The rigidity of periodic frameworks
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Rigidity theory investigates the flexibility of structures which are defined by geometric constraints (fixed lengths, fixed areas, fixed directions, etc.) on a set of rigid objects (points, lines, planes, polygons, etc.). Since the rigidity properties of a structure — either man-made, such as a building or mechanical linkage, or found in nature, such as a biomolecule, protein or crystal — are critical to its form and function, rigidity theory has many practical applications. One such connection is to materials science. Zeolites are a type of mineral with a repetitive sieve-like molecular structure where the “holes” of the sieve expand and contract. Using this as motivation, we study the rigidity properties of infinite periodic frameworks. We think of such a framework as a graph embedded on an n-dimensional torus, and we study its rigidity properties through the consideration of its combinatorial, geometric and topological attributes. In this talk we give a general introduction to rigidity theory for both finite and infinite periodic graphs, and outline a selection of related problems and applications.

The Exact Cover Problem in Finite Geometry
Anton Betten
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We will discuss the problem of classifying combinatorial objects, in particular those in finite geometry. One of the main tools to facilitate this is a reduction to a problem known as “Exact Cover” in computer science. We will see how this fits into a general program to classify combinatorial objects by computer. Plenty of examples illustrating the method will be shared.