



Internet interprets Texas state representative's tweet as a jab at Stephen

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Stephen Hawking, who unlocked the secrets of space and time, dies at 76

LONDON (Reuters) - Stephen Hawking, who sought to explain the origins of the universe, the mysteries of black holes and the nature of time itself, died on Wednesday aged 76.

Hawking's formidable mind probed the very limits of human understanding both in the vastness of space and in the bizarre sub-molecular world of quantum theory, which he said could predict what happens at the beginning and end of time.

Ravaged by the wasting motor neuron disease he developed at 21, Hawking was confined to a wheelchair for most of his life.

As his condition worsened, he had to speak through a voice synthesizer and communicating by moving his eyebrows - but at the same time became the world's most recognizable scientist.

Hawking died peacefully at his home in the British university city of Cambridge in the early hours of Wednesday.

"He was a great scientist and an extraordinary man whose work and legacy will live on for many years," his children Lucy, Robert and Tim said. "His courage and persistence with his brilliance and humor inspired people across the world."

Hawking shot to international fame after the 1988 publication of "A Brief History of Time", one of the most complex books ever to achieve mass appeal, which stayed on the Sunday Times best-sellers list for no fewer than 237 weeks.

"My original aim was to write a book that would sell on airport bookstalls," he told reporters at the time. "In order to make sure it was understandable I tried the book out on my nurses. I think they understood most of it."

The physicist's disease spurred him to work harder but also contributed to the collapse of his two marriages, he wrote in a 2013 memoir "My Brief History".

In the book he related how he was first diagnosed: "I felt it was very unfair - why should this happen to me," he wrote. "At the time, I thought my life was over and that I would never realize the potential I felt I had. But now, 50 years later, I can be quietly satisfied with my life."

U.S. space agency NASA said: "His theories unlocked a universe of possibilities that we and the world are exploring."

Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, said: "We have lost a colossal mind and a wonderful spirit."

Hawking's popular recognition became such that he appeared as himself on the television show "Star Trek: Next Generation" and his cartoon caricature appeared on "The Simpsons". He narrated a segment of the opening ceremony of the

London Paralympic Games in August 2012, the year he turned 70.

A 2014 film, "The Theory of Everything", with Eddie Redmayne playing Hawking, charted the onset of his illness and his early life as a brilliant student.

"We have lost a truly beautiful mind, an astonishing scientist and the funniest man I have ever had the pleasure to meet," Redmayne said.

In Cambridge, Hawking's university college Gonville and Caius flew its flag at half mast.

"At Caius he will always be 'Stephen' - the man whose wicked sense of humor enlivened high table dinners and saw him spinning uproariously around hall in his wheelchair to the strains of a waltz at a college party," it said in a tribute.

Since 1974, Hawking worked extensively on marrying the two cornerstones of modern physics - Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, which concerns gravity and large-scale phenomena, and quantum theory, which covers subatomic particles.

As a result of that research, Hawking proposed a model of the universe based on two concepts of time: "real time", or time as human beings experience it, and "imaginary time", on which the world may really run.

"Imaginary time may sound like science fiction ... but it is a genuine scientific concept," he wrote in a lecture paper.

He caused some controversy among biologists when he said he saw computer viruses as a life form, and thus the human race's first act of creation.

"I think it says something about human nature that the only form of life we have created so far is purely destructive," he told a forum in Boston. "We've created life in our own image."

Another major area of his research was into black holes, the regions of space-time where gravity is so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape.

When asked whether God had a place in his work, Hawking once said: "In a way, if we understand the universe, we are in the position of God."

He married undergraduate Jane Wilde in July 1965 and the couple had Robert, Lucy and Timothy. But Hawking tells in his 2013 memoir how Wilde became more and more depressed as her husband's condition worsened.

"She was worried I was going to die soon and wanted someone who would give her and the children support and marry her when I was gone," he wrote.

Wilde took up with a local musician and gave him a room in the family apartment, Hawking said. "I would have objected but I too was expecting an early death ...," he said.



FILE PHOTO: Professor of mathematics at Cambridge University Stephen

He divorced Wilde in 1990 and in 1995 married one of his nurses Elaine Mason, whose ex-husband David had designed the electronic voice synthesizer that allowed him to communicate. The pair divorced in 2007.

Stephen William Hawking was born on Jan. 8, 1942. He grew up in and around London. After studying physics at Oxford University, he was in his first year of research work at Cambridge when he was diagnosed with motor neuron disease.

"The realization that I had an incurable disease that was likely to kill me in a few years was a bit of a shock," he wrote in his memoir. In fact there were even advantages to being confined to a wheelchair and having to speak through a voice synthesizer.

