

Current Events #1



Plug Me In



In all three West Coast states, transportation accounts for the largest share of climate-changing greenhouse gases. And all three states are trying to boost the number of zero-emission vehicles on their roads.

This week, California passed a milestone toward that goal; 100,000 electric cars sold in the state since the end of 2010.

It wasn't long ago that driving a car that ran on batteries pretty much meant building it yourself. That usually involved converting a standard fossil-fueled car by ripping out most of the works and replacing them with electrical components. As you might imagine, that's a complicated and expensive project.

<http://earthfix.opb.org/energy/article/west-coast-leads-surge-in-electric-cars/>

Coal, Natural Gas, and You

The Morrow Pacific coal export project needs a permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands to build a dock for coal barges on the Columbia River. The project would ship nearly 9 million tons of coal from Wyoming and Montana to Asia. It would transfer coal shipments from trains to barges at the Port of Morrow in Boardman, Oregon, and load the coal onto ships at a dock downriver in Clatskanie, Oregon.

Last month, the state denied the company's coal dock permit application, saying that the project conflicts with the state's policy of protecting its water resources and fisheries on the Columbia River.



<http://earthfix.opb.org/energy/article/coal-export-backers-appeal-oregon-permit-denial/>

Burning Down the House



California, now in its third year of a drought, is projected to have its most destructive year of wildfires on record. In all, close to a dozen fires are currently raging across the state.

Two California wildfires have uprooted hundreds of residents, including a blaze near the resort town of Bass Lake, south of Yosemite National Park, that has forced more than 1,000 people to flee about 400 homes.

The Bass Lake fire on Sunday destroyed 21 structures and charred 320 acres, according to The Fresno Bee.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/USA-Update/2014/0915/Two-California-wildfires-force-hundreds-of-evacuations-at-least-10-homes-lost-video>

Microsoft vs. Imagination

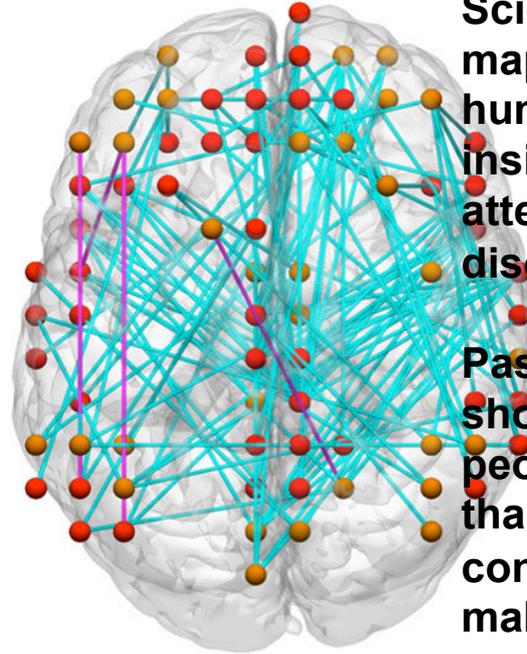
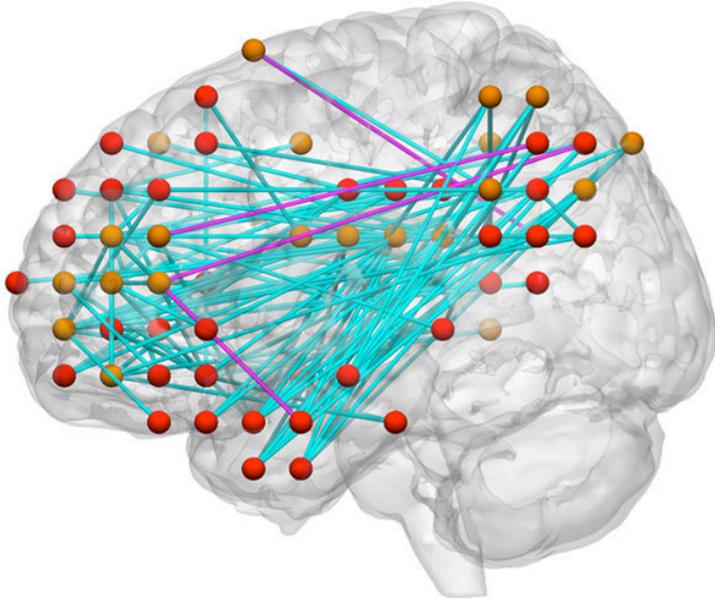
The video game world saw a massive acquisition Monday when Microsoft confirmed it was buying Mojang, the company behind the immense world-building game Minecraft, for \$2.5 billion.

Now let's be clear, while the ink on the deal might say Microsoft bought Mojang, they really just bought the game franchise Minecraft. The company has created and published a few other small games, but nothing in its portfolio is on the level of Minecraft.



<http://www.opb.org/news/article/npr-with-minecraft-microsoft-buys-a-doorway-to-millions-of-players/>

Better Late than Never



Scientists analyzing data from a map of connections inside the human brain have gained new insights into the development of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Past images of brain structures showed that the brains of people with ADHD mature later than those of people without the condition. Now researchers making use of data collected as part of something called the ADHD-200 Initiative (similar to the Human Connectome Project) have found that the growth of connections within and between key brain networks in children with ADHD lags behind what happens in other kids the same age.

