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# Machine Learning-Accelerated Molecular Design of Innovative Polymers: Shifting from Thomas Edison to Iron Man

*Future Composites Symposium*

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*Polymer Digital Engineering Lab: [pdelab.engr.wisc.edu](http://pdelab.engr.wisc.edu)*

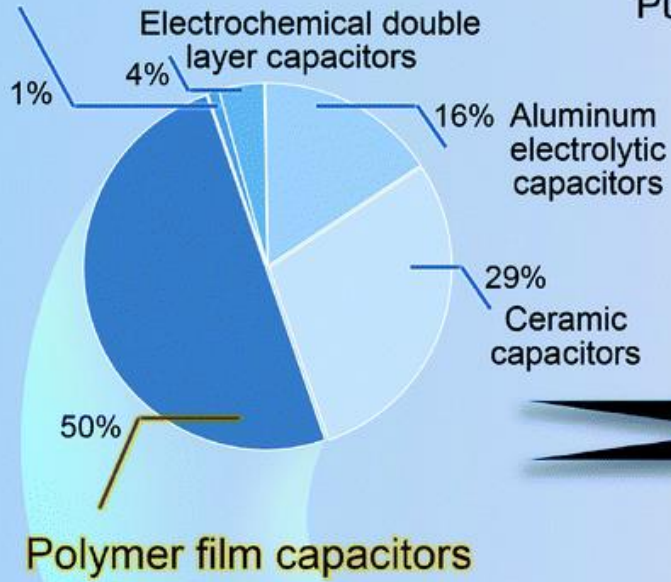
**Acknowledgment:** Air Force's Young Investigator Research Program (FA9550-20-1-0183; Program Manager: Capt Derek Barbee), Air Force Research Laboratory/UES Inc. (FA8650-20-S-5008, PICASSO program), and the National Science Foundation (CMMI-2314424, CMMI-2316200, CMMI-2332276 and CAREER-2323108).

Co-Sponsors:

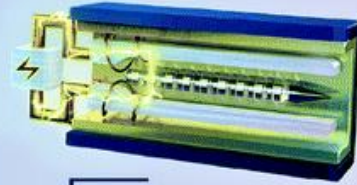


# Dielectric polymers for capacitive energy storage

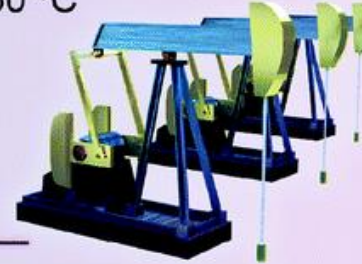
Tantalum capacitors



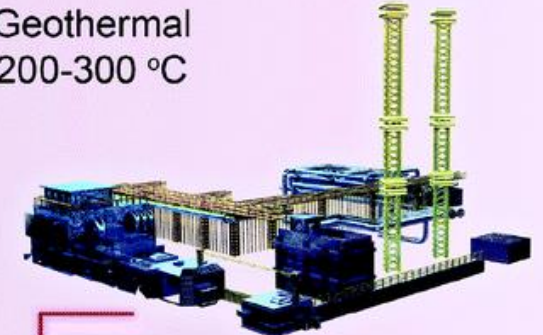
Pulsed power system  
120-180 °C



Oil & gas exploration  
170-250 °C



Geothermal  
200-300 °C



TEMPERATURE

Automobile  
140-150 °C



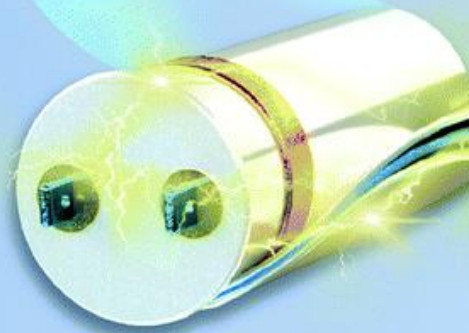
Electrified aircraft  
180-300 °C



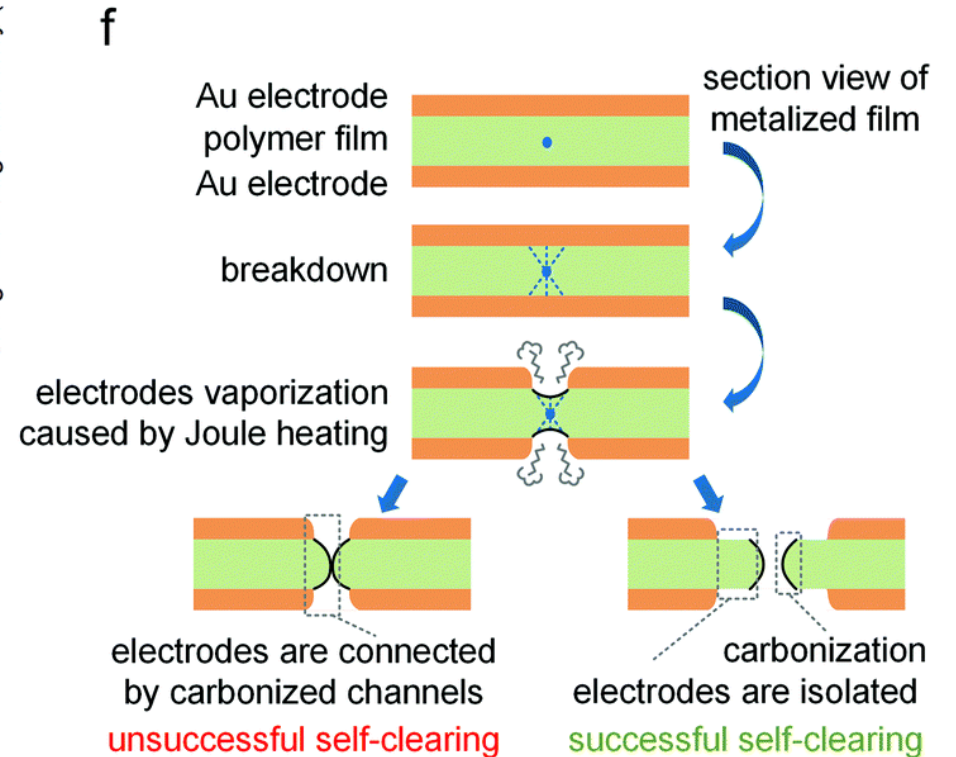
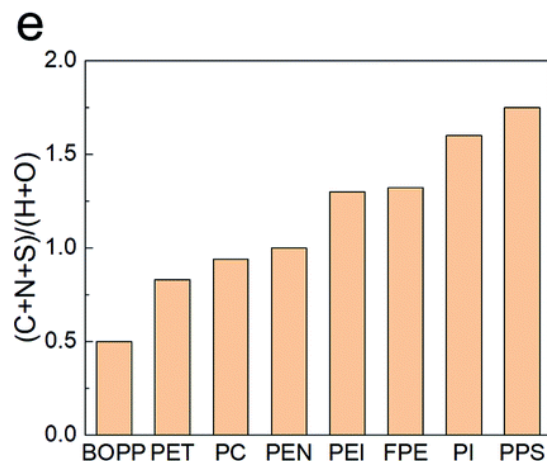
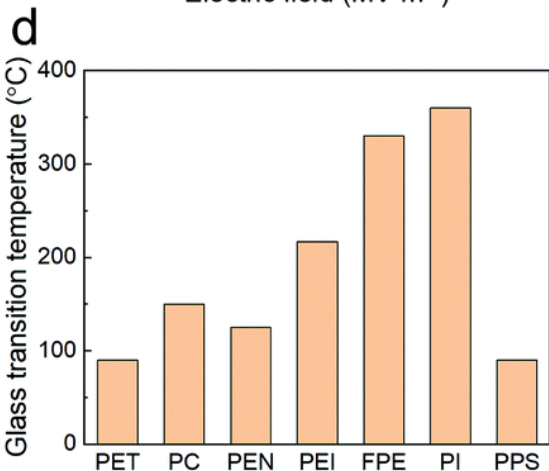
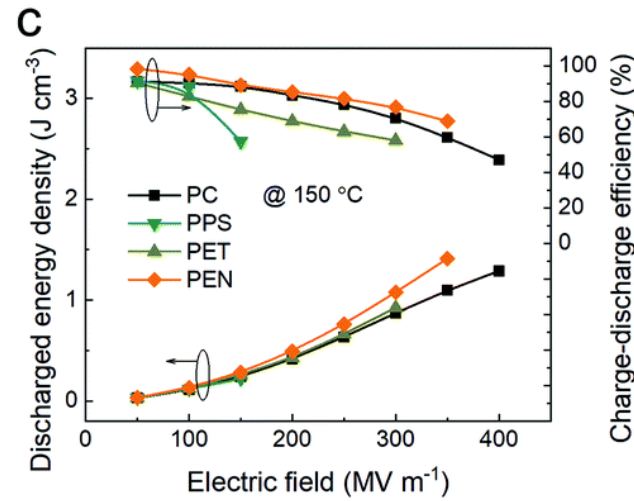
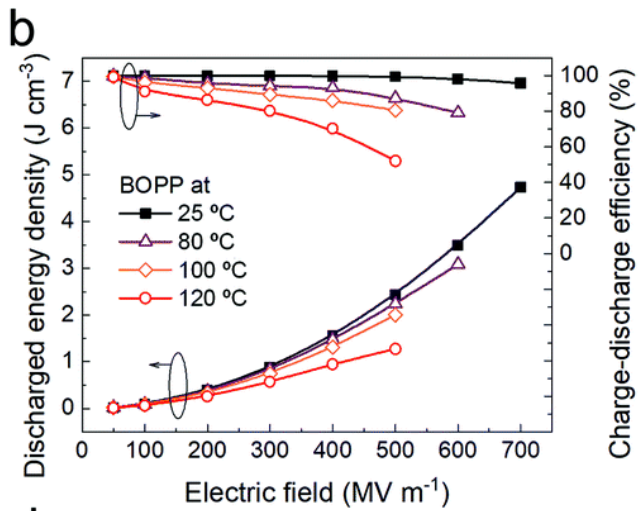
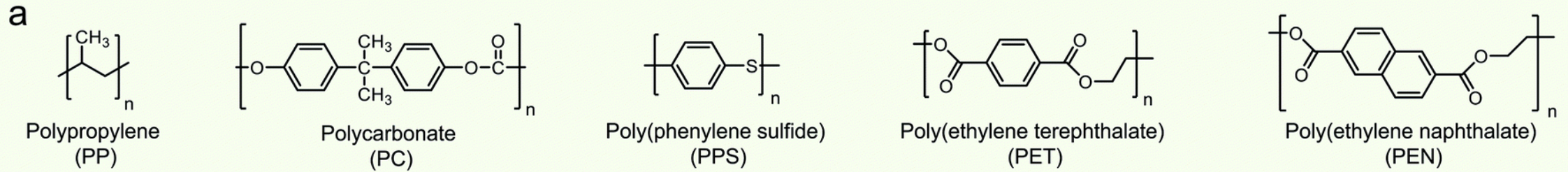
Electrode

Polymer film

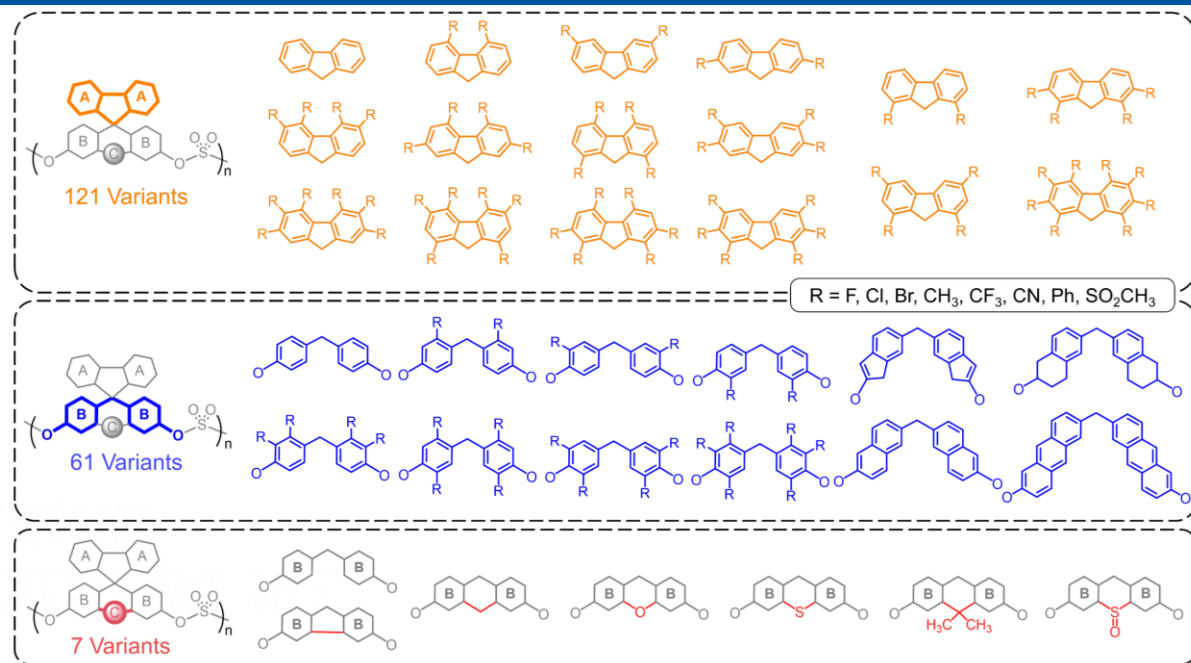
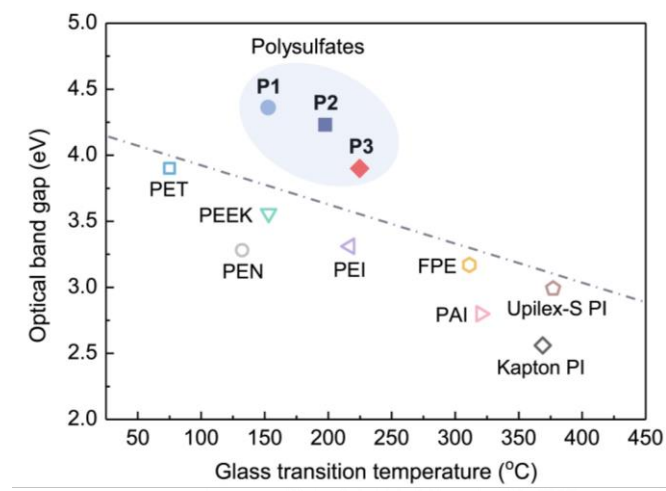
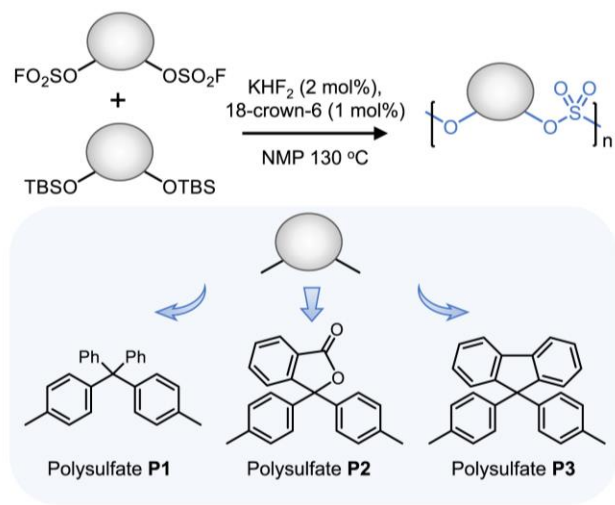
Electrode



# Dielectric polymers for capacitive energy storage

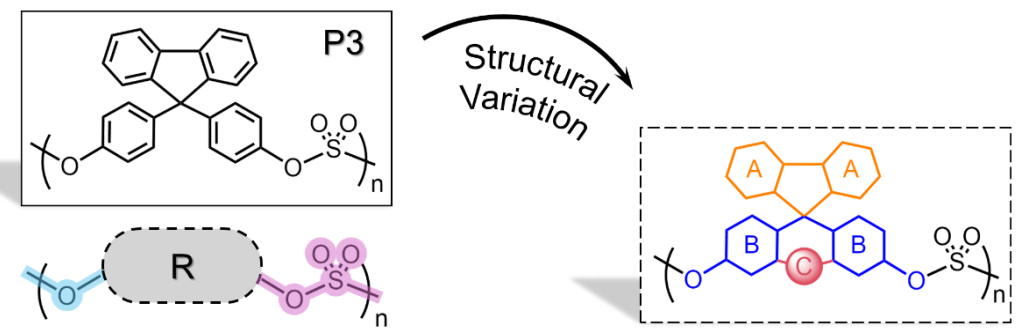


# Building block assembly of heat-resistant polysulfates



Li, He, et al. "High-performing polysulfate dielectrics for electrostatic energy storage under harsh conditions." *Joule* 7.1 (2023): 95-111..