"I haven't had to lecture or teach undergraduates and I haven't had to sit on tedious and time-consuming committees. So I have been able to devote myself completely to research," he wrote.

"I became possibly the best-known scientist in the world. This is partly because scientists, apart from Einstein, are not widely known rock stars, and partly because I fit the stereotype of a disabled genius." Reporting by Pratima Desai; Editing by Veronica Brown and Edmund Blair

A severe drought afflicting South Africa's Western Cape province is expected to cut agricultural output by 20 percent in 2018, decimating the wheat crop and reducing apple, grape and pear exports to Europe,

according to national government.

The City is bracing for "Day Zero" in late August when its taps could run dry.

Moody's said in a report that one of the most direct impacts would be on Cape Town's operating revenues, as 10 percent of them are from water charges. The ratings agency estimates capital expenditure related to water and sanitation infrastructure could be as much as 12.7 billion rand (\$1 billion) over the next five years.

"The long-term solutions are likely to require significant capital and operating expenditure," Daniel Mazibuko, an analyst at Moody's said.

The drought also threatens to slow South Africa's economic rebound which has been fueled by a surge in agricultural production. Cape town generated nearly 10 percent of the country's total gross domestic product in 2016.



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Internet interprets Texas state representative's tweet as a jab at Stephen

By Keri Blakinger

A Texas state representative has drawn Twitter's ire after hundreds of people interpreted a late night tweet as a slight against famed physicist Stephen Hawking. The tweet was sent by Rep. Briscoe Cain of District 128, which includes Baytown and Crosby, at 12:34 a.m. Wednesday, shortly after news broke that Hawking, 76, had died.

"Stephen Hawking now knows the truth about how the universe was actually made. My condolences to his family," Cain tweeted.

The tweet has since collected more than 350 responses from people interpreting the message as an insult to the award-winning scientist and his lifelong quest to find the universe's origin. Hawking also once famously stated, "[T]here is no god. No one created our universe, and no one directs our fate."

Renowned Physicist Stephen Hawking Dead at 76 A family spokesman confirmed the news on Wednesday. We are deeply saddened that our beloved father passed away today. He was a great scientist and an extraordi-

nary man whose work and legacy will live on for many years. Hawking had suffered from ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, since 1963, when doctors only gave him a few years to live. The disease left Hawking paralyzed and dependent on others and technology in order to survive. Many of Hawking's most memorable achievements center around time and space, becoming the leading physicist on black holes and the Big Bang.

"It must hurt to be reminded that there are people who are remembered fondly by millions when they die, whereas no one will remember you at all," David Klion tweeted.

"What an embarrassment you are. Trolling someone at the time of their death is a sign of weakness no matter how you feel about them. You are a jerk," Roger Hutchison tweeted.

Cain spoke to the Austin American Statesman regarding his tweet.

"While many see him as one of the greatest public intellectuals of the last century, and no one disputes that he was brilliant, the fact remains that God exists. My tweet was to show the gravity of the Gospel and



A Texas state representative has drawn Twitter's ire after hundreds of people who interpreted a late night tweet as a stab against famed physicist Stephen Hawking.

what happens when we die, namely, that we all will one day meet the Creator of the universe face to face," Cain said. Hawking published numerous books on physics, including "A Brief History

of Time" and "The Universe in a Nutshell." "God not only plays dice with the universe, but sometimes throws them where they can't be seen," Hawking once said, according to his obituary in the New York Times.

The real reason the U.S. spends twice as much on health care as other wealthy countries

A sweeping new study of health care expenditures found that the United States spends almost twice as much on health care as 10 other wealthy countries, a difference driven by high prices — including doctors' and nurses' salaries, hospital charges, pharmaceuticals and administrative overhead. For years, it has been clear that Americans are not getting a good bang for their buck on health care. The United States spends more than any other country and gets much less, at least as measured by life expectancy or infant

mortality. Policy fixes have tended to focus on the idea that medicine is being overused. The thinking goes that the American health care system is uniquely set up to incentivize wasteful imaging scans, many unnecessary prescriptions and procedures that could have been prevented. The new study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, suggests instead that Americans are using health care at similar rates to other rich countries, and the real difference is the prices of procedures and treatments. The finding doesn't mean Americans aren't overusing

health care; it just means that the U.S. isn't alone in doing so. "The narrative that has come up, that has developed, is that America spends so much more because Americans demand more health care," said Ashish Jha, a professor of health policy at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "We have done, through the Affordable Care Act and other policy efforts, almost nothing about prices. To me, that has been the big missed opportunity." Children born in the United States are 70% more likely to die before 18 than children born in any other

wealthy democratic country. Veuver's Sam Berman has the full story. The study compared the United States to the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Australia, Japan, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Denmark from 2013 to 2016 on nearly 100 different measures of care. It found that the United States spent about twice as much per person on health care, an investment that produced the shortest life spans and the highest rate of infant deaths. The United States used more imaging scans than most countries, but spent much less on inpatient hospital care.

