

Press Release

3rd December, 2007

Contracts Signed for Ireland's Most Powerful Computer

Agreement has been reached between Ireland's research community, under the leadership of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS), and IBM to purchase and install one of the most powerful computers in Europe. The IBM Blue Gene / P Supercomputer is a first for Ireland and will be its most powerful. This computing tool will enable Irish researchers, for the first time, to move into the area of advanced computer simulations at the highest level. This will greatly improve their capacity for research in areas such as climate change, material science, astrophysics and biology where high-end computing is essential for advanced research.

As an added bonus in these environmentally aware times, a key design of the Blue Gene computer is that it combines high computational power with excellent energy efficiency. A valuable, additional element of the agreement is that Irish researchers will have guaranteed access to even larger Blue Gene installations operated by IBM in the US should their applications require it.

The computer will be located in the HEAnet (Ireland's National Education and Research Network) National Hosting Facility in Blanchardstown and operated by the Irish Centre for High End Computing (ICHEC). The Computer will be connected to HEAnet's high speed National Backbone Network making it available for use by Irish researchers from January.

The purchase has been enabled by funds from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and is being supported by all seven Irish universities, RCSI, DIT and the Tyndall National Institute in a unique partnership between the country's major research institutions, DIAS, HEAnet and ICHEC.

Prof Luke Drury from the School of Cosmic Physics at DIAS explained one of the benefits of the new facility –

"This resource will enable us to make real advances in understanding how stars form by allowing us to simulate star forming regions with much greater accuracy and more realistic physics"

ENDS

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BlueGene /L under construction