



Jeopardy champ IBM Watson computing system featured at SC11

SEATTLE, September 22, 2011---Attendees at SC11 will have the opportunity to match wits in a game of Jeopardy!® with IBM's Watson computing system. SC11 will take place in the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle from Nov. 12-18.

Watson will be featured in a kiosk located on the 6th floor of the convention and trade center, separate from the main IBM booth. The kiosk is a version of the full IBM Power Systems-based Watson system that competed on the game show. Watson represents a significant advance in a computer's ability to understand context in human language – a technology with potential applications in such domains as medicine. As has been demonstrated in some well-publicized contests, man versus computer in a game of Jeopardy is not the mismatch one might imagine. Understanding the complexities of natural language, which comes naturally to humans, is an extraordinary challenge for computers.

Nonetheless, Watson's ability to employ hundreds of algorithms simultaneously to process human language and rapidly retrieve answers from its massive database makes it a formidable competitor as Jeopardy champions Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter found out earlier this year when they took on the machine at IBM's T.J. Watson Research Laboratory in Yorktown, New York. Watson won, earning a grand total of \$77,147 in a three-day contest, but not without struggling with some questions. Highlights are available on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFR3IOm_xhE

The Watson kiosk will offer four topic areas to explore, allowing attendees to learn more about the technology, the Watson machine itself and next steps for the Watson system. The fourth of these areas is the Jeopardy game. Those who choose to compete against the machine will be able to see the probabilities Watson calculated in formulating answers. Just as in the television version, contestants will be able to choose a question category and dollar amount, though there will be no host, and contestants will be on their honor for scoring.

“In addition to injecting an element of fun into SC11, Watson will show a dimension of computing that offers some intriguing future possibilities,” said Scott Lathrop, SC11 General Chair. “In keeping with the theme for SC11, Watson offers one more way of ‘connecting communities through HPC.’”

Eddie Epstein of IBM will present “The IBM Jeopardy! Challenge” as part of the SC11 technical program. This talk will give an overview of the IBM Jeopardy! Challenge, including problem challenges, the algorithm approach, the scale out implementation and the highly iterative development process used to develop the Watson system. Future uses of the technology will also be touched on. The Masterworks presentation will be held at 4:15 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 16 in The Conference Center rooms 301/302 (directly across the street from the Washington State Convention and Trade Center).

http://sc11.supercomputing.org/schedule/event_detail.php?evid=mswk106

Watson is bound to find some worthy challengers at SC11.

About SC11

SC11, sponsored by the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) and the IEEE Computer Society, offers a world-class technical program, a comprehensive Communities Program, and an Exhibit Hall that together showcase the latest advances in high performance computing, networking, storage and analysis that are advancing scientific discovery, research, education and commerce. This premier international conference brings together experts from around the world along with people new to the community to share knowledge and information, to form new partnerships and collaborations, and to empower the attendees to enhance their productivity. For more information on SC11, please visit: <http://sc11.supercomputing.org/>.

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