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NEWS

A COMPUTER ON A CHIP

One of the first scientific applications of transputer technology is now under way. The aim is to give molecular modellers a work station with the power of a super computer—but not its price.

Chemical Design has initiated the programme and is working with Glaxo in drug design, ICI in polymers and inorganic catalysts, and British Biotechnology in protein engineering to produce a system aimed at the molecular modelling market. At the heart of the system is INMOS's transputer—'the computer on a chip'. This 9 mm square chip contains a 32-bit microprocessor capable of 10 MIPS (million instructions persecond), 2 Kbytes of RAM,

a 32-bit memory interface and a memory controller.

With this system it would be possible for molecular modellers to perform calculations, which currently take days, within a few hours. Molecular modelling programs are memory intensive and therefore often require access to a supercomputer, but the MITIE workstation would be able to run such programs. According to the company the aim is to provide supercomputer performance at minicomputer prices.

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