

Building Tomorrow

February 20, 2009

New research program takes classroom anywhere, anytime

Province, industry, and university partner for mobile learning research

Edmonton... Research focusing on ways to use small, portable devices such as cell phones and PDAs to deliver courses and instructional material to Albertans could revolutionize education worldwide.

The research conducted by Dr. Kinshuk, the newly appointed iCORE/Xerox/Markin Industry Research Chair at Athabasca University, will take mobile technology like commonly available cell phones and use it to free students to work at their own pace and from the location of their choice.

“A scientific leader like Dr. Kinshuk is a perfect fit for Alberta,” says Doug Horner, Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. “His work supports two key government priorities, enhancing research capacity in growth sectors and increasing student access to Campus Alberta. Whether in a classroom or at a coffee shop, we want to help more Albertans to pursue post-secondary opportunities that fit their needs.”

“Beyond delivering content, we look at using all of the information these mobile devices contain to personalize and adapt the learning content for the student,” says Kinshuk. “For example, we’ve already developed a mobile application that uses a mobile device’s network data and GPS coordinates to display a learner’s location on a Google™ map along with the other online mobile learners, so they can form a location-based learning group - then online learning mimics a classroom group.”

Dr. Kinshuk’s research is supported by the Government of Alberta through iCORE (Alberta’s Informatics Circle of Research Excellence), Athabasca University, Xerox Canada, and a private donation made by Allan Markin. iCORE is providing \$760,000 over five years, Athabasca University is contributing \$1.6 million, Xerox Canada is contributing \$310,000, and Allan Markin is contributing \$450,000.

“The province’s work in combining research, development and commercialization to bring new technologies to world markets is what enabled us to attract a world-leading innovator such as Xerox Canada to invest with us in Dr. Kinshuk’s research,” says Dr. Frits Pannekoek, President of Athabasca University, one of the world’s foremost and fastest growing distance learning post-secondary institutions.

“Open innovation is the latest evolution in research at Xerox,” said Kevin Warren, President and CEO of Xerox Canada. “The collaboration with iCORE, Markin and Athabasca University has allowed us to develop ground-breaking technologies for a fraction of the time and cost associated with proprietary research. Dr. Kinshuk’s appointment will ensure this important relationship is successful well into the future.”

“iCORE is continuously working to support provincial priorities,” says Dr. Randy Goebel, President of iCORE. “The research and downstream commercial opportunities from this Chair will enhance education

to meet the needs of a growing province, and enable Alberta to increase innovation, and build a skilled workforce to improve the long-run sustainability of Alberta's economy.”

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Attachment: Project partners

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Project partners welcome exciting new industry research chair

Project Partners

Advanced Education and Technology (AET)

Investing in science and technology today is critical to ensure prosperity and a high quality of life tomorrow. Alberta Advanced Education and Technology focuses on the application of science and research and the innovative use of technology to shape the future of the province.

Alberta Informatics Circle of Research Excellence (iCORE)

iCORE invests in high calibre research scientists working on fundamental and applied problems in emerging areas such as wireless communications, artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, and quantum and nanocomputing. It operates several grant programs to develop iCORE Chairs at Alberta universities.

Athabasca University

Athabasca University is one of the world's foremost and fastest growing distance and E-learning post-secondary institutions. The university serves over 37,000 graduate and undergraduate students and offers more than 700 courses in 90 undergraduate and graduate degrees, diploma and certificate programs. For more information about Athabasca University, visit www.athabascau.ca.

Allan Markin

Allan Markin is Chairman of the Board of Canadian Natural Resources Limited. Allan has had a successful career in the oil and gas sector and has held senior positions at companies such as Amoco Texas and Merland Exploration before joining Calgary's Poco Petroleum in 1982 as President and CEO and then Canadian Natural Resources Limited 6 years later. Allan's community leadership contributions have focused on the areas of health care and education. In 2004, he was named the City of Calgary Citizen of the Year and the Governor General announced Allan's appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2008.

Xerox Corporation (Canada)

Xerox Corporation is the world's leading document management, technology and services enterprise, providing the industry's broadest portfolio of colour and black-and-white document processing systems and related supplies, as well as document management consulting and outsourcing services. This past year Xerox was awarded the National Medal of Technology, the highest technology award in the United States. For more information, visit www.xerox.com/innovation.

Dr. Kinshuk

Dr. Kinshuk is the newly appointed iCORE/Xerox/Markin Industry Research Chair in Adaptivity and Personalization in Informatics. He is presently a tenured full professor and the Director of the School of Computing and Information Systems at Athabasca University. Dr. Kinshuk came to Alberta in 2006 from New Zealand where he was the Director of the Advanced Learning Technologies Research Centre at Massey University. He is internationally well-known in the field of online and mobile learning with an excellent research record. With more than 230 research publications in refereed journals, international refereed conferences and book chapters, he is frequently invited as keynote and invited speaker in international conferences (21 in past 5 years) and visiting professor around the world (16 in past five years in Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Taiwan and Ukraine). Dr. Kinshuk has a PhD from De Montfort University, United Kingdom.

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