



1. A.G. Varias, Z. Suo and C.F. Shih. Ductile failure of a constrained metal foil. J. Mech. Phys. Solids, 39, 963-986 (1991).
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mechanics of soft materials

Zhigang Suo
Harvard University

Why soft materials?

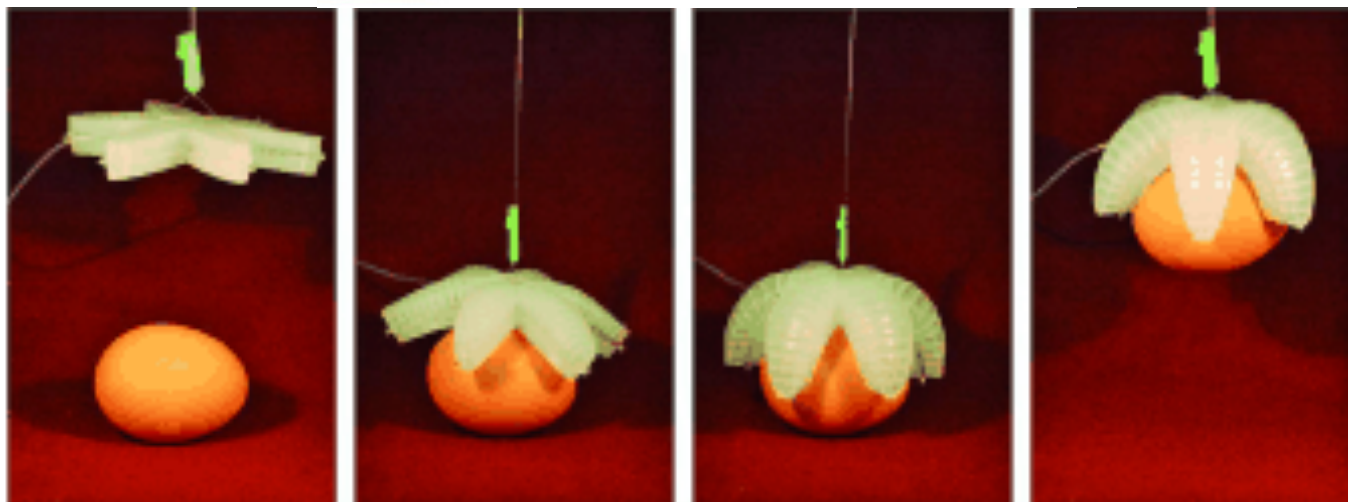
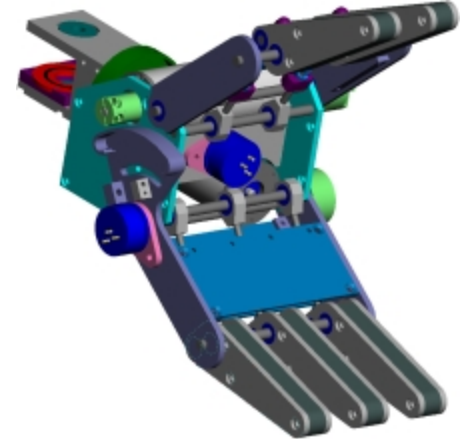


Plasticity

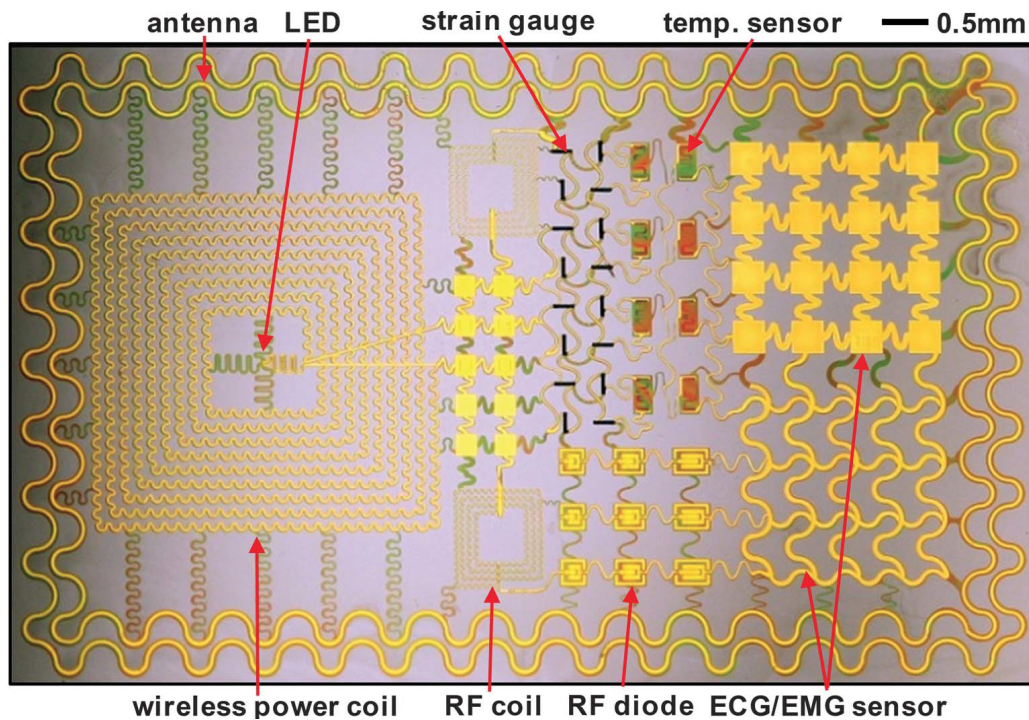


Elasticity

Soft machines

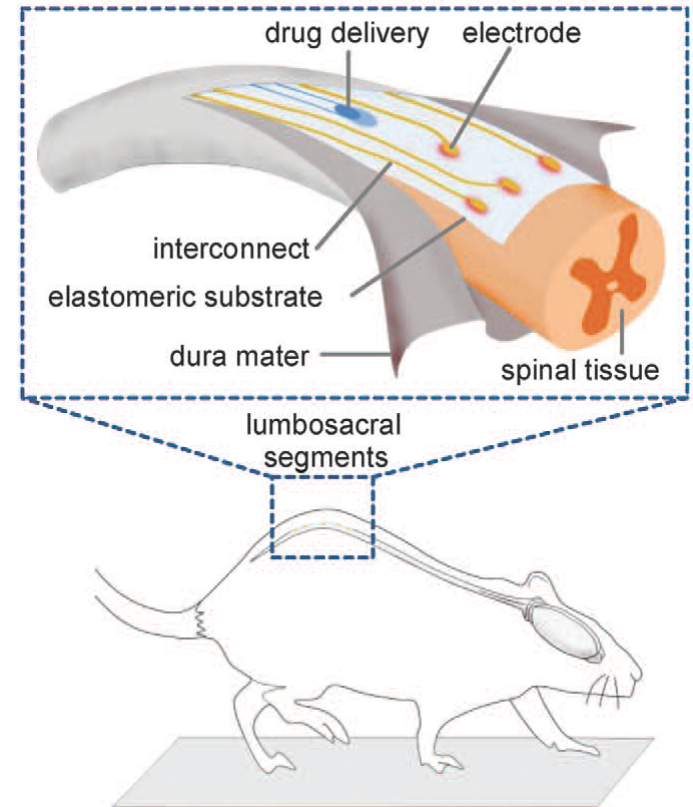


Stretchable electronics



Epidermal electronics

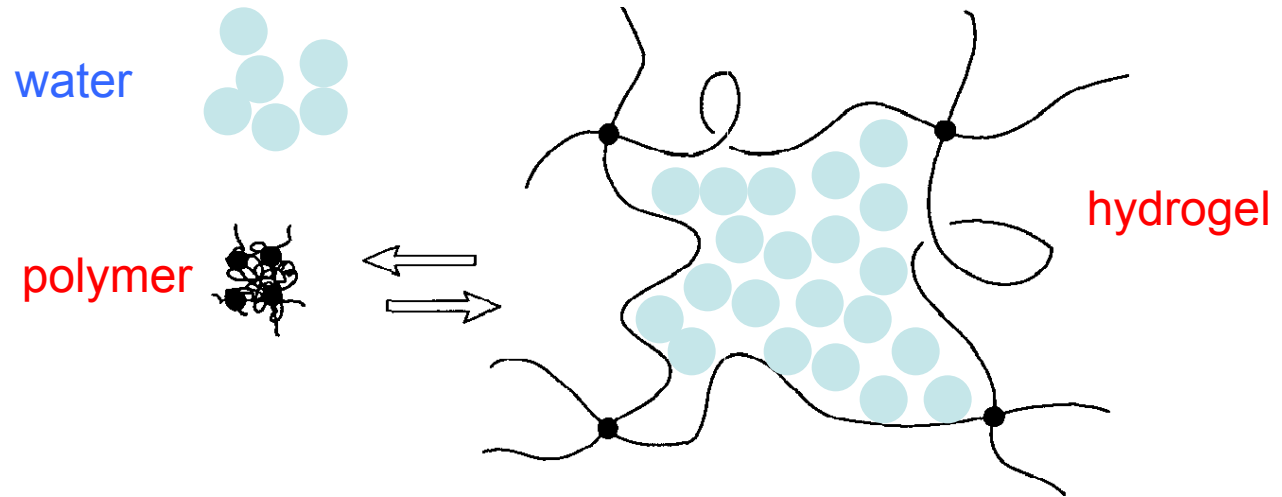
Kim et al. Science 333, 838 (2011)