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2014/09/15/348652297/key-brain-connection-slow-to-develop-in-kids-with-adhd>

Drat! That Darn Cold.



Just 27 percent of acute respiratory tract infections are caused by bacteria, researchers at Seattle Children's Hospital found. That means that more than two-thirds are viral and antibiotics don't help.

But doctors prescribed antibiotics for children with those infections 57 percent of the time, the study found. In other words, children are taking medication that's not going to help them and can hurt, because of side effects and the increased risk of antibiotic resistance, both for that person and for the larger community.

That adds up to about 11 million potentially needless prescriptions each year.

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2014/09/15/348655054/antibiotics-prescribed-for-children-twice-as-often-as-needed>

ISIS is not a Cartoon

Hundreds of foreign fighters, including some from Europe and the United States, have joined the ranks of ISIS in its self-proclaimed caliphate that sweeps over vast territories of Iraq and Syria. But one of the biggest source of recruits is neighboring Turkey, a NATO member with an undercurrent of Islamist discontent.



<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/16/world/middleeast/how-isis-works.html>

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/world/europe/turkey-is-a-steady-source-of-isis-recruits.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=HpSumSmallMediaHigh&module=photo-spot-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=0

Syrian Aid?



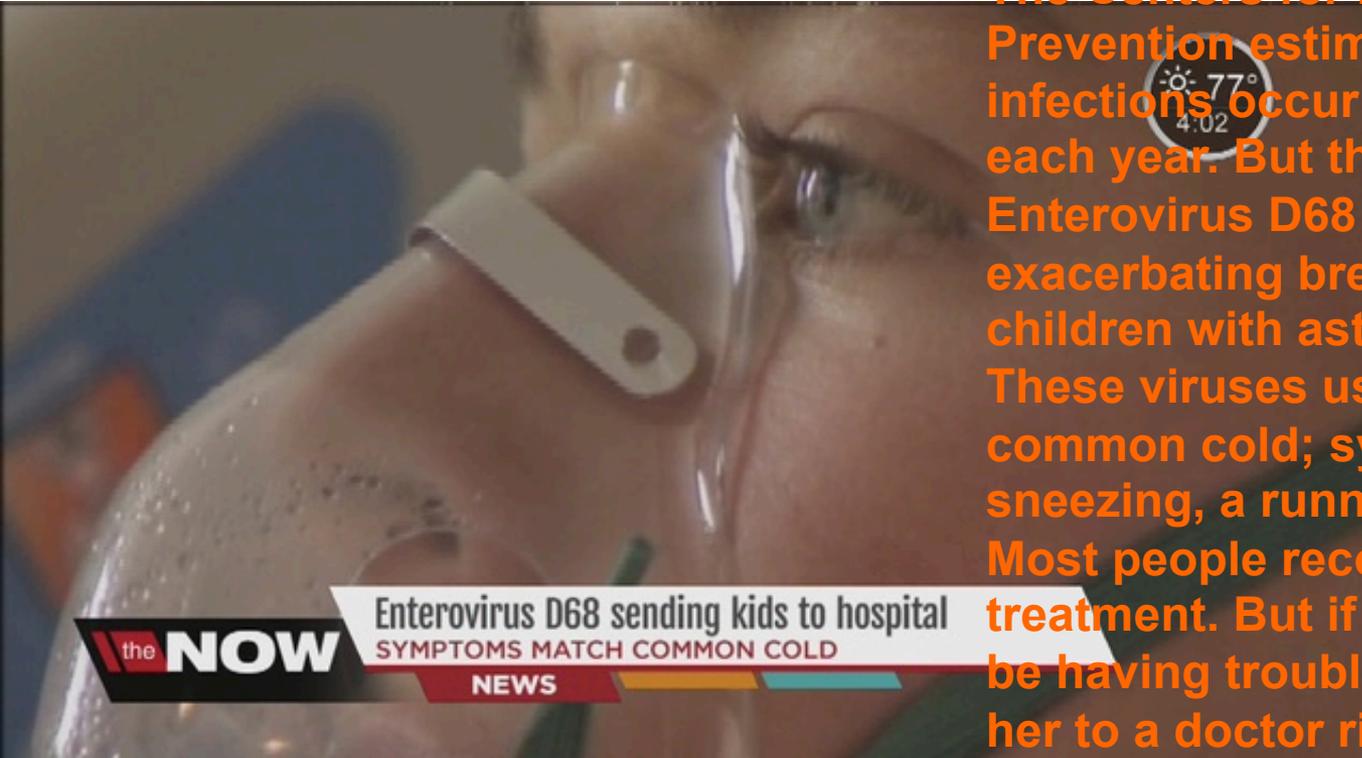
We received some aid from the United States of America.

House leaders — at the urging of the White House — are using that bill as the vehicle for a major foreign policy decision: arming and training Syrian rebels to fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the extremist Sunni group known as ISIS.

