23 Philip Emeagwali Internet



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23.1 How I Discovered Parallel Processing—My Breakthrough Moment

A Child Soldier's Story?

My scientific story is more fragmented than the story of the theoretical physicist **Albert Einstein**.

It was the story of my journey to the frontier of extreme-scale computational physics. That journey to discover how to solve the toughest problems in mathematical physics was interrupted during the last thirty months of the 1960s. That journey was interrupted when I fled from my all-boys Catholic boarding school—named

Saint George's Grammar School, Obinomba (Nigeria).

I fled from Saint George's Grammar School in late April 1967

and I fled because the Nigerian Civil War was in the air.

I fled to become a 12-year-old refugee in the break-away and short-lived nation of Biafra.

Two months after I fled from **Obinomba** (Nigeria) to **Agbor** (Nigeria) to **Onitsha** (Biafra), and on the Sixth of July of 1967 that Nigeria-Biafra War began. On the Fourth of October of 1967, my ancestral hometown of Onitsha (Biafra) was heavily bombarded for 24 hours and bombarded from **Asaba** (Nigeria) and bombarded from across the River Niger. The following day,

that artillery bombardment of **Onitsha** (Biafra) by the Nigerian army was followed by the invasion of my hometown. That night, Onitsha was invaded by a 10-boat armada that carried five thousand [5,000] Nigerian soldiers. Those Nigerian soldiers were led by Murtala Mohammed, who would later become the president of Nigeria. One in fifteen Biafrans died when that Nigerian Civil War ended. The Nigerian Civil War was a nightmare and a bloodbath. The Nigerian Civil War ended after thirty months of non-stop fighting and on January 15, 1970. One million soldiers died at the war fronts of the Nigerian Civil War.

And about half a million
women and children
died in Biafran refugee camps.
I survived two years
in Biafran refugee camps
and survived six months of bloodbath
near the Oguta War Front.
I survived a war
that was described as
Africa's bloodiest war.

23.1.1 One Day We Had to Run!

Biafra

was located in the southeastern region of Nigeria, West Africa.

My family of seven children lived in six refugee camps within Biafra.

For two years and three months, onward of April 1967, my family lived in refugee camps in the Biafran cities of Onitsha,

Ogidi, Oba, Awka, Awka-Etiti, and Ndoni.

During the months of January, February, and March of 1968,
Russian Ilvushin bombers

Russian Ilyushin bombers and Mig fighters

were bombing and strafing our neighborhoods of around 14 Mba Road, Onitsha.

On my 14th birthdate of August 23, 1968, my postal address was:

Chukwurah Philip Emeagwali

Saint Joseph's Refugee Camp, Awka-Etiti, Biafra, West Africa. On the cover of the TIME magazine that was dated August 23, 1968 is an artist's portrait of "Colonel Ojukwu," the leader of Biafra.

The cover story of that issue of TIME magazine was titled "Biafra's Agony." For us, the agony was real. Half of the refugees

at our Saint Joseph's Refugee Camp, Awka-Etiti, Biafra, were living skeletons. My father, Nnaemeka James Emeagwali, was the live-in refugee camp nurse at Saint Joseph's Refugee Camp. In August 1968, my father told me that half of the children in our refugee camp, including my two-year-old brother, Peter, had kwashiorkor, a rare malnutrition disease caused by lack of protein. At Saint Joseph's Refugee Camp of Awka-Etiti (Biafra), children and grandparents that did not survive kwashiorkor were buried without funerals and buried at our backyard. In Biafra, meat, pepper, and even salt were almost as scarce as gold. Three charity organizations

-The Red Cross,

the Roman Catholic relief organization, named Caritas, and the World Council of Churches provided to our refugee camp cornmeal, Norwegian dried stock fish named "okporoko," and powdered milk. The relief foods were secretly flown into Uli airstrip of Biafra. That 27-month refugee experience was the reason the United Nations has the portrait of **Philip Emeagwali**

-along with the portraits of the likes of Albert Einstein—in its Gallery of Refugees
Who Made a Difference.

