

Extra tick restarts time, tech debate

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Time marches on and so does the debate over whether a "leap second" does any good in helping Earth catch up with the world's atomic clocks.

At any rate, an extra second will be added again as 2005 ticks away -- the first in seven years -- so time and technology will be starting out the new year in sync.

Its arrival will be closely watched by physicists and astronomers enmeshed in a prolonged debate over the need, the Washington Post said Monday.

Some experts think the leap second should be abolished because the periodic adjustment of time imposes unreasonable and perhaps dangerous disruptions on precision software.

Others, however, argue that it would be expensive to adjust satellites, telescopes and other astronomical systems that are hard-wired for the leap second. Researchers hope to find out soon whether the leap second really is disruptive.

The length of Earth's day is increasing by about two milliseconds per century because of the tides.

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