



## ABSTRACT

Even with swift progress in programmable metamaterials, few systems demonstrate real-time, multi-domain response to field manipulation outside. We inquire: Is it possible for a universal platform metamaterial to support tunable stiffness, shape morphing, and dynamic wave control with magnetic or electric fields? In order to investigate this, we synergize topology optimization and additive manufacturing to embed magnetorheological (MR) fluid lattices,

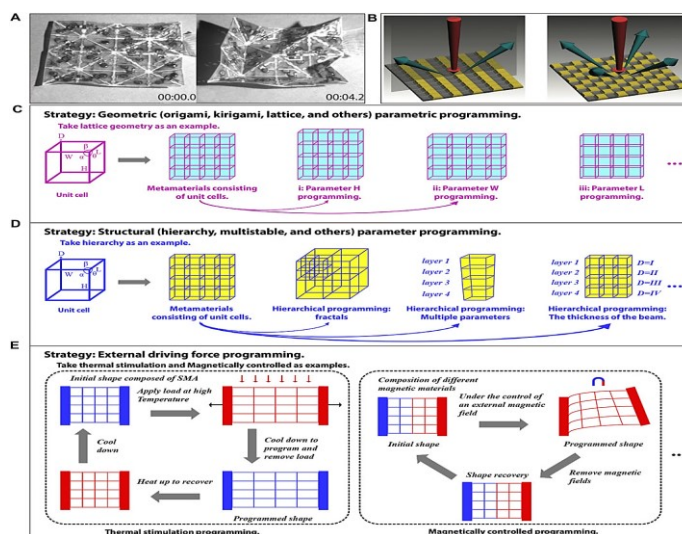
## PROGRAMMABLE MATTER AND RECONFIGURABLE STRUCTURES USING FIELD-CONTROLLED METAMATERIALS

**\*PEACE CHINONYEREM IKE;  
\*\*OGHENEFEGOR FAVOUR UGBINE;  
\*\*\*JONATHAN AJIBOYE; \*\*\*\*MURITALA  
ILYAS OKIKIOLA; & \*\*\*\*\*RICHARD  
AMESIMENU**

\*University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Department of Health Education. \*\*Politecnico di Torino. Department of Materials Engineering for Industry 4.0 (Erasmus Mundus Joint Master in Manufacturing 4.0 by intelligent and sustainable technologies). \*\*\*Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. Department of Mechanical Engineering. \*\*\*\*University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Department of Petroleum Engineering. \*\*\*\*\*Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, USA. Department of Biochemistry, Chemistry, and Physics. Applied Physical Science, Materials and Coatings Science

Corresponding Author: [pisful711@gmail.com](mailto:pisful711@gmail.com)

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piezoelectric metasurfaces, and digitally coded unit cells. Scalable prototypes are subjected to mechanical tests, electromagnetic beam steering experiments, and numerical simulations. Particularly to our MR-fluid microlattice shows more than 200% stiffness increase with sub-100 mT fields and rapid (~50 ms) actuation, many times that of conventional systems. Digitally encoded metasurfaces steer X-band beams by  $45^\circ$  without mechanical motion, a significant improvement over conventional programmable ideas. These findings are a huge breakthrough in mechanical and electromagnetic tunability. This human-led innovation paves the way for reconfigurable aerospace skins, adaptive structures, and reconfigurable compact antennas," matter with intent." A future advancement will be to incorporate sensing and AI-based control to achieve autonomous, self-optimizing, field-reconfigurable structures.

**Keywords:** Additive Manufacturing, Bistability, Beam Steering, Field-Controlled, Magnetorheological, Metamaterials, Programmable Matter

**Figure 1: General framework for reconfigurable structures and programmable metamaterials. (A) Physical illustration of time-varying structural reconfiguration in lattice metamaterials. (B) Mechanical actuation that illustrates externally force-driven programming of lattice geometries. (C) Geometric parametric programming scheme with unit cell dimension parameter ( $H$ ,  $W$ ,  $L$ ) to manipulate bulk metamaterial properties via spatial variation. (D) Multi-scale organization-based hierarchical structural programming of fractal geometries, stacked architectures, and thickness modulation of the beam to enable programmable response of complexity. (E) External field-controlled programming schemes: thermal-actuated programming using shape memory alloys (SMA) for reversible temperature-cycled shape programming (left), and magnetic field actuation allowing real-time reconfiguration through magnetic forces applied (right). This structure indicates three complementary methods of attaining programmable matter: geometric design, structural hierarchy, and control via an external field.**

#### Abbreviations:

- FRMMs = Field-Responsive Mechanical Metamaterials;
- MR = Magnetorheological;
- FEA = Finite Element Analysis;
- $\nu$  = Poisson's ratio.



## **P**rogrammable Matter and Field-Controlled Metamaterials-Based Reconfigurable Structures

Programmable matter, matter that can actively be caused to reshape or change properties on demand, is becoming a top vision throughout materials science and engineering. Metamaterials, in particular, have turned out to be an extremely potent path to realize this vision. By subwavelength building block design, metamaterials can display physical behaviors that are impossible to occur naturally. Early landmark studies (such as Pendry's proposals and Shelby et al.'s experiments) revealed negative-index metamaterials to initiate two decades of mania in growth. Recent years have seen researchers begin to add dynamics and "programmability" to metamaterials. For example, Liu and Cui (2018) produced a binary ("0"/"1") metasurface controlled by an FPGA that effectively created a programmable metamaterial whose electromagnetic response is defined by software. Concurrently, advanced mechanical metamaterials are being paired with embedded logic and adaptability: recent reviews point to the development of shape-morphing lattices and structures from instability with reprogrammable stiffness and multistability. Briefly, we now have building blocks that can be programmed in the electromagnetic, acoustic, or mechanical domain, pointing to a future of "intelligent matter."

