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US Military developing super computers

Quintillion calculations per second is the aim of the game

by Paul Lamkin published on 10 August 2010

Intel, Nvidia, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Sandia National Laboratory have all been awarded grants by a US Military program, aimed at building the next generation of super computers.

The Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) wants the technology giants to get to work on exascale computers that are capable of a thousand times more calculations than today's super computers can handle.

Currently the US Military's best machines are able to perform a petaflop, which is 1000 trillion (a quadrillion) calculations per second. The goal is to introduce machines capable of an exaflop - one million trillion calculations (a quintillion) per second.

The project will see the participating firms attempting to overcome the problems of power -usage from more sophisticated chips, although the agency said that its aim would be to "dramatically" reduce the power per calculation with machines that are, "100 to 1000 times more energy efficient, with higher performance, and that are easier to program than current systems" with the overall objective to, "re-invent computing".

It's all well and good the US Military wanting to expand technological boundaries, but surely they've seen 2010: A Space Odyssey?

If they make the computers too advanced then they'll only have themselves to blame if they end up in deep space with the computers trying to kill them.

Don't say Pocket-lint didn't warn you.

