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Original URL: http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/01/26/cray_awe_deal/

UK pulls in Cray for nuke testing

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Published Thursday 26th January 2006 11:44 GMT

Brits can all sleep easier in their beds now that the UK's Atomic Weapons Establishment has handed over £20m for a shiny new Cray XT3 super computer.

The AWE said the 40 teraflops box of tricks will be used for a range of jobs such as "weapons physics, materials science and engineering" which will "underpin our continued ability to underwrite the safety and effectiveness of the Trident warhead in the Comprehensive Test Ban era."

We think that means that seeing as boffins can no longer check the nukes are in working order by letting one off every now and then, they're going to be running simulations on the XT3.

Cray will ship the XT3 in the second quarter, and it should be humming along nicely in the second half of the year.

Those who really care about these things will be glad to know the XT3 runs on AMD's Opteron processors. The company did not say how many processors the AWE's machine will run but the system at the US' Sandia National Laboratory accommodates upwards of 10,000 and the architecture is designed to scale up to 30,000.

Which, we're sure you'll agree is a pretty good platform for playing *Sim Apocalypse.*®

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