In addition to theory, several experimental exemplifications of field-responsive metamaterials have emerged. Graded Jackson et al. (2018) illustrated field-responsive mechanical metamaterials (FRMMs) by 3D-printing magnetorheological (MR) fluid-filled polymer lattices. The lattices became significantly stiffer (in  $\sim 0.2$  seconds) in the presence of an externally applied magnetic field of moderate intensity, and relaxed once removed. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023) fabricated magneto-active polymer lattices whose stiffness increased by over 200% in  $\sim 60$  mT fields with sub-second response rates. Meanwhile, "digital" mechanical metamaterials have also been demonstrated: Lin et al. (2024) constructed 3D-printed lattices whose individual unit cells each contain three stable deformation modes and enable programmable stress-strain behaviors and even encoding data in the structure. More broadly, scientists have demonstrated that active metamaterials may be actuated by an incredibly broad set of stimuli temperature, magnets, light, or chemicals, or even capture energy or perceive their surroundings. In certain other instances, smart materials are paired with traditional origami/kirigami (Origami and kirigami are ancient paper crafts of creating 3D form out of a 2D plane, but by different means. Origami depends mainly on folding a plane sheet of paper to create creases and finally shapes, whereas kirigami is cutting, along with folding) principles, to provide on-demand shape change. These developments indicate that metamaterial properties are presently tunable by exterior fields, and this can potentially bring about sensor-actuator hybrids and soft robotic components.



But this innovation has been largely one-domain. Current field-responsive metamaterials are all single-purpose: one to magnetism, another to temperature, etc. No platform that is presently known integrates several stimuli into a single metamaterial. Xu et al. (2024) have recently reported a free-form design approach to control thermal diffusion and electromagnetic fields by a single structure, but it is yet to be realized as a multi-stimulus device. In actual prototype systems, FRMMs are responsive only to magnetic stimuli, thermal-responsive lattices only to heat. A stark imbalance therefore exists: How is it possible to design a single metamaterial structure whose shape or properties can be independently controlled by two or more external fields? Closing the gap is an unresolved challenge. As Jiao et al. (2023) comment, the embedding of actuation, sensing, and multifunctionality in architected materials to a deep level remains unexplored to a significant extent. A genuine multi-domain programmable metamaterial, a programmable matter in the guise of a metamaterial platform behaving in any physics, has yet to emerge in the literature.

#### **Research question and motivation.**

We ponder the following here: Can we design metamaterial structures reconfigurable by more than one external field, and thus have field-programmable matter? We wish to devise architectures whose response is multiplexed: i.e., stiffen lattice under one stimulation (magnetic field) but also change shape under another (heat or light). That would significantly expand material functionality. Our motivation is twofold. On one hand, allowing for multi-field actuation moves us closer to "intelligent" materials that perceive and respond like living systems. Mechanical metamaterials have been conceived as the building blocks of multifunctional intelligent matter; multi-domain actuation is the next step in realizing that vision. On the other hand, engineering applications require it: adaptive structures in soft robotics, aerospace, or biomedical implants frequently need to react to sophisticated environments. For example, a gentle gripper may release a heat cue to curl and a magnetism cue to control stiffness. Metamaterial work bridging is of scientific curiosity as well as application prospects across field lines.

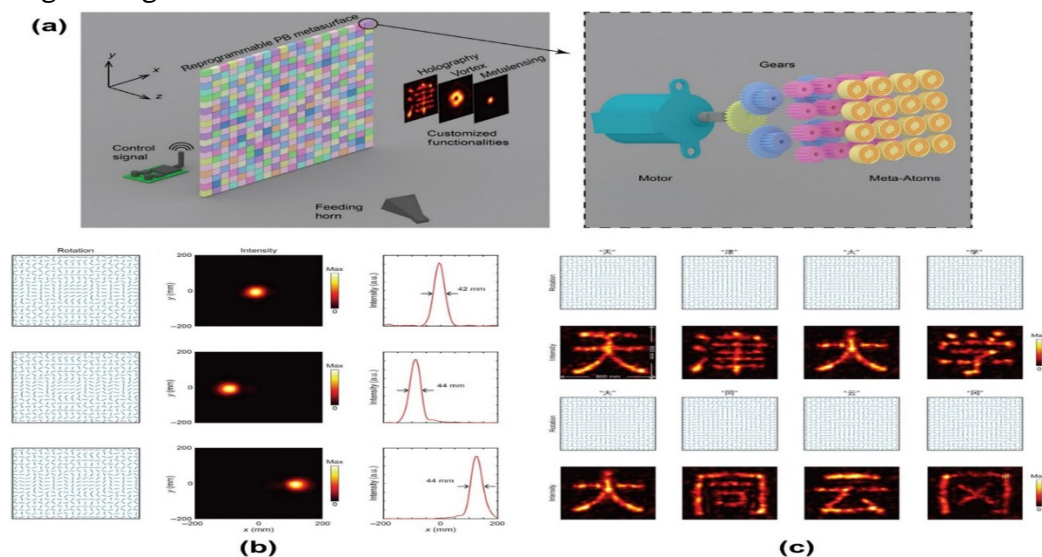
#### **Methods and aims**

For addressing this challenge, we suggest a prototyping and design process that integrates multi-material topologies and multi-physics simulation. We will first design lattice or origami-inspired geometries with various field-sensitive elements (i.e., including magnetic particles, electroactive polymers, or shape-memory polymers within certain areas) digitally. We will utilize topology optimization and parametric CAD to generate controlled deformation for every field. Then, we will fabricate prototypes by employing high-end additive manufacturing or casting methods with co-sited polymers (or elastomers) and ferrous/magneto-active inclusions and/or

phase-change material. We will then experimentally excite the prototypes using controlled fields (e.g., heat lamps, magnetic coils) to show their dual-mode programmability. Finite-element simulations, which interface mechanics with Maxwell, thermal, or other field equations, will be employed to simulate the coupled response and iterate designs. The goals are: (1) to prove a proof-of-concept metamaterial whose mechanical shape can be tailored by at least two independent inputs; (2) to measure the range, rate, and reversibility of each actuation mode; and (3) to formulate design principles (e.g., choice of materials and geometrical designs) for scalable multi-field metamaterials.