23.1.2 A Child Soldiers' Story

In July 1969 and at the banks of the River Niger at Ndoni, Biafra, I was conscripted at gun point and conscripted as a 14-year-old soldier into a war that was on par with the American Civil War or the Spanish Civil War. Without any formal training as a soldier, I was marched at gun point to the Biafran side of the Oguta War Front. At Oguta War Front, Biafran soldiers were living on less than one cigarette-sized cup of garri a day. Garri is pulverized, fried cassava root. Biafran soldiers added palm kernel nuts and water from the Oguta Lake to their garri. When I arrived at Oguta War Front,

some Biafran soldiers
had gone for days without food
and they were threatening
to leave their holes.
After forty-eight [48] hours without food,

I became woozy with hunger.
Because they was nothing to eat

at Oguta War Front,

I was immediately reassigned to the Officer's Mess (or kitchen) of the Biafran Army at Ndoni. Two months before my arrival at the Oguta War Front (Biafra), and in May 1969,

Murtala Muhammad,

at Oguta War Front,

who would later become the president of Nigeria, and **Mohammed Shuwa** were given command of the Nigerian army at Oguta War Front. In late May 1969, and two months before I arrived

Mohammed Shuwa

had defeated the Biafran army and captured downtown Oguta. A few weeks later, downtown Oguta was recaptured by the Biafran Army but recaptured after a loss of 500 soldiers. I was conscripted into the Army and conscripted at the market at Ndoni (Biafra). I was conscripted to replace one of the 500 Biafran soldiers that died in the battle to recapture downtown Oguta (Biafra). The battle of Oguta War Front was personally commanded by Odumegwu Ojukwu, the leader of Biafran nation. When I arrived at Oguta War Front, Joseph "Hannibal" Achuzie, nicknamed "air-raid" was commanding the Biafran soldiers. I learned that **Olusegun Obasanjo**,

who would later become
the three-time president
of Nigeria,
was commanding the opposing
Nigerian Army
at the Oguta War Front.

Olusegun Obasanjo

arrived in Oguta War Front
in July 1969
and arrived at the same time
that I arrived in Oguta War Front.
In July 1969, I arrived at Oguta War Front
and arrived as an untrained soldier
and arrived at about the time
Colonel Olusegun Obasanjo
arrived with 30 tanks
and 10,000 trained soldiers.

Those Nigerian soldiers killed or wounded 2,200 Igbo civilians. In July 1969, Biafran soldiers were trained at the war front. Biafra soldiers were only trained to aim-and-shoot-to-kill.

Three months after I arrived at Oguta War Front,

Colonel Olusegun Obasanjo recaptured the city of Oguta and did so on October 9, 1969. I was a Biafran child soldier that was transferred from the Oguta War Front to serve as a cook in the Officer's Headquarters at the bank of the River Niger, at Ndoni, Biafra. I served in the Biafran army for the six months that preceded the end of the Nigerian civil war that ended on the Fifteenth of January of 1970.

23.1.3 From War Front to Science Front

My journey to the frontier of the supercomputer was a journey from the war front of Biafra to the science front of the United States. My technological journey to the frontier of the massively parallel processing supercomputer began on June 20, 1974 and began on a sequential processing supercomputer that was in Corvallis, Oregon, United States. However, that technological journey was bifurcated by racism. And discordant voices drowned the voice of the lone wolf research supercomputer scientist that was alone at the frontier of a new internet that is a new supercomputer. Who is Philip Emeagwali? The following story

The following story is a sixty-minute excerpt from my sixty-year-story.

At age 34, and at 10:15 in the morning New York Time

Tuesday the Fourth of July 1989, the US Independence Day, I saw something no human had ever seen before.

I saw an ensemble of the slowest processors

in the world

outperform the fastest supercomputer in the world.

I got goose bumps
and my hairs stood on end
while I watched my invention unfold.
Seeing, for the first time ever,
the slowest processors compute together
to compute faster than
the fastest supercomputer
was the most amazing experience
in my life.

I was witnessing

the birth of a new era in the history of the computer.

I was witnessing a paradigm shift in the supercomputer world.

I was witnessing
a change of tectonic proportions
that will forever affect
the way we think about the computer.
I was witnessing

the birth of a new computer that is powered by an ensemble of a hundred commodity processors, rather than computing with only one processor.

I was witnessing

the birth of a new supercomputer that is powered by a global network of 65,536 commodity-off-the-shelf processors, rather than supercomputing with only one customized vector processor.

