



# DIGITALedge!

ROGERS COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

## RYERSON RESEARCH HELPS PIONEER DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL BROADCAST IN CANADA

**T**erry Harvey, the IBO DTV Facilitator at Ryerson University, is in the midst of an exciting research and development project. Ryerson, in conjunction with Greater Toronto Area broadcasters, is testing the viability of digital terrestrial broadcasting under the auspices of Canadian Digital Television Inc. (CDTV). CDTV is the body that brings together Canadian broadcasters during the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting.

Digital transmission is more desirable to broadcasters than analogue transmission. Part of the reason for this is that, despite the initial capital investment, digital television produces higher quality television broadcasts while its MPEG-2 compression rates allow for more TV

signals and digital data to fit into a similar broadcast space with little or no loss in quality. CityTV is one of the Toronto area broadcasters involved in the project and is currently operating a digital TV transmitter located atop the CN Tower. This transmitter functions much like the regular variety except that the signals it transmits are digital rather than analogue. The transmitter was installed in early December of last year and was used for the first time on the eighth of that month to broadcast the CDTV general meeting. Since then, the transmitter has been in constant use broadcasting looped HD content so its reception characteristics can be tested.

Recently, Industry Canada issued a license for a research project that will run from January 2001 to June 2002. During this time, various tests will be conducted to explore not only the technical aspects of digital, terrestrial, over the air broadcast, but various business models as well. It is in the area of developing new business models that Ryerson, through its research group in the Rogers Communications Centre, will become involved.

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The advent of digital broadcast technology has created a period of instability in the realm of broadcast communications technology. Canada, like all other countries, has been trying to decide on a digital TV broadcast format that will last many years. This is not unlike the situation in the 40's and 50's when countries were trying to decide on the monochromatic and colour standards for analogue TV broadcast. The Canadian position on digital television was to stay roughly two years behind aggressive American development in DTV so it could take advantage of any lessons learned. With the Americans moving forward, the stage is set for Canada to determine a standard for digital, terrestrial, over the air broadcast.

"It's a very difficult situation at the moment," says Harvey. "Some countries have already adopted standards, and the two international standards for digital, over the air broadcast are the ATSC (Advanced Television Systems Committee) standard and the DVB-T (Digital Video Broadcast - Terrestrial) standard. Both the ATSC and the DVB were established in the early 1990's to develop the standards for digital broadcast. The CDTV test in Toronto will investigate both the DVB-T and ATSC delivery systems."

Harvey has been an active participant in this endeavour by assisting in the development of the CDTV digital transmitter test meetings for the GTA. Ryerson University will play an important role in this process as will the Rogers Communications Centre. The Centre will receive assistance from various broadcasters and from various broadcast suppliers to put together a facility to undertake a comprehensive test of various systems for both DVB and ATSC transmission. To test new ideas, the Rogers Centre will use several of the IBO (Interactive Broadcast Ontario) interactive prototypes to test the interactive possibilities of digital television. These interactive projects will be relayed from Ryerson to the CN Tower for over-the-air transmission via a fibre optic line.

Another important part of the test is to demonstrate digital television's potential in the mobile environment. Ryerson and its broadcast partners are eager to explore new possibilities with the technology especially where it can help justify the costly conversion to digital

transmitters. One growing area is in the field of mobile reception. ATSC was initially designed for an environment that would allow the maximum amount of data to be transmitted from a broadcast tower to a fixed rooftop antenna. Advances in digital delivery technology can aid in making the transmission more useful in the mobile environment.

DVB transmission has been designed to support mobile television reception. For example, in Germany, DVB-T transmission tests were conducted with television receivers that were installed within motor vehicles. They were able to broadcast 15 megabits per second reliably at speeds of up to 200 km per hour while still maintaining the highest broadcast quality available. In fact, the reception quality in the mobile configuration was comparable or even better than the analogue standard NTSC we use today. This opens up the possibility for merging television markets with cars, often referred to as "backseat multimedia."

