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Today's Tech Buzz

[Engineer helps build Santa a better sleigh](#)

Santa's old-fashioned carriage-style sleigh may have done the trick in the past, but the team at Popular Science thought it was time it got upgraded for the new century. So the magazine tapped a fluidics engineer from software firm ANSYS to analyze the aerodynamics of Kris Kringle's ride and create one that had less drag, which means less work for those tired reindeer. [Popular Science](#) (12/22)

(Kaisa Siren / AFP / Getty Images)

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Robotics among the tech trends to watch in 2015

More human-friendly and capable robots will be making inroads in the industry in the new year, writes Lance Ulanoff. Other 2015 tech trends to watch fall into the categories of nanotech and materials sciences, artificial intelligence and further deployment of Big Data. [Mashable](#) (12/22)

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NASA project manager looks beyond 3D printer for space self-sufficiency

NASA project manager Niki Werkheiser is the driving force behind the 3D printer aboard the International Space Station that has now successfully churned out several vital parts and tools. It's all part of her In Space Manufacturing Initiative, which aims to make astronauts a good deal more self-sufficient. [Forbes](#) (12/23)

(Bloomberg via Getty Images)

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Researchers successfully test hybrid-electric aircraft

Researchers at the University of Cambridge in the U.K. are collaborating with Boeing and have successfully tested a parallel hybrid-electric plane. An electric motor works with a conventionally fueled engine to provide more power during takeoff and landing. Once at cruising altitude, the motor can help keep fuel consumption low when it's in assist mode or it can be put into generator mode to recharge the batteries.  [The Telegraph \(London\) \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (12/23)

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Fully driverless cars are decades down the road, Audi engineer says

Semiautonomous technology will be standard in new vehicle models within the next 10 years, but fully autonomous cars will not dominate city roads for another two to three decades, according to Audi's Thomas Muller, an engineer. He says autonomous designs require an "evolutionary approach" and need infrastructure and regulatory support to be successful. [Dezeen magazine](#) (12/19)

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Innovations & Trends

ASME online productions win a wide audience

The editors of ASME.org round up the site's most popular videos and podcasts of 2014. The twin-cable-stayed elegance of the new Tappan Zee Bridge was the subject of ASME's most-viewed video of the past year. And another two-part production, this one focusing on Thomas Edison's lab in West Orange, N.J., was the second-most viewed. Among podcasts, an exploration of the future of hydraulic fracturing earned the most listeners. [ASME.org](#) (12/2014)

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X-Plane simulator creator launches app to land airplane with an iPad

Austin Meyer, the creator of the high-fidelity flight simulator X-Plane, has a new iPad application called Xavion that can land an airplane in the event of an emergency. In demonstration flight, Meyer shows how after the engine goes out in a Van's Aircraft RV-10, the Xavion app takes control of the airplane, connecting to the autopilot system via Wi-Fi. Meyer says the program is like a virtual co-pilot, and it is aware of the nearest airports, the weather and other flight data. A new version is expected to be launched this month; Xavion is also compatible with the iPhone 6.

(Mauricio Lima / AFP / Getty Images)

[Popular Science](#) (12/18)

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Institute develops 3D printer that can use graphene

The Korea Electrotechnology Research Institute reported Thursday that it has developed a 3D printer that can utilize graphene material. "The 3D nano-printing technology will make it possible to produce 3D objects using various materials, including metal, plastic and graphene, compared to the existing 3D printers that only use plastic as material," said Seol Seung-kwon of KERI's Nano Hybrid Technology Research Center. [The Korea Times \(Seoul\)](#) (12/18)

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Simpler valve solves a severe problem for oil, gas industry

Mark Lobo drew on 25 years of experience with control valve manufacturers to invent a more dependable severe service control valve for the oil and gas industry and launch his own company. Valve Systems International's design simplifies the liquid's flow path through the valve for greater reliability. [The Oklahoman \(Oklahoma City\)](#) (12/16)

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Leadership & Development

Leadership lessons from the janitor

CEOs could do worse than to take some leadership cues from their janitors, writes Gabriel Bristol. Janitors are easily approachable, of service to others, and generally well-connected and in touch with what's really going on around the office, Bristol explains. [Fast Company online](#) (12/17)

(Alexis Gerard)

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SmartQuote

“**In the time we have it is surely our duty to do all the good we can to all the people we can in all the ways we can.**”

-- William Barclay,
Scottish author

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