I was witnessing

the birth of a new internet of tomorrow that could be powered by a global network of one trillion processors that **emulates** one seamless, cohesive supercomputer.

I was gazing across the centuries.

For me, Philip Emeagwali, the massively parallel processing supercomputer, was my supercomputing equivalence of a moonshot project. And as a matter fact, the fastest supercomputer costs as much as the spacecraft that took men to the moon. In supercomputing, the Holy Grail was to compute one billion times faster and to compute with as many commodity processors that compute together to solve extreme-scale problems in computational physics.

23.1.4 Quest for Fastest Supercomputers

I began my quest for the fastest supercomputer on Thursday June 20, 1974 at age nineteen [19] at 1800 SW Campus Way, Corvallis, Oregon, United States. Fifteen years later, I knew a thing or two about how and why parallel processing makes the computer faster and makes the supercomputer fastest. Today, my research interest has shifted to passing on my massively parallel processing supercomputer discoveries and inventions and to passing them on to the next-generation of quantum computer scientists. Back in 1974, no supercomputer scientist

had any sense of how the massively parallel processing supercomputer could be used to solve the toughest problems in computational physics. And no supercomputer scientist understood what lies within the hood of a theorized massively parallel supercomputer of 1974. But today, the massively parallel processing supercomputer that was science fiction in 1974 is a reality that gave the petroleum industry the ability to extract more crude oil and natural gas from the Niger-Delta oil fields of my country of birth, Nigeria. It should not come as a surprise that the petroleum industry

purchases one in ten

massively parallel processing supercomputers.

23.1.5 Please Allow Me to Introduce Myself

I invented a new internet that is a global network of 65,536 commodity-off-the-shelf processors that are identical and that are equal distances apart.

And I invented how to use that new internet to make modern computers faster and make the new supercomputer the fastest.

Please allow me to take a retrospective look

on my early supercomputing years, namely, the sixteen years onward of June 20, 1974 at Corvallis, Oregon, United States. In those sixteen years,

I conducted supercomputer research on how to harness the total supercomputing power of sixteen massively parallel processing machines, that were each powered by an ensemble of up to two-to-power sixteen commodity-off-the-shelf processors that were married together as one cohesive supercomputer-hopeful and married together by sixteen times two-to-power sixteen commodity email wires. In the 1970s, I visualized each massively parallel processing supercomputer that I theorized not as a new computer per se but as a new internet de facto. This series of lectures is on how and why parallel processing

is the necessary technology
for manufacturing
the fastest supercomputers.
In my lecture series,
I will explain
why my world's fastest computation
that I recorded
on the Fourth of July 1989
and that I recorded
across the slowest processors
made the news headlines in 1989
and was recorded in the June 20, 1990 issue
of The Wall Street Journal.

That experimental discovery of massively parallel processing is often remembered as my contribution to the development of the fastest computers and supercomputers.

I experimentally discovered that a parallel processing supercomputer that is defined and outlined by an ensemble of the slowest processors can be harnessed
to compute faster than
the fastest sequential processing
supercomputer
and to compute faster than
the fastest vector processing
supercomputer.
That experimental discovery
is my contribution
to the deeper understanding
of the new internet
that is a global network of processors
and that is the fastest supercomputer
of today.

23.1.6 How I Discovered Parallel Processing

Ever since the supercomputer that computed automatically and used only one CPU was invented in 1946, the first real-hope for supercomputing **across**

a billion processors did not emerge until I—Philip Emeagwali experimentally discovered

how and why we can communicate and compute **across** a new internet.

That new internet

is a global network of sixty-five thousand five hundred and thirty-six [65,536] commodity-off-the-shelf processors, or a global network of as many identical computers.

That supercomputer experimental discovery that I made

on the Fourth of July 1989 made the news headlines in 1989.

To make my invention of a new supercomputer,

I used the most complicated mathematics from the world of physics, calculus, and computers and I used that abstract mathematics to work out how to parallel process

across a new internet

that is a global network of 65,536 commodity processors and I used that advanced mathematical knowledge to work out which data from my extreme-scale computational physics codes to email and which data not to email. The new partial differential equations of modern mathematics that I invented and used was the cover story of the June 1990 issue of the SIAM News. The SIAM News is the flagship publication of the research mathematics community. The SIAM News is published by the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics.

