



# Meet Wim Klein - CERN's human supercomputer

Posted on DEC 5 2012 8:51AM



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Wim Klein's farewell performance at CERN (in French).  
Video courtesy CERN.

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Yesterday, Tuesday 4 December 2012, marked the 100th anniversary of Wim Klein's birth. Klein, who died in 1986, is an important part of CERN's computing history. He was employed at the organization from 1957 to 1976 as a human calculator, checking the results of calculations carried out by computers.

Klein was capable of exceptionally fast mental arithmetic and dabbled in show business, wowing audiences with his mathematical abilities. In August 1976, Klein calculated the 73rd root of a 500-digit number in a record-breaking 2 minutes 43 seconds. This is just one of a number of records Klein achieved.

In this video, Klein can be seen giving a farewell performance of his abilities to CERN colleagues in December 1976. The second part of this video can be found [here](#).

- *Andrew Purcell*

math

mental  
arithmetic

Willem

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