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Cluster Computing:

CIARA TECH LOOKS TO CLUSTERS TO ADVANCE SUPERCOMPUTING

Ciara Technologies, based in Montreal, is moving to make affordable supercomputing a reality with a new cluster system composed of off-the-shelf processors. The system boasts half the power of a supercomputer at less than a quarter of the cost.

In order to accomplish such a task, Ciara Technologies needed some help. The company partnered with giants such as Intel and Raytheon, a major defense contracting firm. The current agreement between the companies has Ciara building and selling the cluster systems in Canada, Intel providing software support, and Raytheon retaining the right to sell the systems to U.S. federal government clients.

Ciara, by not building the typical supercomputer which costs millions of dollars, is offering a cheaper alternative to smaller firms who wish to achieve similar performance advantages. Ciara builds upon existing cluster systems by adopting a 3-D architecture and doubling connections for increased reliability. And in theoretical benchmark terms, Ciara says the cluster system could be capable of 140 teraflops per second. Industry testing and application studies are not universal or conclusive, however.

In fact, Ciara has yet to sell one of the systems. There are interested parties in several sectors, however, including education, financial, and government. Ciara, in addition to announcing its newest cluster system, is opening a testing center Montreal so that companies may test software on the Ciara cluster.

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