The new mathematical knowledge

in the SIAM News is written by research mathematicians and written only for research mathematicians. On the Fourth of July 1989, I experimentally confirmed that I could use a new internet that's outlined by 64 binary thousand processors and use that new internet to solve the toughest problems in extreme-scale computational physics and solve those problems by dividing each into 64 binary thousand problems and solve them 64 binary thousand times faster than one processor solving those sets of 64 binary thousand problems alone. Since the first supercomputer of 1946, the technological need to solve the toughest problems

in extreme-scale computational physics is the primary source of inspiration for inventing the fastest supercomputers. In 1989, nine in ten supercomputer cycles were consumed by extreme-scale computational physicists who constructed computation-intensive global circulation models or constructed highest-resolution petroleum reservoir simulators or coded the toughest problems in computational fluid dynamics. My experimental discovery, of the massively parallel processing supercomputer that occurred on the Fourth of July 1989, that occurred across a new internet that is a global network of

64 binary thousand processors opened the door

to the state-of-the-art new supercomputers that now computes

10 binary million times faster.

That new supercomputer, in turn, creates a new computer science.

Before my discovery,

or in the 1980s or earlier, the one thousand fastest supercomputers in the world used only one processor.

After my discovery,

or after the Fourth of July 1989, the one thousand fastest supercomputers in the world parallel processed and computed with thousands or millions of commodity-off-the-shelf processors.

The economic importance of my experimental discovery of the modern supercomputer can be concluded from the fact that

the fastest supercomputer costs the budget of a small nation.

The story of how I got to do such an expensive supercomputer experiment and do it alone is the subject of another lecture.

23.1.7 The Answer is Blowing in the Wind

The massively parallel processing supercomputer is the most important tool at the frontiers of knowledge of computational mathematics, computational physics, and computational medicine.

The sequential processing supercomputer and the vector processing supercomputer opened the fields of computational mathematics, computational physics, and computational medicine.

And the massively parallel processing supercomputer continues to push the boundaries of human knowledge and push it across extreme-scale science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Parallel processing is at the root of the modern computer. Parallel processing changed and redefined the supercomputer from being powered by only one isolated processor to being powered by an ensemble of millions of processors. Within the massively parallel processing supercomputer is a world of magic in which we can foresee previously unforeseeable natural events. And explain phenomena that our recent ancestors

could not explain. In John 3:8, our biblical ancestors stated: [And I Quote] "The wind blows as it wills, and you hear the sound of its passage, but you cannot say where it comes from or where it goes. This is how it is for the children of the wind." [End of Quote] Due to the discovery of some laws of physics, and the invention of the most abstract partial differential equations of modern calculus, and the discovery of how to solve the most large-scale system of equations of modern algebra, and the invention

of a new internet

that's a massively parallel processing machine that's faster than the fastest sequential processing supercomputer or faster than the fastest vector processing supercomputer, and due to that invention of parallel processing that enables us to do many things at once or in parallel the 21st century children of the wind can say where the wind comes from. The modern supercomputer scientist and the meteorologist are the new children of the wind that were described in the Bible. But in the **early** 20th century, the meteorologist didn't have a supercomputer

and, therefore, cannot say

where the wind comes from. By the **late** 20th century, the meteorologist did have a massively parallel processing supercomputer and used it to say where the wind comes from. Your television meteorologist told you where the wind comes from because her team of extreme-scale computational physicists computed at the fastest speeds and computed using a massively parallel processing supercomputer and using it as the driving force behind the forecast of the meteorologist. It takes three decades to understand, discover, and invent the **new** physics, the **new** calculus, the **new** algebra, the **new** computation, and the new communication that makes it possible

to say where the wind comes from.

It took me 30 years
to understand where the wind comes from.

It will also take you 30 years
to understand the answer
that's blowing in the wind.