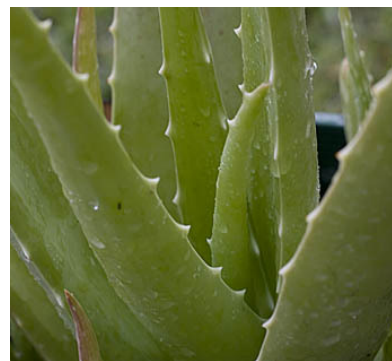
Electronic dura mater

Minev et al., Science 347, 159 (2015)

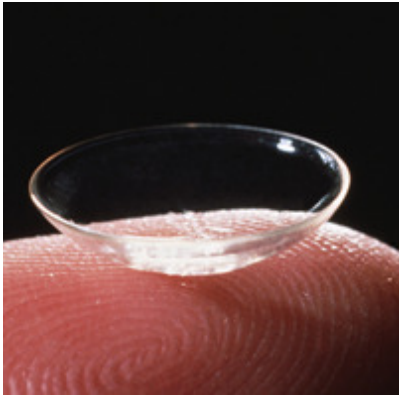
Hydrogel



Liquid like: water and polymers aggregate by **weak bonds**. **Enable transport**
Solid-like: polymers crosslink by **strong bonds**. **Retain shape**



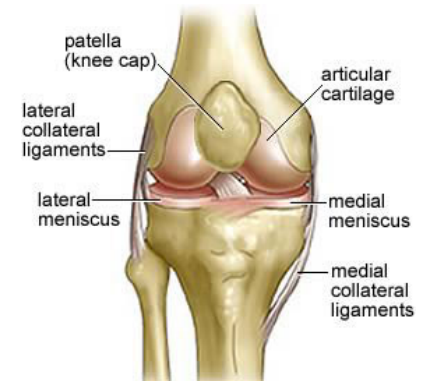
applications of hydrogels



Contact lens (1960s)



Superabsorbent diaper (1980s)

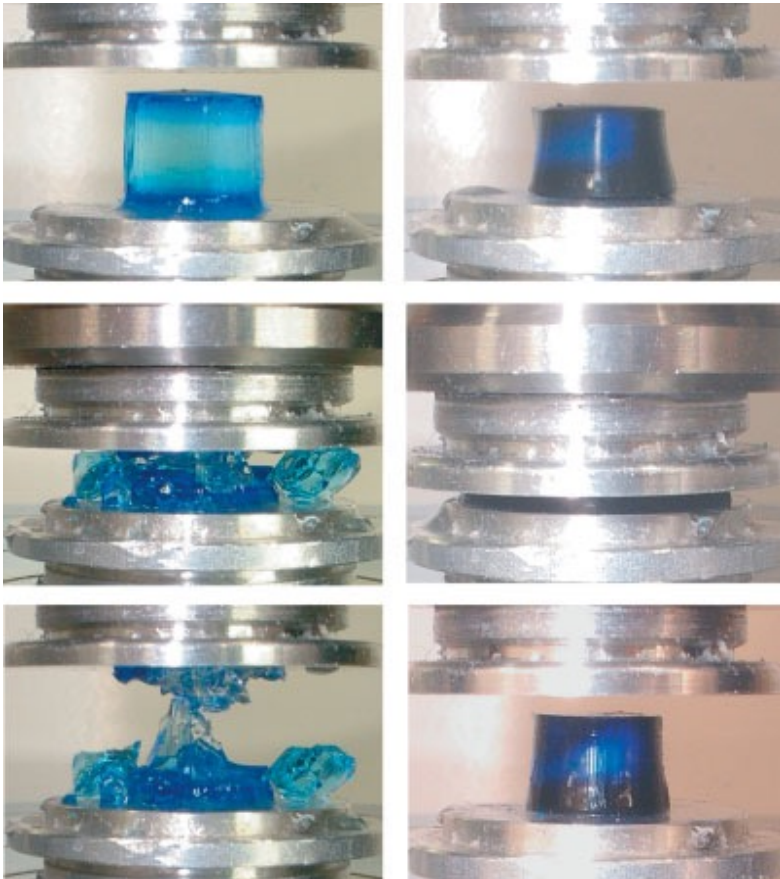


Artificial tissues

Wichterle and Lim, Hydrophilic gels for biological use. Nature 185, 117 (1960)

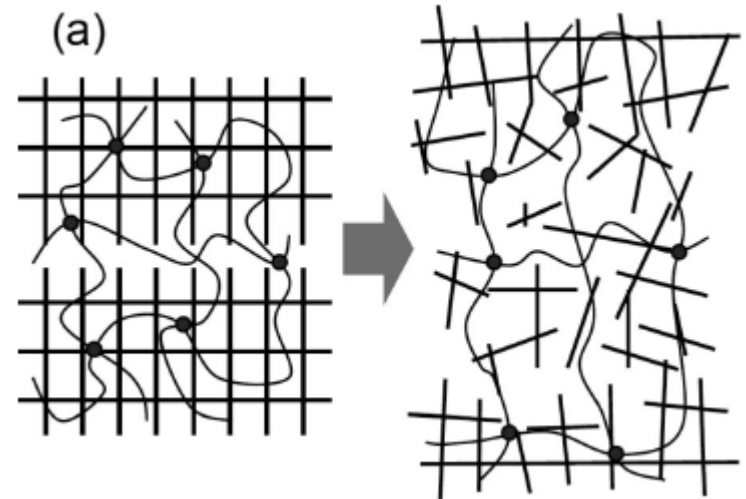
Masuda Trends in the development of superabsorbent polymers for diapers
pp. 88-89, Superabsorbent polymers: science and technology (1994).

Double-network gels



Single-network gel

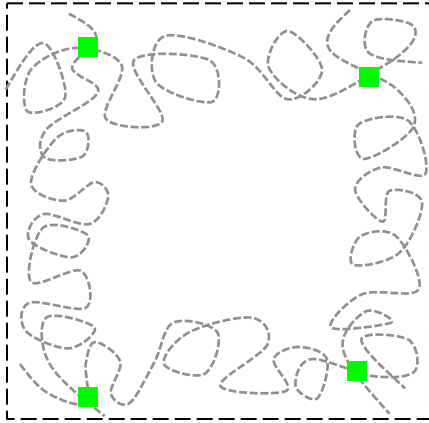
Double-network gel



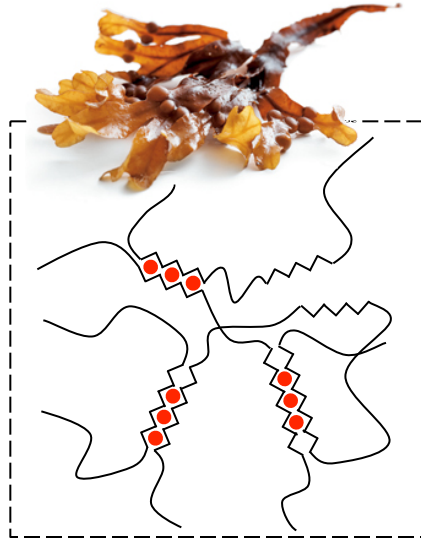
Network of long chains
Network of short chains

High toughness by sacrificing the network of short chains

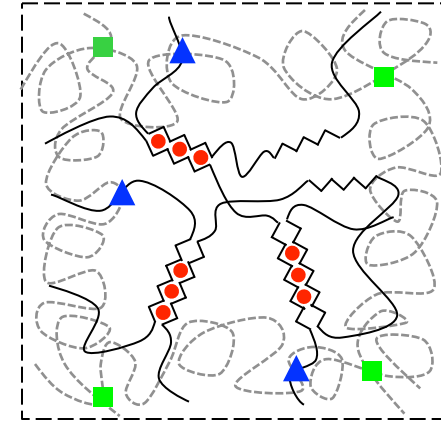
Three types of gels



Polyacrylamide gel



Alginate gel



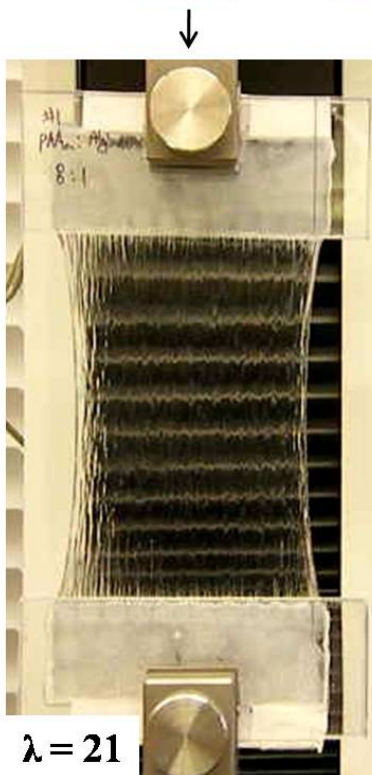
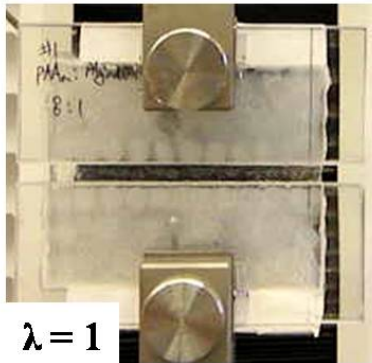
Hybrid gel

