



Press Release

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\$4.5 MILLION FOR RESEARCH ON COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGIES AT UNIVERSITIES ACROSS CANADA

Toronto, Ontario – The Honourable David L. Emerson, Minister of Industry, today announced a contribution of \$4.5 million to the Network for Effective Collaboration Technologies Through Advanced Research (NECTAR), a new Science and Engineering Research Canada (also known as NSERC) research network that will develop technologies to make virtual collaboration at a distance as productive and efficient as working face to face.

“People across Canada need to be able to collaborate effectively despite the large distances that separate them,” Minister Emerson stated. “The tools developed through this research network will help Canadian companies bring new products and services to market to further support collaboration.”

NECTAR’s research will be carried out by 11 researchers at six universities: the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, the University of Calgary, the University of Saskatchewan, Dalhousie University, and Queen’s University. In addition, partners from the public and private sectors will contribute nearly \$1.2 million to the project. They will also contribute expertise and resources to ensure that the research results are disseminated widely. The network plans to provide training to graduate and undergraduate students as well as to two postdoctoral fellows each year.

Dr. Ronald Baecker, the network’s scientific director, is a professor of computer science at the University of Toronto and the founder and chief scientist of the Knowledge Media Design Institute. He also is an active researcher, lecturer, and consultant. “Our work should be of particular interest to the many research networks of scientists being funded by Industry Canada, NSERC, SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) and CIHR (Canadian Institutes for Health Research),” added Dr. Baecker.

Dr. Saul Greenberg of the University of Calgary and Dr. Carl Gutwin of the University of Saskatchewan will act as team leaders for the network along with Dr. Baecker. Dr. Kellogg Booth of the University of British Columbia will take on the position of associate director for NECTAR.

NSERC President Tom Brzustowski said, “NECTAR offers an exciting program of research that brings together a collection of internationally recognized researchers from a variety of disciplines in a unique endeavour. The network will undoubtedly provide a better understanding of the possibilities collaboration technology offers.”

NECTAR is supported by NSERC through its Research Networks Grants Program. This program funds large-scale, complex research projects that involve multisectoral collaboration on a common theme and demonstrate the added advantages of a networking approach in which partners from both the private and the public sectors make contributions. The objective of the Research Networks Grants Program is to foster the creation of knowledge and expertise through large-scale multidisciplinary research projects; collaboration between university- and college-based researchers and other sectors; transfer of knowledge and expertise to Canadian-based organizations; training of highly qualified personnel; and other social and economic benefits to Canada.

Science and Engineering Research Canada (also known by its legal name “Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council” as well as the acronym NSERC) is a key federal agency investing in people, discovery, and innovation. It supports both basic university research through research grants, and project research through partnerships among post-secondary institutions, government, and the private sector, as well as the advanced training of highly qualified people.

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