The reason for Ryerson's participation in this project is to help broadcasters determine what options are available in terms of a DTV business model. Ryerson has been developing knowledgeable workers for the broadcast industry for well over 50 years. As well, Ryerson has pioneered the development of FM radio and hosted Canada's first TV studio broadcast in 1949.

Ultimately, broadcasters will have to decide what business models they wish to pursue. "A broadcaster can conceivably go into a less robust mode during certain hours of the day and a more robust, High Definition mode during prime time," Harvey explains. Canadian broadcasters have already been allocated a digital television channel by Industry Canada to help facilitate the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. The current research opportunity is an excellent time to demonstrate how a digital channel can best be utilized. And given the current resources of both the Rogers Communications Centre and the Interactive Broadcast Ontario Project, Ryerson will demonstrate to the broadcast community a variety of ways digital broadcast can be delivered creatively while opening up new possibilities for revenue that will help support it. ■

# HDTV EDITING

Late last year, the Rogers Communications Centre was the recipient of a unique opportunity; it temporarily housed a high definition-editing suite for research and development purposes. The High Definition (HD) suite was an offshoot of an IBO (Interactive Broadcast Ontario) project whose aim was to assist Vision Television in bridging the gap between traditional and interactive broadcast.

The high definition opportunity came about after Terry Harvey, the IBO DTV Facilitator, suggested to Vision Television that they augment their foray into the world of interactivity with HD editing and production. Vision TV expressed interest in the offer and subsequently Terry, along with Lucie Costin-Hall (an RTA faculty member), met with Panasonic to enlist their support for the project. Eventually Panasonic supported the project by loaning HD cameras to Vision TV cinematographers and by providing an HD editing suite that was set up in the Rogers Centre. As it was located in the Centre, both Vision TV and Ryerson students had access to it for research purposes. The student research element focused mainly on the audio considerations for HD video production. It involved working with Dolby AC3 5.1-digital surround sound, the HD standard for audio.

Panasonic delivered the HD editing equipment in early December. With their help, a team headed by Ian Miller, who is a technologist in Ryerson's Computing and Communication Services department, made the suite operational. Vision Television started to make use of the facility in the middle of December. Their project involved telling the story of Canada's Aboriginal schools.

The editing suite was linear in nature because no truly adequate non-linear system for HD video has yet been developed. The suite consisted largely of new prototype equipment including a Panasonic Mixer (video switcher), of which there are only two in North America. Editing HD footage with a linear system proved to be quite a challenge. The data streams involved with HD video are very high. This is due to the fact that uncompressed data streams are used in order that maximum quality can be employed during the editing process. The net data rate when applying a dissolve between two video clips was in the area of three gigabytes per second.

The tape format used in the field was HD DVC Pro and the footage was edited with a HD DVC Pro player. The final product was outputted to a tape format known as D5. Both formats use the 1080i HDTV format. The finished product was broadcast in D5 via Bell Expressview's HD satellite channel. There was also a standard definition broadcast, which utilized the Betacam SP format. Entitled the Aboriginal Residential School's Program, both broadcasts aired some time in mid to late February on Vision TV.

The project was completed in January of this year and was successful according to Terry Harvey. "Everyone was happy with the results. The project demonstrated to the faculty what can be done with the HD format and it provided Ryerson with HD footage to use for research purposes." ■



fig. A

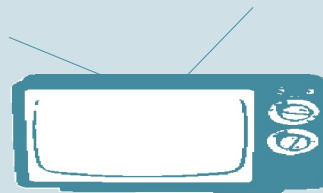


fig. B

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# DVD AUTHORING

The Rogers Communications Centre is making progress in the development of its professional DVD authoring facility. The Centre is exploring a product made by Pinnacle systems known as DVD1000. DVD1000 allows students to capture, edit, encode and author DVDs and interactive CDs as well as stream video to the web. Ryerson students have already successfully used the DVD1000 for a number of projects, including demonstrating the capabilities of interactive television. The station is an all-in-one package, including the DC 1000 video capture card, Adobe Premiere RT 5.1 and Minerva Impression 2.0 for CD and DVD authoring.

