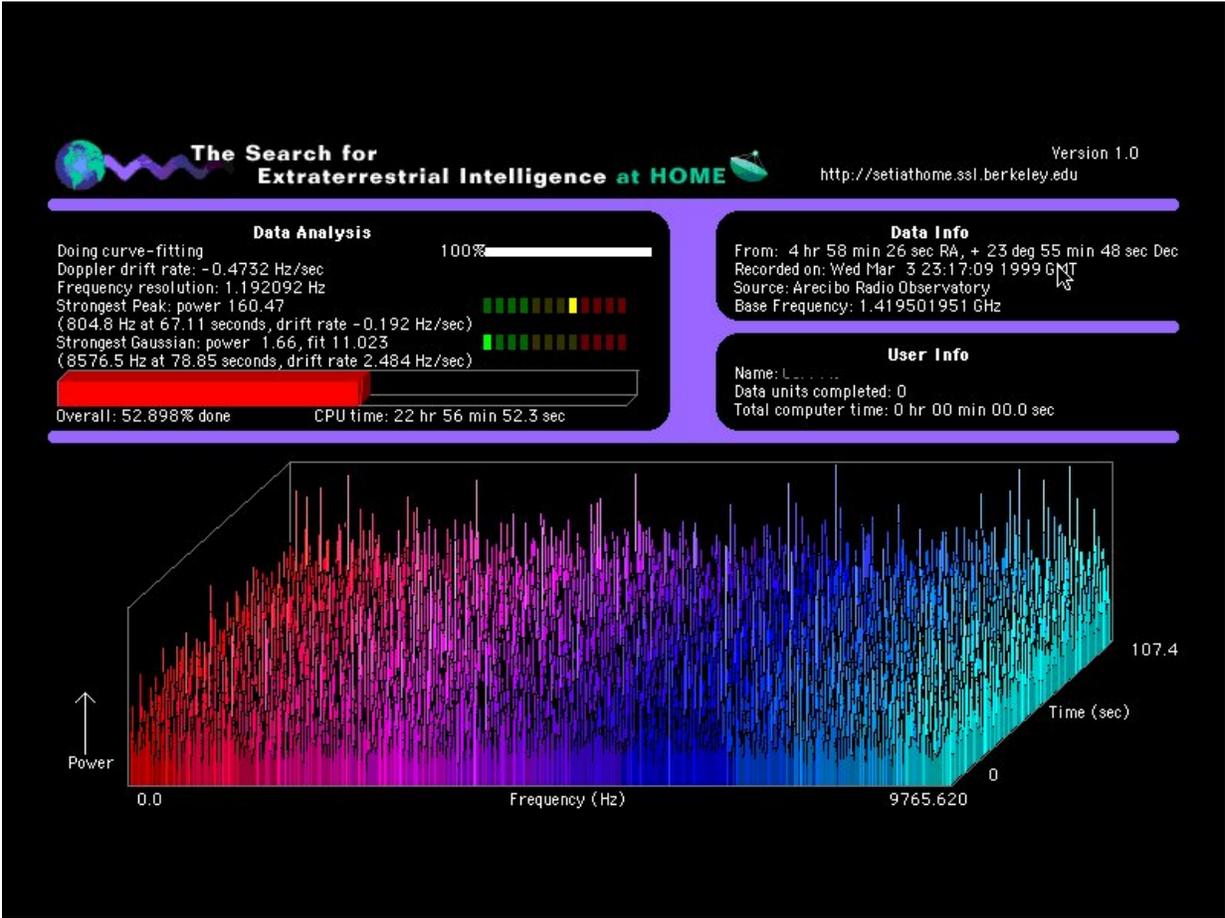


SETI@Home ends its public phase, hunt for aliens continues

March 6 2020, by Jelani Harper



Credit: SETI@home

For the general public, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI)

is almost over. On March 2, SETI@home revealed its crowdsourced supercomputing application [will go into hibernation](#) on March 30 of this year.

For nearly 21 years, SETI@home leveraged UC Berkeley's distributed computing solution, BOINC, to access the computational resources of volunteers from the [general public](#) to analyze data for potential extraterrestrial life. Although the organization will discontinue this practice at the end of the month, its website and message boards will remain operational, providing a means for the public to engage with the scientific community.

The decision to stop using the computers of volunteers from the general public for this endeavor stemmed from two reasons. Firstly, the organization has issued [initial analysis](#) of all the data needed for the present. Secondly, it now has to engage in the laborious process of completing the backend analysis of over 20 years' worth of data. The data management demands for this stage are considerable. Initial data analysis of the scope and scale of SETI@home primarily involves sifting through smaller databases for relatively high-level tests. Now, researchers are tasked with analyzing the entirety of their data to see what they might have missed all this time.

SETI@home is largely considered the brainchild of computer scientist David Gedye, who, along with fellow computer scientist David Anderson, was instrumental in devising the supercomputer framework for seeking out extraterrestrial life.

Because of the distributed architecture powering the supercomputer, it can access the computers of volunteers over the internet when those machines are online but not in use. Members of SETI based at UC Berkeley sent those devices data from space to analyze for evidence of alien life.

The enormous amounts of data for this project largely stemmed from radio telescopes. The objective was to filter out the noise—mostly produced from man-made radio waves and satellites—inherent to such data in outer space to identify potential signals indicative of alien life.

As the length of time of the SETI@home project indicates, the efforts of volunteers who donated their computing resources to detect alien life was vital. According to SETI@home researchers, "We're extremely grateful to all of our volunteers for supporting us in many ways during the past 20 years. Without you, there would be no SETI@home."

BOINC is still available to volunteers from the general public to help with other causes, such as disease research.

More information:

setihome.berkeley.edu/forum_thread.php?id=85267

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Citation: SETI@Home ends its public phase, hunt for aliens continues (2020, March 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-03-setihome-phase-aliens.html>

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