Acylamide
CrossInker: MBAA
Photoinitiator: Ammonium persulphate
Crosslinking accelerator: TEMED

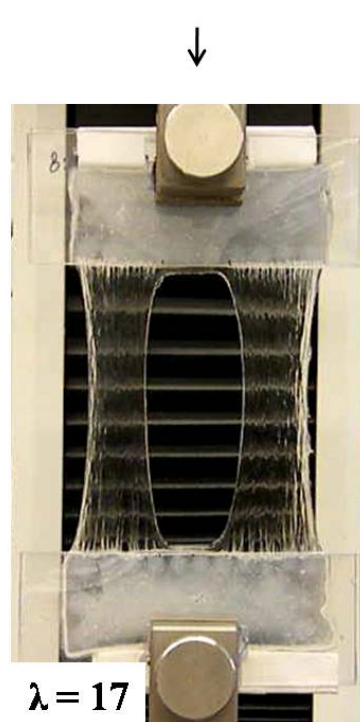
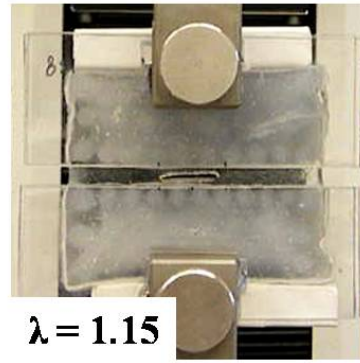
Alginate
(CaSO_4)($2\text{H}_2\text{O}$)

Highly stretchable and tough hydrogels

(a)



(b)



- Water: 90%
- Stretch: 21
- Fracture energy: 9000 J/m²

- ~10 J/m², tofu, jello
- ~10 J/m², most gels
- ~100 J/m², contact lenses
- ~1000 J/m², cartilage
- ~1000 J/m², double network gels (Gong 2003)
- ~1000 J/m², VHB
- ~10,000 J/m², natural rubber

Stretchy!

Steel ball

Diameter 2.54 cm

Mass 64 g

Drop from 1.86 m

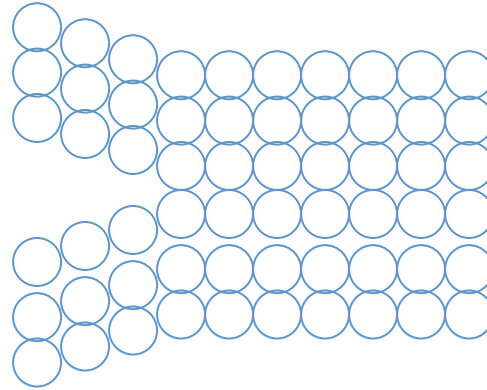
Gel

Thickness 1 mm

Videos

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v489/n7414/full/nature11409.html#/supplementary-information>

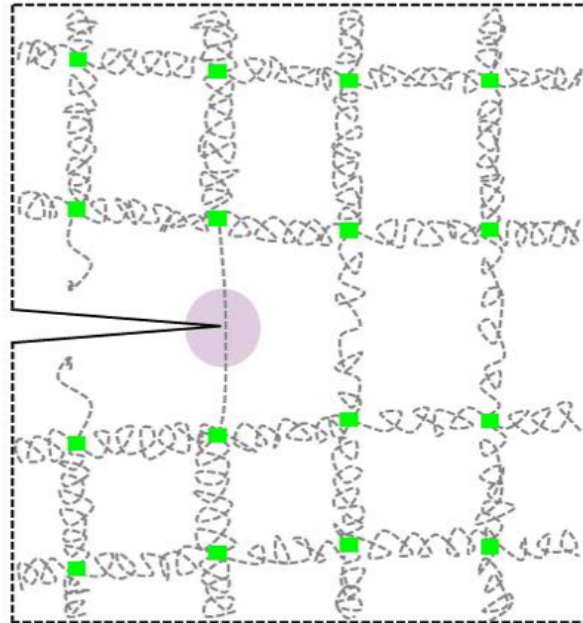
Rupture of glass



$$\text{fracture energy} = \frac{\text{covalent energy of a single layer of atoms}}{\text{area}}$$

$$\Gamma \approx 1\text{J/m}^2$$

Rupture of a network

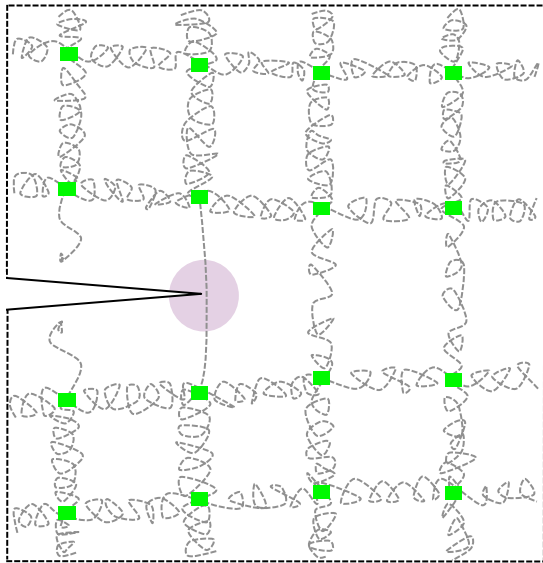


$$\text{fracture energy} = \frac{\text{covalent energy in a layer of chains}}{\text{area}}$$