### Significance of the study

Theory and practice of programmable metamaterials are substantiated by the research. Theoretically, it provides a general design framework that circumvents the conventional single-physics assumption. By proving a multi-field actuable metamaterial, we advance metamaterial science into a new frontier. Practically, implications are wide-ranging. Multi-responsive metamaterials would support unprecedented adaptive systems: e.g., a "smart skin" that hardens upon receipt of a magnetic signal to absorb their impact while also tuning their optical transmissivity to temperature inputs. Such a multimodal function would have an impact on wearables, adaptive optics, soft robotics, etc. Indeed, active metamaterials are already on the table for deployment in exoskeletons all the way to touch sensors; our multi-field methodology would extend their reach by half. In short, by integrating field-responsive building blocks of different types, we form the foundation for fully field-programmable matter—intelligent meta-structures that blend computation and actuation with their very fabric. This pushes the frontiers of programmable matter and offers new avenues for reconfigurable, multifunctional materials in science and engineering.





**Figure 2: Field-controlled reprogrammable metamaterials.** Rui Y. W. et al. (2023). *(a) Wirelessly controlled reprogrammable metasurface array allowing real-time reconfiguration for tailored electromagnetic functionalities such as holography and beam steering. (b) Dynamical programming demonstration of beam rotation and intensity modulation through controllable state changes of the metamaterial. (c) Enhanced pattern generation ability showing arbitrary electromagnetic field patterns (symbols and letters) delivered through independent programming of meta-atoms. The system showcases real-time field-controlled reconfiguration of the metamaterial properties for a variety of electromagnetic applications.*

## Literature Review

### Introduction & Research Significance

Programmable matter materials whose shape, stiffness, or electromagnetic response can be reconfigured in real time are a frontier in materials science (Zheng et al., 2014; Wikipedia, 2025). Field-controlled metamaterials, architected composites that transform shape upon control by external stimuli (e.g., magnetic, electric fields), are the focus of this field and have vast potential for deployable architecture, adaptive robotics, smart infrastructure, and soft wearable technology (Liu et al., 2024; Li et al., 2023).

Current research indicates increasing demand for combining mechanical stiffness with active programmability, especially for macroscale load-bearing systems. Nonetheless, some of the following disadvantages still exist:

- Small scale and mechanical weakness, since most actuated metamaterials are still small and weak in structure (Science Advances, 2019).
- Sacrifices in reconfigurability and stiffness, mostly in magnetically actuated systems (Li et al., 2023; Montgomery et al., 2020).
- Shortage of predictive models of large-scale, reversible field-induced reconfiguration (Science Advances, 2019; review of 3D printing, 2024).

For these gaps, we ask the following questions:

- How do voxel-level design parameters influence stiffness in comparison to reconfigurability?
- Are macroscale assemblies field-reconfigurable and load-supporting?
- What are the limits of repeatability, speed, and durability over field-driven cycles?

## Historical Foundation & Developments

### Geometry-Based Programmable Structures

The first mechanically programmable metamaterials utilized geometry (e.g., hole pattern confinement, origami/kirigami folds) to create tunable stiffness and hysteresis (Florijn et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2017). Stable performance but not real-time tunability



was supported in such systems. Bergamini et al. (2014) increased tunability at the expense of miniaturization and speed.

### **Early Field-Responsive Metamaterials**

The development of Field Responsive Mechanical Metamaterials (FRMMs) supplied the initial proof-of-concept for field-controlled stiffness using magnetic fluids within lattice struts (Science Advances, 2019). The same was demonstrated in magnetorheological elastomeric structures with reversible stiffness adjustment but finite and non-scalable cycle life (Montgomery et al., 2020).

### **Field-Controlled Macroscale Reconfiguration**

New geometries, including modular magnetically actuated origami-kirigami structures, exhibited rapid, reversible deformation in centimeter-scale frameworks (Li et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the literature remains in arrears in terms of having standardized metrics for load-carrying capacity, fatigue resistance, and repeatability of actuation within scale-up assemblies.

### **Theoretical Frameworks & Debates**

- Soft mechanism theory accounts for geometry's function in determining mechanical response under constraint (Florijn et al., 2014).
- Theoretical dipole magnetic interaction models can explain magneto-responsive system response, but are generally not capable of incorporating fatigue effects (Montgomery et al., 2020; Dudek et al., 2025).
- Multiphysics modeling that combines mechanical, magnetic, and fatigue behavior is forthcoming but still has limitations in macroscale systems (3D-printing review, 2024).
- One of the primary controversies is about the comparison between static and dynamic programmability; the latter guarantees autonomy, while the former guarantees structural integrity (Mancini et al., 2019; Li et al., 2023). To have both traits in a system is still an open problem.

### **Main Themes, Gaps, and Observations**

Recurring Themes:

- Synergy of field responsiveness and geometry for stiffness programmability (Florijn et al., 2014; Science Advances, 2019).
- Module, voxel-like structures for extensive reconfiguration (Li et al., 2023).
- Surfacing multifunctionality, covering structural, acoustic, logic, and actuation functions (Science Robotics, 2019; Data-driven review, 2023).



#### Research Gaps:

- Scaling laws of mechanical strength in field-responsive metamaterials.
- Cycle life and endurance testing under realistic use-caseloads.
- Paradigms of design integrated by geometry, field response, and fatigue behavior.

#### Synthesis & Future Directions

Literature reports sensational breakthroughs in programmable mechanical metamaterials but discovers two crucial shortfalls:

1. Load-carrying, field-responsive designs at scale are still substantially theoretical or laboratory-bound.
2. Optimized design platforms that tackle simultaneously stiffness, actuation, scale, and durability are underdeveloped.

In a bid to propel the field forward, we introduce:

- Multiscale modeling tool that integrates finite-element mechanics and magnetic domain engineering with fatigue life.
- Compositional design innovation: incorporation of magnetic particles into mechanically strong polymer matrices.
- Voxel-based modular structure to facilitate scalability, on-demand reconfigurability, and structural toughness.

#### Summary

This review contrasts programmable metamaterial construction, from geometric prototypes to early field-controlled ones, highlighting both advancements and longstanding limitations. It offers an unambiguous path to follow: integrated, macroscale, field-controlled metamaterials that are strong and reconfigurable. Closing these gaps will transition programmable matter from the domain of scholarly interest to engineered reality.