Dave Han, a former Radio and Television Arts student at Ryerson and a former production staff member at the RCC, has done extensive work in DVD authoring and is very pleased with the DVD1000. Recently, Vision TV asked the Rogers Centre to come up with a demonstration of an interactive television channel they want to pitch to the CRTC. "We were given content on Beta Cam. So I encoded it, brought it into Minerva, designed a few menus and what we ended up with was basically a prototype of how this interactive television could function," explained Han. Content was burned onto a regular recordable CD for easy viewing and interaction on a standard PC.

Because Minerva uses a visual interface, authoring DVDs is remarkably simple to do. "It's really easy to organize all your content," says Han. "If you have a basic idea of how a computer works and how to use drag and drop, you can use this software."

The all-in-one feature also saves numerous headaches and potentially a

lot of time that can be wasted trying to bring various pieces of hardware and software together so they can "talk" to each other. "A nice thing about this package is the hardware is working very closely with that software," Han continues. "Whereas if you bought your video card here, and your authoring software there, you're potentially going to run into some problems. "The software that is used to edit and author the encoded file also captures video. Therefore, there isn't the loss of video quality that often occurs as a result of transferring files.

While DVD technology itself is still quite expensive, Han sees the station as an excellent tool for demonstrating what the Rogers Communications Centre is doing in terms of interactive television. "You can just create your demo, burn it onto CD and stick it into any computer, and you have a prototype of what your interactive television station can and will be." The DVD 1000 station also gives students the opportunity to produce DVDs. Recently, two RTA students, Sholeh Alemi and Michelle Osborne, created an interactive DVD on the Pinnacle system. The twenty minute plus project is entitled Devil's Night: A Pick a Path Adventure and offers the feature of letting the user choose which direction the narrative will take and how the narrative will end. The project was a complete success.

Other useful features that are included within the system are Premiere RT, which allows you to edit video and render visual effects and transitions in real time, as well as providing the option of outputting to a variety of formats including videotape and internet streaming video. DVD1000 also works with MPEG-2 compression -- the standard compression rate for broadcast quality video and it is supported by the following operating systems: Windows 2000, Windows NT and Windows 98, making it compatible with almost any home PC. ■

# VISUAL COMPUTING LAB: LOOKS TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Recently, the Rogers Communications Centre updated the Visual Computing Lab (VCL) in response to advances in the New Media option of the Image Arts program. Emil Kolompar, a faculty member in the Image Arts New Media program, spearheaded this initiative. The VCL is home to a host of animation software that continues to be used by students for various 3D projects. However, with recent advances in digital communications, 3D projects are converging with other forms of media. "One of the needs that has emerged because of technologies like Flash is the ability to work with various media types and render out more advanced forms of streaming media. These media types include video and composited media. We're also starting to see the emergence of the 3D interface and the VCL provides Image Arts with an ideal hardware and software base to explore this emerging field," explains Brad Fortner, Program Director of Operations and Technology in the Rogers Centre.

The VCL was chosen as the best place to meet this challenge. In addition to Lightwave, Houdini, SoftImage and Digital Fusion software, the lab now hosts current versions of Macromedia Flash and Cold Fusion, Adobe Photoshop and Terran Media Cleaner Pro. The new software allows students to develop and stream media using the most advanced tools available across a wide range of media disciplines. For instance, Photoshop 6 now allows the user to output work better related to the web-based environment. Media Cleaner Pro filters streaming video to work smoothly with the bandwidths found on the net. Cold Fusion, which works with audio and video as well as text, allows students to employ database principles to their content. Databases, applied to media, represent the next wave in digital content creation often referred to as metadata. In terms of hardware, the Rogers Centre also added additional ZIP drives and CD burners to the VCL giving students greater flexibility with regards to rendering and saving their projects. The School of Image Arts assisted financially with the upgrades. ■

