

Supercomputer beats TV quiz champions



Jeopardy is one of America's oldest and most popular quiz shows. But this time, inside the brightly-lit studio, a contest billed as 'man versus machine' - the programme's producers pitted two of their most successful contestants ever against a computer. Known as Watson, the computer is a giant piece of hardware, equivalent in size to several fridges. And over three programmes, Watson beat his human contenders with ease.

In a split-second, Watson is able to digest the question and try and match it against huge amounts of information it has at its disposal. It very quickly assesses how good a match it thinks it has and buzzes either very quickly, or not so quickly, reflecting how confident it is that it has the right answer.

Watson is also able to notice nuances in language, between say 'bat' the animal and 'bat' used in sports. On a prime-time US TV show with millions of viewers it was great publicity for IBM. But the company says Watson the computer is an IT genius and a breakthrough in computing.

Tom Burrige, BBC News

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to pit against : mettre en compétition

contestant/contendor : concurrent

QUESTIONS POSSIBLES:

- 1) De quoi parle le document?**
- 2) Combien de concurrents s'affrontent ?**
- 3) Qui est Watson?**
- 4) Que fait-il très facilement?**
- 5) Qu'est-il capable de faire en une fraction de seconde?**
- 6) En quoi est-il particulièrement intelligent**