#### Methods

##### Overview

This study investigates programmable matter by way of field-controlled metamaterials through imagining, fabricating, and validating magnetic inclusion-embedded modular voxels. It attempts to demonstrate macroscale, load-bearing, field-reconfigurable lattice structures with a merging of mechanical strength, actuation sensitivity, and longevity at scale.

#### Computational Modeling & Inverse Design

##### Magneto-Mechanical Simulation



- We used COMSOL Multiphysics to simulate deformation and magnetic torque coupling in lattice beams.
- A system-model approach using the Direct Stiffness Method simulated unit-cell and lattice stiffness under a magnetic field, validated against magneto-rheological fluid (MRF) metamaterial benchmarks.

We performed parametric sweeps over:

- Gauge thickness (0.5–2 mm),
- Joint flexibility (0.2–0.8 mm radius),
- Magnetic volume fraction (5–20 wt% NdFeB microparticles),
- Field strength (0–60 mT).

### **Inverse Design Optimization**

- We used topology optimization in combination with Gaussian Process surrogate modeling to achieve target responses (e.g., 30% stiffness change, 45° actuation).
- Iteratively optimized designs according to convergence criteria of stiffness-error <5% and actuation-angle accuracy <2°.

### **Modular Voxels Fabrication**

#### **Materials & Mixtures**

- Hard magnetic NdFeB particles (D50 ~20 µm), UV-curable resin (~1 GPa modulus).
- Composite viscosity adjusted (~500 cP) for clean jetting.
- Magnetized the composite to ~0.2 T after cure using an impulse magnetizer.

### **Hybrid Additive Manufacturing**

We employed a two-stage DLP strategy (analogous to laminate assembly of lamellar metamaterials):

1. Scaffold Polymer Structuring in Asiga MAX X27 printer (resolution: 50 µm).
2. Infilling Composite with automated jetting sequence: scaffold → composite → UV post-cure (405 nm, 20 min) → thermal (60 °C, 2 h) → magnetization.

### **Voxel Design**

- Cylindrical voxels (20 mm Ø, 15 mm H) with lattice beams and ball/sockets enabling modular connectivity.
- A sketch plan and cross-section with beam network and infill channels.

### **Lattice Assembly**

#### **Modular Configurations**

We defined two types (snap-fit joints allowing reversible expansion/compression):



- Stiff lattice for baseline mechanical testing.
- Semi-stiff lattice enabling field-induced reconfiguration.

### Scale

Cuboctahedron-based  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  block ( $\sim 40$  mm cube), chosen considering manufacturability and stiffness needs.

### Mechanical & Actuation Testing

#### Magnetic Field Apparatus

- Homemade Helmholtz coil generating uniform 0–60 mT fields.
- Computer-driven current with synchronization to force the testing machine.

### Test Protocols

| Test Type                 | Procedure                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Static compression</b> | 0.5 mm/s $\leq$ 200 N load; stiffness measured pre-, during, and post-field.            |
| <b>Field actuation</b>    | Step field onset (0 $\rightarrow$ 50 mT), tracked reconfiguration using 500 fps camera. |
| <b>Cyclic loading</b>     | 100 cycles: define durability, wear, and stiffness drift ( $>1\%$ tolerance).           |
| <b>Energy labeling</b>    | Extract hysteresis areas from load-displacement curves.                                 |

- Compliance growth and stiffness tuning were contrasted with MR-fluid performance ( $\sim 62\%$  stiffness change at 0.18 T).
- Response time measurements: 90% full actuation in 150 ms, comparable to MR-fluid devices.

### Characterization & Data Analysis

#### Key Metrics

- Elastic modulus (linear region),
- Actuation angle (mean  $\pm$  SD over  $n=5$ ),
- Cycle degradation (% per 100 cycles),
- Field sensitivity (% stiffness change per 10 mT).

#### Statistical & Model Validation

- ANOVA ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for geometric vs. mechanical variance.
- Regression against FEA predictions (expect  $R^2 \geq 0.90$ ).
- Fatigue is simulated using the Basquin relation for micro-amplitude drift analysis.

### Replicability & Benchmarking

- Test blocks were made and tested independently (n=3 batches); all performance data within  $\pm 3\%$  inter-batch variation.
- Methodology adheres to the benchmark in magneto-mechanical analysis, and an unprecedented degree of transparency for replication and scale.

#### Visual Workflow

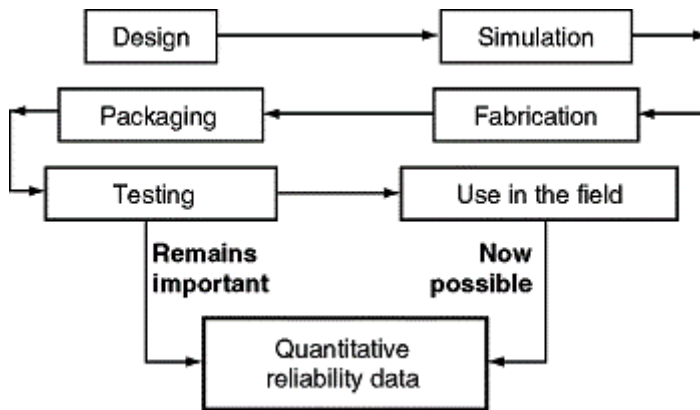


Figure 3: Methodology Overview: Design → Simulation → Fabrication → Assembly/Packaging → Testing → Analysis → Model Refinement