Its utilization patterns were overall similar to other wealthy countries — leading the researchers to focus on other drivers of difference. Nonspecialist doctors in the United States are paid on average \$220,000 per year — double the average salary in the other countries. Nurses and specialists were also compensated better. Defenders of doctors' higher salaries often point to the burden of medical school debt in the United States, but one study found that taking into account tuition cost didn't explain the difference in earnings.



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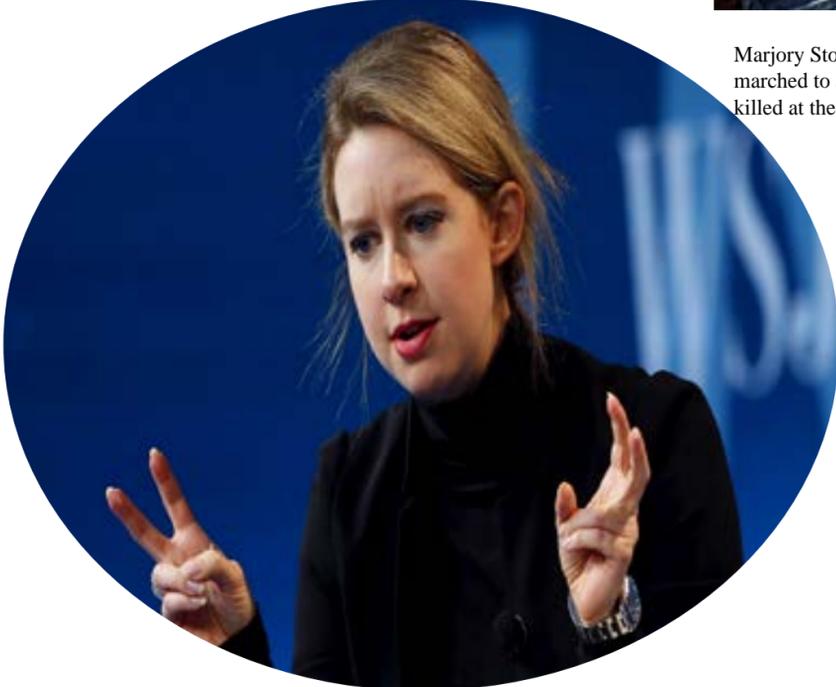
A Snapshot Of The World



Students march from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and Westglades Middle School to a nearby park as part of a National School Walkout to honor the 17 students and staff members killed at the school in Parkland, Florida, U.S., March 14, 2018. REUTERS/Joe Skipper



Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student Lenore Munoz, 17, speaks to a crowd of students after they marched to a nearby park as part of a National School Walkout to honor the 17 students and staff members killed at the school in Parkland, Florida, U.S., March 14, 2018. REUTERS/Joe Skipper



FILE PHOTO: Holmes attends the WSJLive conference in Laguna Beach



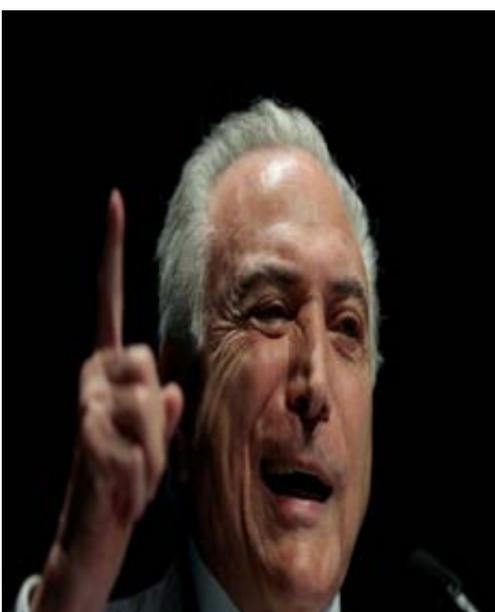
Students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and Westglades Middle School react after marching to a nearby park as part of a National School Walkout to honor the 17 students and staff members killed at the school in Parkland, Florida, U.S., March 14, 2018.