$$\Gamma \approx 50 \text{ J/m}^2$$

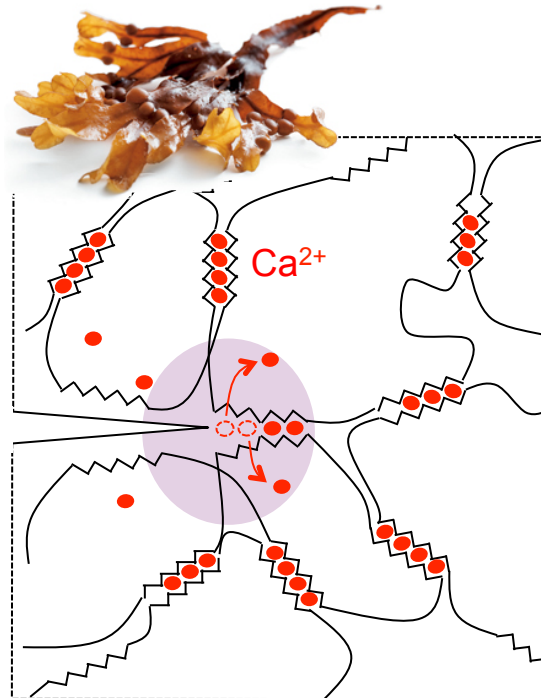
brittle + brittle = tough

a



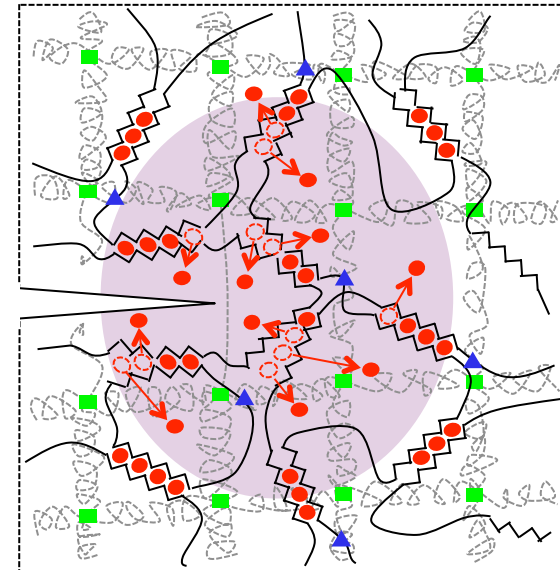
Polyacrylamide gel

b



Alginate gel

c

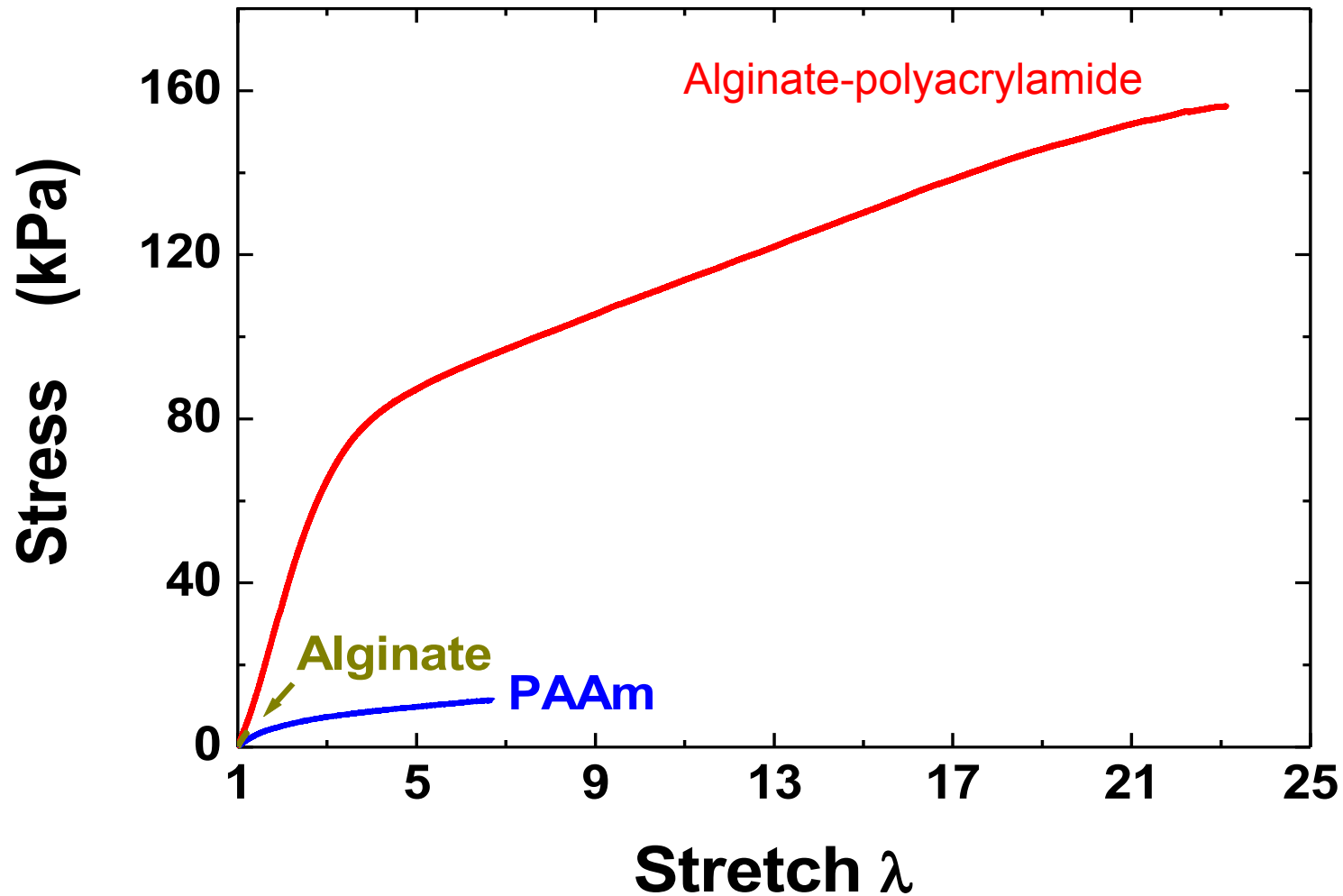


Hybrid gel



Plastic zone near the crack tip

Synergy of the hybrid



Hydrogel = tough water.

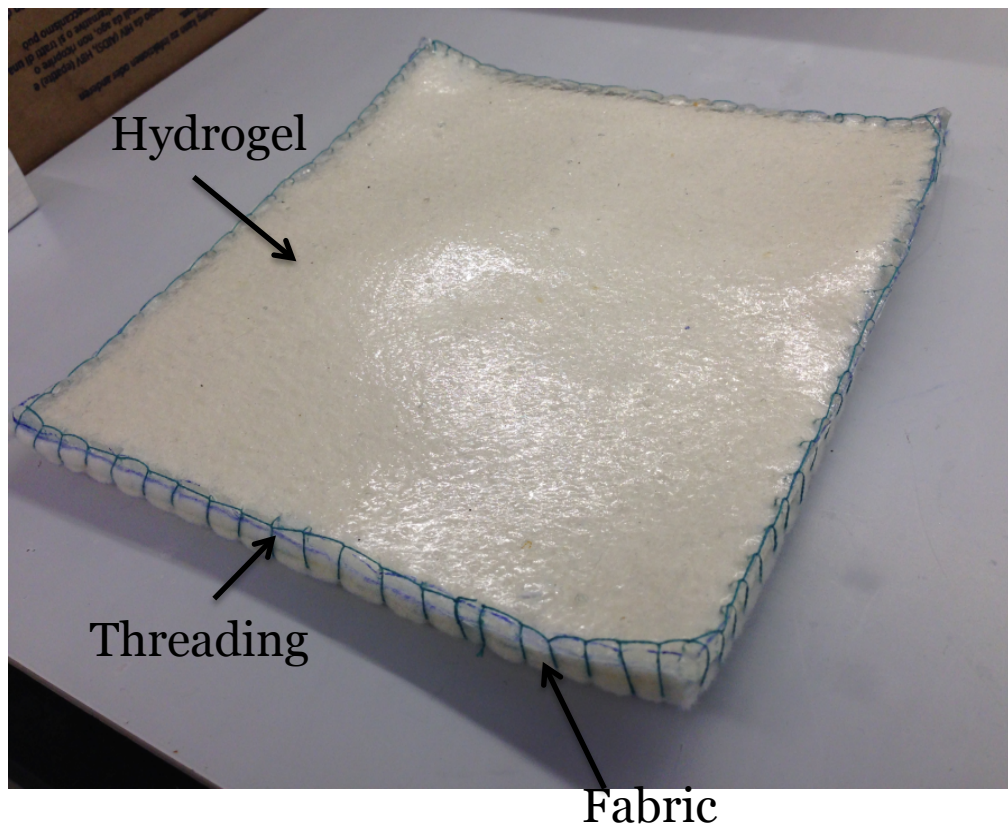
Can we use water in new ways?

Hydrogels outperform existing fire-retarding materials

Videos:

<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/suppl/10.1021/acsami.5b10538>