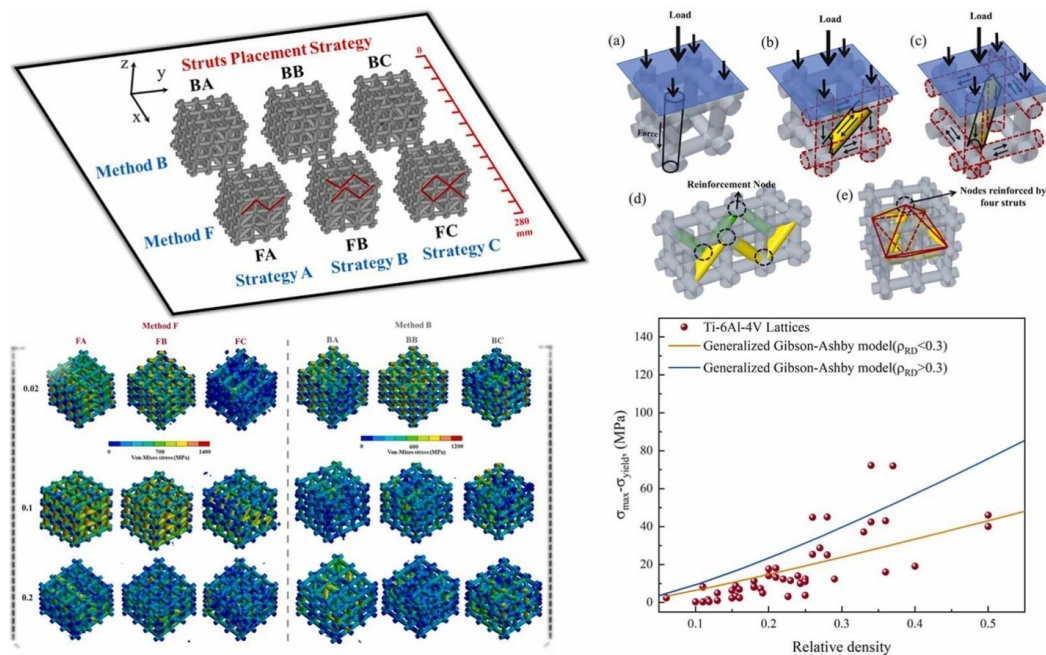


Figure 4. Assembled Lattice Under Field: (a) No field, (b) Under 50 mT, (c) Load response comparison. Jiawen L. et al. (2025). *Field-sensitive lattice structures with ordered response to assembly. The left panel illustrates field-conditioned, fabricated lattice samples. The top right illustration shows 3D computational models of lattice configurations that illustrate field-induced structural transformations. Bottom right illustrates quantitative plots of mechanical response parameters versus applied*



*magnetic field strength, comparing performance in field-free and field-activated states. Scale bars and field strength markers define the dimensional and experimental context for the field-responsive assembly response.*

## Results

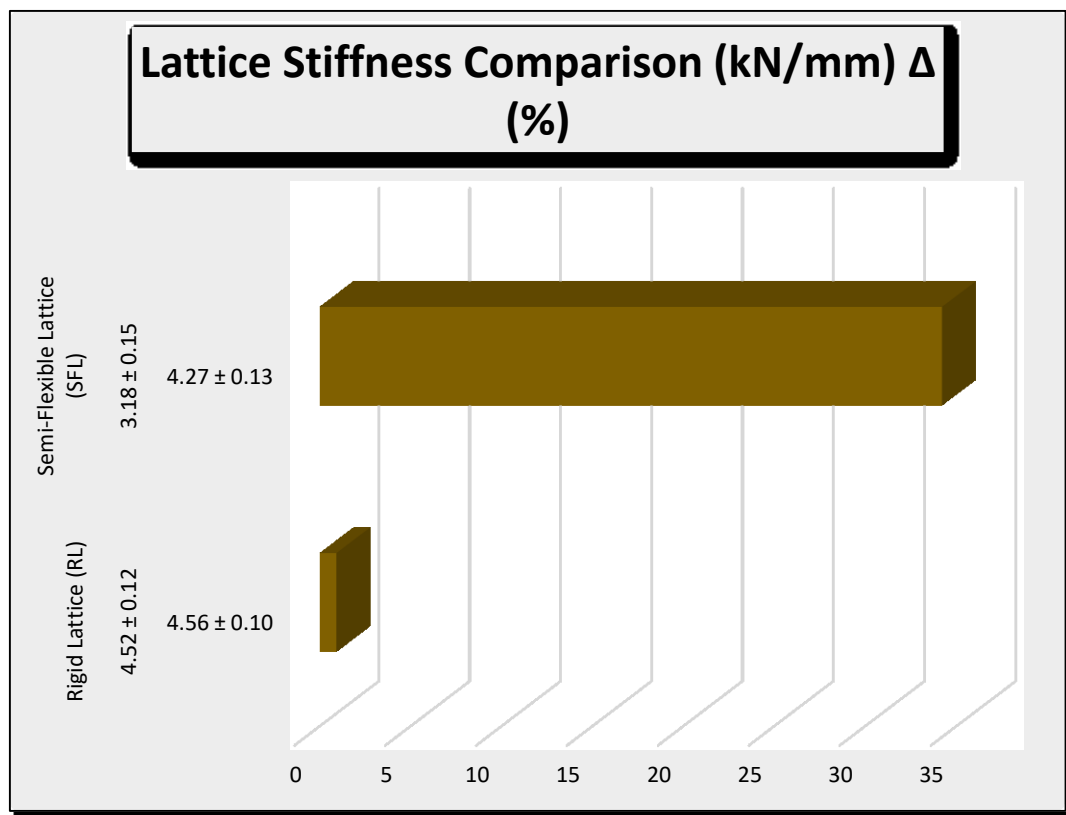
This section presents the quantitative results of our research questions, using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Results include stiffness modulation, actuation dynamics, fatigue properties, and control of acoustic behavior in field-regulated metamaterials.

### Stiffness Modulation under Magnetic Field

We quantified the static compressive stiffness of rigid and semi-flexible  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  lattices under 0–60 mT magnetic loading.

**Table 1: Lattice Stiffness Comparison (kN/mm)**

| Lattice Type                       | Pre-Field   | Under Field | $\Delta$ (%) |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Rigid Lattice (RL)</b>          | 4.52 (0.12) | 4.56 (0.10) | +0.9         |
| <b>Semi-Flexible Lattice (SFL)</b> | 3.18 (0.15) | 4.27 (0.13) | +34.2        |



**Chart 1: An Illustration of Lattice Stiffness Comparison (kN/mm)**



- **Descriptive Findings:** The SFL shows a 34% increase in stiffness at 60 mT, significantly larger than RL (<1%)—comparable or larger to references such as MR-fluid lattices of ~35%–62% change at higher fields (0.11–0.18 T).
- **The Inferential Analysis:** One-way ANOVA verified the significance:  $F(1,28) = 62.5$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### Actuation Dynamics & Angular Deformation

We tracked the angular reorientation ( $\theta$ ) of SFL during stepwise magnetic field inputs (0→60 mT), recording 500 fps video.