# SPEEDIER AMD PROCESSORS

## Make NON-LINEAR EDITING POSSIBLE IN INSCRIBER LAB

The Inscriber Lab, located in the Video Post area of the Rogers Communications Centre, is Ryerson's first lab that uses CPUs manufactured by Advanced Micro Devices (AMD). The lab, which is used primarily to train students to design and add titles to video productions, was recently treated to a complete PC overhaul and upgrade. Half of the 13 computers in the lab had traced some of their components back to original equipment purchased when the Centre opened almost a decade ago. As such, the lab did not have a consistent level of technology, making it cumbersome for the teachers, students and the staff who are charged with maintaining it.

Bill Brishna, the Rogers Centre's lead Computer Specialist, was tasked with specifying the technology to upgrade the lab. Pedja Ljubomirovic, one of Bill's co-workers, first proposed the idea of going with an AMD Duron processor based on his personal experience. Since pioneering the use of Windows based systems in multimedia some years earlier, the Rogers Centre has always used computers based on Intel CPUs. Because of Pedja's advice, Brishna purchased an AMD system for use at home and was pleased with the outcome. "In fact," says Brishna, "my AMD home machine works great. I have installed four operating systems on the computer -- Windows 2000, Windows 98, Windows NT and Linux -- they all work fantastically."

Encouraged by his own experience, Brishna decided to order a Duron System from Ryerson's supplier to further experiment with the processor in the Rogers Centre. His tests involved

installing every kind of software used in the Rogers Centre, to see whether various packages were compatible with the Duron Processor. In one case he installed over 1200 fonts and tested it with Windows 2000 and Windows NT. He found there was absolutely no degradation in performance with the AMD based system.

However, according to Brad Fortner, software compatibility was the real issue. "We had experimented with other manufacturer's CPUs in the past, but we found that they were not compatible with the 'off the shelf' software we use in the lab," Fortner said. As luck would have it, with the Duron Processor, Brishna found it to be one hundred percent compatible with all existing software used in the building. He was extremely pleased with the results, citing that in most cases it outperformed equivalent Intel processors in terms of speed.

The speedier Duron equipped computers have additional benefits. The systems turned out to be about 200 dollars cheaper than similar systems equipped with Intel processors. Plus, by combining the AMD Processor with the new Asus A7V motherboards, four IDE channels were made available. This allows the systems to accommodate up to eight hard drives, a feat that was not possible with the old computers. "This means we can consider adding render based non-linear video editing to the lab," adds Fortner. "The Duron's speed, coupled with the disk drive potential, makes them an ideal host. This is the first time we tested anything beyond the Intel processor and after a complete semester we have had no problems. This allows us to have an open mind to other processors in future purchases," he concluded. ▀



# RYERSON UNIVERSITY

## FOUNDING SPONSOR OF THE LIBERTY VILLAGE NEW MEDIA CENTRE

According to the recent "Toronto New Media Works" report, the GTA lacks a focus that is found in other North American cities when it comes to Toronto's new media industry. It has an effect on area employment and is seen as a barrier to the industry's growth. On April 26, 2001, The Liberty Village New Media Centre (LVNMC) opened its doors with a mandate to serve and act as a gateway for the advancement of Toronto's new media industry.

The LVNMC's mission is to encourage and support the economic growth and global competitiveness of the new media industry in Toronto. SMART Toronto, the City of Toronto and York Heritage Properties as well as many public and private organizations have established the Centre. The LVNMC's startup funding is from The Ontario Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology's Small Business New Media Fund. Ryerson is proud to be a founding sponsor of the LVNMC and participates actively in its development with representatives on two of the Centre's three operations committees. ■

# PIERRE TREMBLAY

## TESTS THE LIMITS OF ADOBE AFTER EFFECTS

Pierre Tremblay, who teaches in the School of Image Arts, recently received a grant from the Dean of Applied Arts to conduct video postproduction research using the Adobe software After Effects. After Effects is a video compositing program capable of rendering a variety of special effects to video footage. Pierre was once a student at Ryerson and studied basic animation in the Visual Studies course that he now teaches. Pierre feels that After Effects is the most appropriate software with which to anchor the course's curriculum, as it is a powerful program with many capabilities.

