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CERN picks Cisco to collaborate on advanced networking capabilities

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Cisco joins CERN's openlab industry partnership platform to help develop new computing infrastructure technology

The European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) has welcomed networking supplier Cisco to its science and industry partnership platform, openlab, as it embarks in a round of experiments on the Large Hadron Collider (LHC).



With the LHC back online after a lengthy upgrade process and operating at record-breaking energy levels early in its second research run, CERN is generating unprecedented amounts of data.

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Its computing grid was already handling vast amounts of data per year. The LHC's millions of sensors are capable of producing data at a rate of a [petabyte](#) per second – the equivalent of 20,000 Blu-ray discs – and this is expected to increase significantly in the next decade, necessitating not just huge amounts of compute and storage capacity, but new approaches to the network tying it together.

According to Cisco, this ramp up means CERN is seeing big data challenges that are currently beyond the imagination of most enterprise CIOs.

To this end, Cisco's partnership with CERN will research and develop next-generation, highly secure computing infrastructure capable of dealing with the coming data explosion that will be helpful not just to CERN's scientists, but the wider world as well.

CERN and Cisco have each assigned a team of experts to the project, with a mandate to investigate concepts that build on the evolution of hardware, heterogeneous system designs and the increasing functionality of network interface hardware.

“The success of the LHC depends critically on advances in information processing technologies and components,” said Alberto Di Meglio, head of CERN openlab.

“Advanced technologies are needed to operate scientific instruments, such as the accelerator and the detectors, safely and efficiently in an open environment.

“We need technologies that are at the forefront of today's practices and, in many cases, several years ahead of general industry usage. Therefore, we are partnering with industry-leading companies and are pleased to welcome Cisco into CERN openlab,” he added.

Read more about CERN

- Rackspace and CERN talk up the latest development to emerge from [their open-source cloud partnership](#).
- Cern is using [Software AG's in-memory data management software BigMemory](#) to support system availability for the Large Hadron Collider.

“Managing and analysing large amounts of data are challenges many organisations are facing, including CERN. As the public and private sector evolve to a digital platform, open innovation and collaboration across industry leaders, research institutes, universities and startups will be vital to the success of the global economy,” said Maciej Kranz, vice-president of corporate technology at Cisco.

Cern openlab is a framework to develop and test state-of-the-art technology in CERN's research environment. A number of other technology companies already participate in the framework, including Brocade, Huawei, Intel, Oracle, Rackspace, Seagate and Siemens.

It also collaborates with universities to help train scientists and engineers through its Summer Student Programme, which is open to both Masters and PhD-level students.

The lab has just kicked off a three-year phase looking at a number of projects around data acquisition, compute platforms, storage architecture, compute provisioning and data analytics, as well as networking.



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