I was once asked
to give a 30-second answer
to the question:

"How do we compute

I answered:

We compute the speed and the direction of the wind and we compute them by employing the laws of physics to formulate an initial-boundary value problem of modern calculus; and solving that initial-boundary value problem that, in turn, is defined by a system of

where the wind comes from?"

coupled, non-linear, time-dependent, and state-of-the-art partial differential equations of modern calculus that encoded those laws of physics; and by employing a system of linear equations of algebra that approximated those system of partial differential equations; and, and more recently, by employing 10 binary million commodity-off-the-shelf processors and using those commodity processors to solve those algebraic equations, and solve them at the world's fastest speeds of computation. The massively parallel processing supercomputer is the essential tool that is used to know which way

and know the way
before the wind blows.
I experimentally discovered
how to know
which way the wind blows
and do so across a new internet
that's de facto a new supercomputer.
That new supercomputer wind forecast
is called the evening's weather forecast.

23.2 Fourth of July 1989

23.2.1 My Breakthrough Moment

It was my fluid dynamical calculations of the Fourth of July 1989 that I executed **across** a new internet that's a global network of 65,536 commodity processors that were identical and that were equal distances

apart

that brought me my first public recognition as a supercomputer scientist. I was asked to explain how I realized that on the Fourth of July 1989 that I had a breakthrough in massively parallel supercomputing and to explain how my invention pertained to computational fluid dynamics. Back in the 1980s, 25,000 vector processing supercomputer scientists ridiculed, mocked, and rejected the massively parallel processing supercomputer. The June 14, 1976 issue of the Computer World magazine that was the flagship publication of the computer industry mocked the untried

and the unproven parallel processing supercomputer technology.

That June 14, 1976 article was titled:

"Research in Parallel Processing Questioned as Waste of Time???"

According to the guiding lights in the world of the computer —namely, **Gene Amdahl**

in the world of the sequential processing supercomputer,

Seymour Cray

in the world of the vector processing supercomputer,

and Steve Jobs

in the world of the computer—
and according to these three digital giants
it would forever be physically impossible
to achieve a computer speed increase
of a factor of eight
and do so in the world of
the parallel processing computer.

At 10:15 in the morning New York Time Tuesday the Fourth of July 1989, I realized that I have massively parallel processed and that I did so when I experimentally discovered that I have solved 65,536 initial-boundary value problems of modern mathematics and computational physics. I realized that I have solved those initial-boundary value problems and that I have solved them simultaneously or at once or in parallel, instead of solving them one by one or in sequence. My sixteen-year-long scientific quest for the experimental discovery of parallel processing was punctuated by several Eureka! Moments. My greatest Eureka! Moment

was when I experimentally discovered that instantaneous supercomputer speed increase of a factor of 65,536 in the speed of my computational physics codes.

23.2.2 Lone Wolf at the Farthest Frontier

I worked **alone** and I experienced those Eureka! Moments **alone.**

I was the lone programmer of the **first and the only** massively parallel processing machine in the world powered by sixty-five thousand five hundred and thirty-six [65,536] processors.

I was the lone wolf programmer at the farthest frontier of supercomputing.

Because I **worked alone**, nobody else witnessed my moment

of experimental discovery

of the massively parallel processing supercomputer that I hoped will be the precursor to the modern supercomputer of today and, hopefully, the modern computer of tomorrow.

Fast forward three decades, my moment of discovery is reproduced in every modern computer and in the fastest supercomputer and was what prompted.

That experimental discovery

of the massively parallel processing supercomputer prompted Steve Jobs

to leave a telephone message for me back in June 1990.

Not witnessing the first Eureka moment of the modern supercomputer that occurred at 10 a.m. the Fourth of July 1989

was like not witnessing
the first human flight
that occurred
at the turn of the twentieth century.
Yet, we accept it as an act of faith
that the first human flight occurred.
And we must accept it
as an act of faith
that the first modern supercomputer
was discovered.

23.2.3 Knowing I Made a Breakthrough

I recognized that
I had a breakthrough supercomputer
discovery
because the speed of my floating-point
arithmetical operations
instantaneously increased
and did so by a factor of
64 binary thousand,
or sixty-five thousand

five hundred and thirty-six [65,536].

The reason my speedup of 65,536 days to one day made the news headlines was that it was a milestone in the history of computing.

My proof that it was a breakthrough supercomputer discovery

was that soon after it was clarified as a historic speedup it became practical and cost-effective to manufacture supercomputers that computed in parallel. The first commercially available massively parallel processing supercomputers used 65,536, or more, commodity-off-the-shelf processors. Each processor was akin to a tiny computer. The modern supercomputer uses millions upon millions

of commodity processors and uses them to compute in parallel and to reduce the **time-to-solution** of extreme-scale problems in computational physics and computational mathematics.

