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Keeping it Innovative

Posted by KatharineW on 26-Jul-2010 04:47:37

I came across this interview the other day with Dr Lyn Evans, who heads up the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) team at CERN, in Switzerland. Most of us are aware of the project but often the media hype around its recent mechanical issues outweighs the really astounding work that's being done there.

I quite often talk to the IT team at CERN openlab, which develops solutions for use by the LHC scientists. As high computing performance is such an important requirement for the calculations and simulations they run, the team makes a point of always trialling the latest Intel technologies. When we last spoke, they had just tested the Intel® Xeon® processor 5600 series (Westmere EP) and Intel® Xeon® processor 7500 series (Nehalem EX).

Like all research organisations, it needs to take budget constraints into account when building or upgrading its systems. However, by working closely with Intel on an ongoing basis, it has ensured that it always knows when new opportunities for optimising performance or efficiency are coming along. By taking this proactive approach to IT resource development, CERN openlab has created a culture of continued innovation and cost saving.

With simulations now underway, there is a vast amount of data for the CERN scientists to go through. Even with further design-based closures predicted, the data already collected can provide food for research for a long time to come. As Dr Steve Meyers, another CERN representative, points out, the "LHC is its own prototype", and when you think about it that way, the groundbreaking work and ambitious vision they're showing is even more impressive.

Tags: server, data_intensive_computing, intel, 5600, innovation, 7500

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