Russian president Vladimir Putin addresses the audience during a rally marking the fourth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region in the Black Sea port of Sevastopol



First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones and Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon attend a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee, chaired by Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May at 10 Downing Street in London



Brazil's President Michel Temer attends the World Economic Forum on Latin America in Sao Paulo



Horse Racing - Cheltenham Festival



Horse Racing - Cheltenham Festival - Cheltenham Racecourse, Cheltenham, Britain - March 14, 2018 The Last Samurai ridden by David Bass and Tiger Roll ridden by K M Donoghue clear a fence during the 16:10 Glenfarclas Chase (Cross Country Chase) Action Images via Reuters/Matthew Childs

Could A Video Game Be The Next Big Breakthrough In Treating Kids With ADHD?

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



A screenshot from Akili's video game designed to treat ADHD.

Akili Interactive Labs reported this week that its late-stage study of a video game designed to treat kids with ADHD met its primary goal, a big step in the Boston company's quest to get approval for what it hopes will be the first prescription video game.

In a study of 348 children between the ages of 8 and 12 diagnosed with ADHD, those who played Akili's action-packed game on a tablet over four weeks saw statistically significant improvements on metrics of attention and inhibitory control, compared to children who were given a different action-driven video game designed as a placebo. The company plans next year to file for approval with the Food and Drug Administration.

"We are directly targeting the key neurological pathways that control attention and impulsivity," said Akili CEO Eddie Martucci. The study "was meant to be a strong objective test to ask: Is it the targeting we do in the brain or is it general engagement with a treatment that's exciting and interesting ... that actually leads to these targeted effects? And so I think we clearly see that it's the targeted algorithms that we have."



Despite the positive results, questions about the product remain. For instance, parents and physicians subjectively perceived about the same amount of improvement in children's behavior whether they were playing the placebo game or the therapeutic game. And if Akili can get approval, it remains to be seen whether clinicians and insurers will embrace its product.

The video game has not been tested head-to-head against ADHD medications or psychotherapy to see if it's equally effective.

Akili's video game, which is played on a tablet, sends players down a molten lava river and through an icy winter wonderland, rewarding them with stars and points as they complete tasks. Akili sees the video game as the delivery system for targeted algorithms that act as a medical device to activate certain neural networks. That's a different category than existing apps and games that help patients manage their disease, such as those that deliver cognitive behavioral therapy or help patients track symptoms or monitor

their glucose levels. "We have something that looks and feels and is delivered through a video game," Martucci said, "but when someone's using it, they're getting a direct physiological activation that will lead hopefully — and we have a nice glimpse of data now — to cognitive and general clinical improvement."

The researchers recommended that kids complete a 30-minute session of the game five days a week for four weeks. Just 11 of the participants reported adverse events, mainly headache and frustration — much milder than the usual side effects associated with the drugs often used to treat ADHD.



Akili CEO Eddie Martucci (right) talks about one of the company's video games with Jeff Bower, Akili's director of data science.

Akili is also studying whether a similar version of its video game may have promise in treating adults with depression; the company recently started a mid-stage clinical trial in that population, with early results expected late next year. Akili has also explored the therapy's potential in early stage studies of patients with pediatric autism and multiple sclerosis.

While the effectiveness of brain fitness games is heavily debated among researchers, one neuroscientist may have invented a video game with real staying power and results.



His game, on its journey through FDA approval, uses multitasking to improve overall brain function and he hopes that, pending FDA approval, the game could be used to help people suffering from Alzheimer's disease, PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and ADHD.

Brain fitness games that promise to prolong memory, boost brain health and prevent cognitive decline are everywhere. In fact, the estimated market for these games is close to \$1 billion and experts believe the industry will grow to \$6 billion over the next five years. With stores and marketers promising consumers that these games will make them smarter, raise IQ and forget less, it's no surprise that brain fitness games are a thriving industry.



However, some experts are more than skeptical about the results of these games.

Psychology professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology Randall Engle has been outspoken about his skepticism saying, "We're really talking about a biological system. The idea that you can do some little computer game for half an hour a day for 10 days and change that system is ludicrous on the face of it." He went on to say, "There's very little research that's don't right that suggests that these thing work."

Engle has completed numerous studies putting brain fitness game to the test and has not seen any "substantial benefit" to the games. In fact, Engle was one of 75 scientists who signed a letter to the brain fitness game industry stating that marketers are inventing claims and even targeting elderly customers worried about memory loss.

New Brain Health Game Takes a Different Approach

Neuroscientist Adam Gazzaley, who in fact signed the same letter as Engle, believes that he may have invented a game that addresses both the business and science aspects of brain fitness games.

