

Fake News?

Fruit shape sensor detects drug shipments hidden in cargo

Smugglers beware. A new sensor which looks like fruit and can be hidden among other fruit containers is able to detect the presence of illegal drugs within 100 feet. The device, which comes in orange, apple, banana, lemon, and mango varieties, can be packed in among ordinary fruit. Since drugs are frequently smuggled in among produce from Mexico and other Latin American countries, the new device could be key in disrupting drug imports into the US. Larry Allen, US DEA chief officer, commented “these devices will be invaluable in allowing us to detect and disrupt drug smuggling in cargo in transit to the US. Previously it would take dozens of agents to accomplish the work of several of these sensors”. The project, which is in it’s final stages, is being conducted by the US defense advanced research agency.

Let there be light: German scientists test “artificial sun”

Scientists in Germany flipped the switch Thursday on what’s being described as “the world’s largest artificial sun,” a device they hope will help shed light on new ways of making climate-friendly fuels.

The giant honeycomb-like setup of 149 spotlights - officially known as “Synlight” – in Juelich, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) west of Cologne, uses xenon short-arc lamps normally found in cinemas to simulate natural sunlight that’s often in short supply in Germany at this time of year.

Machine Learning Opens Up New Ways to Help Disabled People

CC rules require TV stations to provide closed captions that convey speech, sound effects, and audience reactions such as laughter to deaf and hard of hearing viewers. YouTube isn’t subject to those rules, but thanks to Google’s machine-learning technology, it now offers similar assistance.

YouTube has used speech-to-text software to automatically caption speech in videos since 2009 (they are used 15 million times a day). Today it rolled out algorithms that indicate applause, laughter, and music in captions. More sounds could follow, since the underlying software can also identify noises like sighs, barks, and knocks.

Toyota sues Microsoft for contract breach

Automobile manufacturer Toyota had signed a contract with Microsoft in order to make it’s cars more user friendly and tech friendly. Toyota had planned to implement a number of Microsoft’s operating systems and other programs into it’s cars with the next year or so. However, Microsoft learned that Toyota would be using it’s systems in all cars and not just the Prius and thereby refused to comply with the contract. Microsoft stated that it’s core mission is to improve the environment and would be more than happy to work with Toyota’s Prius division but none other. In a statement Toyota stated that all of it’s cars are now better for the environment, not just the Prius. They will now look for another provider to work with.