

Larry Smarr, PhD

Dr. Larry Smarr is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of California, San Diego. From 2000-2020, he served as the founding Director of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2), a UC San Diego/UC Irvine partnership, while holding the Harry E. Gruber Professorship in UCSD's Department of Computer Science and Engineering. Before that (1985-2000) he was the founding director of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at UIUC. The WWW browser/server NCSA Mosaic--the which led to Netscape Navigator, Microsoft's Internet Explorer, and the Apache Web Server--originated at NCSA while he was Director.

He received his Physics PhD in 1975 from the University of Texas at Austin, and did postdoctoral research at Princeton, Harvard, and Yale, before becoming a Professor of Physics and of Astronomy at UIUC from 1979 to 2000. In May 2008 he was awarded an honorary Ph.D. "Doctor of Science Honoris Causa," by the University of Missouri, where he received his BA and MS in 1970. In June 2024 he was awarded an honorary PhD in Engineering from UIUC.

He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering, as well as a Fellow of the American Physical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1990 he received the Franklin Institute's Delmer S. Fahrney Gold Medal for Leadership in Science or Technology, in 2006 the IEEE Computer Society Tsutomu Kanai Award for his lifetime achievements in distributed computing systems, and in 2014 the Golden Goose Award for his seminal research on computational general relativity.

Smarr gives frequent keynote addresses at professional conferences and to popular audiences. His views have been quoted in Science, Nature, the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Time, Newsweek, Atlantic, New Yorker, Wired, MIT Technology Review, Fortune, Business Week, CBS, BBC, the Sydney Morning Herald, the Age, the Australian, and the Australian Broadcasting Company.

In the last decade Smarr has become a pioneer in the quantified-self movement, including personalized surgery. He continues to provide national leadership in advanced cyberinfrastructure (CI), having served over the last 20 years as Principal Investigator on four major NSF CI research grants: the NSF OptIPuter, Pacific Research Platform, Cognitive Hardware and Software Ecosystem Community Infrastructure, and Toward the National Research Platform grants.

For eight years he was a member of the NIH Advisory Committee to the NIH Director, serving three directors. Smarr served on the NASA Advisory Council to four NASA Administrators, being appointed chair of the NASA Earth System Science & Applications Advisory Committee and chair of the NASA Information Technology Infrastructure Committee, as well as the NSF Advisory Committee on Cyberinfrastructure. He has been a member of DoE's Office of Science Advanced Scientific Computing Advisory Committee, ESnet Policy Board, and the Advisory Board to the Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He also served on Governor Schwarzenegger's California Broadband Taskforce in 2007.