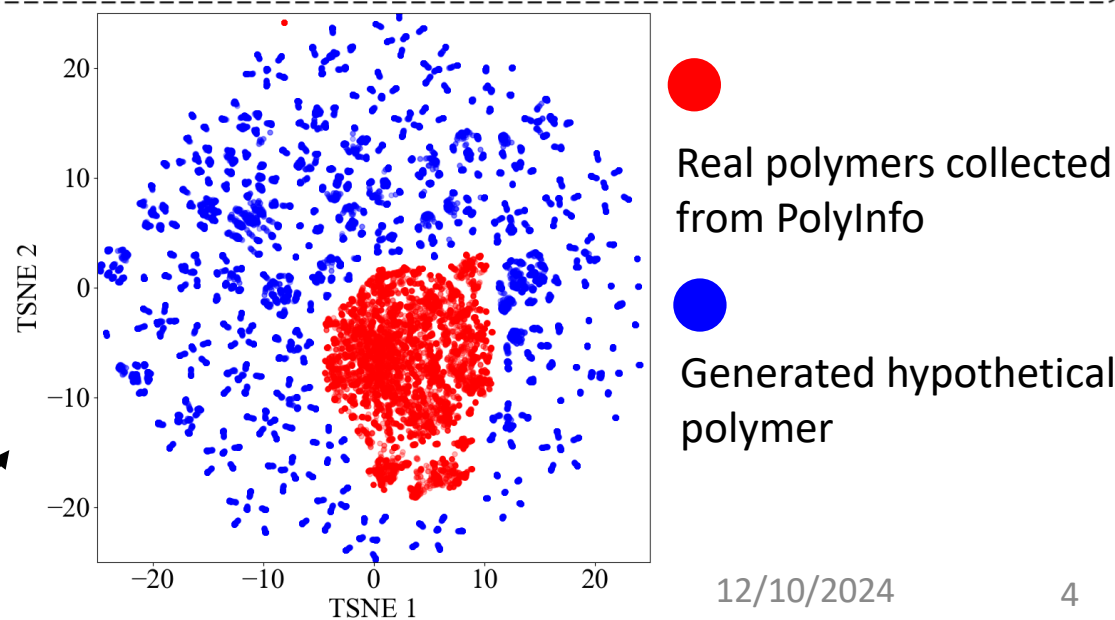
**Inspired**



**Generation**

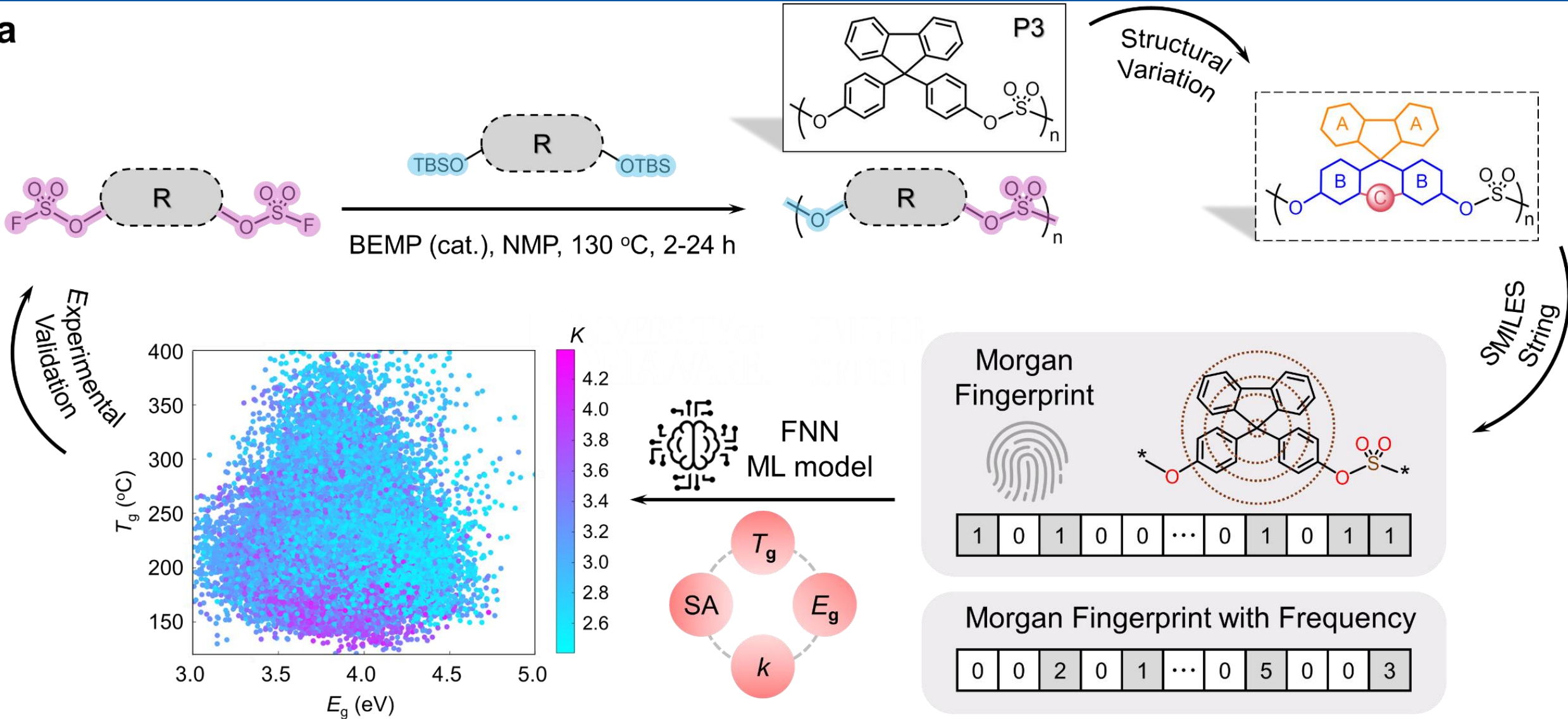
**49,731 hypothetical polymer structures**

**Chemical space**



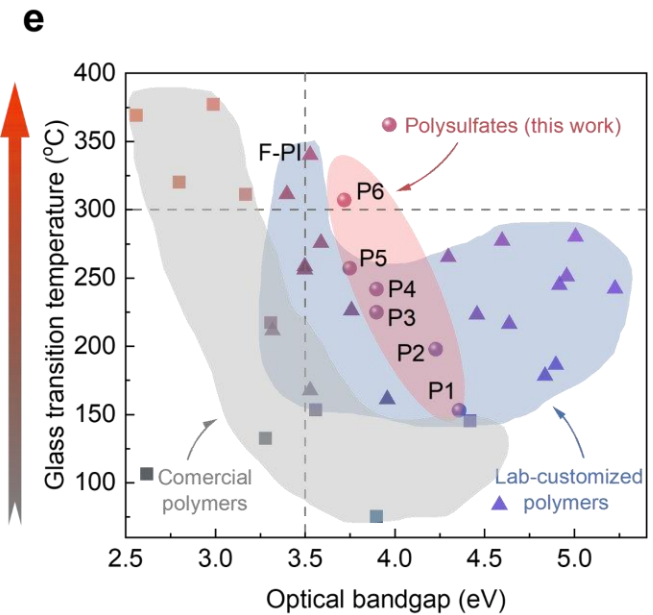
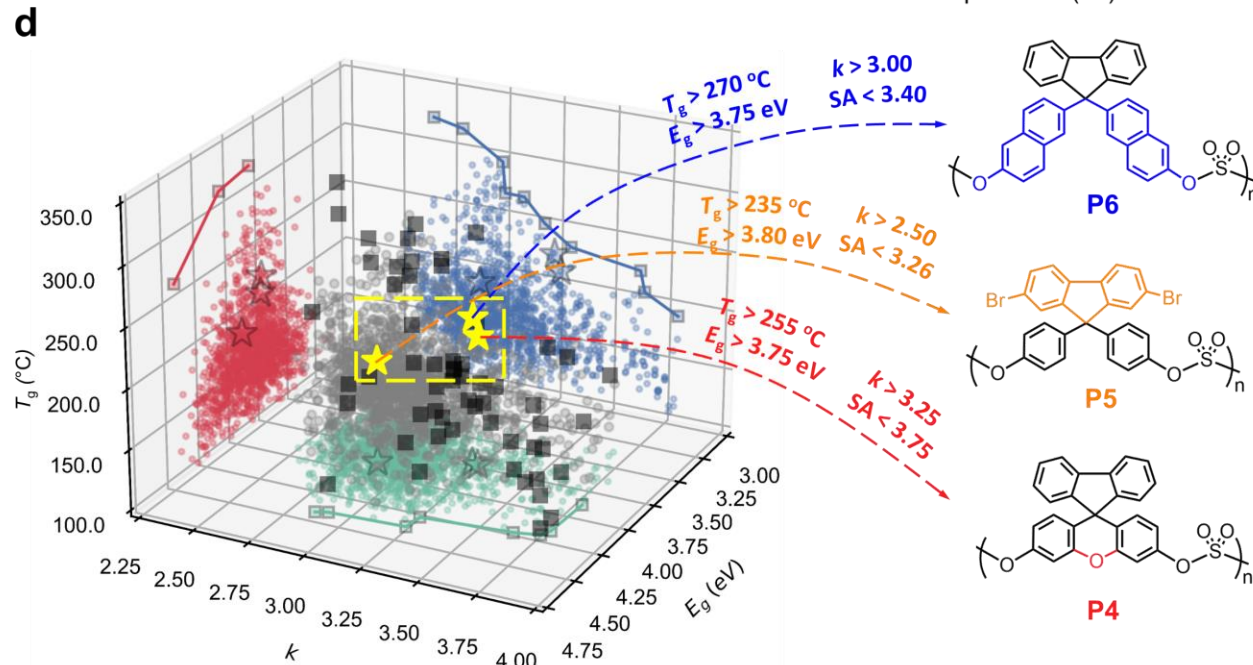
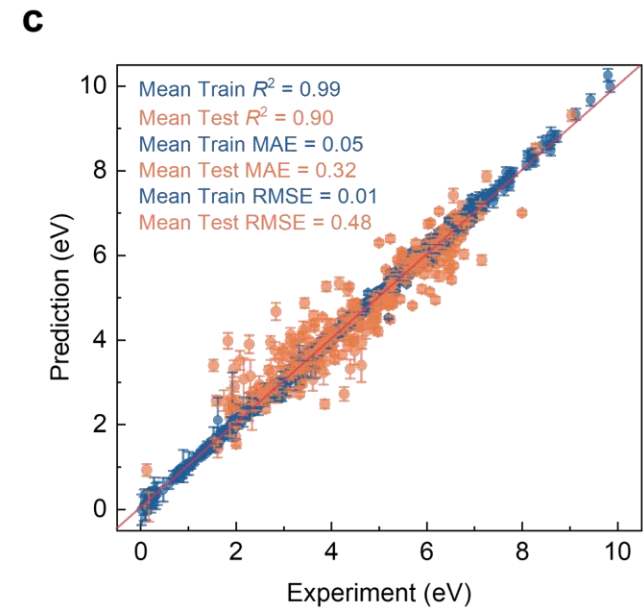
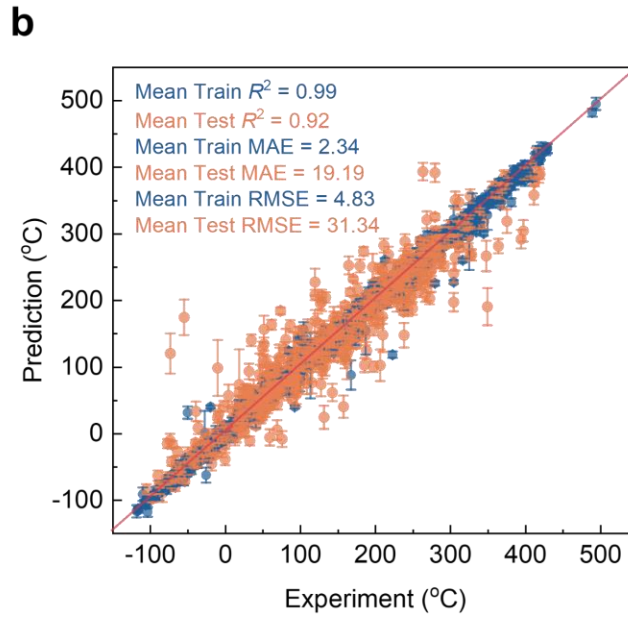
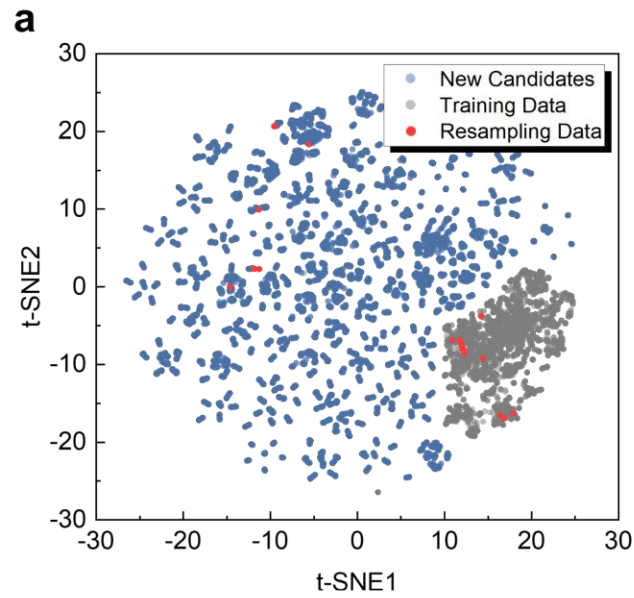
# Discovery workflow integrating both ML and Exp