Last year, Pierre contacted the Creative Director of the Space Channel, Gord McWatters, and asked him to be a guest lecturer in his class. During the course of their discussions, the Creative Director expressed interest in student short films. Subsequently, he invited Pierre's students to create short films for possible broadcast on the Space Channel.

Last spring, four projects were chosen for the Space Channel and one for Bravo. This year, the Director of the Space Channel returned to Ryerson requesting more of the same. Originally students had produced materials at half the quality of a television broadcast signal i.e. 320x240 resolution. Now that these projects were being used for broadcast, image quality became more of an issue. "Technically," says Pierre, "...I still wanted to work with the 320x240 output format, but I wanted to see if we can make the quality of that

resolution any better. This is why I received the grant." Pierre used the grant to hire a Research Assistant, Spencer Saunders - a fourth year, New Media student.

They needed a place to work, so Pierre approached Brad Fortner, Program Director of the Rogers Communications Centre, to ask about using the Centre's newly purchased Mac G4. The G4 contains Final Cut Pro, a Mac based software program Pierre planned to use in conjunction with After Effects. It also comes with Media Cleaner Pro, which allows maximum optimization during video compression. Brad gave the go ahead to Pierre to conduct his research here in the Rogers Centre.

The content used for the research is a video project that Pierre has been developing over the last two years. With Spencer's assistance, he has been studying which rendering and outputting formats achieve the best quality with the least amount of memory. They have looked at various formats including CD-ROM, VHS video, mini DV and DVD-ROM.

In December, Pierre was invited to visit le Fresnoy, a postgraduate art school in France. There, he was asked to give a lecture and present his work. He also had the opportunity to produce two short films in association with le Fresnoy students. With short films in ever-increasing demand by the industry, the results of Pierre's research will prove to be very useful to students both academically and professionally. ■



# LILA PINE'S

## PROJECT BREAKS INTERACTIVE GROUND

Lila Pine, a professor and video artist from the School of Image Arts at Ryerson, has recently embarked on a project involving her family history. According to Lila, the project was inspired by a comment her sister made five years ago while they were having dinner. The comment concerned Lila's aunt who is also named Lila, and although Lila was named after her aunt, she knew very little about her. "Her name was always mentioned in whispers," says Lila. Lila had known that her aunt was in a mental hospital but the comment her sister made completely surprised her. Her sister claimed that her aunt was never really mentally ill. She was simply diagnosed with menopause. Although Lila was horrified by that revelation she did not pursue it any further. However, her sister's disclosure continued to bother Lila and eventually this inspired her to begin writing a screenplay about what she imagined her aunt's story to be.

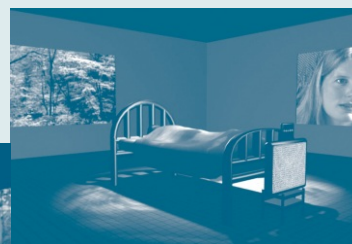
At some point, Lila chose to do an installation rather than write a screenplay. An installation is an environment created by an artist who uses a particular space (for example a room or hallway of some kind) in a unique way to showcase their art. With an installation, the space becomes part of the art in some way.

Part of the installation will take place in Toronto in a hospital room with her aunt's image projected on the bed. Various interviews Lila conducted with her family concerning her aunt will be placed behind the walls in the hospital room and they will all be played at once. These multiple voices from her family will represent the multiple versions of her aunt's story as well as the multitude of stories that are women's stories. While all this is happening, poetry by Sylvia Plath will be read.