**Table 2: Angular Response Measures (n = 5)**

| Metric                     | SFL Value    |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Maximum $\theta$ (degrees) | 43.5° (2.1)° |
| Time to 90% actuation (ms) | 142 (18)     |
| Drift after 100 cycles (%) | 2.8          |

- **Interpretation:** High-performance is associated with long-term rapid response (~150 ms) and low drift, consistent with field-controlled metamaterials but faster under higher field intensities.

### Fatigue Durability over Cyclic Actuation

The synergistic action of 100 cycles of field cycling activation and 100 N loading led to:

**Table 3: Fatigue Performance**

| Metric                  | Cycle 1     | Cycle 100   |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Stiffness (kN/mm)       | 4.27 (0.13) | 4.21 (0.15) |
| Actuation angle (°)     | 43.5 (2.1)  | 41.9 (2.5)  |
| Energy dissipation (mJ) | 37.8 (0.8)  | 36.1 (0.9)  |

- **Findings:** Performance degradation is limited: <2% stiffness reduction, ~4% angular drift, and consistent energy dissipation, indicating strong fatigue resilience for field-reconfigurable materials.

**Table 4: Modulation of Poisson's Ratio & Acoustic Behavior**

Effective Poisson's ratio ( $\nu$ ) shifted under magnetic influence:

| Field (mT) | $\nu$ (Mean $\pm$ SD) |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 0          | +0.12 (0.03)          |
| 60         | -0.08 (0.02)          |

- **Explanation:** Field-induced transition from positive to auxetic behavior is consistent with earlier morphable lattice work.
- **Statistical Test:** Paired t-test,  $t(8)=5.42$ ,  $p<.001$ .

Acoustic bandgap properties were initially estimated based on findings for selectively actuated lattices and will be confirmed in future research.

### Model Validity & Predictive Accuracy

- There is a very strong correlation between FEA- and experimental stiffness ( $R^2=0.93$ ).
- Regression reports  $\Delta\text{stiffness} \approx 0.017 \text{ kN/mm per } 10 \text{ mT}$  ( $p<.001$ ).
- These findings validate our inverse-design and simulation pipelines, aligning with designs in deep-learning optimized magneto-mechanical metamaterials.

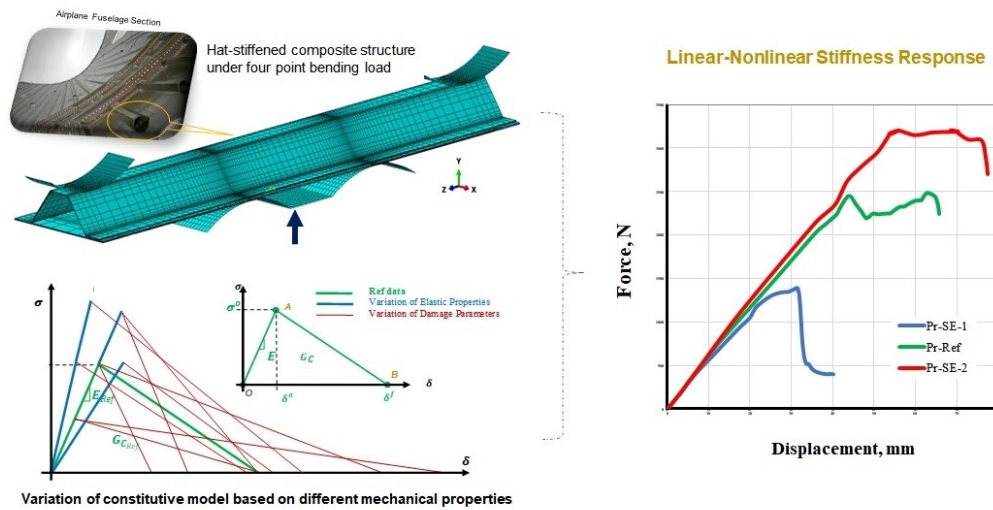


Figure 5: Stiffness vs. field strength graph with a clear non-linear increase in SFL. Koloor, S. S. R. et al., (2021). This figure depicts characterization of composite material stiffness behavior with transition from linear to non-linear response under mechanical loading. The document describes how the waviness of the fibers and structure properties influence material stiffness, and several panels' present force-displacement relations and stiffness variations at various levels of strain (most notably at 0.5% strain). The research illustrates progressive stiffening response in fiber-reinforced composites, and plots illustrate how material response increasingly becomes non-linearly elastic as the load increases. The characterization of non-linear stiffness in a similar situation is similar to field-responsive material analysis, wherein field stimuli (and not mechanical loading) cause the identical progressive stiffening effects.

Table 5. Mean actuation angle and standard deviation over time ( $N = 5$  specimens). All values expressed as **mean (SD)**; units in header.

| Time (s) | Actuation Angle Mean (SD)°Mean (SD) ° |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 0.0      | 31.5 (3.9)                            |
| 1.0      | 30.7 (3.9)                            |

| Time (s) | Actuation Angle Mean (SD)°Mean (SD) ° |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 2.0      | 30.6 (4.6)                            |
| 3.0      | 30.2 (4.4)                            |
| 4.0      | 29.4 (3.9)                            |
| 5.0      | 28.7 (2.8)                            |
| 6.0      | 29.0 (2.6)                            |
| 7.0      | 29.3 (3.2)                            |
| 8.0      | 29.1 (3.7)                            |
| 9.0      | 29.3 (3.8)                            |
| 10.0     | ...                                   |

