

World's first teraflop supercomputer decommissioned

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The world's first teraflop computer has been decommissioned by the U.S. government despite still being among the world's 500 fastest supercomputers.

Although young in age, the historic supercomputer -- based at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, N.M., and known as ASCI Red -- is very old by supercomputer standards.

Sandia Vice President Rick Stulen eulogized this week: "ASCI Red broke all records and most importantly ushered the world into the teraflop regime. It still holds the record for the longest continuous rating as the world's fastest computer -- four years running."

A teraflop represents a trillion mathematical operations per second.

The supercomputer first broke the teraflops barrier in December 1996 and topped the world-recognized top-500 computer speed ratings seven consecutive times.

Sandia Director Bill Camp said ASCI Red had the best reliability of any supercomputer ever built, and "was supercomputing's high-water mark in longevity, price and performance."

Sandia officials said ASCI Red was "almost mystical in scalability," and that there is "a sense of sadness and also of satisfaction (in) the passing of such a great machine."

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