Based on feedback she received from others, Lila felt that she wanted to make her installation interactive. Fortunately, the Interactive Broadcast research at the Rogers Communications Centre came about at just the right time. With assistance from IBO (Interactive Broadcast Ontario), Lila will set up the other part of her installation in Paris.

The installation in Paris and the installation in Toronto will be connected by a television placed above her aunt's projected image on the hospital bed. Each installation will have a camera to record the participants' responses. Those responses will then be broadcast live to the respective installations in each city i.e. on the television in Toronto, one will be able to see the responses of the people to the installation in Paris and vice versa. Thus, the participants' voices will be added to the multiplicity of other voices in the installation. There were some technical issues to be sorted out with this part of the project, but Lila has received help in this area from a former fourth year, New Media student - Nick Stedman, who was hired by IBO to be Lila's Research Assistant. The entire installation will take place in December of this year. Lila wants "...to make interactivity more like children playing together on a playground so that you don't notice the technology," she says. "It's a matter of story living versus story telling." ▀

The story of Lila Pine's aunt



# ROGERS' EATON LECTURE THEATRE SERVES THE COMMUNITY

When the Rogers Communications Centre opened in 1991, Brad Fortner and Darryl Williams (Dr. Michael Murphy's predecessor) were adamant that the building would have an open door policy to the technological community it served. They intended that this philosophy apply not only to the Ryerson family, but also to the rest of the community outside Ryerson i.e. Industry peers, etc. The concept was reinforced by the Rogers Communications Centre technical development committee that was made up of industry representatives who assisted with the technical implementation of the Centre.

To facilitate this, Fortner and Williams initiated the long-standing, Tuesday night tradition of allowing Toronto area communication associations to use the Eaton Lecture Theatre, a large lecture hall used for a variety of purposes such as screening student work. The endeavour has been successful and over the years "...we've had just about every association in Toronto that deals with communication issues use our facility," says Brad, "...including executives and content creators."

Some of the associations that make regular use of the Rogers facility include SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers), the Audio Engineering Society, the Toronto section of Siggraph, the Toronto Java Users Group and the Linux Users Group. Many of these associations are non-profit but have served to further the development of communications technology in the Greater Toronto Area.

"What's really good about this is that it raises the profile of Ryerson," says Brad. "People don't necessarily come here because they're coming to the Rogers Centre, people come here because they're coming to Ryerson. That's what they walk away with."

All of the associations offered use of the theatre are based on communications technology, as that is the focus of the Rogers Centre. "Offering the Eaton Theatre in this manner is a small way that Ryerson can put something back into the community that supports it so vigorously," concludes Fortner. ■