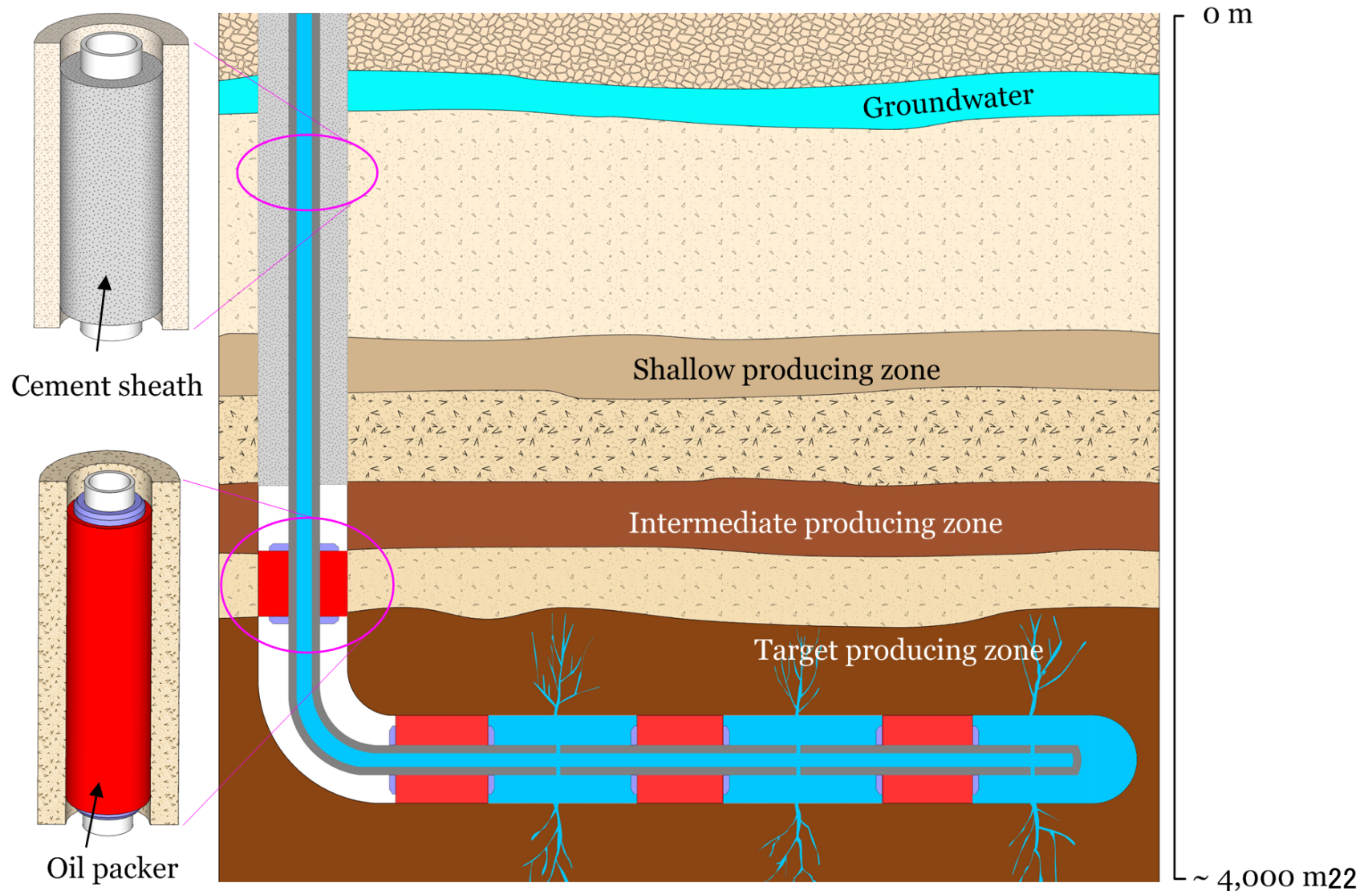
Hydrogel-fabric laminate



Cool jacket



Drilling, sealing and fracking



Postmortem observation of leaked packers

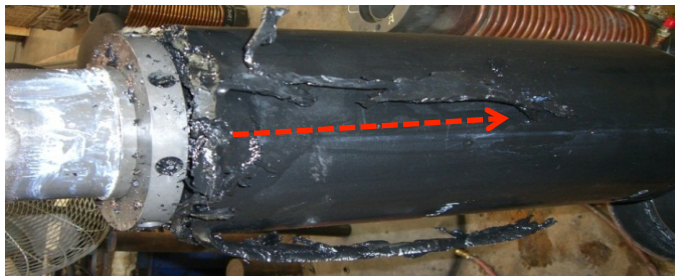
nearly no damage



damage at the end



damage along the packer



Transparent, desktop oilfield

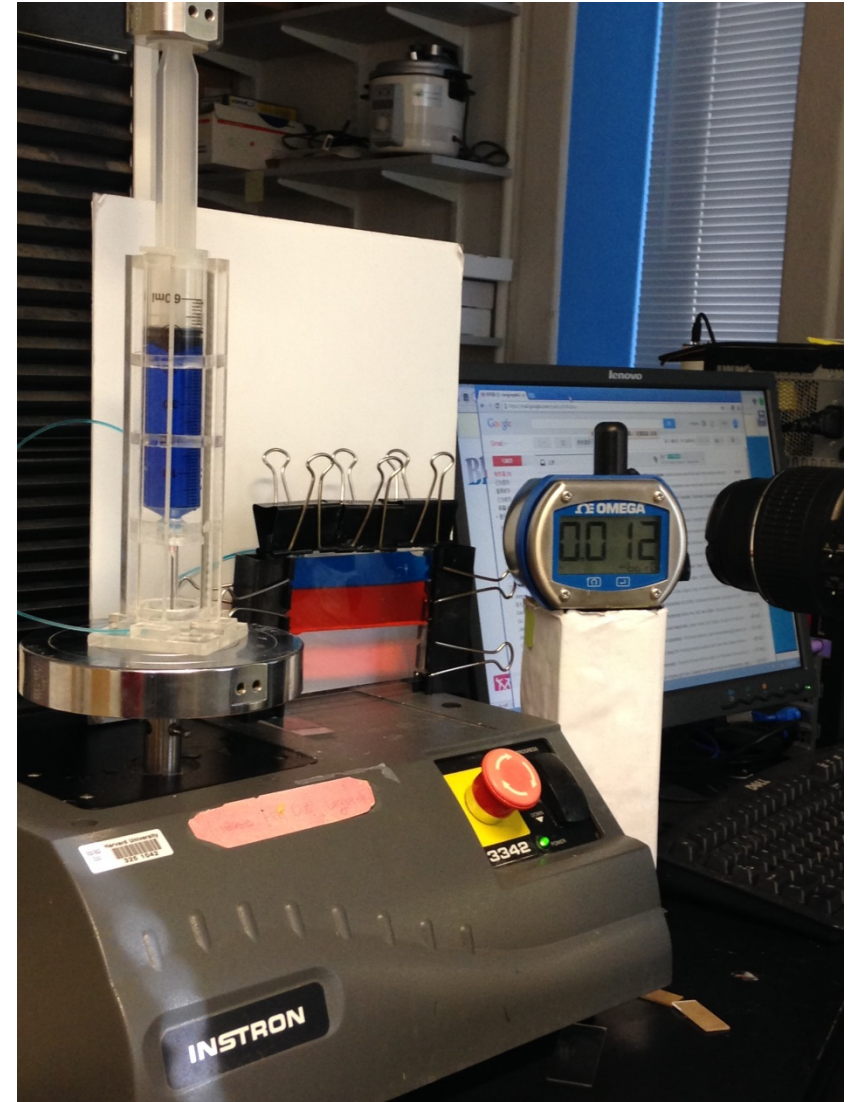
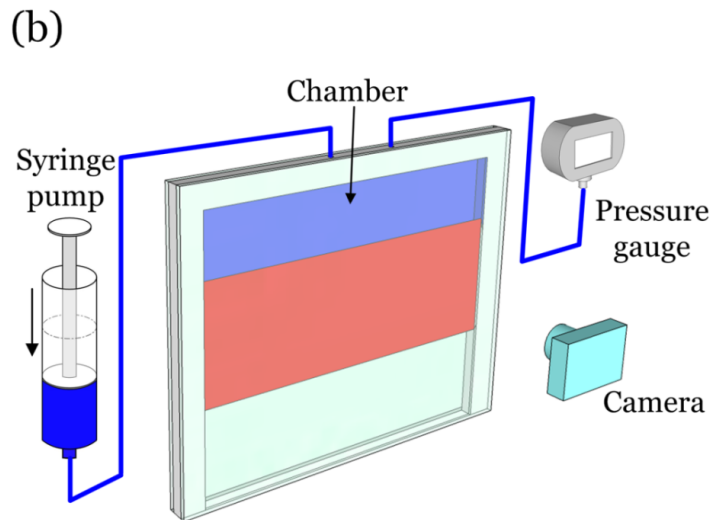
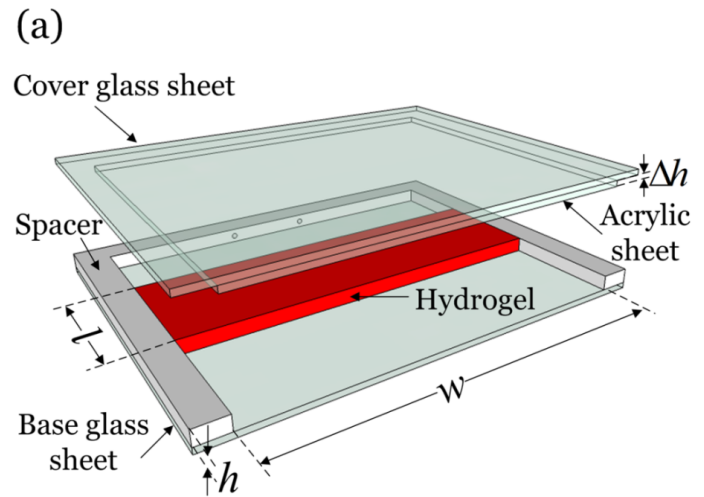
Full-scale tests

- Expensive and time-consuming
- Difficult to monitor
- High pressure (modulus $\sim$ MPa, $P = 10$ MPa-GPa)

