

# SMARTEST MACHINE ON EARTH

1 X 53 HD



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What is so special about human intelligence? Join “Watson”, an IBM-developed super-computer as it competes against the most successful and celebrated contestants of all time on the popular game show *JEOPARDY!* for a grand prize of 1 million dollars. Who will prevail in this ultimate showdown between man and machine?

*Smartest Machine on Earth* chronicles NOVA’s unprecedented, behind-the-scenes access to IBM researchers as they develop the technology for Watson, the state-of-the-art computing system named after company founder Thomas J. Watson. The film examines the technological feats and hurdles necessary to develop Watson, the challenges artificial intelligence researchers face in mimicking the human thought process, and potential applications for the future.

Seeing Watson in action will leave many dumbfounded. Viewers will experience Watson’s incredible ability to reason and tackle human language as no computer has ever before. Refined and fine-tuned over four years and countless man-hours, Watson has already managed to rival some of the best former *Jeopardy!* contestants. But now it’s time to take the stage and see what Watson is really made of.

Watson is not connected to the Internet. Instead, it is stuffed with millions of documents—including anthologies, dictionaries, encyclopedias—from various sources, such as Wikipedia, *The New York Times*, and World Book Encyclopedia, from which it searches for answers. It’s been trained on thousands of *Jeopardy!* clues, but during game time it “hears” the questions for the first time just like its human competitors.

Watson is fascinating to see in action. Its accuracy now rivals the best human players: It has a

“life-like” voice and is extremely fast on the buzzer, something that certainly frustrates its human opponents. The system also utilizes a sophisticated game strategy, calculating how much money to wager depending on its confidence and how much it stands to lose.

The IBM Watson team, led by David Ferrucci, provides intimate access into the often challenging and humorous creation this one-of-a-kind machine. “I don’t think the world has ever seen a machine quite like Watson...something that can answer over this breadth, that can answer with this kind of confidence...this quickly, with just enough—horsepower—computational power to fit in a room,” says Ferrucci.

The film also explores other groundbreaking artificial intelligence technologies and introduces viewers to machines that see, speak, and move through the world. Some of the world’s top computer scientists discuss the overall meaning of Watson, and whether we are close to building a true artificial intelligence.

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## NOVA

### CREDITS

*Writers:* Julia Cort & Michael Bicks;

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*Producer:* Michael Bicks

*Executive Producer:* Paula S. Apsell

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