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News

## Perilous primes



In "[Discovering new primes](#)" and "[Primes update: success again!](#)", PASS Maths has been following progress in the hunt for Mersenne primes. It seems that some people are taking the search too seriously for their own good!

Aaron Blosser, a contractor at the US West telecommunications firm in Denver, Colorado, set up the company's network of workstations to join in the search.

The Mersenne search program was only supposed to run during quiet times when the machines had no other work to do, but US West are claiming that it wreaked havoc with their directory services, causing enormous delays to their customers.

Unfortunately, Blosser never asked permission to run the Mersenne search on the US West network, and he is now under investigation by the FBI. The company wish to prosecute and things are looking grim for this over-keen prime-seeker.

The greatest irony? Despite having a network of over 2500 computers to play with, Blosser didn't find a prime!

### GIMPS

The Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search.

K.E.M.

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*Plus* is part of the family of activities in the Millennium Mathematics Project, which also includes the [NRICH](#) and [MOTIVATE](#) sites.