

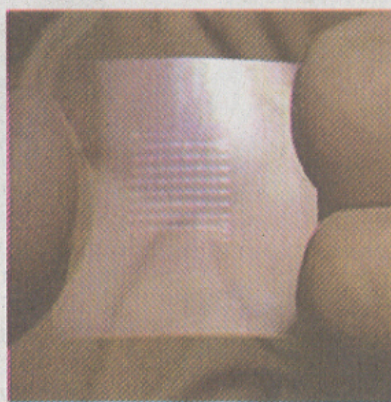
A massive asteroid heading for Earth has a 1-in-300 chance of smashing into the planet in 2029, according to researchers. The space rock is believed to be more than 1,300ft long and was only rediscovered recently by astronomers who first spotted it in June. However, the threat is likely to be eliminated once astronomers work out its orbit. "In the unlikely event that it did hit, it would be quite serious. We're talking either a Tsunami if it hit in the ocean, which would be likely, or significant ground damage," said NASA chief Donald Yeomans.

Asteroid Could Hit the Earth by 2029



Transparent Transistors to make Gizmos Cheap

RESearchers at Oregon State University and Hewlett Packard have reported their first example of an entirely new class of materials, which could be used to make transparent transistors that are inexpensive, stable and environmentally benign. The new transistors are not only transparent but they work extremely well and could have other advantages that will help them transcend carbon-based transistor materials, such as organic and polymers, that have been the focus of hundreds of millions of dollars of research around the world. "Compared to organic or polymer transistor materials, these new inor-



Transparent transistors on a sheet of plastic can be seen only at certain angles. Such circuitry could find its way into computer displays in car windshields and other curved surfaces.

ganic oxides have higher mobility, better chemical stability, ease of manufacture and are physically more robust," said John Wager, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at OSU. The newest devices are amorphous, meaning they have no long-range crystalline order, which helps to keep processing costs a great deal lower. They are also physically robust - hard to scratch, chemically stable, resist etching, and have a very smooth surface. They are made from low cost, readily available elements such as zinc and tin, which raise no environmental concerns.

Mobile Porn Under Control

CHILDREN Down Under may have to look elsewhere if they want to have access to porn or any other kind of sleaze on the mobile. They will now be required to first show a photographed identification and give a request access in writing. The Australian Communications Authority has drafted a bill according to which MA or R content will be limited to phone numbers prefixed with 195 and 196 and available only to users aged over 18. The authority has said that 16 companies, including Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and Legion Interactive, have already reserved adult numbers and these services cannot be activated until regulation of the area is formalised next year. Mobile-phone companies will also be required to hire moderators who have undergone a police check and have been trained to spot paedophiles attempting to groom children in unrestricted mobile chat rooms. "We have seen the dangers of using chatrooms on the Internet and we feel the risk will be carried over to the mobile world. The computer at least is in a public space and gives parents a chance to supervise. The mobile is a personal device, so the risk is higher," said Vince Humphries, the authority's manager of mobile content and credit management.