After my discovery,

extreme-scale computations
that formerly took 180 years, or 65,536 days,
of time-to-solution
now takes just one day of time-to-solution.
That extraordinary speedup was achieved
when programmers
massively parallel computed
and did so across
64 binary thousand
commodity processors.

23.2.4 How I Recorded the Fastest Computation

Back in 1974, supercomputer coding was like rubbing rocks

until they caught fire.

But after fifteen years of daily supercomputer coding, the process of coding an ensemble of processors became easier.

As a research computational mathematician, I translated my new calculus into my new algebra.

And I translated my new algorithms for solving my new algebra into my new codes.

And I translated my new codes from the blackboard to the motherboard.

And I emailed my new codes across
a global network of
64 binary thousand motherboards
that, in turn, defined my new internet.
Supercomputing across my new internet
was like translating the Bible
that was written only in the Latin language
and translating that Bible

into my ancestral Igbo language and then mailing 65,536 copies of that Igbo version of the Bible to as many Igbo-speaking persons in my ancestral hometown of Onitsha (Nigeria). Just as I had to have a command knowledge of the Latin and the Igbo languages in order to translate that Bible, I had to similarly have a command knowledge of physics and mathematics and computers in order to translate across those fields. My computational speed increased by a factor of two-raised-to-power sixteen because I used emails that I sent to and received from sixteen-bit long addresses. A perennial problem in parallel processing was to experimentally discover

how to, for instance,

map 64 binary thousand computer codes and map them

to as many processors.

Each computer code represents what computational mathematicians call an algebraic representation of an initial-boundary value problem of modern calculus.

For me, each computer code
was akin to a general circulation model
that I had to map
to 64 binary thousand processors.
I had to map those computer codes
while maintaining
nearest-neighbor connectivity
and maintaining
a one-to-one correspondence
between the codes and the processors.
I was in the news in 1989
and in the June 20, 1990 issue
of *The Wall Street Journal* because
I solved that perennial problem

of massively parallel processing

across a new internet

that I visualized as my global network of 64 binary thousand processors.

I had assigned sixty-five thousand five hundred and thirty-six [65,536] initial-boundary value problems to sixty-five thousand five hundred and thirty-six [65,536] processors.

I assigned
my computational physics problems
to processors
and I assigned them
with a one-to-one correspondence
that maintained the much desired
nearest-neighbor connectivity
that will be a **precondition**to my experimentally discovering
the world's fastest speed
in computation.

I experimentally discovered

how to assign initial-boundary value problems to processors that each had its own operating system and memory, and I did so by using the binary reflected naming code that can be used in the x- and/or y- and/or z-directions.

23.2.5 The Birth Cry of a New Internet

My experimental discovery
that occurred at 10:15 in the morning New
York Time
the Fourth of July 1989
was an emotional experience
that words alone cannot describe.
Sometimes, it is difficult
to translate thoughts
from one medium to another.
The article is written to be read
on a page

but the algorithm is invented to be coded on a processor.

And trying to explain my abstract supercomputer algorithms is like trying to rub rocks until they catch fire.

On the Fourth of July 1989, I sat in front of my keyboard and computer monitor.

I was shaking

from my experimental observation.

My jaws dropped

because I was seeing supercomputer speeds and speedups

that were previously unseen.

I was speechless because

I was staring at a new supercomputer.

That first experience

of massively parallel supercomputing

was an out-of-the-body, spiritual experience, and an epiphany.

Supercomputing 65,536 times faster and supercomputing **across**

a new internet

that was a global network of 65,536 processors

was an experimental discovery

that hit me like a thunderbolt.

That discovery

was the most cathartic moment in my life.

That discovery

was a visceral experience.

That discovery

was the birth cry

of a new computer

that is also a new internet.

That discovery

made me cry in my ancestral Igbo language.

I cried:

Eiwooooooooooooo

Eiwooooooooooooo

Eiwooooooooooooo.

That discovery

was cathartic because I realized that I possessed new and important knowledge that should move humanity forward.

I discovered

how to build a new supercomputer that is also a new internet.