

Ferrofluid

Try It Out

Take out the magnet and tube. Move the magnet so that it's close to the dark fluid in the tube. What happens to the fluid? What if you move the magnet around?

What's going on?

A **ferrofluid** is a liquid that is attracted to the poles of a magnet. A process for making a ferrofluid was invented in 1963 by Steve Papell to create fuel to be used by NASA in a weightless environment.

What's the big deal?

Ferrofluid can be used to visualize music, which is just plain cool looking. But it does more than look cool. Ferrofluid has been used in a number of different applications over the years. Liquid seals to protect hard drives, lubricants in magnetic machines, and heat sinks in loudspeakers are just some of the things this interesting substance has been used for. In the future, they may even be able to harvest energy from the environment. Now *that's* cool!



*An example of a speaker that uses ferrofluid to visualize music.
(Image: Van der Waals)*

Wonder While You Walk...

Many new technologies these days are just a new combination of older technologies. Common substances, like magnets, put together in new ways to solve a problem. What are some other new technologies like this?



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