Desktop experiments

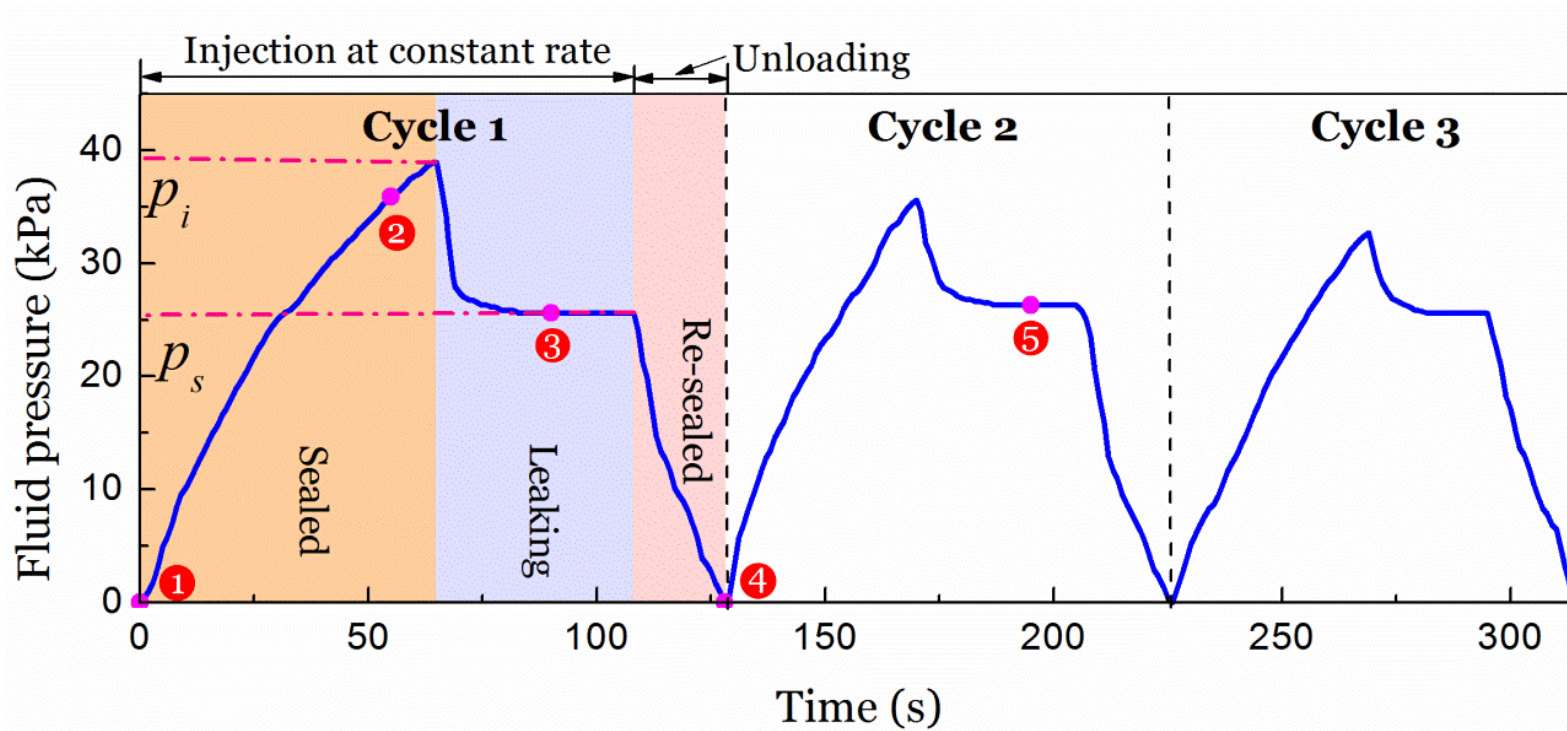
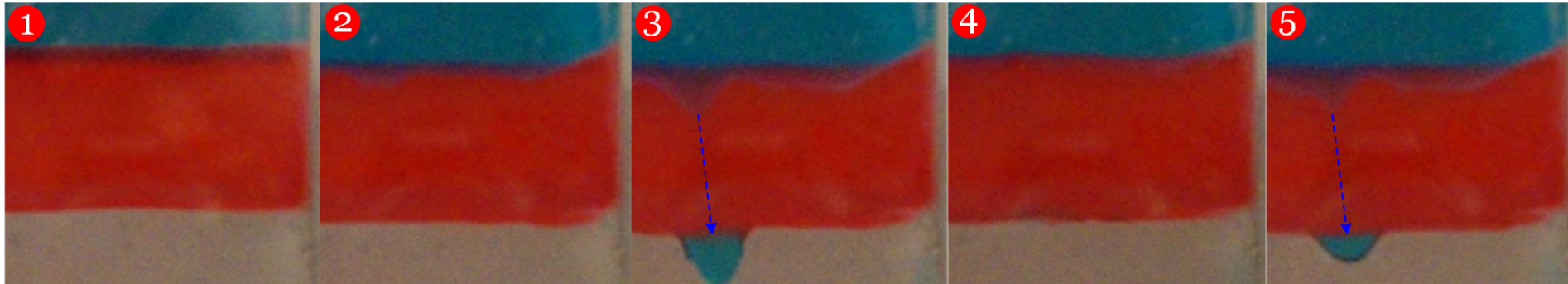
- Low-cost and fast
- Transparent
- Low pressure (modulus $\sim$ kPa, $P = 10$ kPa-100 kPa)

Experimental setup



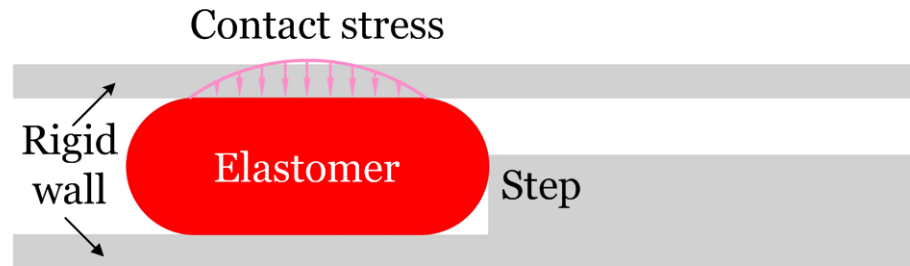
$$w=120 \text{ mm}, h=4.5 \text{ mm}, l=10 \sim 30 \text{ mm}, \Delta h=0.45 \sim 1.65 \text{ mm}, \mu=1.03 \text{ kPa}$$

