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The University of Texas at Austin
presents**



A Homemade Edison Tinfoil Phonograph

**** Watch the Demonstration Video ****

Andrew McNeese, Jason Sagers and Preston Wilson of ARL:UT's Environmental Sciences Laboratory (ESL), along with Richard Lenhart from the university's Mechanical Engineering Department have recreated an influential device from our past - Thomas Edison's tinfoil phonograph.

Originally created in 1877, Edison's device allows simple recording and reproduction of sound using a stylus to etch a copy of the acoustic wave produced by the source onto a rotating, foil-covered cylinder. The "signal" is then played back using a second stylus attached to a transmitting diaphragm. The capability to reproduce sound put Edison's phonograph at the forefront of recording technology during his time. The Acoustical Society of America recognized Edison's contribution by awarding him their first honorary membership in 1929.

Edison's tinfoil phonograph continues to inspire curiosity just as the original phonograph did over a hundred years ago. In response, researchers have provided numerous demonstrations of the device recording and playing back Edison's original test - "Mary had a Little Lamb." In addition to the inherent learning opportunities presented, research on the science behind the phonograph and analysis of the device's acousto-mechanical behavior is underway.