



Pizza tossing unlocks secrets

Monash scientists have unlocked the physics of the perfect pizza toss and will use it to design the next generation of micro motors thinner than a human hair.

Daniel (Kuang-Chen) Liu, a PhD student, videotaped a professional pizza tosser at work. The team from Monash's Micro/Nanophysics Research Laboratory, then calculated how best to describe the way the dough travels through the air – including how much the dough rotates, how quickly it spins, its stability and the

energy efficiency of the toss itself.

The result is a set of nonlinear differential equations that captures the art of pizza tossing.

The model could help researchers design the next generation of standing wave ultrasonic motors which operate on similar principles to pizza tossing.

The tiny motors have the potential to be used for minimally invasive neuro-microsurgery.



Visual clutter a road hazard

New Monash research proves visual clutter around our roads, including prominent advertising, signs or billboards, can be a distraction hazard for drivers – especially older ones.

It found the distractions delay drivers' ability to detect a change around them – such as a vehicle changing lanes – by an average of half

a second. Older drivers took the longest to react.

The comprehensive work from the Monash University Accident Research Centre has important implications for the design and regulation of road environments, and could lead to a new debate around the need for tighter advertising restrictions along our roads and highways.



Surfing is productive

Surfing the net at work for pleasure actually increases our concentration levels and helps make a more productive workforce, according to a new University of Melbourne study.

Dr Brent Coker, from the Department of Management and Marketing, says that workers who engage in

'Workplace Internet Leisure Browsing' (WILB) are more productive than those who don't. "People who do surf the Internet for fun at work – within a reasonable limit of less than 20% of their total time in the office – are more productive by about 9% than those who don't," he says.



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