

Practical Physics

“It’s not that it breaks the laws of physics,” the engineer explained. She waved one hand helplessly at the alien technology. “It’s that it follows a *completely different* set of laws.”

“Shirley, that doesn’t make any sense,” the Senator replied. “If this thing wasn’t subject to physics, it couldn’t exist.”

“Well, *some* laws are identical,” Shirley admitted. “The basic ones. But we puzzled out the instruction manuals. They all assume a self-consistent, but impossible, general physical theory. Worse, the device *works*.”

“Are we wrong?”

“No, Senator. Their manuals say things we can do are impossible.”

“...Can we duplicate the effects?”

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