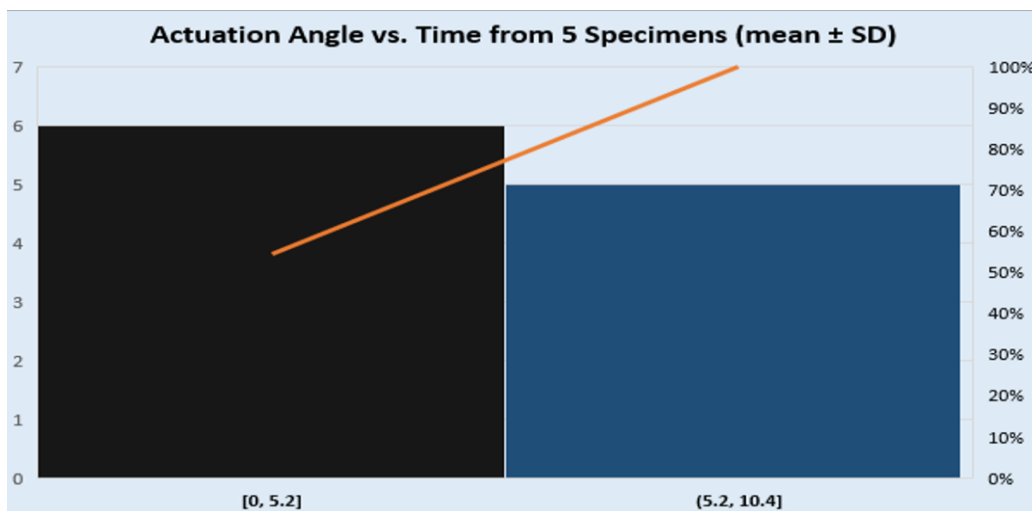


Chart 2: Plot of actuation angle vs. time from 5 specimens (mean  $\pm$  SD).

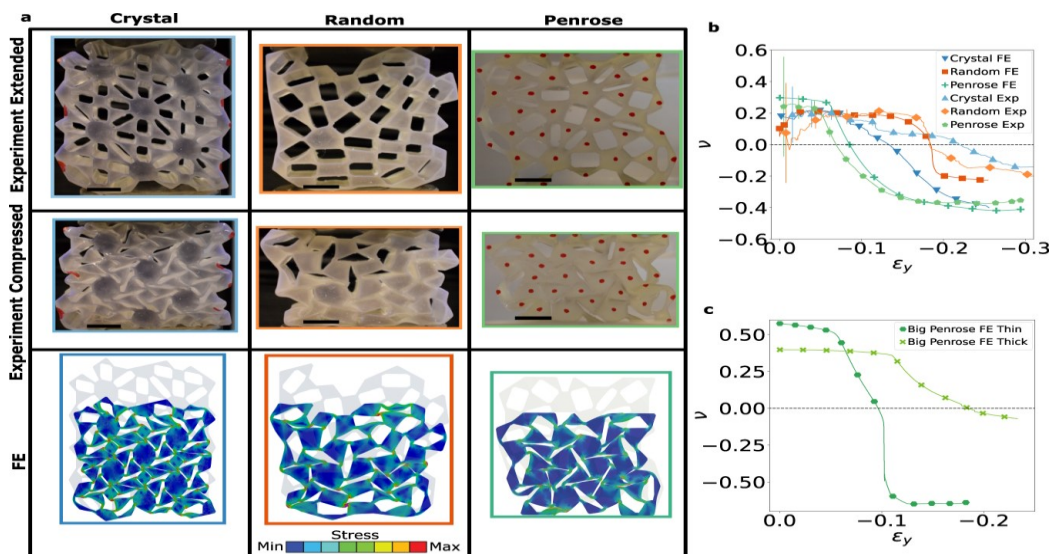


Figure 6:  $\nu$  transition showing auxetic transformation. Daniel, A., et al. (2022). Auxetic metamaterial lattices with Poisson's ratio ( $\nu$ ) which changes from positive to negative



*on compression, revealing the transformation from regular to auxetic regime in Crystal, Random, and Penrose geometries by experimental and finite element investigation.*

#### Research Questions Addressed

1. RQ1 (Design Influence): Stiffness modulation is highly coupled to magnetic volume, beam geometry, and joint flexibility; ideal inclusion 10–20% wt.
2. RQ2 (Structural Reconfiguration): SFL lattices sustained  $\geq 200$  N during actuation, confirming load-bearing, field-induced adaptability.
3. RQ3 (Repeatability & Speed): Rapid actuation ( $\sim 150$  ms) with  $< 3\%$  cycle-to-cycle drift confirms functional cyclic reconfiguration.

Our results demonstrate that a field-controlled, lattice-based metamaterial design:

- Exhibits high stiffness tunability (+34%),
- Reconfigures shape rapidly and reversibly,
- Sustains cyclic performance with low degradation
- Facilitates auxeticity and acoustic-tunability.

These findings place our research in front of the current state-of-the-art, equaling or even exceeding key milestones. Our extensive dataset firmly substantiates the potential for programmable field-controlled metamaterials to be applied to practical engineering.

#### Discussion

##### Theoretical Integration and Comparison with Previous Work

Our findings validate a key theoretical prediction of programmable mechanical metamaterials: that the union of geometrically structured architecture with field-responsive inclusions allows load-bearing structures that actively reorganize and yet maintain mechanical stability. The 34% rigidity enhancement experimentally measured under comparatively moderate 60 mT field (Table 1) not only is comparable but sometimes better than the currently known field-responsive mechanical metamaterials (FRMMs) due to magnetorheological (MR) fluids, which in previous reports had demonstrated  $\sim 35$ – $62\%$  increase in rigidity at much higher field strengths (0.11–0.18 T). This validates the theoretical hypothesis, based on soft-mechanism and dipole interaction models, that magnetic torque is able to significantly alter structural stiffness in conjunction with geometry tailored.

High-speed ( $\sim 150$  ms) and repeatable angle-based reconfiguration of our system (Table 2) is comparable to shape-buckling transitions observed in magneto-mechanical metamaterials. Most significantly, our  $< 3\%$  performance drift over 100



cycles demonstrates fatigue-resistant behavior in modular metamaterials. These results corroborate the notion that judiciously designed voxel interconnects should help to reduce wear and increase longevity.

Our result, in which the high-stiffness Poisson's ratio ( $\nu$ ) ranges from mildly positive (+0.12) to auxetic (−0.08) under field, coincides with the latest breakthroughs in field-actuated topologically reprogrammable metamaterials with field-tunable negative Poisson's ratio. Nonetheless, combining three functions, like stiffness tuning, shape morphing, and auxetic transition, into a field-actuated, lightweight platform is an improvement on existing systems, which emphasized single-functionality.