His game is in the process of getting approval from the Food and Drug Administration, which will take several years and even more money. However, if approved, the game could be used to help people suffering from Alzheimer's disease, PTSD, traumatic brain injury and ADHD.



The game is fully immersive and focuses on multitasking. For example, the player would need to guide a horse through the desert while tapping only green carrots flashing at the top of the screen, but not the radishes or carrots of another color. Gazzaley says that "if we created this, what we call a high-interference environment, with multitasking going on and lots of distraction... if we put pressure in that environment, we would see benefits in other aspects of cognitive control."

He believes that by improving one area of cognition, all areas of cognition may be improved. He also hopes that one day the game can be analyzed by doctors to tailor the treatment of the player after seeing how the player responds to the game in varied environments.

Admitting that his game and his theory needs to undergo extensive testing, Gazzaley is cautiously optimistic.

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WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has removed U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, a native Texan, from his Cabinet post, replacing him with CIA Director Mike Pompeo.

The president made the move on Friday, according to The Washington Post, and in a public statement said “a great deal has been accomplished over the last 14 months” of Tillerson’s tenure.

But other details emerged Tuesday that conflicted with that account, including an NBC report suggesting Tillerson found out he was fired from the president’s tweets.

The latter scenario would indicate that Tillerson’s termination came after he took a hard line supporting British allegations that Russian operatives poisoned an ex-Russian spy and his daughter. Trump has been hesitant to criticize Russia, even as special counsel Robert Mueller investigates whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia in the 2016 presidential election.



Rex Tillerson and his wife with President Trump at his swearing ceremony as Secretary of State in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 1, 2017.

When speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Trump indicated the Tillerson decision had long been on his mind and said the two “disagreed on things” and “were not thinking the same.” But he said he still hoped to maintain a relationship with Tillerson.

“I actually got on well with Rex,” he said, “but it was a different mindset.” In the afternoon, Tillerson told reporters at the State Department that he will leave his role in the federal government on March 31.

“Between now and then, I will address a few administrative matters related to my departure and work towards a smooth and orderly transition for Secre-

Mounting Tensions Between Tillerson And The President Spurred His Departure

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson Is Leaving Trump’s Cabinet

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, whose departure from the Cabinet was announced on March 13, 2018, is shown arriving at a news conference between President Donald Trump and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg at the White House on Jan. 10, 2018. (Photo/ REUTERS)

tary of State-Designate Mike Pompeo,” Tillerson said.

He went on to remind his department’s “foreign service officers and civil service colleagues” that they are all bound by a commitment “to support and defend the Constitution.”

“As a state department we are bound together by that oath, we remain steadfast here in Washington and at post across the world,” Tillerson said. “These are experiences no lecture hall in an academic environment or in a think tank can teach you. Only by people going to the front lines to serve can they develop

this kind of talent.”



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson pauses while speaking to State Department employees upon arrival at the State Department in Washington on Feb. 2. (Photo AP)

The news follows a year of escalating

tensions between Tillerson and Trump, including reports in October that Tillerson called Trump “a moron.”

The change at the State Department comes at a consequential moment in American foreign policy: Trump agreed last week to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

A series of senior Trump administration officials have left the administration in recent months, a remarkable level of churn so early in a presidential term.

Tillerson leaves behind a State Department that is widely viewed as understaffed, strapped for resources and de-

moralized due to pushes for budget cuts by the Trump administration.

A Wichita Falls native, Tillerson was a surprise choice for the secretary of state position but had the backing of much of the Republican foreign policy establishment. He had no diplomatic experience but was the longtime CEO of Exxon-Mobil.



Rex Tillerson is leaving his post as Secretary of State and entering into private life.

Tillerson is closely aligned with a fellow Texan, NATO Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison.

During his remarks to reporters Tuesday, Tillerson did not specifically thank Trump for the opportunity to serve as the nation’s top diplomat.

“All of us we know want to leave this place as a better place for the next generation,” Tillerson said. “I’ll now return to private life to private citizen as a proud American, proud of the opportunity I’ve had to serve my country.”

Speaking with reporters in Washington after the news broke, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said he was “grateful for the good and hard work that Rex has provided as secretary of state, and I’m confident that Mike Pompeo will make an excellent secretary of state.” Yet Cruz also alluded to the rocky relationship between Tillerson and Trump.

“These are challenging times,” Cruz said. “It was evident for some time that Secretary Tillerson and the president — that there was real tension between the two of them. And that’s a difficult situation in any administration, to have the secretary of state and the president on different pages.” (Courtesy texastribune.org)

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