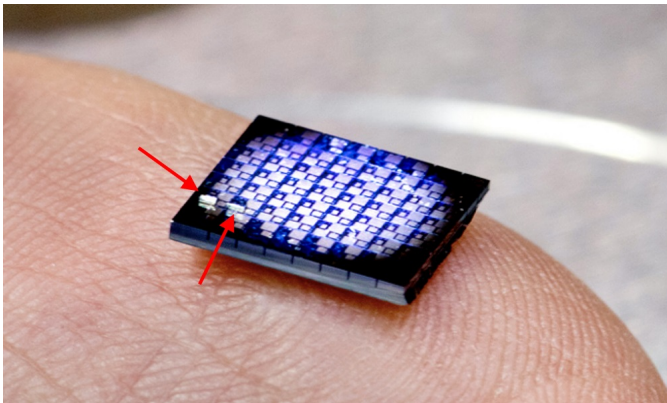


IBM Claims "World's Smallest Computer"

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The IBM Think 2018 conference is all about the latest from Big Blue, and one such project comes in a very small package-- a computer the size of a grain of rock salt packing the power of a 1990 x86 chip.



The extra-tiny (1 x 1mm!) computer is part of the "5 in 5," a collection of inventions and technologies IBM Research says "could change our lives in the next 5 years." It consists of a few hundred thousand transistors, an unspecified amount of RAM, a solar cell and an LED-based communications module. IBM adds it should be very cheap to produce, at around 10c apiece.

But what is the "world's smallest computer" good for? IBM slots it in the "crypto-anchor" program to create what is essentially a high-tech watermark for products. Since it is can "monitor, analyse, communicate and even act on data," the computer be embedded in individual objects and devices for tracking during shipping in order to detect theft, fraud and non-compliance.

IBM Research is still working on the tiny computer project, meaning it is not an actual product as yet. Also, Big Blue needs to further detail the device-- for instance, a 1990 x386 computer with 4MB RAM could run Doom. Can the tiny computer do likewise?

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