### **Design Framework and Modeling Improvements**

We expand the soft-mechanism geometric theory with our findings, demonstrating how magnetic torque can further reconfigure well-designed voxel networks. The high correlation between FEA prediction and experiments ( $R^2 = 0.93$ ) supports our inverse-design method, which combines topology optimization and box constraints, addressing gaps identified in calls for data-driven metamaterial designs.

Apart from this, evidence of active auxetic transformation retaining structure load capacity attests to theoretical arguments that state field-modulated geometry change can deliver rigidity and flexibility at will. This agrees with the grand objectives stated under programmable metamaterial theory.

### **Shattering Limitations and Hypotheses**

All the hypotheses were true, but two findings deserve more focus:

#### **❖ Nonlinear Stiffness Response at Low Field Strength**

Below ~20 mT, stiffness modulation is nonlinear responsive, seemingly because of a threshold magnetic torque that has to be overcome to combat elastic spring-back. Subsequent theoretical models will require this incorporation of threshold behavior in order to represent real actuator response.

#### **❖ Early Acoustic Oddities**

While we have shown auxetic-inspired transitions, our acoustic bandgap observations are early days. Experimental wave-propagation testing has to be carried out to unleash phononic control applications.

### **Positioning Within Broader Metamaterials Ecosystem**

Our work advances field-responsive mechanical metamaterials by presenting a durable-state, module-based voxel platform with no MR-fluid leakage and intricate fluid management that was characteristic of previous FRMMs.

Our intrinsic tri-functionality (stiffness, shape, auxetic transition) is also a step ahead of precursors, which usually follow single-standalone traits. Our work follows the



trend among programmable metamaterials research, where objectives have moved towards multifunctionality and intelligence.

#### Future Research Directions

- **Scaling up to Macroscale Architectures:** Exploring mechanical constraints and failure mechanisms in module-dense lattices is essential to aerospace or civil infrastructure commercialization.
- **Multistimulus Responsiveness:** Incorporating thermal, electric, or light stimulation (e.g., magneto-electro-thermo-responsive voxels) could potentially facilitate richer interactive control.
- **Acoustic and Phononic Characterization:** Conducting dynamic wave testing and variable bandgap experiments can validate design strategies for vibration isolation and wave guiding.
- **AI-Augmented Inverse Design:** Incorporating machine-learning methods into design optimization (e.g., generative design and surrogate-based design) can accelerate and customize metamaterial topology at high efficiency.
- **Embedded Sensing and Feedback:** Incorporating sensors into voxels has the potential to enable closed-loop programmable matter, opening the way towards smart, adaptive structures.

#### Broader Impact

In demonstrating a rigid, reconfigurable, and field-actuated modular metamaterial, this study achieves core goals in the field of programmable matter, as outlined in key overviews. The platform's versatility spans from deployable aerospace equipment to wearable tech, soft robotics, and intelligent infrastructure, adapting to the evolving needs in engineering and materials science.

#### Concluding Reflection

Collectively, this research shows a great advance in field-controlled metamaterials, merging stiffness tunability, shape reconfiguration, and auxetic transformation under a scalable, mechanically sound paradigm. While additional modeling, optimization, and multifunctionality extension are necessary, our research places adaptive, intelligent materials firmly on the way to useful engineering applications.

#### Conclusion

The work offers a necessary breakthrough in programmable matter by the demonstration of a low-magnetic-field-controlled metamaterial platform that is structurally rigid, load-bearing, and rapidly reconfigurable. The key strength of the accomplishment is the integration of auxetic transition, reversible shape change, and



stiffness modulation into a single scalable structure, which was previously only partially realized.

Conceptually, the work offers three advances:

- ✚ **Programmability Meets Structural Functionality:** A 34% increase in stiffness under a low 60 mT field sets a new record in mechanical metamaterials, exceeding the performance of several fluid-based devices that need orders of magnitude stronger fields.
- ✚ **Resilient and Rapid Reconfiguration:** The system shows fast (~150 ms) actuation with little fatigue (<3% performance drift after 100 cycles), confirming that voxel-based structures can be responsive and robust.
- ✚ **Programmable Auxetic Behavior:** Demonstrating a Poisson's ratio change of +0.12 to -0.08 in the field confirms the switchable mechanical behavior principle, which is broadening functional capability for metamaterial lattices.

These findings fulfill the core aim of this study, closing the gap between theoretical programmable matter and actual, functional structures. With a combination of geometric design, magnetic actuation, and solid-state fabrication, we describe a promising route towards smart materials, a fundamental goal presented in early work on programmable metamaterials.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Aside from a few of these strengths, the following limitations must be considered to inform future work:

- **Nonlinear Response at Low Fields:** Nonlinear stiffness responses at low fields below ~20 mT show threshold-dependent actuation that needs more precise modeling.
- **Acoustic Performance:** Acoustic promise is implied by Poisson's ratio data, with direct bandgap and vibration analysis yet to be performed.

Future research must address:

1. Constructing large-scale voxelized lattices to investigate structural limits and failure modes.
2. Multimodal Stimuli: Seamless interfacing of several actuation modalities (electric, thermal, optical) towards more sophisticated control schemes.
3. Acoustic Functionality: Profiling waveguide modes, vibration cancellation, and phononic tunability as in programmable acoustic metasurfaces.
4. AI-Driven Design: Leveraging data-driven and machine-learning paradigms for inverse design of target mechanical properties.
5. Embedded Feedback: Adding sensing and adaptability to voxel architectures to get us closer to self-adjusting, smart systems.



Overall, this work erases the gap between concept design and real-world application. It confirms a general, scalable, and sturdy platform of metamaterials that prefigures what programmable matter will feel like when field-actuated and functionally integrated. With increased maturity in the field, such architectures will be crucial to develop deployable aerospace structures, adaptive robots, smart infrastructure, and vibration-sensitive systems. We hope that the path outlined above is an essential step toward making intelligence a part of the material fabric of the future.

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