a

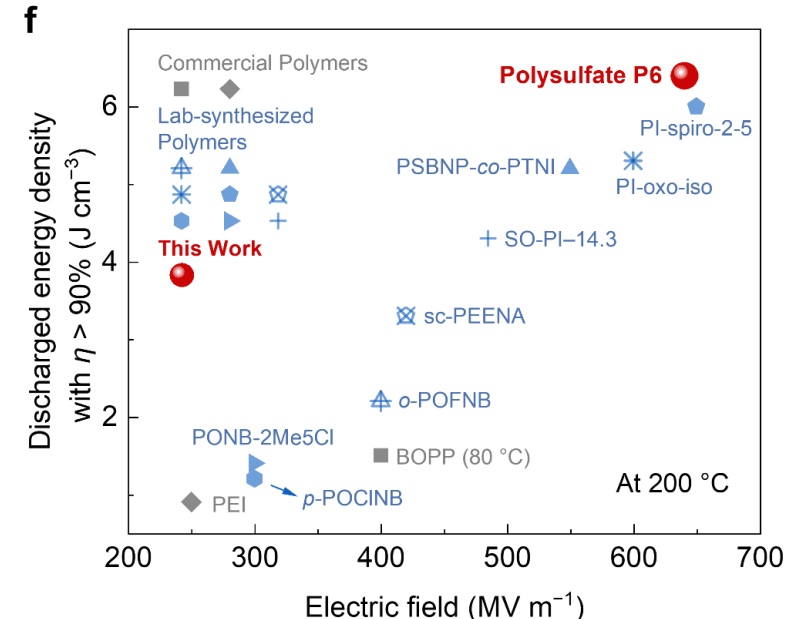
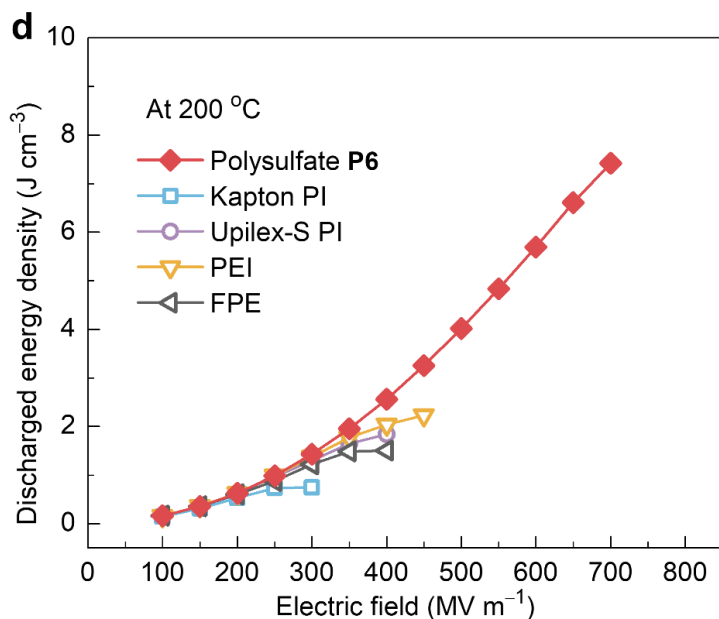
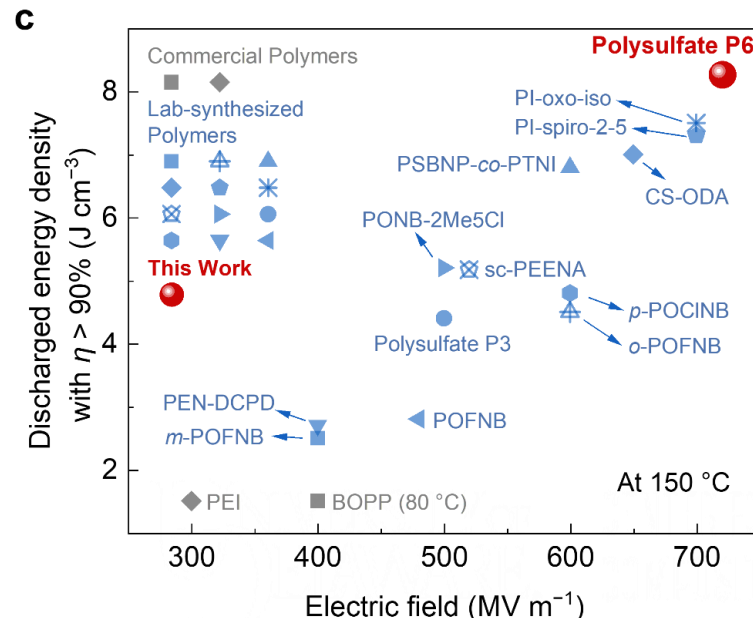
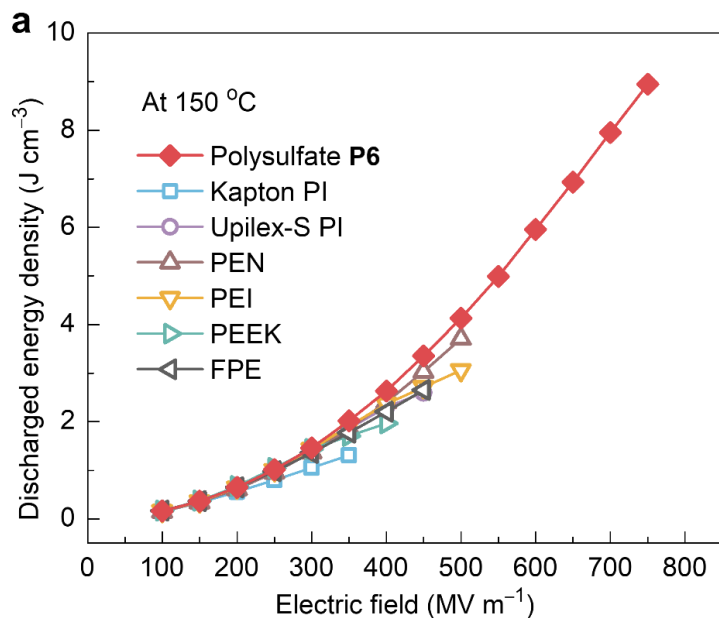


He Li, Hongbo Zheng, Tianle Yue, Zongliang Xie, Shaopeng Yu, Ji Zhou, Topprasad Kapri, Yunfei Wang, Zhiqiang Cao, Haoyu Zhao, Aidar Kemelbay, Jinlong He, Ge Zhang, Priscilla Pieters, Eric Dailing, John Cappiello, Miquel Salmeron, Xiaodan Gu, Ting Xu, Peng Wu, Ying Li†, Karl Sharpless, and Yi Liu. (2024) *Nature Energy*. Accepted.

# Predictions on thermal and electronic parameters



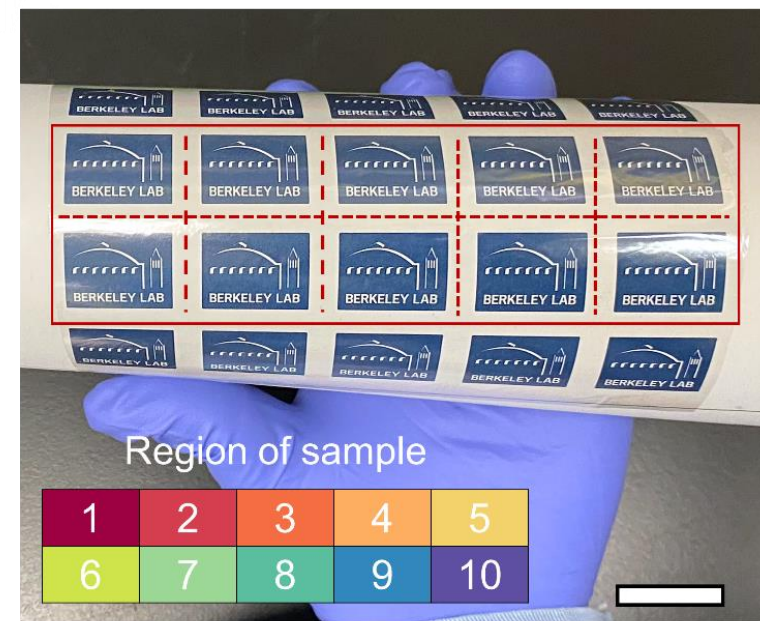
# Electrostatic energy storage and reliability



Karl Barry Sharpless  
Scripps Research

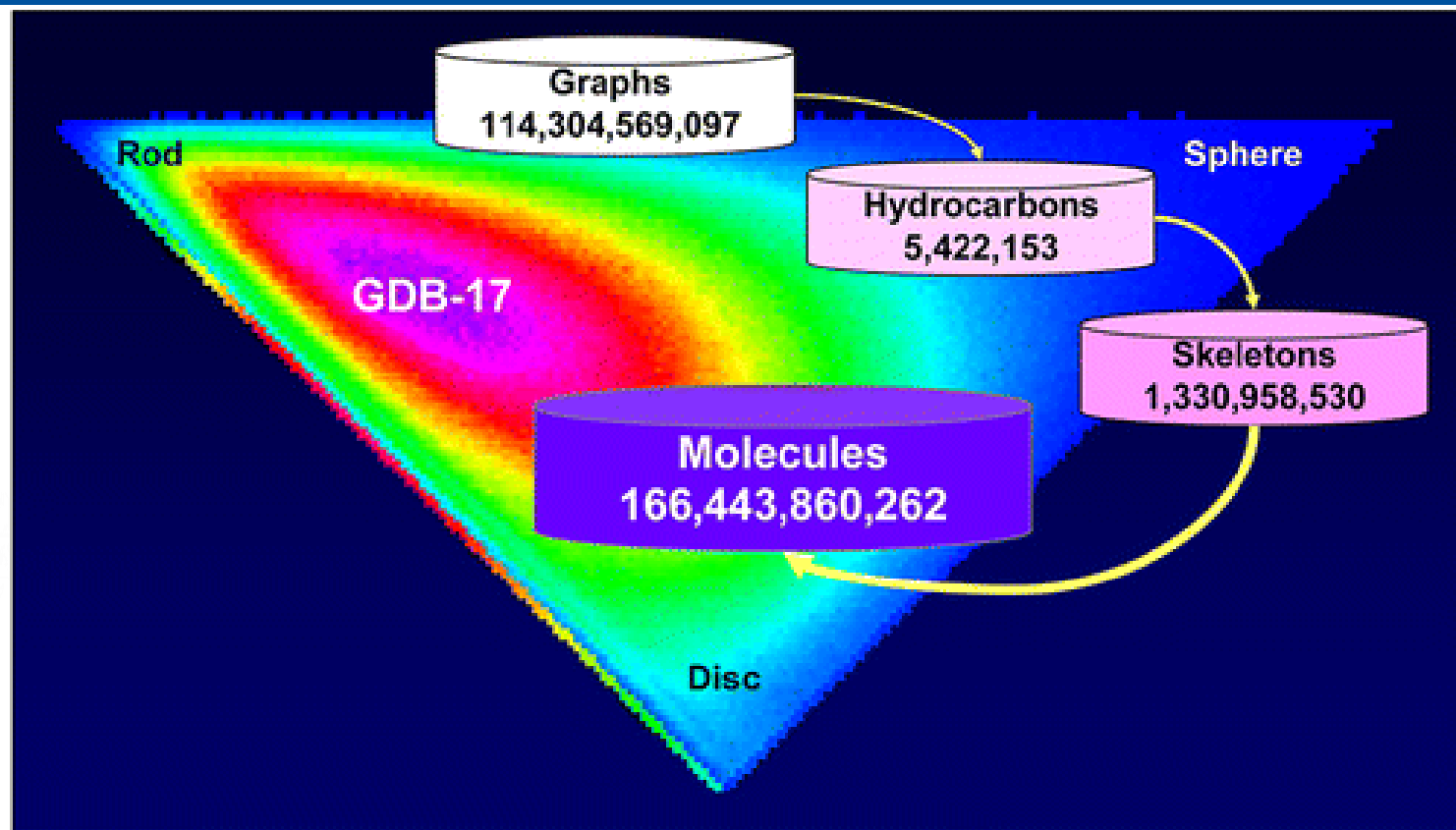


Yi Liu, Lawrence Berkeley  
National Lab



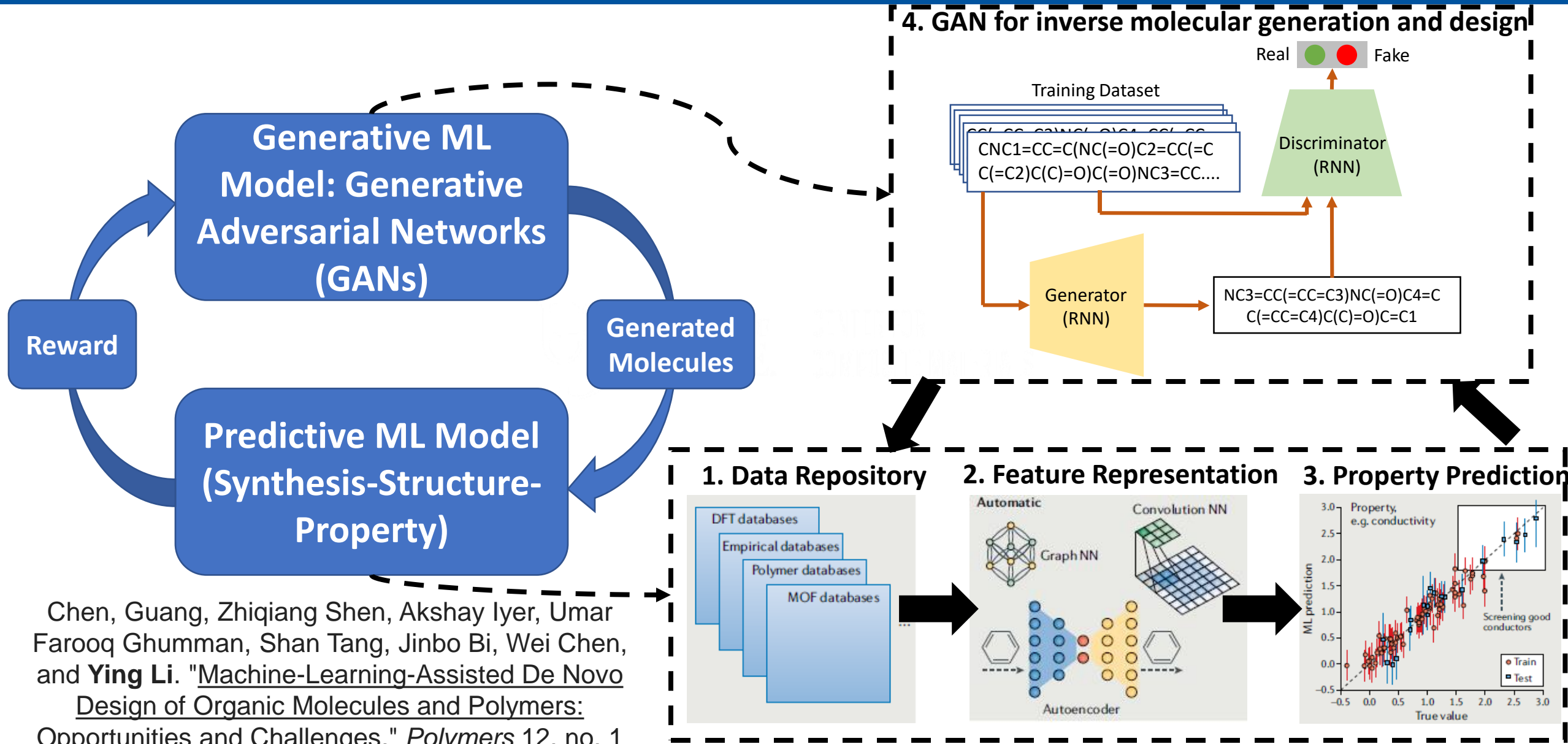
Roll of the polysulfate P6 film 12/10/2024

## LEGO building blocks



For example, GDB-17 database enumerates small organic molecules up to 17 atoms of C, N, O, S, and halogens following all possible chemical structures, resulting in **>166.4 billion** molecule designs. [J. Chem. Inf. Model. 2012, 52, 11, 2864-2875]





Chen, Guang, Zhiqiang Shen, Akshay Iyer, Umar Farooq Ghumman, Shan Tang, Jinbo Bi, Wei Chen, and **Ying Li**. "Machine-Learning-Assisted De Novo Design of Organic Molecules and Polymers: Opportunities and Challenges." *Polymers* 12, no. 1 (2020): 163.