Experimental observations

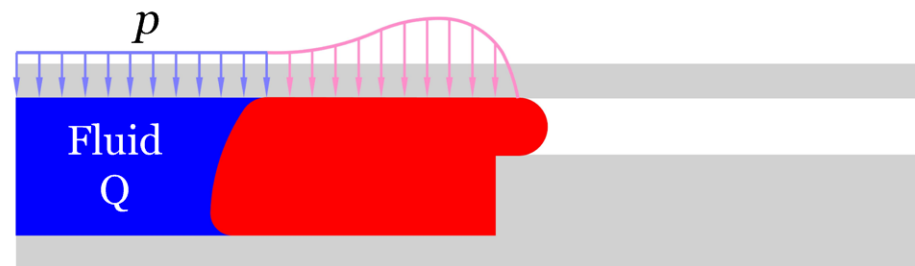


elastic leak

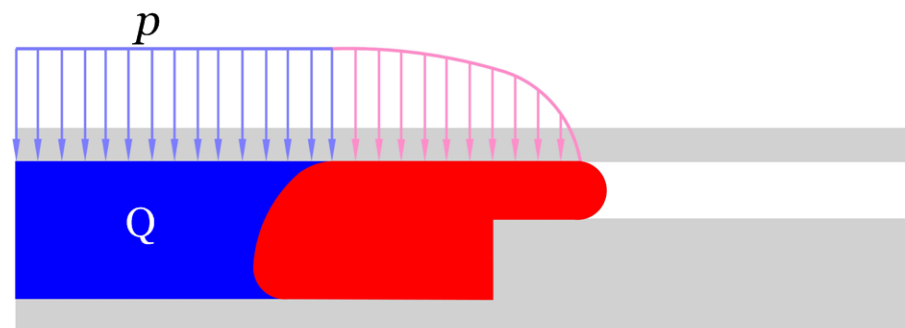
Precompress



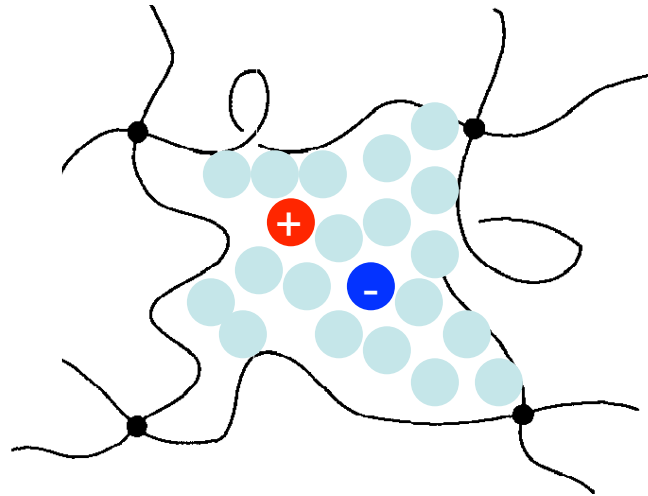
Seal



Leak

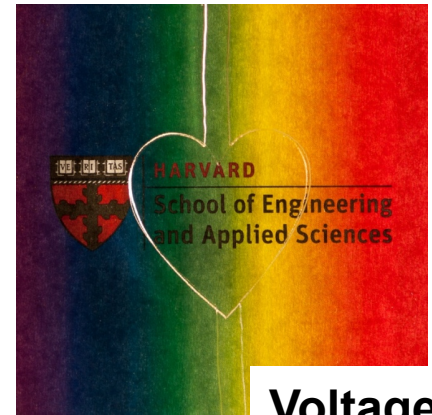
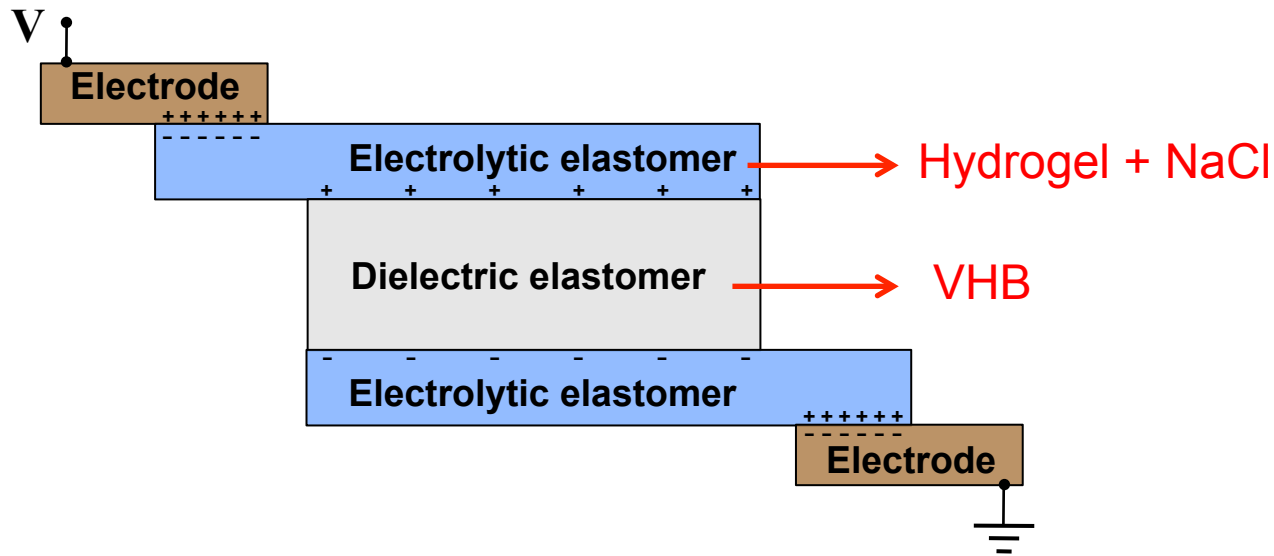


Hydrogel integrates stretchability and conductivity at molecular scale

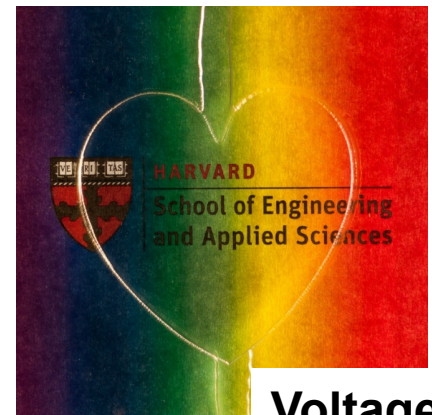


Artificial Muscles

mimic function, not anatomy



Voltage off



Voltage on



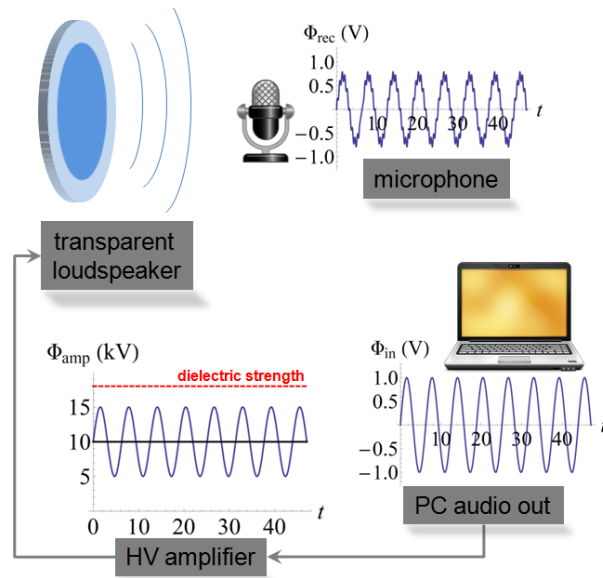
Challenges

A new context to study the science of hydrogels

- fragile?
- unstable? Water electrolyzes at $\sim 1\text{V}$. Dielectric deforms under $\sim 10\text{kV}$
- slow? Resistivity of saltwater is a million times that of copper.
- volatile?
- adhesion? Integrate dissimilar stretchable materials
- fatigue? Repeated large stretch

ionic music (iTune)

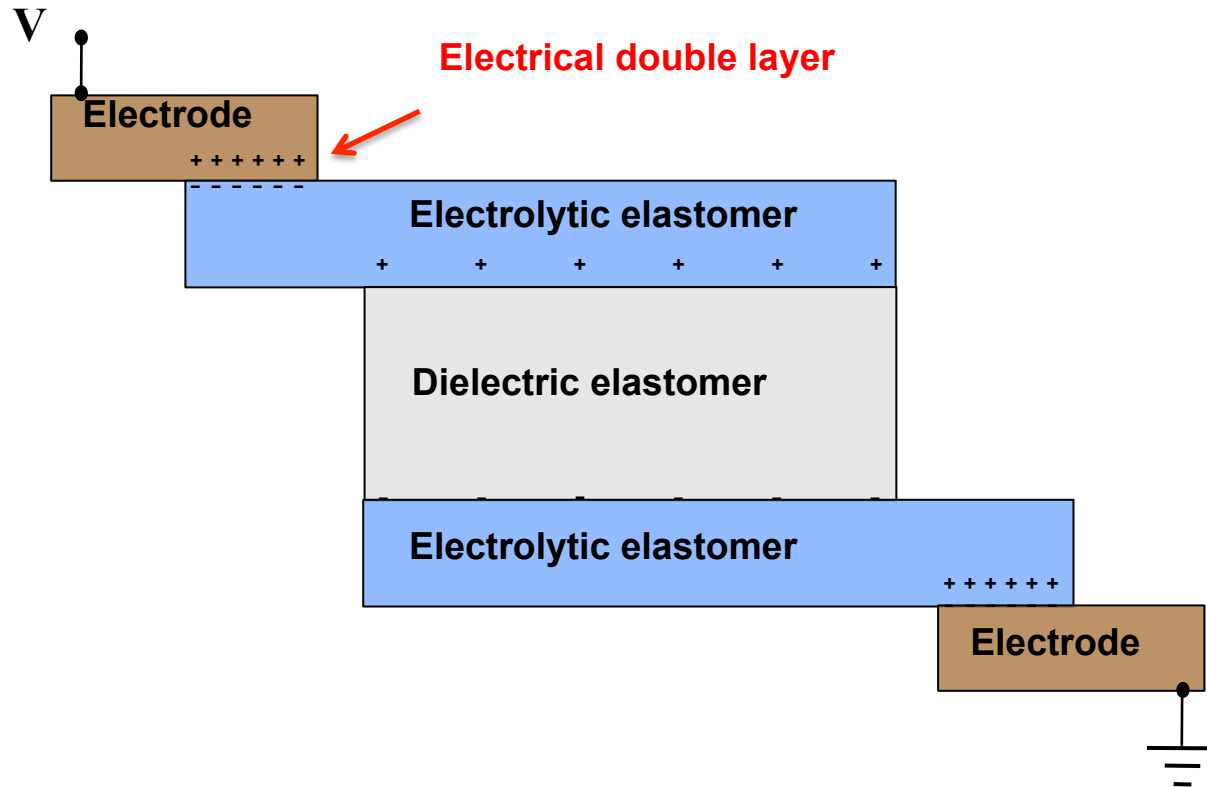
Transparent loudspeaker



videos

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/341/6149/984/suppl/DC1>

Ionotronics: hybrid ionic-electronic circuits



Small voltage across electrical double layer—no electrolysis.

Large voltage across dielectric elastomer—electroactive strain.

