Chicago Tribune

Document

NEW LIGHT ON MAKING OF LASERS NORTHWESTERN MAGIC DOES IT WITHOUT MIRRORS; GENERATING POWERFUL RAYS FROM DISORDERED POWDERY PARTICLES OF ZINC OXIDE M LEAD--IN THE FAR FUTURE--TO DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ILLUMINATING DEVICES THAT ARE BRIGHTER AND LESS EXPENSIVE.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

By demonstrating that particles of powder can be converted into tiny lasers, researchers at Northwestern University hope they've taken toward significantly brightening the world of commercial electronics.

The discovery that it is possible to make disordered powdery particles of zinc oxide into lasers holds the potential of one day replacing estimated 30 billion light-emitting diodes (LEDs) in commercial use in display devices with far brighter and cheaper lasers.

Bright, coherent laser light is traditionally produced by bouncing photons back and forth between mirrors and focusing them into a bea Supersmall semiconductor lasers such as the ones used in compact disc players depend upon crystals to mimic the mirror effect of l What Northwestern scientists have done is to produce laser light without crystals, using disordered particles of zinc oxide.

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