# Step 1 Data Repository and Chemical Space

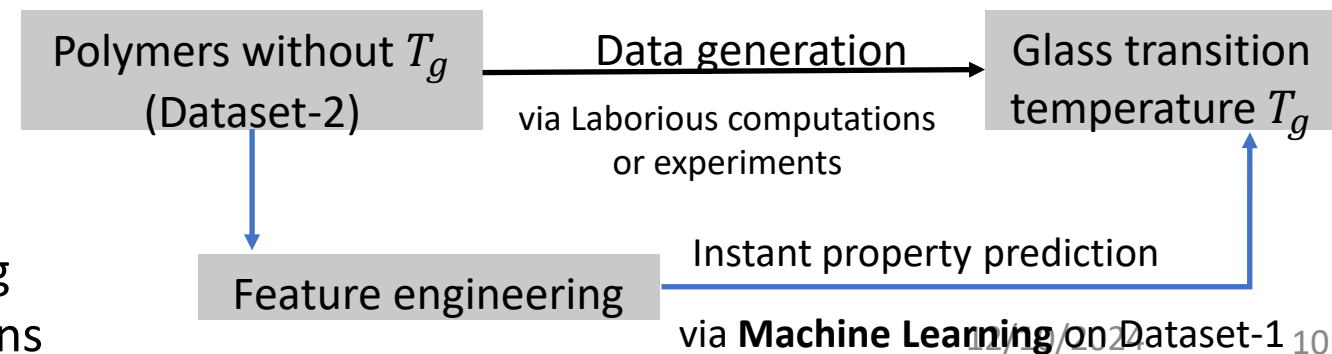
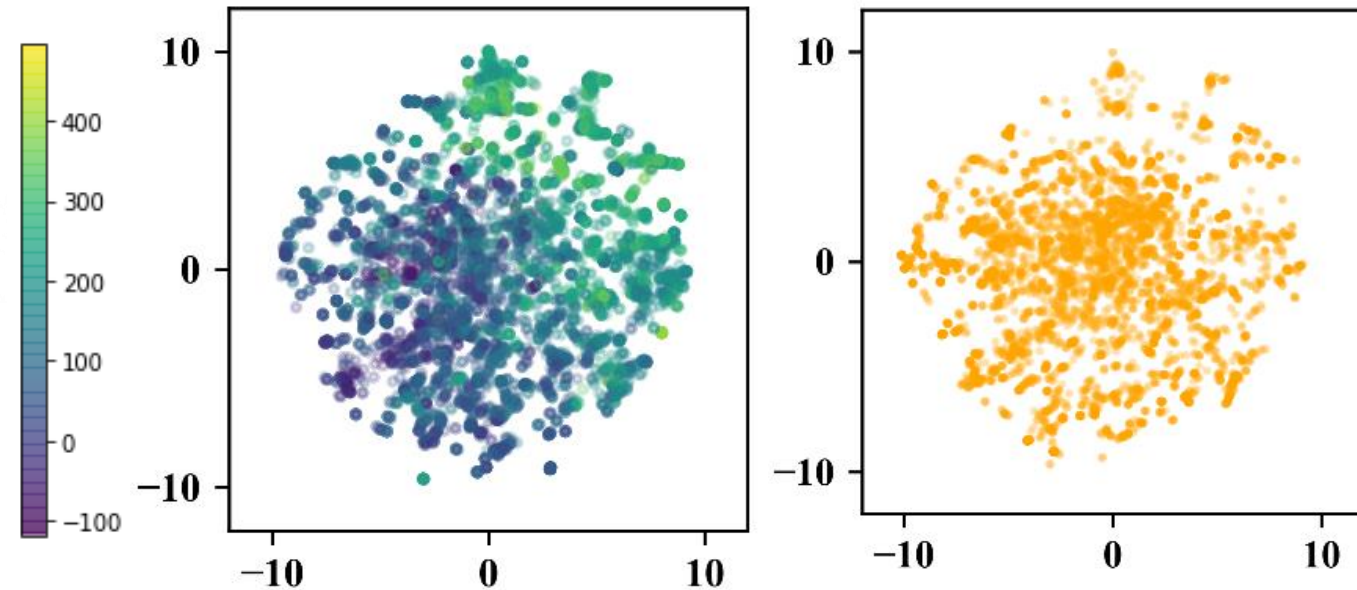
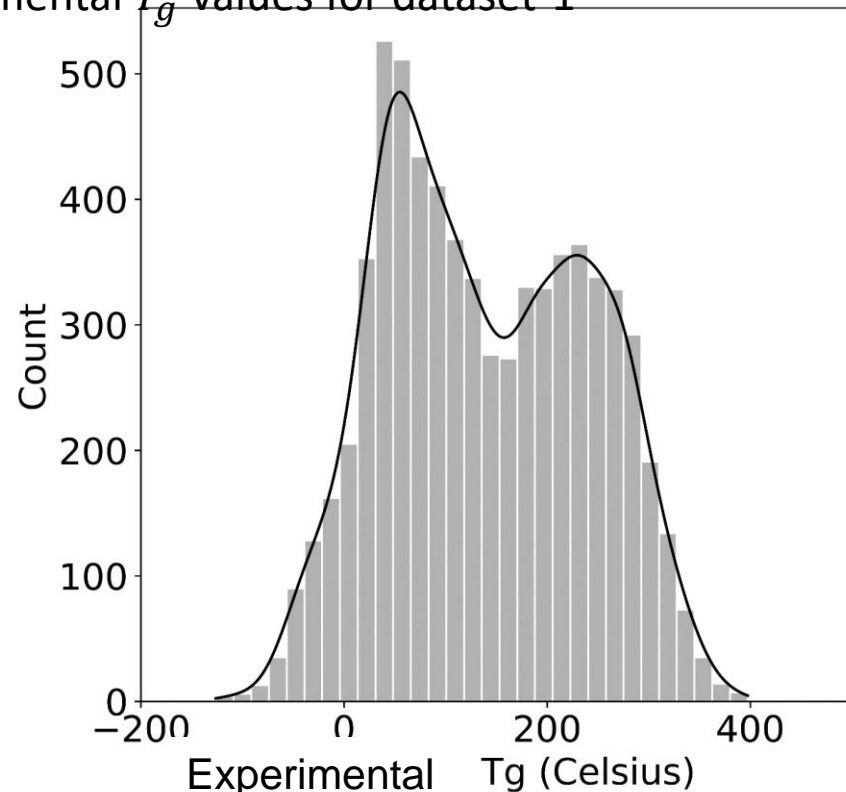
Dataset	Number of Polymers	$T_g$ (°C)	Source
Dataset-1	6923	-118~495	Real polymers from PolyInfo
Dataset-2	5690	Unknown	Real polymers from PolyInfo

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)  
t-distributed stochastic neighbor embedding (t-SNE)

Dataset-1  
6,923 polymers (w/  $T_g$ )

Dataset-2  
5,690 polymers (w/o  $T_g$ )

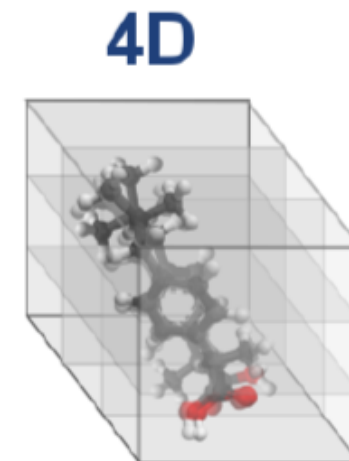
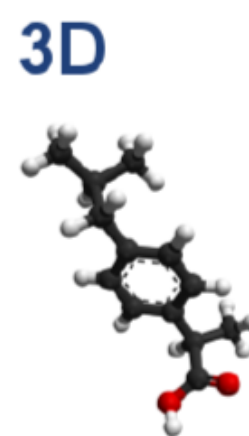
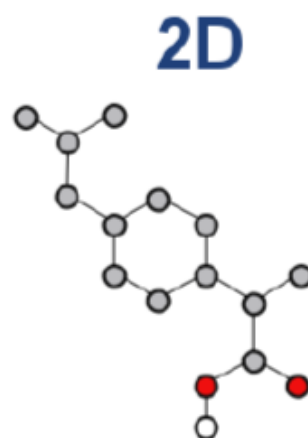
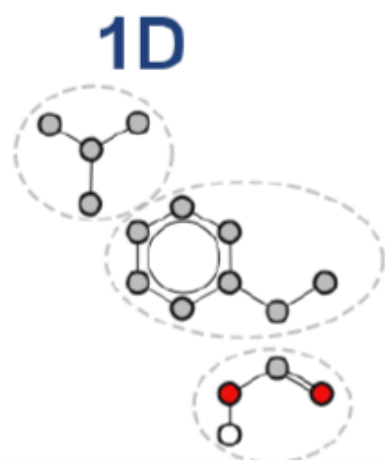
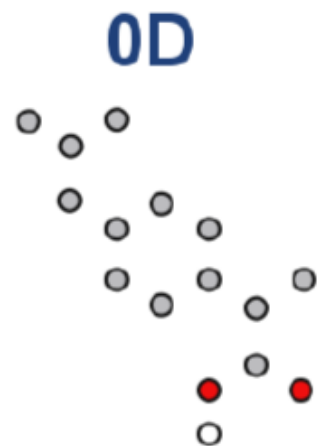
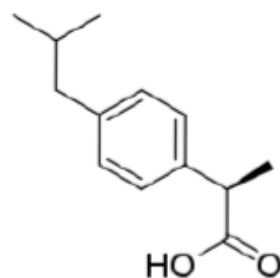
Experimental  $T_g$  values for dataset-1



Lei Tao, Guang Chen, **Ying Li**, 2021, "Machine Learning Discovery of High-Temperature Polymers", Cell/Patterns



- Lasso (least absolute shrinkage and selection operator)
- Support Vector Machine
- Decision Tree
- Random forest
- Artificial neural network



- Atom counts
- Molecular weight
- Atomic properties

- Fragment counts
- Fragment presence

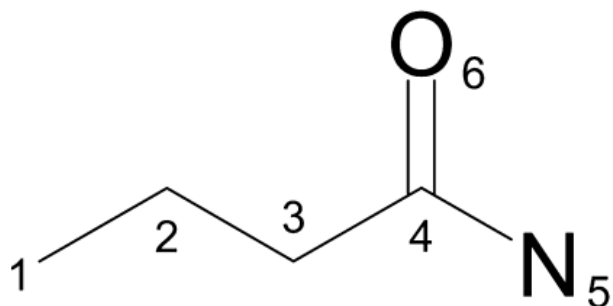
- Topo-structural
- Topo-chemical

- Geometrical
- Atomic coordinates

- Grid-based
- Ensemble-based

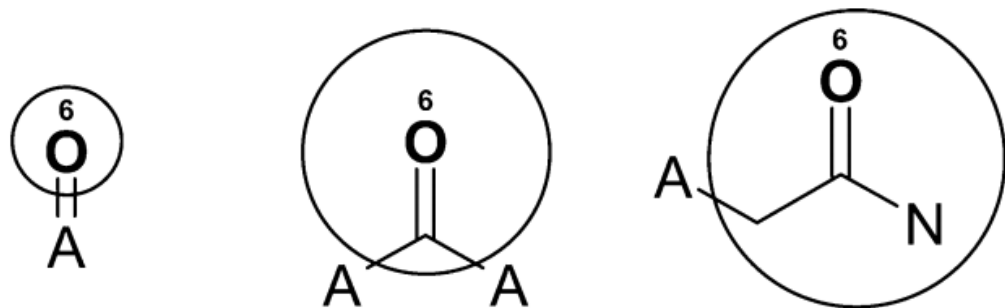
# Extended Connectivity FingerPrinting (ECFP)

## 1. Assign each atom with an identifier



1: 734603939  
2: 1559650422  
3: 1559650422  
4: -1100000244  
5: 1572579716  
6: -1074141656

## 2. Update the identifiers of each atom, iteratively



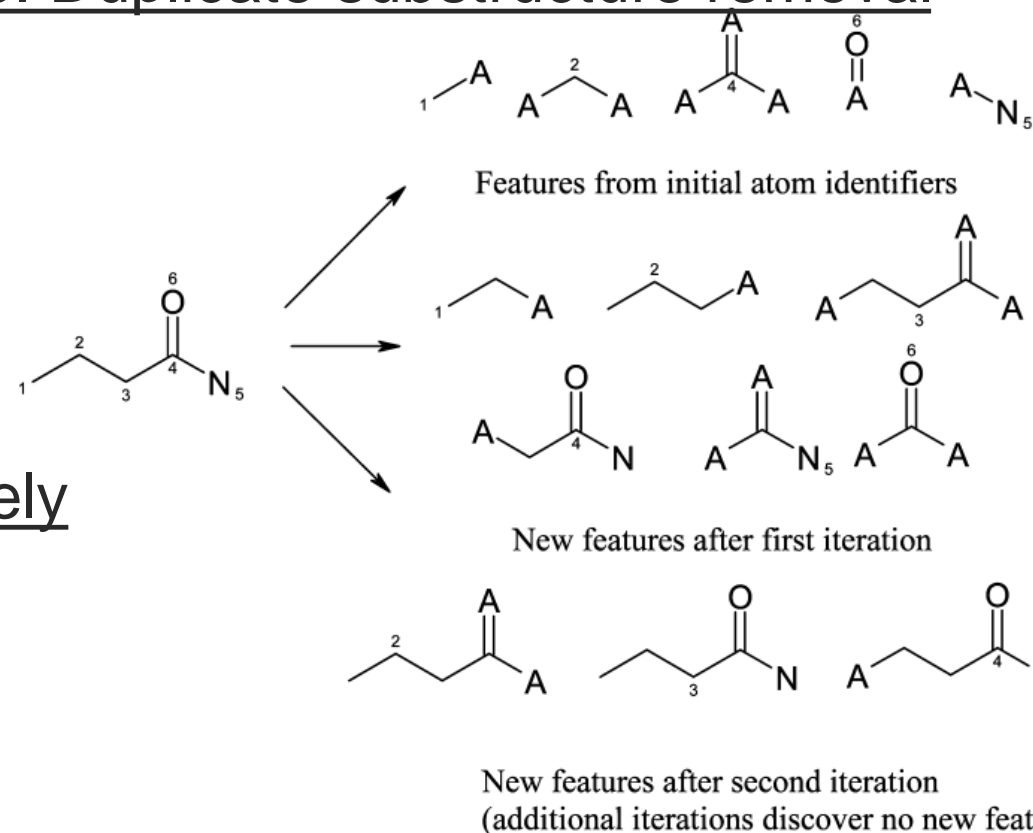
Iteration 0

Iteration 1

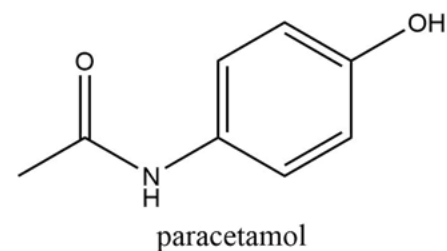
Iteration 2

Rogers, David, and Mathew Hahn. "Extended-connectivity fingerprints." *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* 50, no. 5 (2010): 742-754.

## 3. Duplicate substructure removal



## 4. Fold list of identifiers into a 2048-bit vector



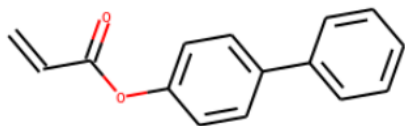
Morgan Fingerprint



(0,0,1,0,1,0,0,...,0,1,0,0)

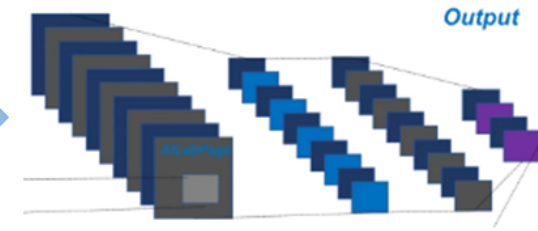
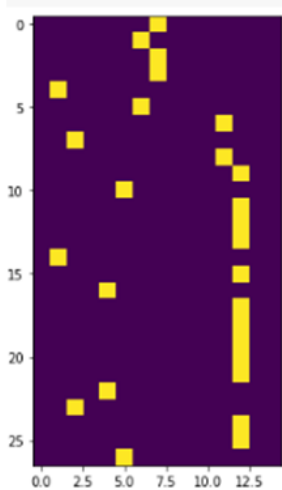
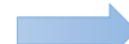
# Using Image to represent the polymers

Poly(4-biphenyl acrylate)



```

c n o C N F = O ( ) 1 2 ...
C 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 ..
= 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 ..
C 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 ..
C 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 ..
( 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 ..
= 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 ..
O 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 ..
) 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 ..
O 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 ..
C 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 ..
.
    
```



C=CC(=O)Oc2ccc(c1ccccc1)cc2

SMILES Code

One-Hot Encoding

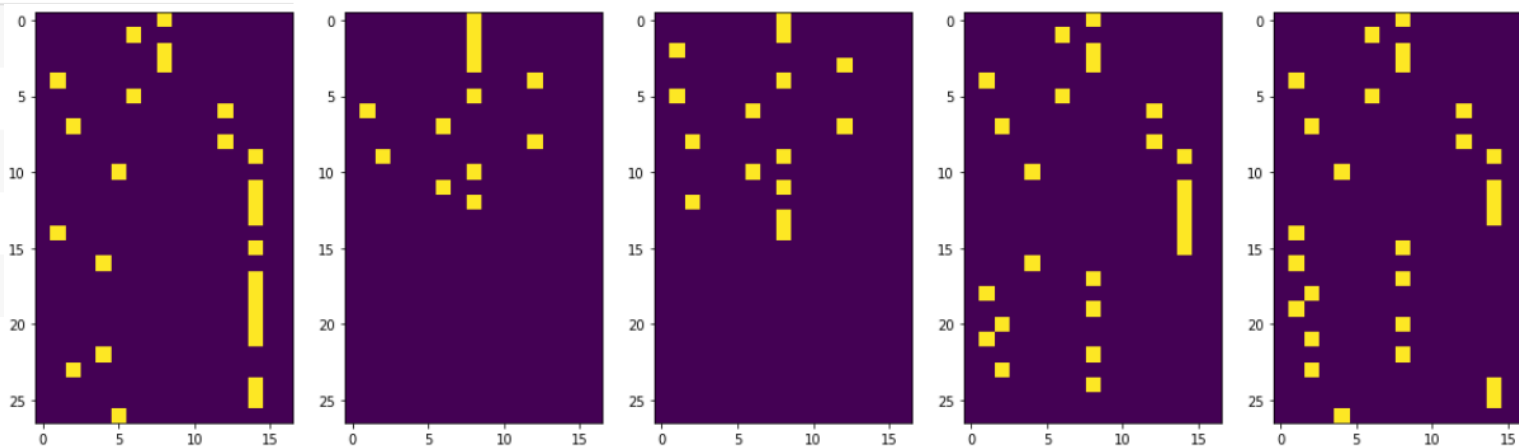
Encoded Image

Convolution

Pooling and Fully Connected Layers

	Nomenclature Name	Molecular Structure	Tg	Class_of_Polymer
0	Poly(4-biphenyl acrylate)	<chem>C=CC(=O)Oc2ccc(c1ccccc1)cc2</chem>	383.0	
1	Poly(butyl acrylate)	<chem>CCCCOC(=O)C=C</chem>	219.0	
2	Poly(sec-butyl acrylate)	<chem>CC(OC(=O)C=C)CC</chem>	250.0	
3	Poly(2-tertbutylphenyl acrylate)	<chem>C=CC(=O)Oc1ccccc1C(C)(C)C</chem>	345.0	
4	Poly(4-tertbutylphenyl acrylate)	<chem>C=CC(=O)Oc1ccc(C(C)(C)C)cc1</chem>	344.0	

