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Building a wind-tunnel computer to help fight cancer

Image courtesy Mike Schropp, totalgeekdom.com.

Mike Schropp wanted to help fight cancer through the World Community Grid. But Schropp, the man

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behind the Total Geekdom website, isn't known for doing things by half measures. He decided to 'soup up' his computer, in order to contribute as much processing time as possible to the 'Help Conquer Cancer' project, which aims to improve the results of protein X-ray crystallography, a technique that helps researchers to further their understanding of cancer initiation, progression and treatment.

After building his 'supercomputer', using some pretty nifty hardware, Schropp decided to overclock the processors (both CPUs and GPUs) using a variety of cunning tricks, so as to ensure he could squeeze every last drop out of his lean, mean, cancer-fighting machine.

Of course, doing this meant he had some major cooling issues on his hands. After briefly considering the idea of water-cooling, Schropp decided that building a wind tunnel would clearly be the best option. Being thinner at its center, the tunnel helps to increase airspeed, thus aiding the cooling process.

Thanks to this ingenious cooling solution, Schropp's 'supercomputer', which draws around 400 watts power, was able to contribute approximately 2 years' worth of processing time during just its first month of operation!

You can read more about the project on the Total Geekdom website.

- Andrew Purcell

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Science Node
Email:
editors@sciencenode.o
Website:
sciencenode.org

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