

PlayStation 3 will be used to help cure cancer and Alzheimer's

Contributed by wikinews.org
Last Updated Monday, 28 August 2006

The upcoming Sony PlayStation 3 game console is going to assist scientists in finding cures for cancer and Alzheimer's disease using the Folding@home distributed computing program.

Folding@home is already used on more than 150,000 personal computers nationwide and scientists hope to create a super computer faster than IBM's BlueGene/L System which currently calculates more than 280.6 trillion bits of information per second. The new calculations are expected to process a thousand trillion bits of information a second. Folding@home runs a series of simulations which predict the shape of proteins and how they "fold" and scientists say that the program could determine the formation of some diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

"Using the Cell processor of the PS3, we should be able to do more folding than what one could do on a PC. Also, since the PS3 has a powerful GPU, the PS3 client will offer real time visualization for the first time," said a statement on Folding@home's website.

A small program will be downloaded to the users PlayStation 3 console and will then begin to calculate "work units" when users are not playing games.

The program is expected to be available at the end of September.

"We will release more details on all of this as the new software rolls out. We are beta testing the ATI GPU client software internally at the moment and will likely announce an open beta in four to five weeks (end of September)," said the statement.