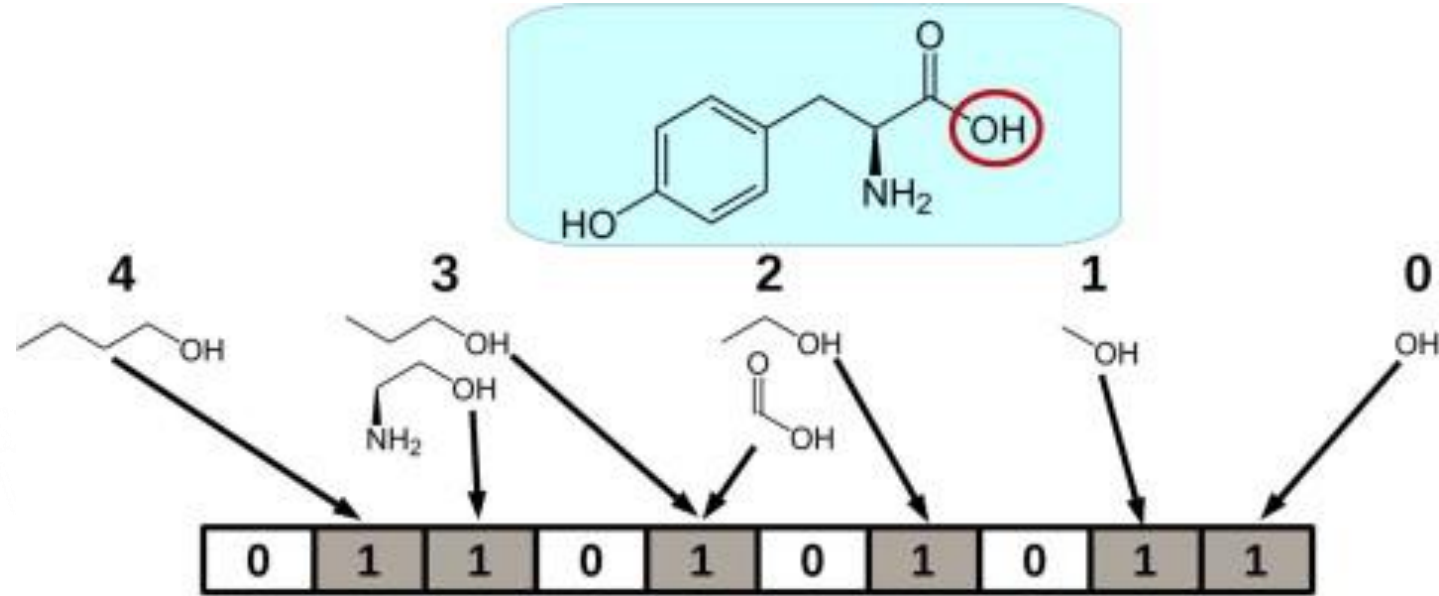
Feature Engineering Examples



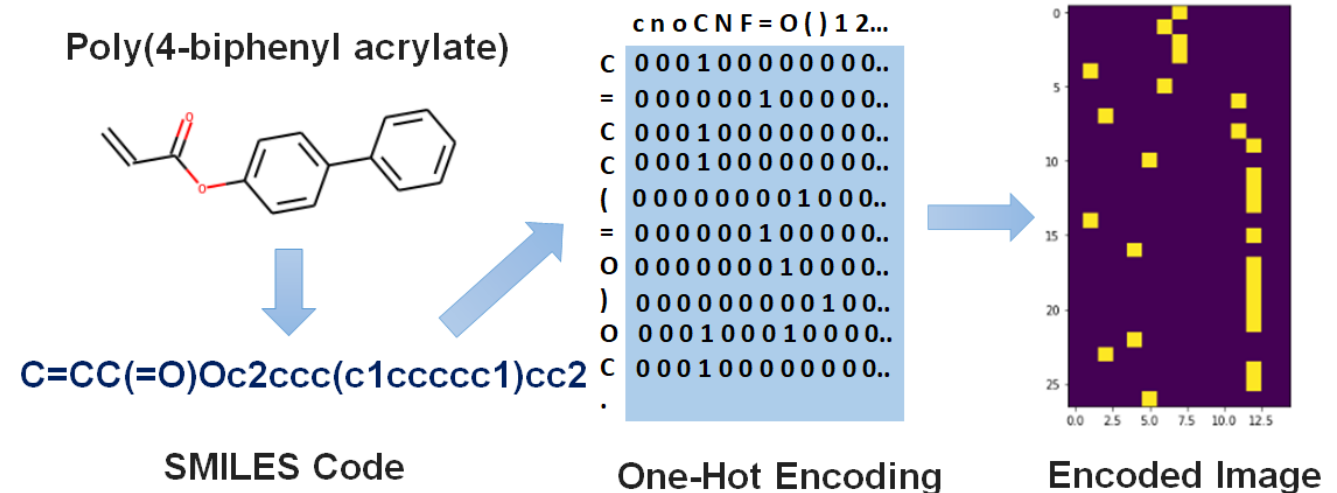
# Comparison Between Feature Representations

Molecular Descriptors (~5000): Very time-consuming    Fingerprints (hash 45,000 distinct substructures into 2048 bits)

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| N  | Group                                      |
| 1  | <a href="#">Constitutional descriptors</a> |
| 2  | <a href="#">Topological descriptors</a>    |
| 3  | <a href="#">Walk and path counts</a>       |
| 4  | <a href="#">Connectivity indices</a>       |
| 5  | <a href="#">Information indices</a>        |
| 6  | <a href="#">2D autocorrelations</a>        |
| 7  | <a href="#">Edge adjacency indices</a>     |
| 8  | <a href="#">BCUT descriptors</a>           |
| 9  | <a href="#">Topological charge indices</a> |
| 10 | <a href="#">Eigenvalue-based indices</a>   |
| 11 | <a href="#">Randic molecular profiles</a>  |
| 12 | <a href="#">Geometrical descriptors</a>    |
| 13 | <a href="#">RDF descriptors</a>            |
| 14 | <a href="#">3D-MoRSE descriptors</a>       |
| 15 | <a href="#">WHIM descriptors</a>           |
| 16 | <a href="#">GETAWAY descriptors</a>        |
| 17 | <a href="#">Functional group counts</a>    |
| 18 | <a href="#">Atom-centred fragments</a>     |
| 19 | <a href="#">Charge descriptors</a>         |
| 20 | <a href="#">Molecular properties</a>       |



Images (a sparse matrix, 21×310): Very fast



# Step 3 Property Prediction (Predictive ML Model)

## Three different feature representations

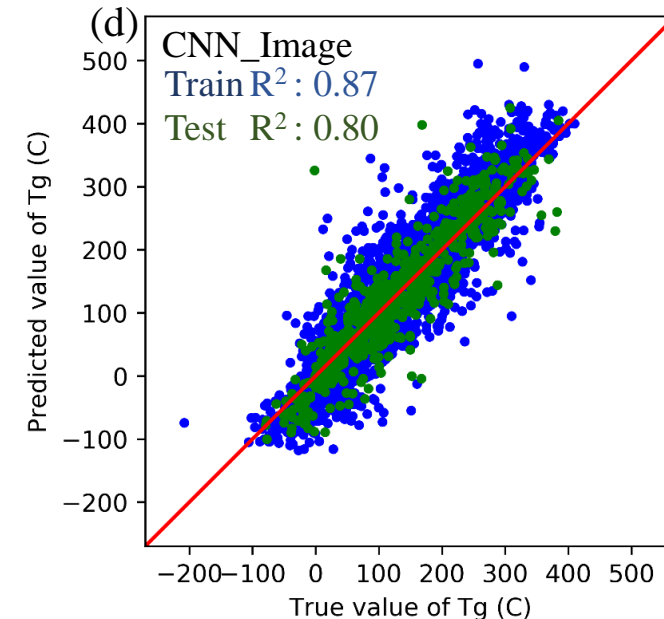
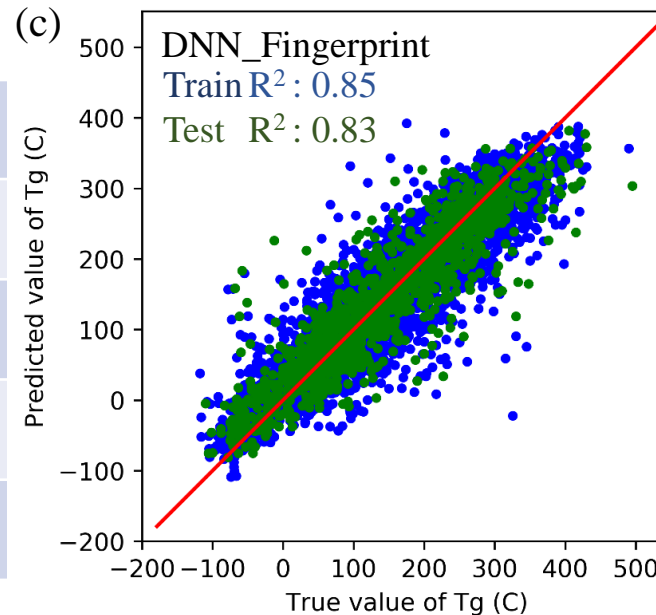
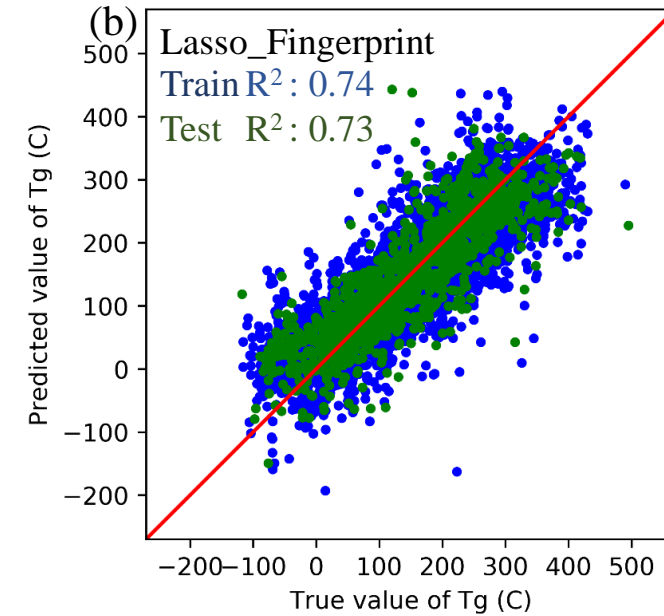
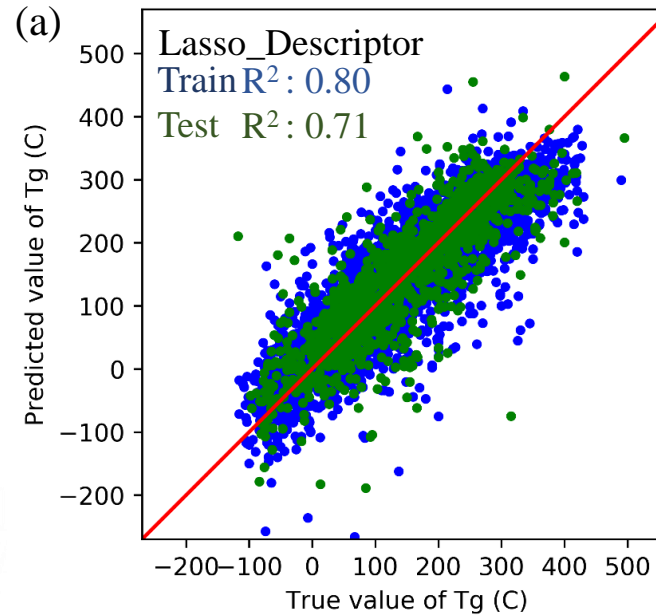
- Molecular descriptors
- Morgan fingerprints
- Images

## Three different ML models

- Least absolute shrinkage and selection operator (Lasso) regression
- Deep neural network (DNN)
- Convolutional neural network (CNN)

