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## EU pledges \$63 million for grid computing

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**The European Union has decided to put its money where its mouth is when it comes to the latest computing trends--it's putting \$63.4 million into grids.**

The grid handout will be put into 12 separate European research projects, with the majority of the funding being put into four larger projects, which will receive around \$10 million each.

Grid computing, which handles large computing tasks by sharing out the workload across several machines, has typically been used in academic and certain **commercial projects** with large numbers of in-house computers. One **big grid project** is designed for research--it uses 6,000-odd machines to investigate particle physics.

It has also been seen as a way for the tech community to push forward not-for-profit projects that don't have resources to invest in extra computing power--for example, the **SETI@home** project, which hunts for alien life.


Now the EU is hoping industry will be able to milk grid computing's potential for commercial reasons. The idea behind the grants is that universities and research institutions can come together to research how to best use grids for business applications.

"These projects will accelerate Europe's drive to turn its substantial grid research investment into tangible economic benefits," Enterprise and Information Society Commissioner Olli Rehn said in a statement this week. "Greater use of grid tools is key for mobilizing Europe's scientific and technological capital to deliver greater competitiveness and better products."

One project, NextGrid, will last for three years and aims to architecture standards as well as business and operational issues and will also, according to the project's Web site, "address the possible convergence between grid and Web services...The overall result of the project will be a collection of new architectural designs, key middleware components, application support mechanisms, know-how and standards that will underpin the Next Generation Grid."

The project also aims to make grid "as ubiquitous as the Web is today."

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