

## “Third Generation” Visual Computing Lab Moves It Into the Professional Communication Era

**From: Office of Program Director, Operations and Technology,  
Rogers Communications Centre, Ryerson University**

**August 1, 2010** – What started as a PC lab filled with state of the art Digital Equipment Corporation computers in 1997, morphed this summer into an iMac lab that will continue to provide advanced state of the art production facilities for 3D, Film Effects, Printing, and Multimedia curriculum. The Visual Computing Lab will continue to be shared across all of the Schools within Ryerson’s Faculty of Communication and Design. This “third generation” update includes new technologies to address the high-end presentation and printing design needs of the new Master of Professional Communications Graduate program offered by Ryerson’s School of Professional Communication.



When students and faculty start making use of the lab they will find the lab consists of thirty-four iMacs with large 27” screens. Loaded with technology required to do advanced media work, the iMacs are equipped with 2.8GHz Quad-Core Intel i7 CPU's, 8GB of RAM, 2TB Drives, ATI Radeon HD 4850 512MB video cards, and 8x DVD SuperDrives. The computers are

equipped with full sized Apple keyboards that include the numeric keypad required for many of the labs software shortcuts. The large screen size, quad core processing, video cards, SD media capability and DVD output lend themselves to the unique curricular requirements for the Visual Computing Lab that includes print, multimedia/web design, 3D applications and rendering. The iMac's will be set to dual boot into either OSX or Windows 7 so faculty and students will have access to the operating system of their choice to undertake production work.

As in the past the Visual Computing Lab will continue to serve RTA, Image Arts, Theatre and Interior Design students with 24 hour access to software such as Adobe's Web Premium 5.0 suite, Maya, 3D Studio and SMEDGE rendering software amongst its many offerings. In addition to the new iMacs an Epson large format flatbed scanner has been added to the room. The Epson Expression 10000XL large format (12.2" x 17.2") photo scanner has 2400 dpi resolution --higher than any other B-size flatbed scanner available today - plus a 3.8 dynamic range and 48-bit color.





To assist with more advanced design and 3D model creation, students will be able to borrow from a pool of Wacom digital pen devices that includes Cintiq 21UX and 12WX display devices that allow students to draw directly on the screen. The collection of tablets includes the more traditional Intuos4 Wacom surfaces.

For 3D modeling work, students creating 3D graphics will have access to Nextengine's Desktop 3D Scanner. The unit contains an eye-safe high-definition laser array and sensors with a high point density. The Scanner HD captures a wide colour gamut when scanning objects which is an important requirement in order to capture surfaces.



In addition to the software noted above the lab also contains EP Budgeting (Movie Magic), Microsoft Office 2010, Nero Burning Software, FireFox, MAX/MSP, Jitter, Basic Stamp, Processing, Arduino, Scratch, SynchronEyes, Eclipse, Google SketchUp, Google Earth, Second Life, iTunes connectivity to the shared sound effects server, SSH FTP, Netscape, Internet Explorer 8, Apple Quick Time, Real Media player 10 basic and VLC Media Player.



Teaching Faculty will be pleased to hear that the labs layout has been retained. The lab was re-built in 2006 with the teaching in learning process as a key design factor. Faculty teaching in the room will find they are no more than four rows away from any student and they can access any student via wide aisles and make use of a unique walkway down the center of the classroom to garner better student interaction. Also to assist with the teaching and learning process, the lab will be equipped with LanSchool [v7.4 Classroom Management Software](#) that will replace the SynchronEyes software previously installed in the lab. LanSchool allows teachers to share screens with the class, project any students work directly from their computers and turn off services such as the Internet, instant messaging, email and games that can distract students while teaching.

The Visual Computing Lab grew from a lab that housed 3D animation and film effects software to include multimedia design software in 2002. In 2004 the lab entered its second generation expanding to accommodate the Ontario double cohort of students and was later equipped with a new generation of PC's that could deliver 3D, multimedia and "HDTV" media. This third generation lab will allow it to continue as a state of the art 3D facility and multimedia lab, while providing a modern production environment for the School of Professional Communication.

More information on the Rogers Communications Centre can be found at <http://www.rcc.ryerson.ca/technology/index.htm>