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AP Physics P.5

1.11.18

The Largest Prime Number Discovered

The article I found interesting and delved deeper into reading was the discovery of the new largest prime number as of January 4th, 2018. This number is referred to as M77232917 and is made up of 77,232,917 twos, subtracted by one. What interested me about this article is the fact that I had no idea that there were a number of people attempting to figure out the largest prime numbers. According to the article, there is a term for all of these prime numbers of extreme values. They are called Mersenne primes, named after a french monk named Marin Mersenne. Mersenne was the first to ever discover a Mersenne prime. It struck out to me that there are rewards of up to \$3000 USD if a new Mersenne prime is discovered. This leads me to wonder the capabilities of numbers and just how many Mersenne primes can exist. Due to the long amounts of time it takes a computer to process these numbers, I believe that it will be a while until more of these numbers are found.

Reference(s):

GIMPS. "Largest Known Prime Number Discovered." *ScienceDaily*, Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search, 4 Jan. 2018, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/01/180104164507.htm.