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NEWS

HOMOGENEOUS SUPERCONDUCTING FILMS MADE AT WESTINGHOUSE

Scientists have discovered a way to make films of oxide materials that are uniformly superconducting right to their surface layers—a property vital to the development of practical electronic devices using the new “warm” ceramic superconductors. Oxide superconductors have become notorious for their tendency to degrade at any surface exposed to the atmosphere, making it difficult to connect them to insulators. The Josephson junction is a basic building block of circuitry in superconductor electronics as the transistor is in semiconductor electronics.

To make yttrium-barium-copper oxide (YBCO) thin films homogeneous to their surfaces, the Wes-

tinghouse researchers devised a way of processing the films without exposing them to the atmosphere.

“The major significance of this work is that we now know we can create a well defined interface between superconducting YBCO and an insulator. This has been for some time a critical hurdle in efforts to develop a Josephson device with the oxide materials and the industry has now finally overcome this hurdle.”

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