The Obama administration says giving aid to Syrian rebel groups — unlike airstrikes by American forces against ISIS in Iraq — requires congressional approval. That permission is needed under Title X of the United States Code, which regulates the armed forces. The administration sees the continuing spending resolution as the most convenient vehicle for an aid vote.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/opinion/dont-hide-the-syrian-aid-vote.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=c-column-top-span-region®ion=c-column-top-span-region&WT.nav=c-column-top-span-region>

Catching a Breath



Enteroviruses are very common, especially in the fall and winter months. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 10 to 15 million infections occur in the United States each year. But this type of enterovirus -- Enterovirus D68 -- appears to be exacerbating breathing problems in children with asthma.

These viruses usually present like the common cold; symptoms include sneezing, a runny nose and a cough. Most people recover without any treatment. But if your child appears to be having trouble breathing, take him or her to a doctor right away.

As of September 11, the CDC had confirmed more than 80 cases of Enterovirus D68 in six states: Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky and Missouri. New York also announced on Friday that it had more than a dozen confirmed cases of the virus.

http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/15/health/enterovirus-outbreak/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

Freedom!

The three main UK party leaders gave a joint promise Tuesday that Scotland will get extra powers if it opts to stay part of the United Kingdom in a landmark vote in two days' time.

Opinion polls have put the pro-independence and pro-union camps neck-and-neck in the run-up to Thursday's referendum.

With the survival of the 300-year-old union of England, Scotland and Wales as Great Britain on a knife-edge, UK Prime Minister

David Cameron of the Conservatives, coalition partner Nick Clegg of the Liberal Democrats and Labour leader Ed Miliband have joined forces to beg Scotland to stay.



http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/16/world/europe/scotland-independence-vote/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

If Russia Invades Ukraine...



A shaky truce between pro-Russian rebels and Ukraine came close to breaking down completely yesterday in eastern Ukraine. In the country's west, troops from the US and 14 other countries are joining pre-scheduled exercises.

Heavy fighting broke out in eastern Ukraine on Sunday between pro-Russian rebels and Ukrainian government forces, leaving at least six dead.

The fighting, which shattered a 10-day-old cease-fire, erupted around the airport in the rebel-dominated eastern city of Donetsk. A rebel fighter told the New York Times, "It's not a cease-fire. It's full-on fighting." Sunday's fighting marked an escalation over the past several days.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0915/Heavy-fighting-in-eastern-Ukraine-leaves-six-dead-despite-cess-fire-video>

A Response...Finally

President Obama will announce Tuesday that the U.S. military will take the lead in overseeing what has been a chaotic and widely criticized response to the worst Ebola outbreak in history, dispatching up to 3,000 military personnel to West Africa in an effort that could cost up to \$750 million over the next six months, according to senior administration officials. By the end of the week, a general sent by U.S. Africa Command will be in place in Monrovia, Liberia — the country where transmission rates are increasing exponentially — to lead the effort called Operation United Assistance. The general will head a regional command based in Liberia that will help oversee and coordinate U.S. and international relief efforts while a new, separate regional staging base will help accelerate transportation of urgently needed equipment, supplies and personnel.



http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/us-military-to-lead-ebola-fight/2014/09/15/69db3da0-3d32-11e4-b0ea-8141703bbf6f_story.html?hpid=z1

http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/16/health/obama-ebola/index.html?hpt=hp_c2

Ebola Changing?



Ebola currently transmits only through contact with bodily fluids; a mutation that allows the virus to spread through the air would pose a catastrophic threat to people worldwide, health experts say. As of Friday, there have been 4,784 cases of Ebola with 2,400 deaths, according to the World Health Organization, which says the virus is spreading at a much faster rate now than it was earlier in the outbreak. Ebola is an RNA virus, which means every time it copies itself, it makes one or two mutations. Many of those mutations mean nothing, but some of them might be able to change the way the virus behaves inside the human body.

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/12/health/ebola-airborne/index.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/world/2014/09/16/pkg-mclaughlin-ebola-spiraling-crisis.cnn.html>

Protect and Serve

A grand jury in Missouri now has more time to decide whether Ferguson police Officer Darren Wilson should be charged for the shooting death of teenager Michael Brown.

Outrage over the shooting led to days of protests in Ferguson and a heated debate over whether Brown's race played a role in his death.

Brown was black, like two-thirds of his neighbors in Ferguson. Wilson is white, like most of the city's police department.



http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/16/justice/missouri-ferguson-darren-wilson-grand-jury/index.html?hpt=hp_t2

1 in 5 is a Hitter



A week after the Ray Rice video surfaced, the National Football League is still scrambling to douse the media firestorm over the league's handling of domestic violence by its players.

Commissioner Roger Goodell has come in for heavy criticism over his handling of a domestic abuse case involving the former Baltimore Raven, which became deafening last week after a video surfaced of Mr. Rice knocking out his then-fiancee Janay Palmer in an Atlantic City elevator. Rice was released by the Ravens and indefinitely suspended by the league, but that was not enough to mute calls for Mr. Goodell's resignation.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2014/0915/Ray-Rice-case-Can-NFL-leadership-weather-media-firestorm-video>