## Four predictive ML models trained on dataset-1

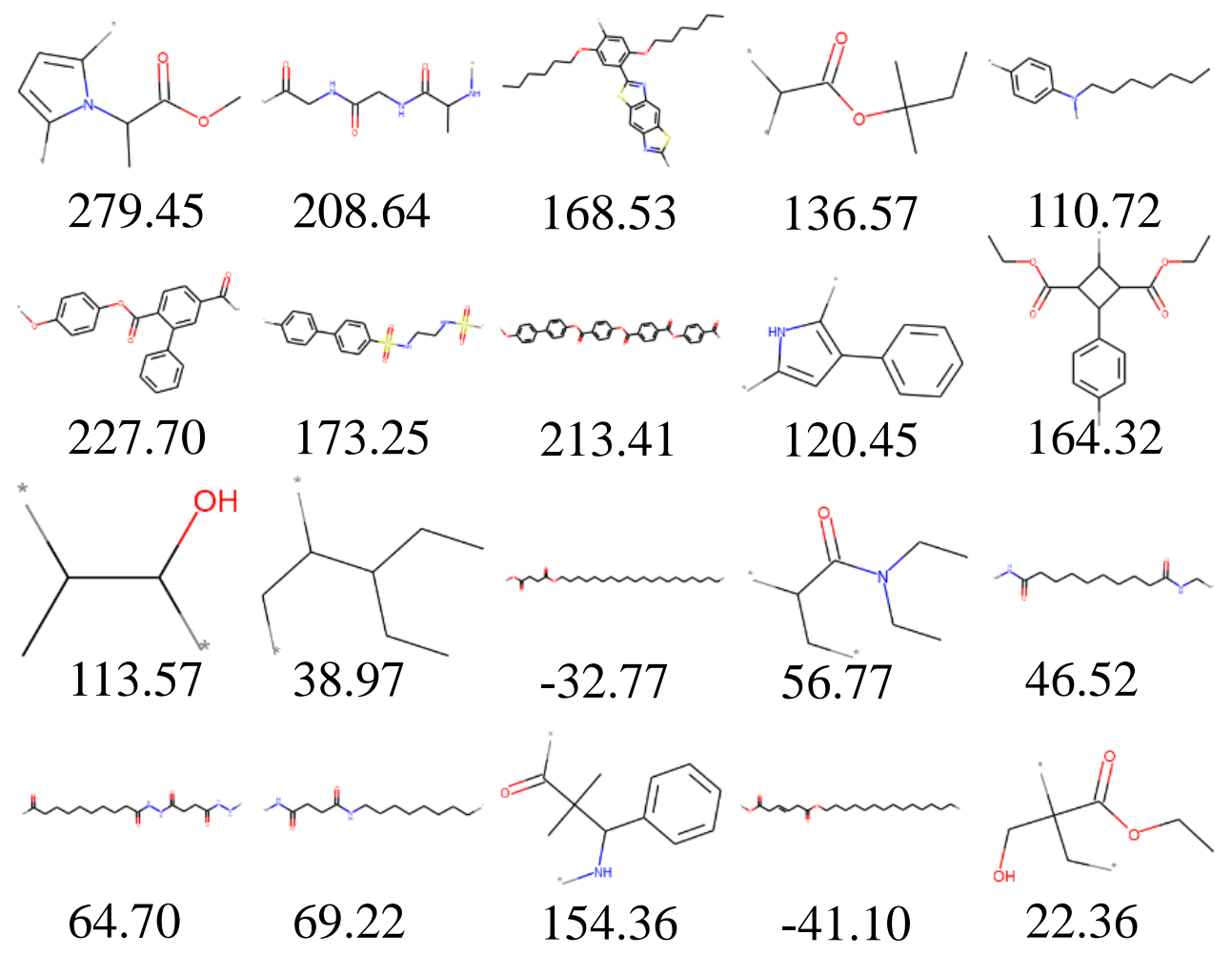
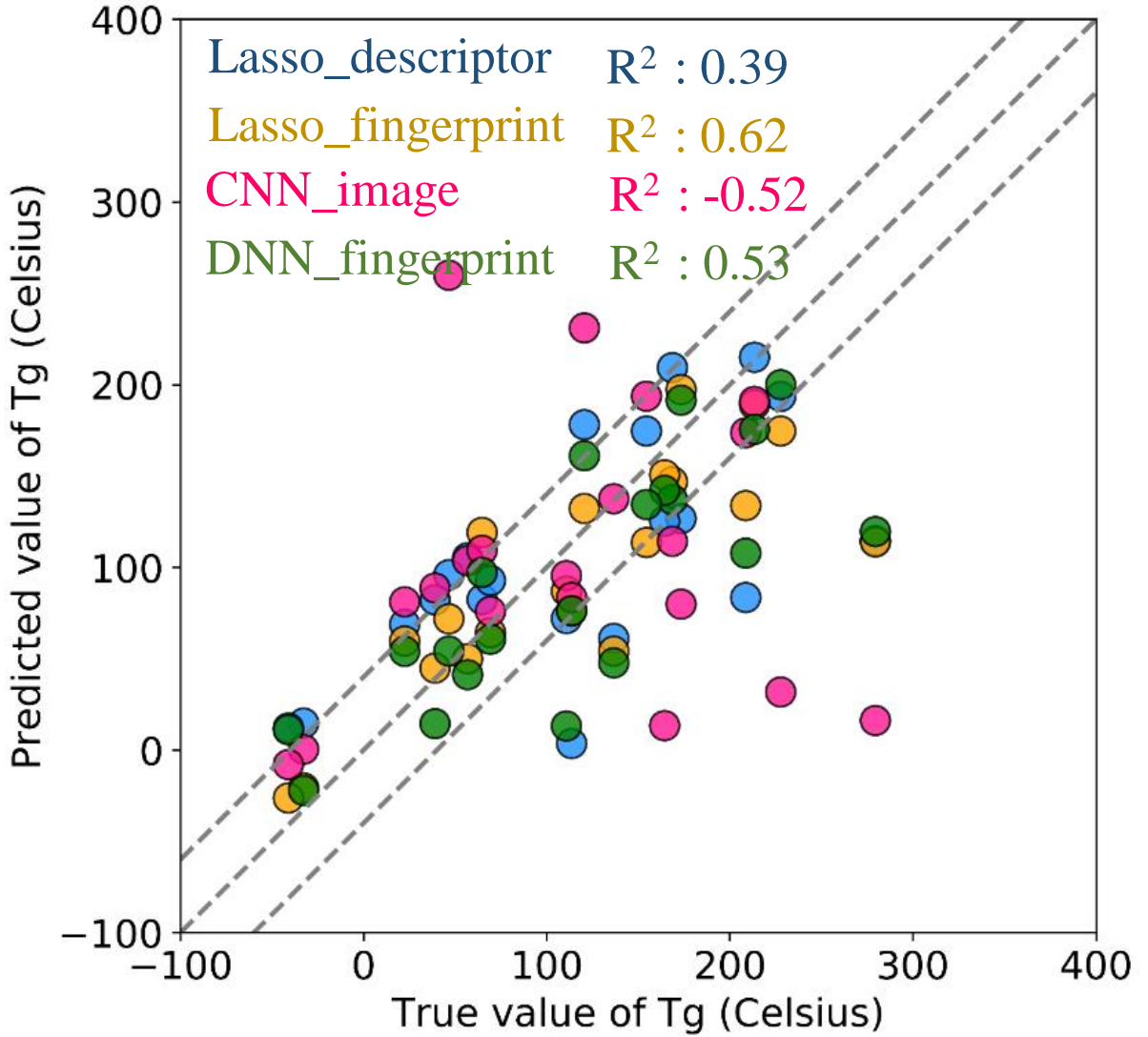
Name	ML Model	Features	$R^2$ (train/test)
Lasso_Descriptor	Lasso regression model	3579 descriptors	0.80/0.71
Lasso_Fingerprint	Lasso regression model	2048 fingerprints	0.74/0.73
DNN_Fingerprint	Deep neural network	2048 fingerprints	0.85/0.83
CNN_Image	Convolutional neural network	310×21 binary images	0.87/0.80





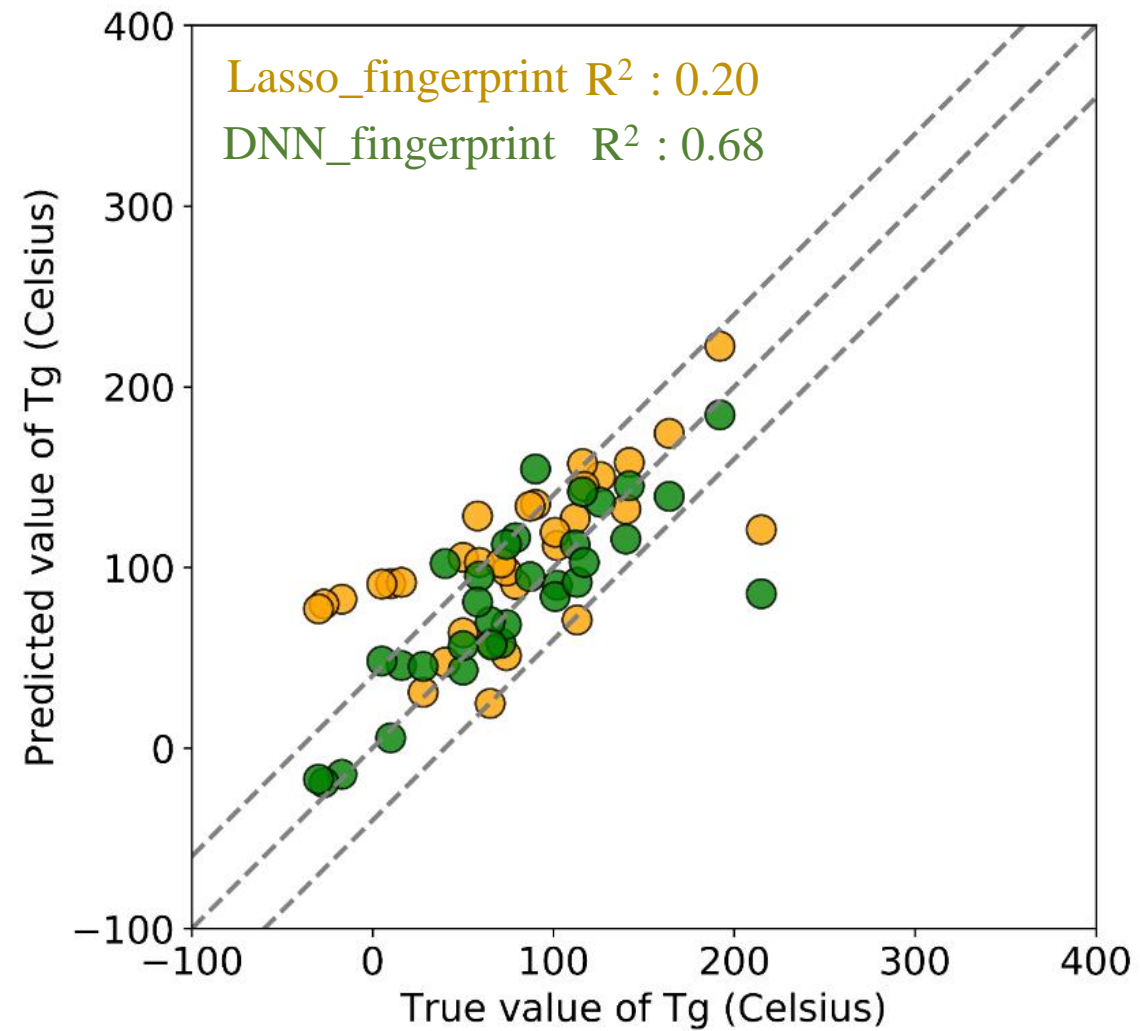
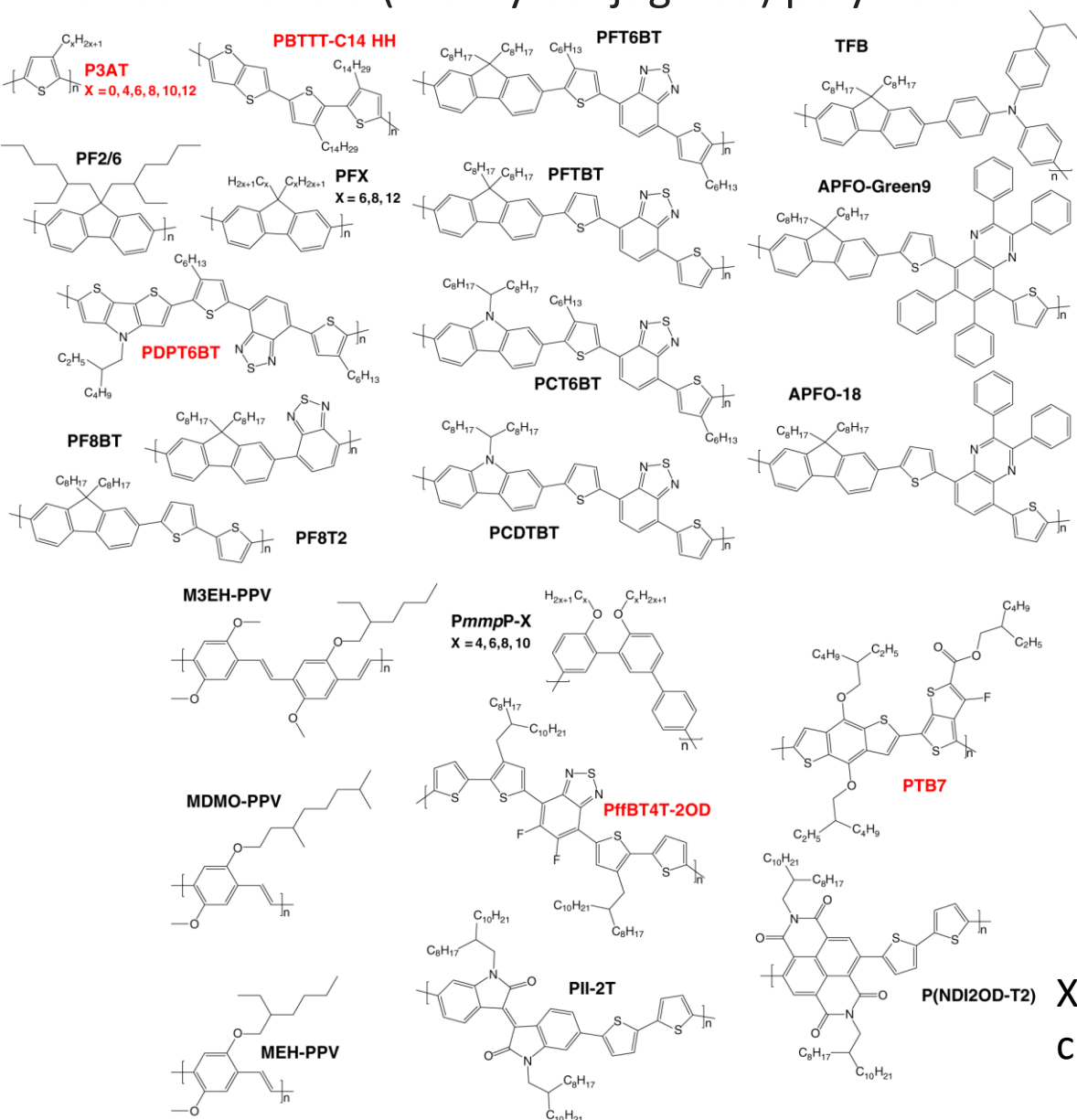
# Which ML model is trustworthy on dataset-2?

Comparison between the MD simulated  $T_g$  and the ML predicted  $T_g$  on 20 polymers randomly selected from dataset-2.



# Which ML model is trustworthy on experiments?

32 semiflexible (mostly conjugated) polymers that differ drastically in aromatic backbone and alkyl side chain chem

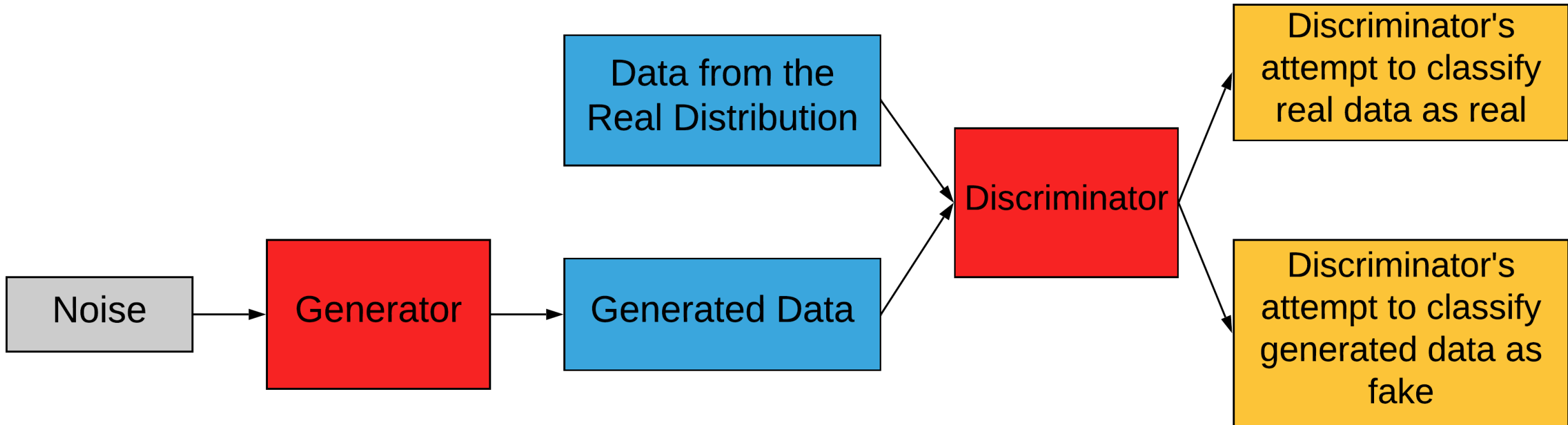


Xie, R., Weisen, A.R., Lee, Y. et al. Glass transition temperature from the chemical structure of conjugated polymers. Nat Commun 11, 893 (2020)

[Ralph H. Colby & Enrique D. Gomez @ Penn State University] 18



# Step 4 Inverse Molecular Generation and Design

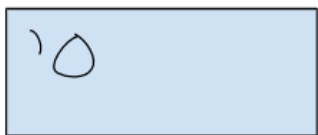


Generated Data

Discriminator

Real Data

Finally, if generator training goes well, the discriminator gets worse at telling the difference between real and fake. It starts to classify fake data as real, and its accuracy decreases.