# KEVIN TOWES

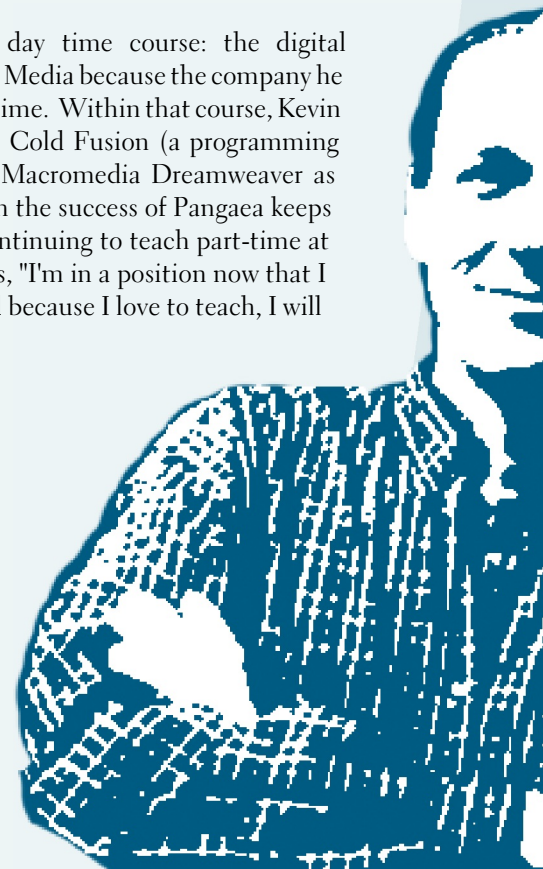
## A RYERSON GRADUATE SUCCESS STORY

Like the 'cat that came back,' Kevin Towes is now a faculty member in Image Arts after first arriving at Ryerson University in 1992. Back then he was a student in the Media Arts program and his talents were quickly recognized. Kevin secured employment at the Rogers Communications Centre and was given his own space to test the limits of 3D software and emerging internet technologies. In the early 90's, the internet was fairly new and Kevin found himself in a position to really experiment with new web technologies. Having access to state of the art equipment, he was able to learn a great deal.

While studying at Ryerson, it was Alex Bal, then Program Director for the New Media option of Image Arts, who encouraged him to become a TA to help teach new media courses to second and third year students. By his fourth year, Kevin taught Continuing Education courses - conducting classes in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Premiere.

After graduating, Kevin was invited to join the faculty of the Image Arts program and he's been teaching at Ryerson ever since. "I love it," Kevin explains. "When you're in a field that places you in front of a computer all day it's great to get in front of a classroom to talk to people and get some new ideas." According to Kevin, he never limits the students by telling them what they can and cannot do. Kevin merely presents the technology and leaves it up to the student to form their own conclusions about the limits of that technology, encouraging them to push the technology to the next level. "That's the whole idea of New Media; it's always new, it's always changing," Kevin says.

Currently, Kevin is teaching only one day time course: the digital production component of second year New Media because the company he founded, Pangaea, is taking up most of his time. Within that course, Kevin helped introduce the students to HTML, Cold Fusion (a programming language), advanced Macromedia Flash, Macromedia Dreamweaver as well as the concept of databases. Although the success of Pangaea keeps Kevin extremely busy, he still insists on continuing to teach part-time at Ryerson. The reason being, Kevin explains, "I'm in a position now that I can be flexible with my work schedule and because I love to teach, I will continue to do so." ▀



# BILL BRISHNA



Bill Brishna, the Rogers Centre's lead Windows NT Specialist, came to Toronto from Europe over twenty years ago armed with a Bachelor of Science degree. At that time, the electronics industry was very popular and Bill was able to find work in this field within three weeks of his arrival. Desiring to keep up with the rapid changes in the industry, Bill came to Ryerson Polytechnic University in 1987 to upgrade his skills. Bill began to develop a strong interest in computers. "Back then, we didn't even have floppy drives, we used to store data on audio tapes," Bill recalls.

Bill's education with computers really began on his own time as a personal initiative. The first computer he ever bought was an 8086 and he managed to wipe out the entire hard drive within four hours. "I formatted the C drive instead of the D drive and there was nothing left on the computer," says Bill. "But this is how you learn, you learn by playing with the computer."

After he graduated from Ryerson in 1991 with a Degree in Electrical Engineering, Bill found employment with IBM where his interest in computers increased and he did work in the areas of upgrading, troubleshooting, installing etc. After working for IBM for several years, he left to work with a friend who owned his own retail computer business. There, Bill honed his technical skills even further, developing advanced expertise in hardware maintenance.