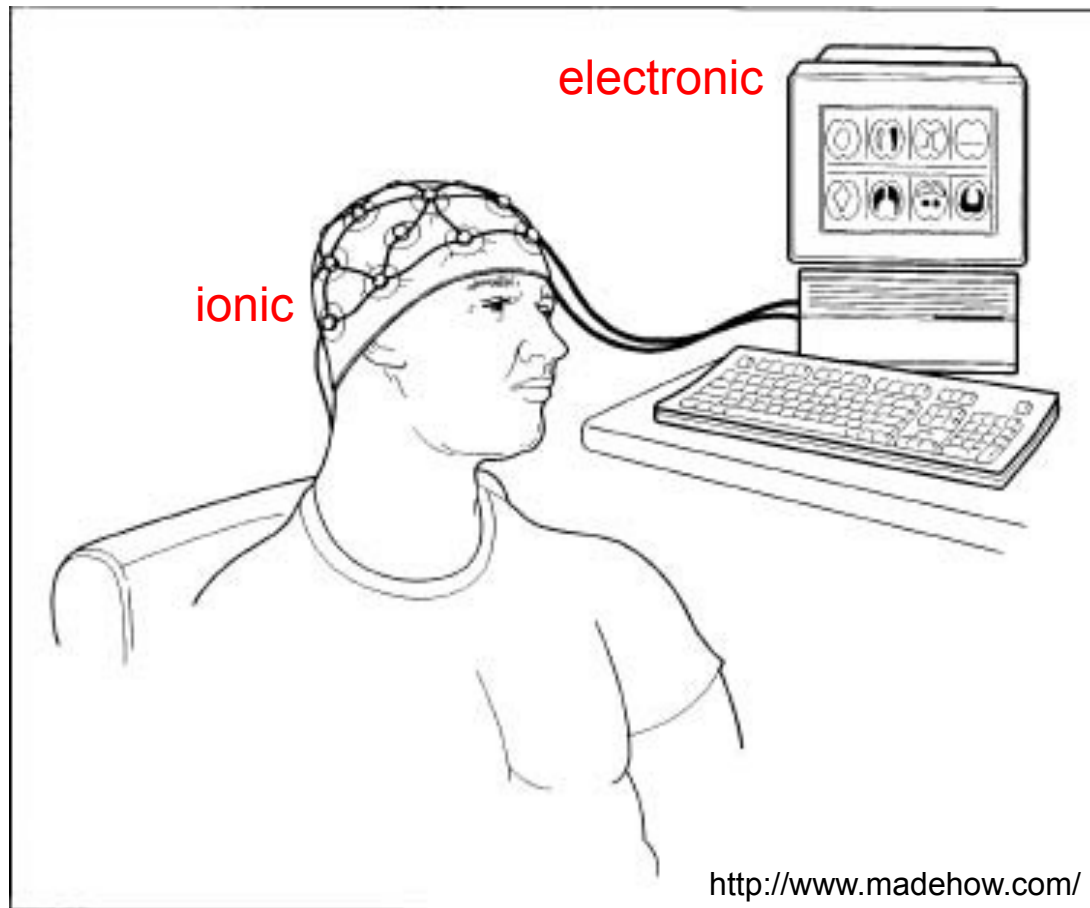
Water-retaining hydrogels

Saturated aqueous solution	Relativity humidity at 25 C
NaCl	75%
LiCl	11%

Bai, Jiang, Chen, Foo, Zhou, Xiang, Zhou, Wang, Suo, Applied Physics Letters 104, 062902 (2014).
Chen, Bai, Xiang, Su, Chen, Wang, Zhou, Suo, Journal of Polymer Science B 52, 1055 (2014).
Bai, Chen, , Xiang, Zhou, Zhou, Wang, Suo, Applied Physics Letters. 105, 191903 (2014).

Hybrid ionic-electronic circuits

Ionotronics

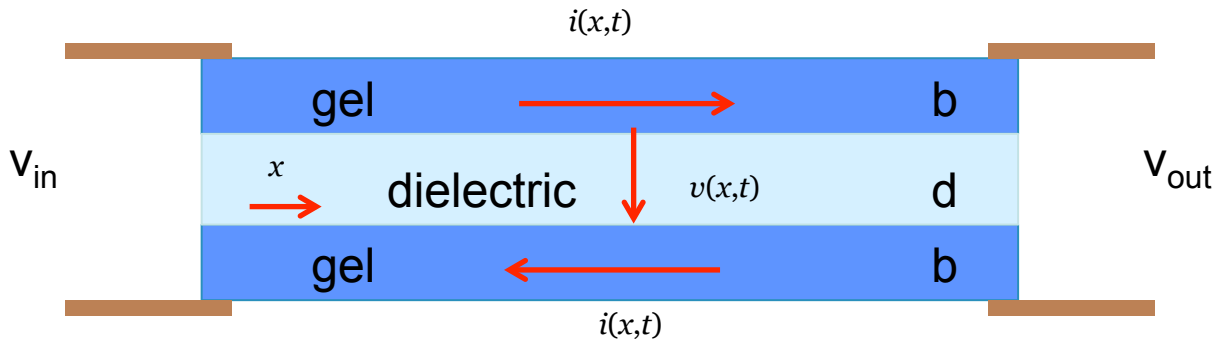


Ionic cable: artificial axon

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AXQ3p64CEY&feature=youtu.be>

Signal diffuses fast

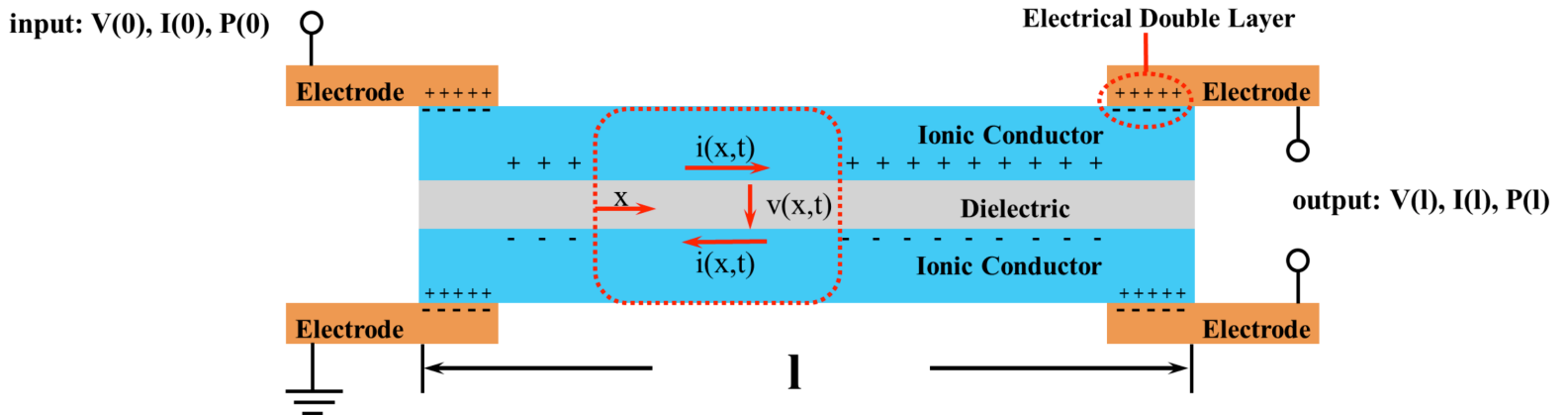


$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial t} = D \frac{\partial^2 v}{\partial x^2}$$

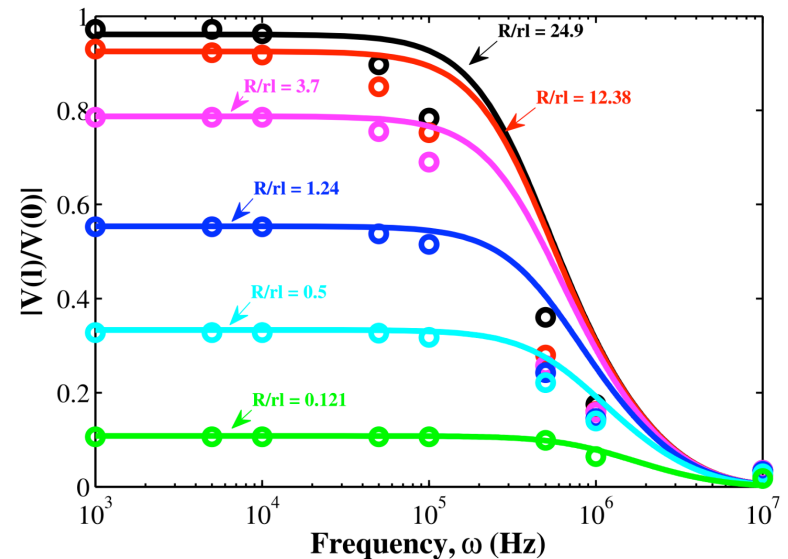
$$D \approx \frac{bd}{\epsilon \rho} \approx \frac{(10^{-3} \text{ m})(10^{-3} \text{ m})}{(10^{-11} \text{ F/m})(10^{-2} \Omega \text{ m})} = 10^7 \text{ m}^2 / \text{s}$$

Ion diffuses slowly $D_{ion} \approx 10^{-9} \text{ m}^2 / \text{s}$

Ionic cable



$$\omega \propto \frac{1}{\rho \epsilon} \frac{bd}{L^2}$$



TOUGH WATER

Can we use water in new ways?

- Fire-retarding blanket (phase-transforming material)
- Transparent, desktop oilfields (soft material)
- Artificial axons (stretchable conductor)

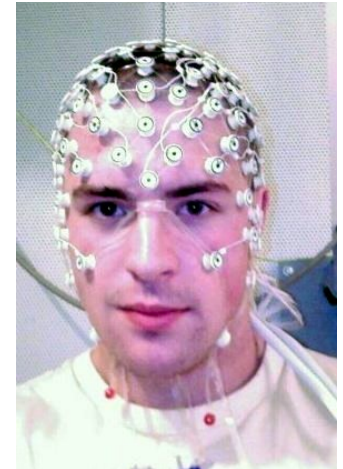
Why soft materials, again?

Create a new context for mechanics.

machine meets life



The Internet of Things
Wearable electronics
Biometric sensors
Mobile health
Neural recording
Neural stimulation
Computer-brain interface
Stretchable electronics
Implantable electronics
Injectable electronics
Soft robots
Soft machines



machine

hard
dry
electronic

life

soft
wet
ionic