FAKE

REAL



REAL

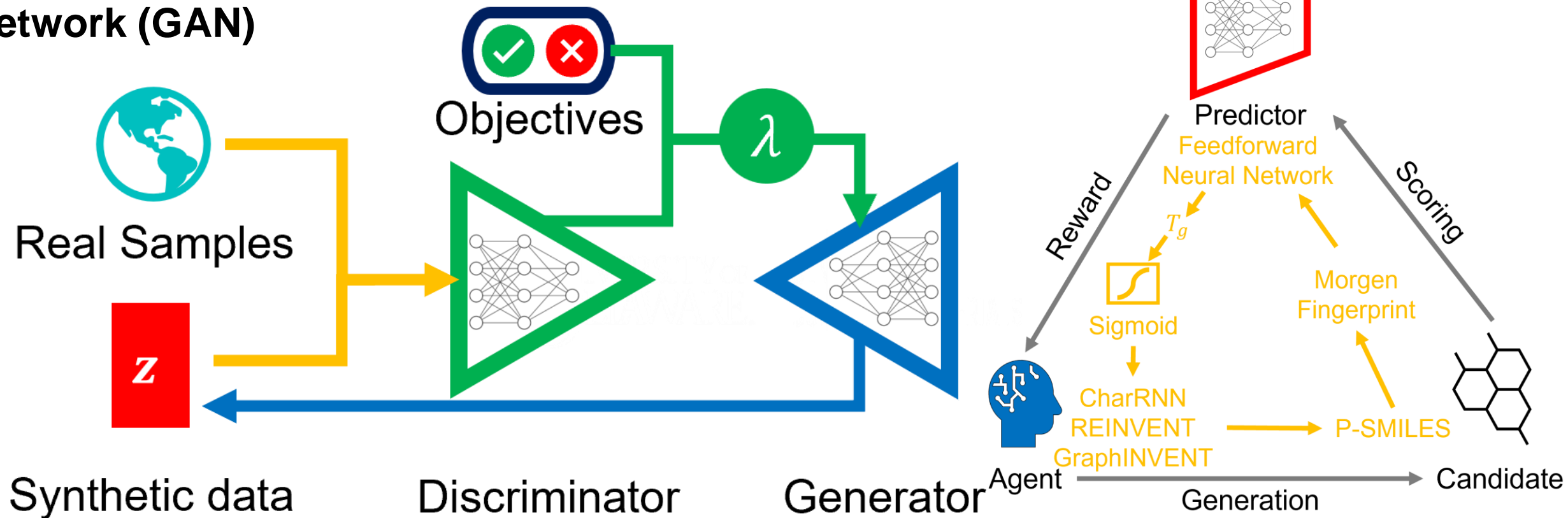
REAL



As training progresses, the generator gets closer to producing output that can fool the discriminator:

Goodfellow, Ian; Pouget-Abadie, Jean; Mirza, Mehdi; Xu, Bing; Warde-Farley, David; Ozair, Sherjil; Courville, Aaron; Bengio, Yoshua (2014). Generative Adversarial Nets. Proceedings of the International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NIPS 2014). pp. 2672–2680.

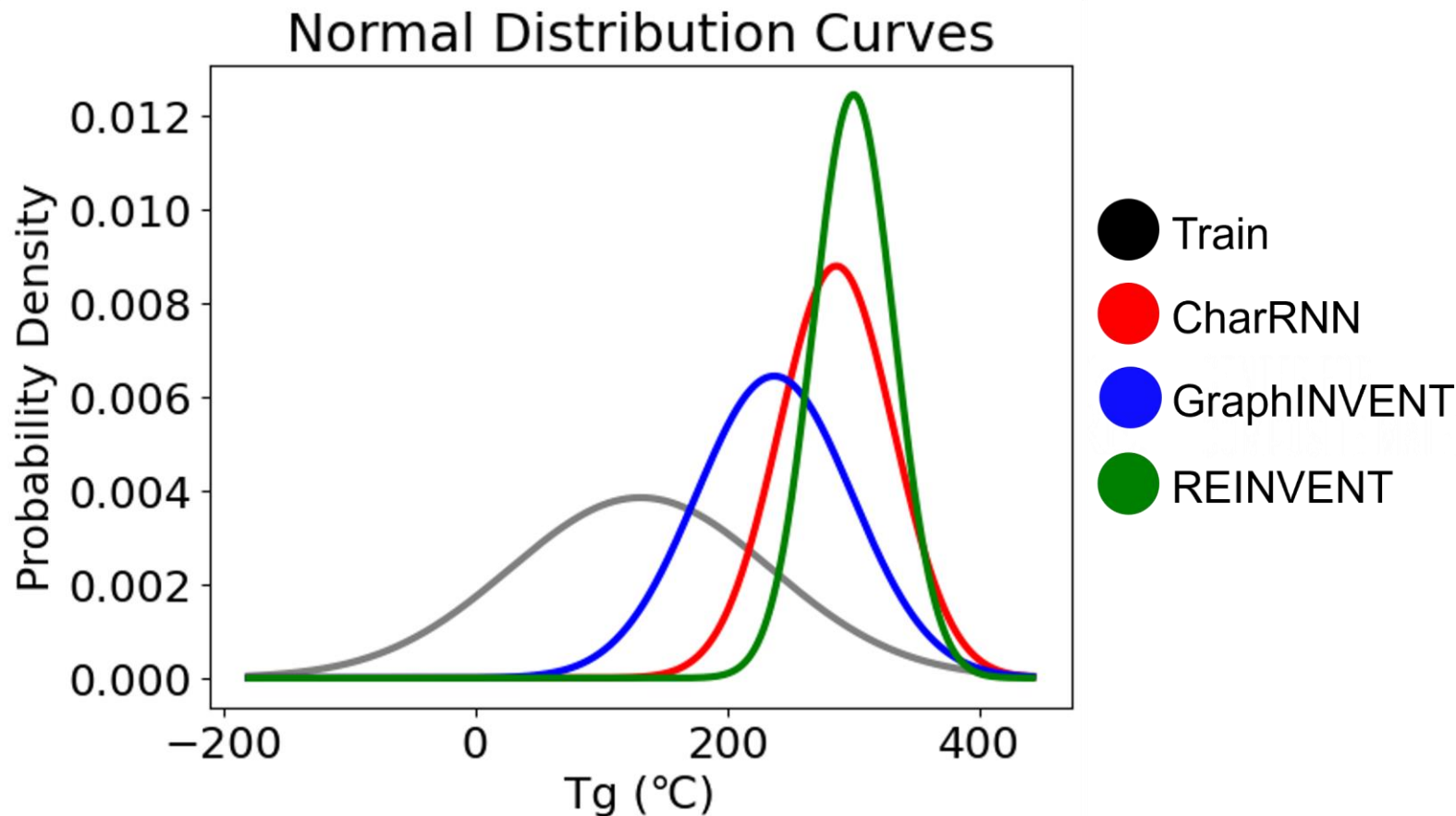
## Generative Adversarial Network (GAN)



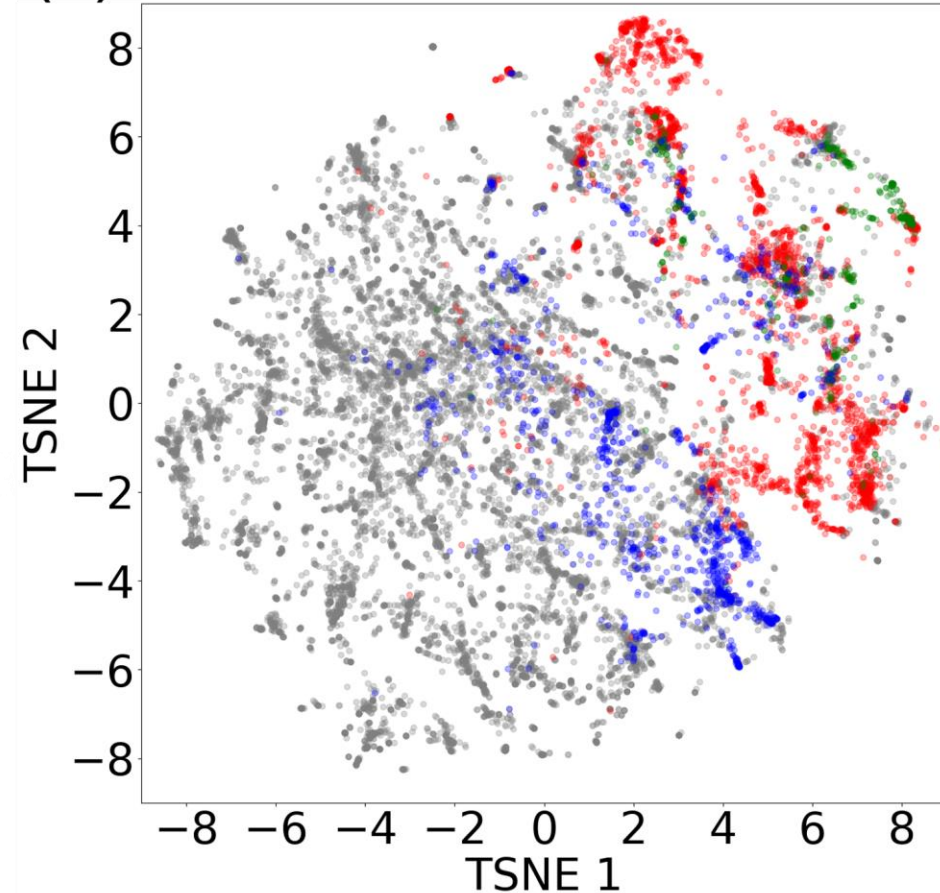
Sanchez-Lengeling, Benjamin, Carlos Outeiral, Gabriel L. Guimaraes, and Alan Aspuru-Guzik. "Optimizing distributions over molecular space. An objective-reinforced generative adversarial network for inverse-design chemistry (ORGANIC)." *ChemRxiv* 2017 (2017).

Yue, Tianle, Lei Tao, Vikas Varshney, and Ying Li. "Benchmarking Study of Deep Generative Models for Inverse Polymer Design." *Digital Discovery* (2024).

(a)

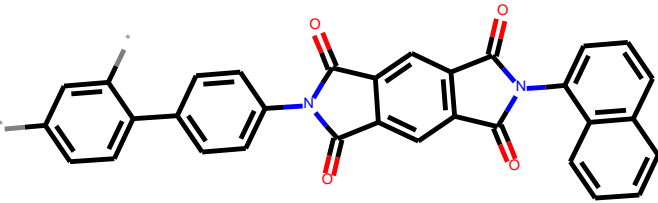


(b)

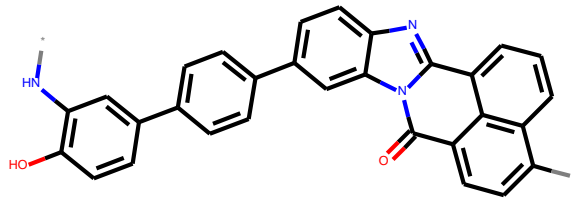


(a) Normalized probability density distribution of predicted Tg values and (b) chemical space distribution of the hypothetical valid unique polymers generated by CharRNN (red), GraphINVENT (blue), REINVENT (green), and the real polymers.

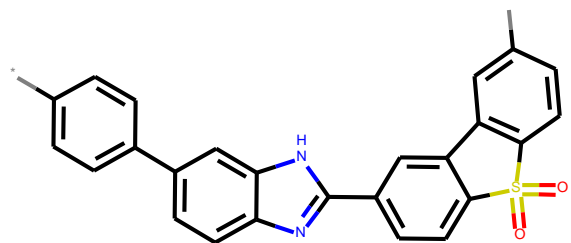
## Enumerations



686.77 (658.42) K

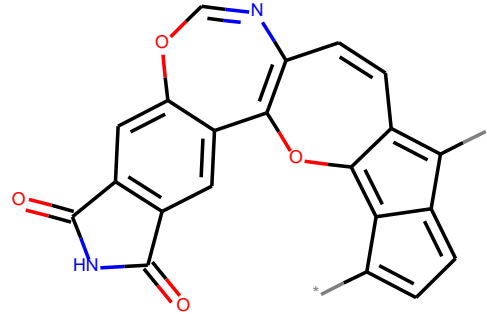


661.90 (641.99) K

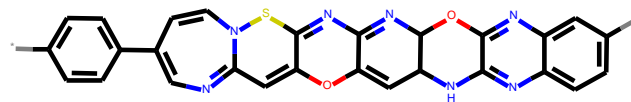


649.04 (632.67) K

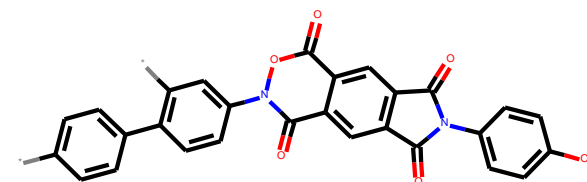
## Inverse design by GAN



737.76 (673.45) K

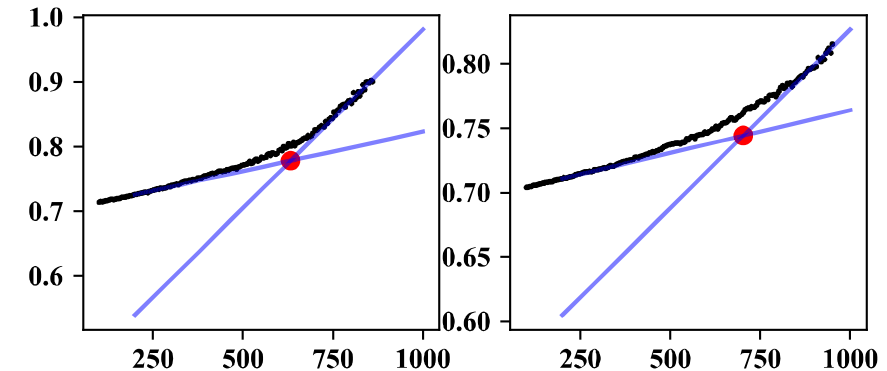
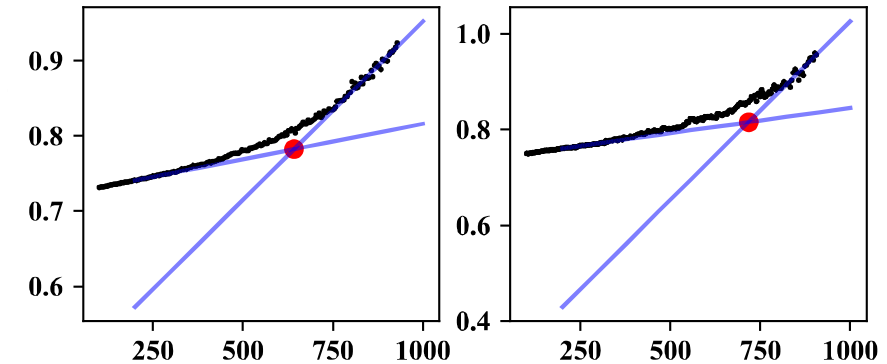
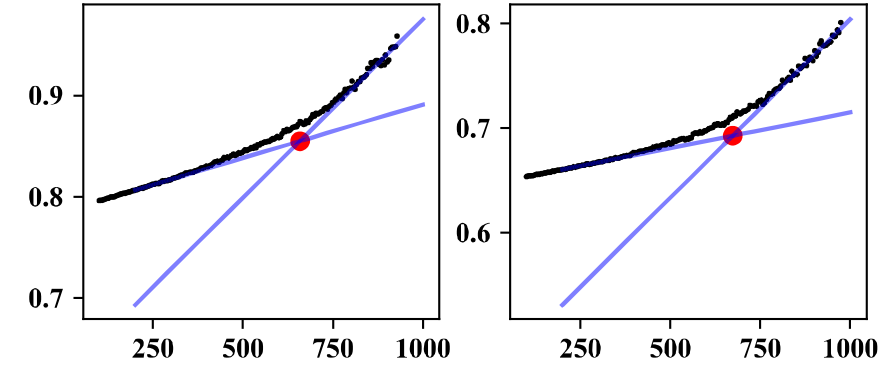


