic Eridanus Supervoid hanging around near the ragged edges of our observable universe, makes it much easier, though.

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[Studio Octopi proposes River Thames swimming pools](#)

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London architecture firm Studio Octopi has designed concepts for the creation of natural swimming pools in the River Thames. The designs were a response to "London As It Could Be Now," an open call ideas project developed by The Architecture Foundation with Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners and the Royal Academy of Arts. Participants were asked explore ideas that raised awareness of the Thames and increased people's interaction with it.

..
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[SHADE the Motion Picture](#)



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The intention of this film is to provide the viewer with a wealth of factual information that he or she may not have been aware of, or have disregarded in the past as not having merit. The filmmakers have chosen to use what some may consider polarizing...

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[Should Venture Capitalists Dance? An Interview With Foundry Group's Jason Mendelson](#)

While [Foundry Group](#) has made a reputation as a nationally-focused early-stage venture firm, they are also known for having a lot of fun. In [Share](#) 2011, they launched a "Justin Timberlake meets VC" video called [I'm a VC](#) that got nearly 100,000 views. This year they followed up with [Worst of Times](#), a digital short that explores how "worthless" today's technology has become. Launched just a couple months ago, the video has quickly garnered close to 150,000 views. To this end, I recently sat down with [Jason Mendelson](#), managing director at Foundry Group and producer and writer of both pieces. We talked about what motivates venture capitalists to sing, dance, and dress in drag in public.

PS: Why do you guys make these videos? Does it help you with deal flow? Your jobs?

JM: Unlike many venture firms, we don't have a marketing person or outside firm. In fact, we don't even have an internal marketing plan between the partners. We just do what we do. We make these videos mostly because we love hanging out and being creative with one another. And when else do you have an excuse to shop for such horrendous looking clothes?

We think that a lot of people in the venture ecosystem take themselves way too seriously, so I think part of our counter culture is to poke fun at the whole system. My partners [Brad Feld](#), [Seth Levine](#), and [Ryan McIntyre](#) all have great senses of humor and we love to have fun at our own expense. If entrepreneurs find that attractive, then perhaps it might help our deal flow, but we really are just trying to express our personalities and have fun more than anything else.

PS: Do you really feel that today's technology is so bad?

JM: Absolutely not. But all of our gripes in *Worst of Times* are real. Today's technology is simply amazing, but also has a ways to go. This is, in part, why I like being a venture capitalist. I get to invest in entrepreneurs passionate about taking these technologies to the next level. We really are lucky to have the technology that we have, but it feels like we are close to having so much more.

PS: Who is the best dancer of the group? The worst?

JM: Without a doubt, Seth steals the show when we do these things. None of Brad, Ryan or I can dance at all, which is somewhat ironic given that Ryan and I have a fairly serious band on the side. But if I had to vote, I'd give Brad or I worst dancer.

PS: Surely you must have had some good outtakes or funny things happen while undertaking your latest project. Care to share?

JM: I think my favorite story happened just as we finished shooting. We decided to pay homage to [Robert Palmer's Addicted to Love Video](#) whereby Seth, Ryan and Brad would dress up as the backup all-woman band and I would play Palmer. To wit, the guys each wore black cocktail dress, full make up and swayed back and forth without expression to capture the vintage Palmer band look of the day. It was the last scene that we shot over two days and we were all exhausted. Brad decided that he wanted to walk home. I offered to drive him and reminded him that he was looking rather "special" at the moment and he replied "It's Boulder. And no one will recognize me anyways."

About 30 minutes later I get an email from Brad's wife Amy. The title was: "What did you do with my husband?" And the body read: "He comes home wearing a dress and make-up, too tired to talk, takes a shower and goes to sleep. Should I be worried?" To which I wrote back: "Sorry Amy, but I haven't seen Brad all day."

PS: When is the next video?

JM: I don't know. While a ton of fun to make, we'll see what inspires me next. It takes a lot of time to write original music, lyrics and produce what amounts to a short film. So long as it's funny and unique, I'm in. If anyone has ideas, hit me up!

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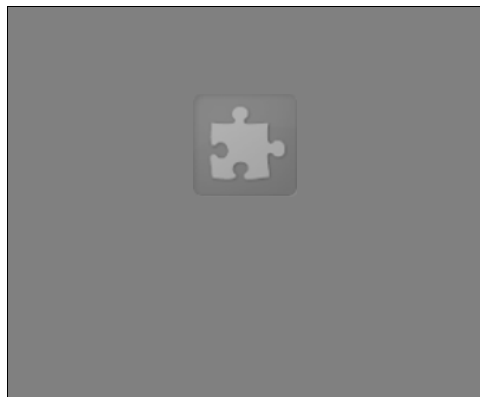
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Google is getting in the thermostat game. The company announced on Monday that it purchased Nest, the maker of...

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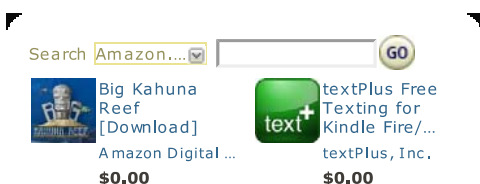
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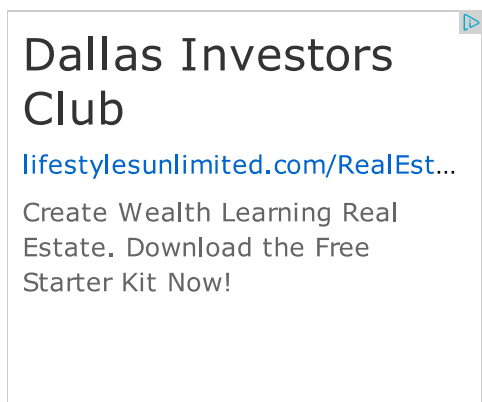
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