

By: Robin Dja2008 Games Editor

## Scientists Prefer Games Consoles

*Video consoles are a better, cheaper alternative to supercomputers*

It seems that scientists are not only interested in researches that prove how bad [video games](#) are for your body, mind and soul. Some of them actually appreciate the video consoles (OK, not the games) and start using their power to conduct very important scientific researches. Yes, I said "important", not those researches that prove that [men like video games more than women](#) do. And the [telegraph.co.uk](http://telegraph.co.uk) website tries to explain why do scientists love consoles, following the news that [Wii is used for therapy](#), it could be used to [fight against obesity](#) and so on. And everything is possible because these gaming consoles (especially the PlayStation 3) are build in a similar way the rather expensive supercomputers are designed. So, basically, the scientists are now reprogramming consoles to use them as supercomputers and, as they say, it really pays off. For example, Prof. Gaurav Khanna from the University of Massachusetts has used 16 PS3s to calculate what will happen when two black holes merge. According to him, the PlayStation 3 actually has a "supercomputer-on-a-chip" that can also run on Linux, so it does not limit what you can do."A single high-precision simulation can sometimes cost more than 5,000 hours on the TeraGrid supercomputers. For the same cost, you can build your own supercomputer using PS3s. It works just as well, has no long wait times and can be used over and over again, indefinitely," Prof Khanna says. Todd Martinez, from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, shares the same beliefs. He has persuaded the supercomputing center to buy computers driven by the PS3 chips and now, together with his students, is using them to simulate the interactions between the electrons in atoms, as part of work to see how proteins in the body dovetail with drug molecules. So you can see that it's all about some serious research here, not the Sunday afternoon, "I-have-nothing-else-to-do" so-called study. And we can only be happy about that - we know these video games consoles are able to deliver great amounts of fun hours. Now that we know they can help science, we will value them even more.