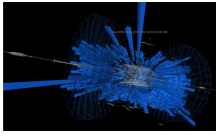


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By: Dan Talpalariu, Science Editor



First image transmitted by LHC during today's test
CERN

[We're Still Here: LHC Test Successful](#)

Worldwide fears proved to be unfounded, at least so far

10:36 am, today. The main computer screen in one of the LHC surveillance rooms displays 2 flashing dots, indicating that the last test has been successfully completed. Humankind still exists.

Perhaps the most believable story about the apocalypse is the most recent one, linked to the [power-up of the LHC](#) (which we've written about on a daily basis). Briefly, the Large Hadron Collider is supposed to smash together protons contained into two particle beams that are to be sent on colliding courses at the speed of light (about 11.000 tunnel laps/second) on October 21st. This experiment is supposed to prove the existence of the Higgs boson (the God particle) and to provide data about the formation of the universe, 13.7 billion years ago. It may generate tiny black holes on the way, but these are an expected result that also needs to be observed and learned from.

Today's test only consisted of sending one protonic beam alone, in a clockwise direction, through the whole length (27 km / 17 miles) of the collider. First reactions: "There it is," sighed (amid champagne corks popping) the leader of the project, Lyn Evans, upon beam lap completion. "Well done everybody," added Robert Aymar, general director of CERN. Now only the counter-clockwise full-length lap test remains to be done until the big event. Yet, the worries related to the end of the world as we know it are still pending in the air.

Stephen Hawking, leading physics scientist, backed up CERN's chief spokesman, James Gillies, in dismissing the global panic. Gilles assured people through the means of Associated Press that the worst that could happen is for a full-power beam to get out of control and damage the accelerator before burrowing itself in the earth surrounding the tunnel.

For those of you who still believe there's a good reason to remain partisans to the Earth-sucking black holes idea, scientists Juliana Kwan and Geraint F. Lewis from the University of Sydney's School of Physics have written a book, said to maximize the time of your survival in a black hole. It's called "No Way Back: Maximizing survival time below the Schwarzschild event horizon" and it basically states that the more you fight it, the quicker you're doomed to fall towards singularity and be transformed into a handful of particles.

But until there will be a reason to worry, Nostradamus and the panicked people can rest easy. Small colliders of this sort have been around for decades, searching inside atoms. This is just a bigger version with a higher goal.