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DEALS, SUPERCOMPUTING, HARDWARE

Cray, Nvidia Team Up on \$25M Defense Grant to Develop Graphics-Based Supercomputers

Thea Chard 8/10/10

Seattle-based supercomputing company [Cray](#) (NASDAQ: [CRAY](#)) is part of a team that has been [awarded](#) a \$25 million U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) grant for the further development of supercomputer technology.

The team, led by graphics processing unit (GPU) developer [Nvidia](#) (NASDAQ: [NVDA](#)), also includes Oak Ridge National Laboratory and six U.S. universities. According to a [statement released Monday](#), DARPA is funding the project “to address the challenge that conventional computing architectures are reaching the practical limits of energy usage.”

The four-year research contract, part of [DARPA’s Ubiquitous High Performance Computer program](#), will finance the development of GPU software and hardware technologies needed to equip a new class of supercomputers that could be 1,000 times more powerful than the best supercomputer in existence today—dramatically increasing computing performance, programmability, and reliability.

Steve Scott, Cray’s senior vice president, chief technology officer, and principal investigator on the team, said in a statement that the DARPA program “is attacking technical issues that are key to the future of high performance computing,” and could lead to “radical improvements to the state-of-the-art in the coming decade.”

Cray has had a long history of ups and downs in the supercomputing sector. In the second quarter of 2009 the [company reported \\$62.7 million in revenue](#). Despite inking a number of extensive deals in 2010—including a \$45 million Department of Defense contract, a \$45 million National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) contract, a \$20 million deal with Brazil’s Foundation for Space Technology, Applications and Science, and a \$47 million Department of Energy contract—Cray reported only \$28.7 million in revenue in the second quarter of 2010.

The company attributed the fluctuation in revenue to the recent rollout of its XE6 supercomputer, adding that it expects higher profits for later in 2010.

“I remain very excited about our 2010 prospects, led by a number of significant wins and continued strength in custom engineering,” Cray president and CEO Peter Ungaro said in a [statement last week](#).



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“[We] are in the midst of one of the largest production ramps in our history. In fact, in a five month period this year, we expect to ship over six-times more compute power than we did in all of 2009.”

Thea Chard is the Assistant Editor for Xconomy Seattle. You can e-mail her at tchard@xconomy.com or follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/theachard>.

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