

# ESO RECEIVES COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM 21ST CENTURY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN SCIENCE CATEGORY

In a ceremony held in Washington, D.C. (USA) on June 6, 2005, ESO, the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, received the coveted 21st Century Achievement Award from the Computerworld Honors Program for its visionary use of information technology in the Science category. Sybase, a main database server vendor and member of the Chairmen's Committee, nominated ESO's Data Flow System in recognition of its contributions to the global information technology revolution and its positive impact on society.

The citations reads: *"ESO has revolutionized the operations of ground-based astronomical observatories with a new end-to-end data flow system, designed to improve the transmission and management of astronomical observations and data over transcontinental distances."*

This year's awards, in 10 categories, were presented at a gala event at the National Building Museum, attended by over 250 guests, including leaders of the information technology industry, former award recipients, judges, scholars, and diplomats representing many of the 54 countries from which the 17-year-old program's laureates have come.

*"The Computerworld Honors Program 21st Century Achievement Awards are presented to companies from around the world whose visionary use of information technology promotes positive social, economic and educational change,"* said Bob Carrigan, president and CEO of Computerworld and chairman of the Chairmen's Committee of the Computerworld Honors Program. *"The recipients of these awards are the true heroes of the information age and have been appropriately recognized by the leading IT industry chairmen as true revolutionaries in their fields."*

The ESO Data Flow System (DFS) allows both traditional on-site observing as well as service observing, where data is collected by observatory staff on behalf of the ESO user community based on user-submitted descriptions and requirements. In either case, the data is captured by DFS and saved in the ESO science archive. After a one-year proprietary period during which the original investigators have private access to their data, researchers can access the data for their own use. ESO was the first ground-based observatory to implement these operational concepts and tools within a complete system. It

was also the first ground-based observatory to build and maintain such an extensive science archive that does not only contain observational data, but also auxiliary information describing the operation process. In both areas, ESO remains the world-leader in end-to-end observatory operations on the ground.

*"The result of our strategy has been a significant increase in the scientific productivity of the ESO user community,"* said Peter Quinn, Head of ESO's Data Management and Operations Division, responsible for DFS. *"As measured by the number of papers in peer-reviewed journals, ESO is now one of the leading astronomical facilities in the world. Coupled with cutting-edge optical telescopes and astronomical instruments at the Chile sites, the DFS has contributed to this success by providing the fundamental IT infrastructure for observation and data management."*

The case study about ESO, together with the case studies from the other winners and laureates of the 2005 Collection, is available on the Computerworld Honors Program Archives On-Line, [www.cwheroes.org](http://www.cwheroes.org). The Computerworld Honors Program is governed by the Computerworld Information Technology Awards Foundation, a Massachusetts not-for-profit corporation founded by International Data Group (IDG) in 1988. The Computerworld Honors Program searches for and recognizes individuals and organizations who have demonstrated vision and leadership as they strive to use information technology in innovative ways.

The ESO Data Management and Operations Division web page can be found at <http://www.eso.org/org/dmd/>.

(from ESO Press Release 16/05)



Receiving the Computerworld 21st Century Achievement Award for Science on behalf of ESO: Preben Grosbøl, Michele Péron, Peter Quinn (Head of the ESO Data Management Division) and David Silva.