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Bacterial batteries

By **Birmingham Science News Examiner**, Paul Hamaker
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Professor Derek Lovley from the University of Massachusetts has isolated a strain of *Geobacter sulfurreducens* that is called KN400.

KN400 can generate enough electricity to make a microbial fuel cell practical. Potential uses are electric production in remote areas, conversion of waste to electricity, and longer battery life in harsh environments.

KN400 greatly increases the power output of batteries and electric cells. More electron flow per unit area is the reason.

Bacteria with large numbers of tiny projections called pili transfer electrons more efficiently. In the presence of an anode KN400 formed a thick biofilm that contained the protein pilin that is part of the pili.

The discovery was reported at the Society for General Microbiology's meeting at Heriot-Watt



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