708.59 (717.64) K

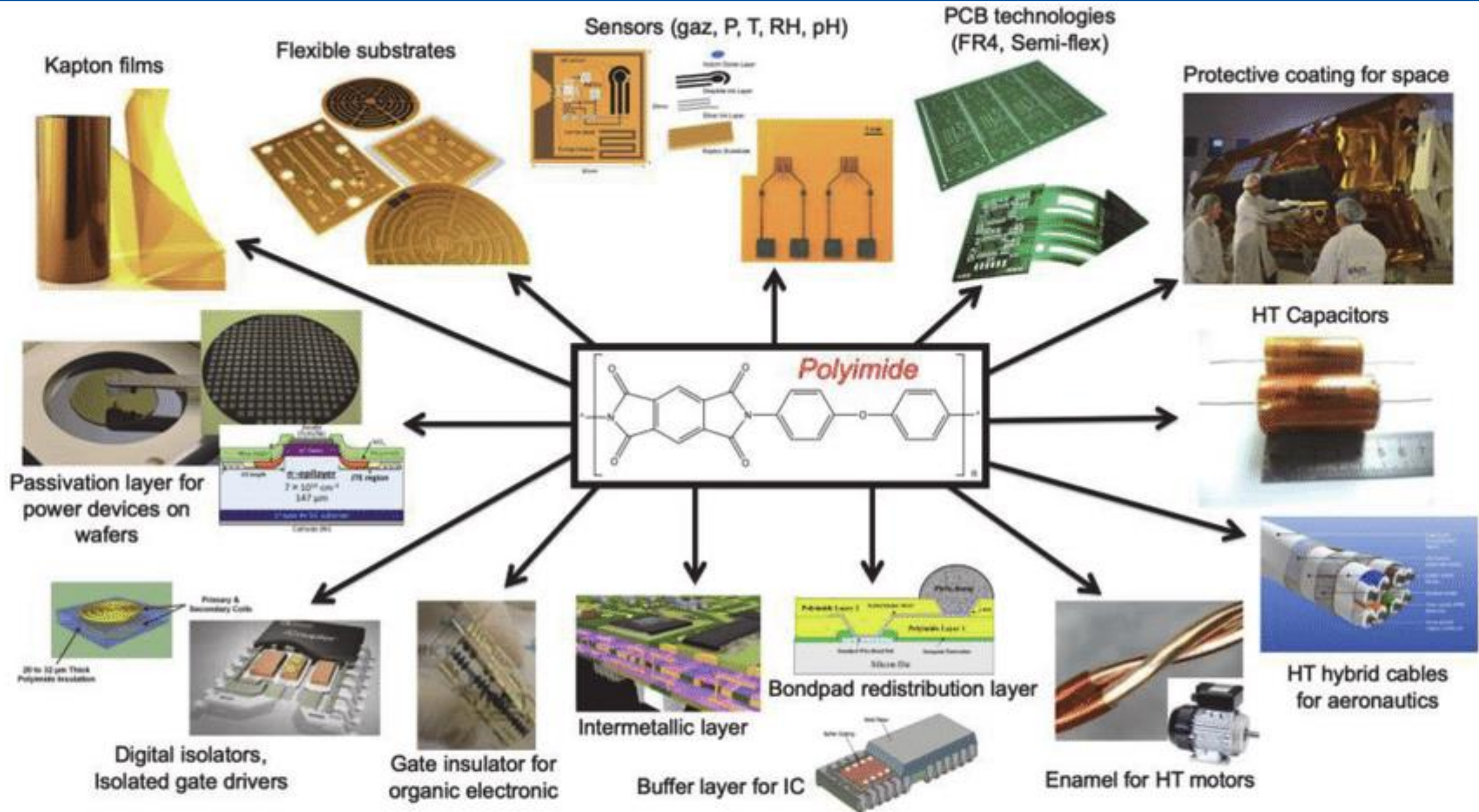


707.83 (702.67) K

## MD simulations



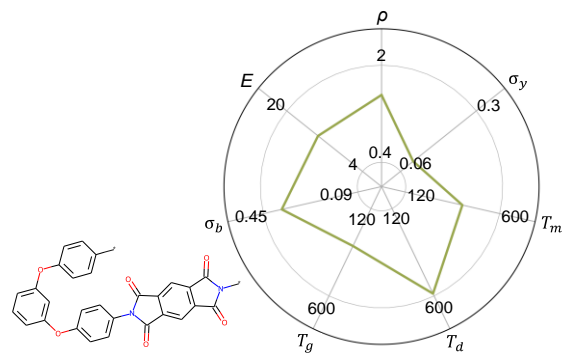
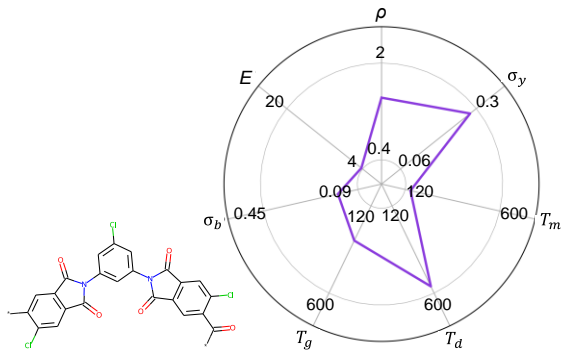
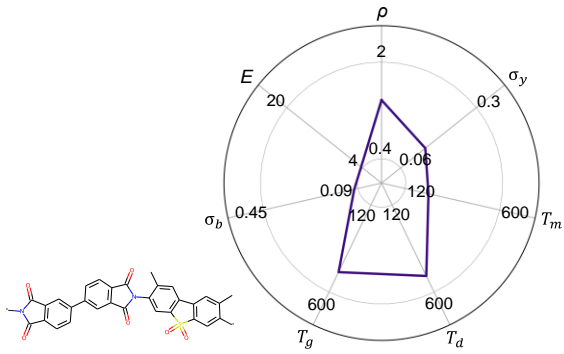
# Application Example: Polyimide, "Golden Plastic"



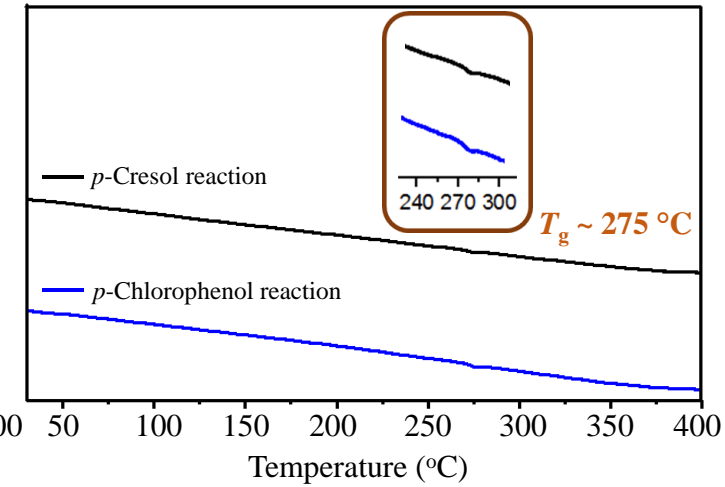
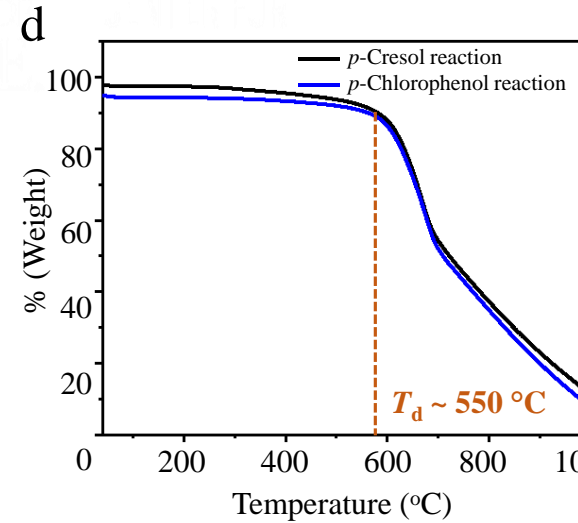
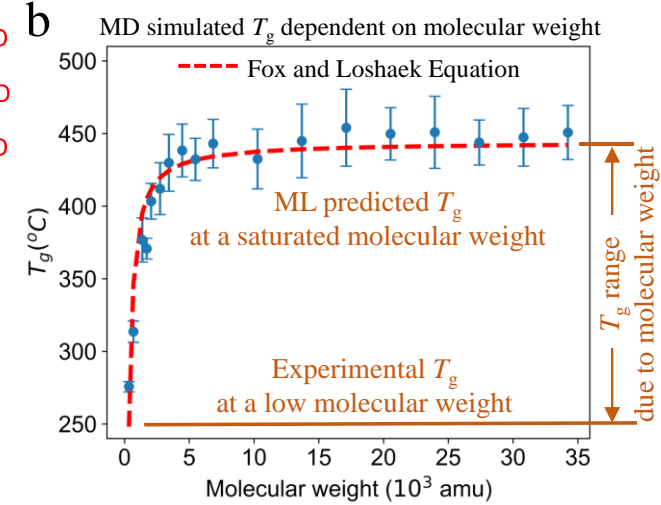
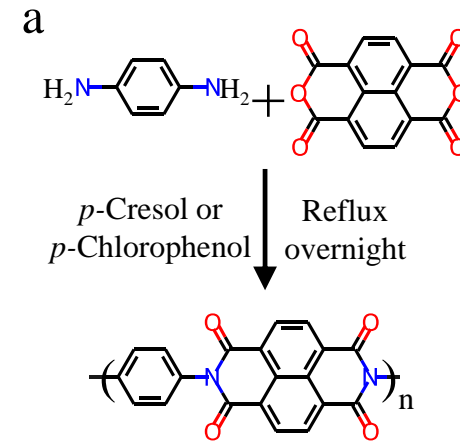
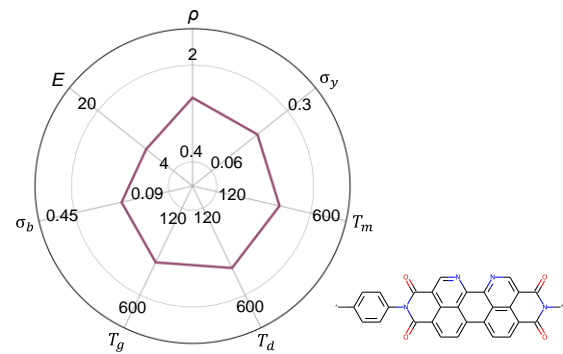
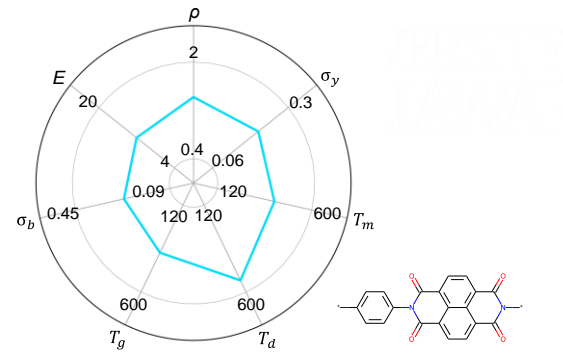
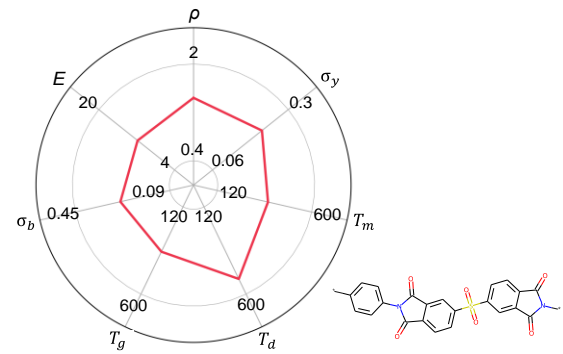


# ML-assisted discovery of novel polyimides

Real polyimides Pareto frontier



Novel polyimides beyond Pareto frontier



“Discovery of Multi-Functional Polyimides through High-Throughput Screening using Explainable Machine Learning” Lei Tao, Jinlong He, Nuwayo Eric Munyaneza, Vikas Varshney, Wei Chen, Guoliang Liu, Ying Li, Chemical Engineering Journal, 2023, 465, 142949. 12/10/2024

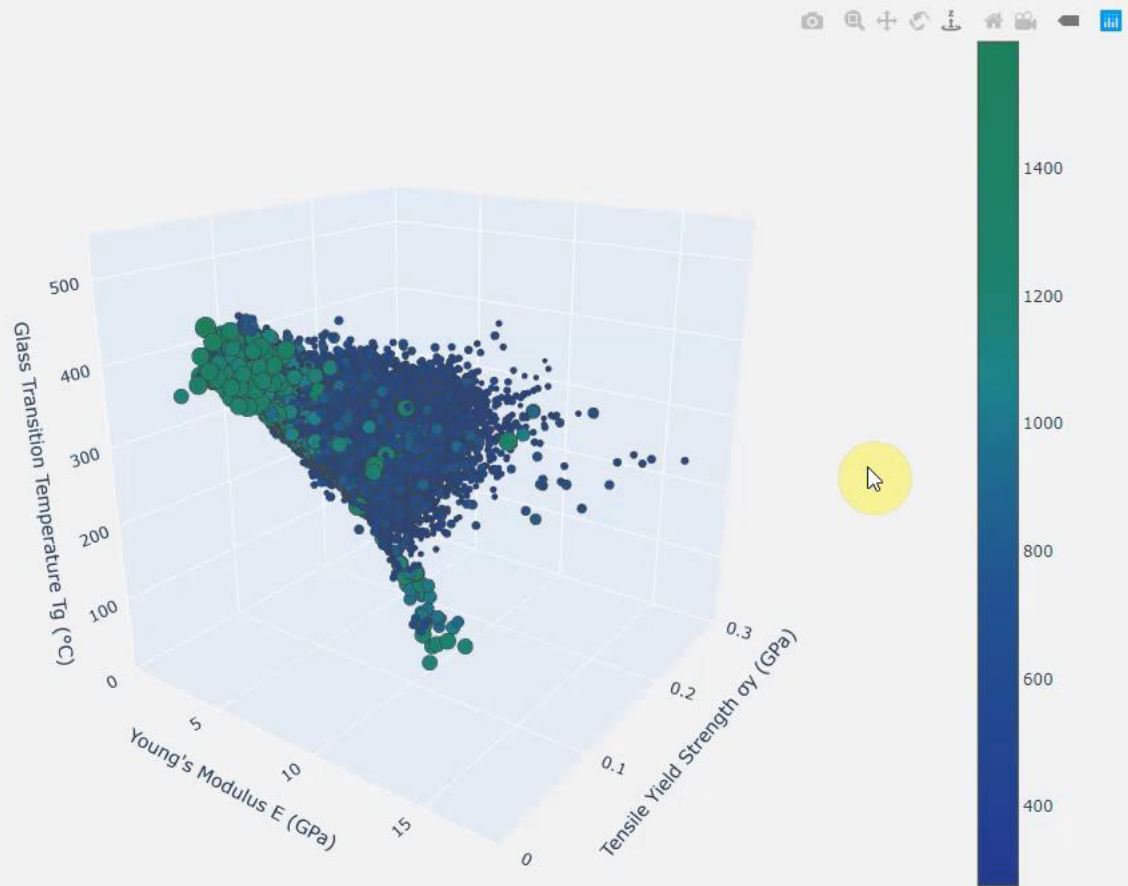
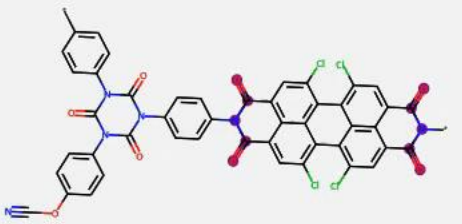
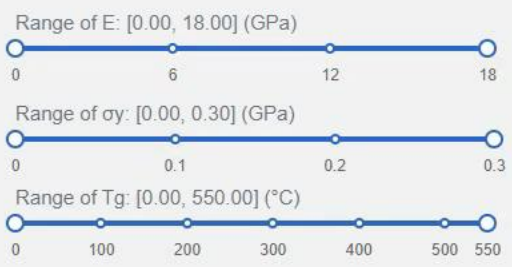


# Polyimide Explorer

This tool explores 8 million hypothetical polyimides for three thermal/mechanical properties including Young's Modulus E, Tensile Yield Strength  $\sigma_y$  and Glass Transition Temperature Tg. All hypothetical are obtained via the computational polycondensation of compounds that are commercially available. The best-performing 77,000 hypothetical polyimide are included for visualization. More details/data can be found in [Tao, Lei, Jinlong He, Vikas Varshney, Wei Chen, and Ying Li. 'Machine Learning Discovery of Multi-Functional Polyimides'](#)

- Operation 1. *Hover* over a polyimide in the 3D plot to see its structure, and imide groups contained are highlighted
- Operation 3. *Select* the interested ranges of the three properties to filter desired hypothetical polyimides.

- Operation 2. *Click* a polyimide in the graph to see the info of its structure/property and reacting compounds at the bottom of the page.
- Operation 4. *Predict* the properties of polyimides based on a SMILES input.



Enter a polyimide SMILES and press predict for property prediction

- › ML is a powerful method for the prediction and rapid screening of innovative polymers, particularly with growing large sets of experimental and computational data for polymeric materials.
- › By establishing an *inverse* mapping from property to polymer's synthesis (polyGAN), we can overcome the limitations of the property-prediction (or *forward* problem-based) approaches that screen polymers from a predetermined dataset and suffer from selection bias.
- › My personal suggestion: stop with trial-and-error (Edisonian) and embrace  
Machine learning & Optimization (AlphaGo, AlphaGo Zero, AlphaFold, AlphaCode, AlphaTensor, AlphaGeometry, ...)

All of us can be Iron Man in the future with our J.A.R.V.I.S. (ML models).

This presentation does not contain any proprietary, confidential, or otherwise restricted information

**Thank You !**

THEORETICAL & COMPUTATIONAL  
CHEMISTRY

ACS IN  
FOCUS

# Machine Learning for Polymer Informatics

Ying Li & Tianle Yue