Bill came to work at Ryerson in June of 1999 after completing his certification as a Microsoft Systems Engineer. According to Bill, one of the most rewarding aspects of his job is working with students. He claims that most of the new ideas that push the limits of the present technology come from student projects. "When you work with students, you learn along with the students," says Bill, who never tires of learning new things. In fact, he spends most of his free time on the computer, searching for new technologies, new ideas, and new developments. He insists on keeping current, constantly upgrading his knowledge and skills in an environment he describes as "...challenging and ever-changing. This is what I have defined as my profession," he said. "This is my interest and it's going to stay that way." ■

## THE ROGERS CENTRE WELCOMES NAMIR

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The Rogers Communications Centre is pleased to welcome Namir Jirgis to its roster of computer support specialists. Namir has joined the team that includes Bill Brishna and Pedja Ljubomirovic. Namir has filled the position of Hardware, Software and Network Specialist. Namir is highly qualified in his field and is a welcome addition to the Rogers Centre. ■

# ANNUAL TARA AWARDS

## BREAKS NEW GROUND

This year's Oscars had nothing on the 23rd annual TARA Awards - Time Warp 2001. The TARA (Television and Radio Arts) Awards, a long running tradition at Ryerson University, is a night to celebrate student achievement in all four years of the RTA program. There are twenty-five categories, which are nominated and voted on by industry professionals. All student projects marked by professors are eligible for consideration. The TARA Awards is one of the most high profile, prestigious awards ceremonies in the post-secondary community; and this time around, producers Mike Girgis and David Swan (former 4th year RTA students) pulled out all the stops.

Traditionally, the ceremony has been produced off campus, but this year Girgis broke new ground by hosting the ceremony at the Rogers Communications Centre. "We used the Rogers Centre as our studio...we really wanted to highlight the building this year." But this is not the only aspect that made this year's TARA Awards revolutionary. Although the ceremony has been broadcast on television for the last several years, this was the first time the show was broadcast live on the web. The building from top to bottom was painted with light and sound and dressed to the nines. The TARA Award producers assigned a "time warp" theme to the event. There were six separate locations reflecting several different periods in history such as the fifties, the sixties and the seventies. Each location had the props, the atmosphere, the music and the characters to emulate that era.

It was the second floor that played host to an interactive lounge that provided a means for attendees to see and interact with leading edge

demonstrations of the interactive broadcasting components of the TARA Awards show. As Mike Girgis explained, "part of our goal was to create a live model, multi-platform, convergence broadcast. This raised a lot of questions. If we're going to do a live broadcast, how can we re-purpose the content to different products like cell phones, Blackberries, digital television and WebTV?"

The TARA Awards broadcast involved interactive elements that included a simultaneous web cast, a traditional TV broadcast with an internet interface via WebTV and a transmission via Rogers wireless to Blackberry devices. The audience was able to interact with the broadcast by voting on their selections for the viewers' choice awards and by watching certain clips from the nominees at computer kiosks spread throughout the Rogers Centre. The idea was to show people how they will be watching (and interacting) with TV in the future.

This year's TARA Awards had the feel of a festival. Typically, a show like this has one stage and one audience, but not this time. TARAS 2001 had an open concept, giving people the freedom to journey from set to set and allowing them to have a much richer experience. There were also monitors all around the building so participants could follow the show as they moved around. To make the show possible, eleven cameras were employed at the various Rogers Centre venues along with ten hosts, all RTA students.

Mike Girgis: producer extraordinaire

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# THE BRAZIL PROJECT

## CONCLUDES WITH VIDEO REPORT ON DVD

Approximately 50 years ago, the Federation of Brazilian Industries initiated SENAI (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial), an apprentice training and education program for Brazilian industries. As such, SENAI provides all kinds of training to apprentices for work in any kind of Brazilian industry as well as providing technical support to these industries. Among other things, SENAI is instrumental in the implementation of ISO (International Standards Organization) 14001, which monitors the impact of industry's waste management on the environment.

In 1996, the Rogers Communications Centre was asked to share their expertise and provide technical assistance to SENAI. Dr. Sam Mikhail (presently Dean of Engineering at Centennial College here in Toronto), Dr. Michael Murphy (Academic Director of the Rogers Centre), Ike Morgulis (Ryerson Associate and Consultant) and others were enlisted as consultants to give facilitators technical guidance in the training of employees (with the use of distance education methodology) for service in the Federation of Brazilian

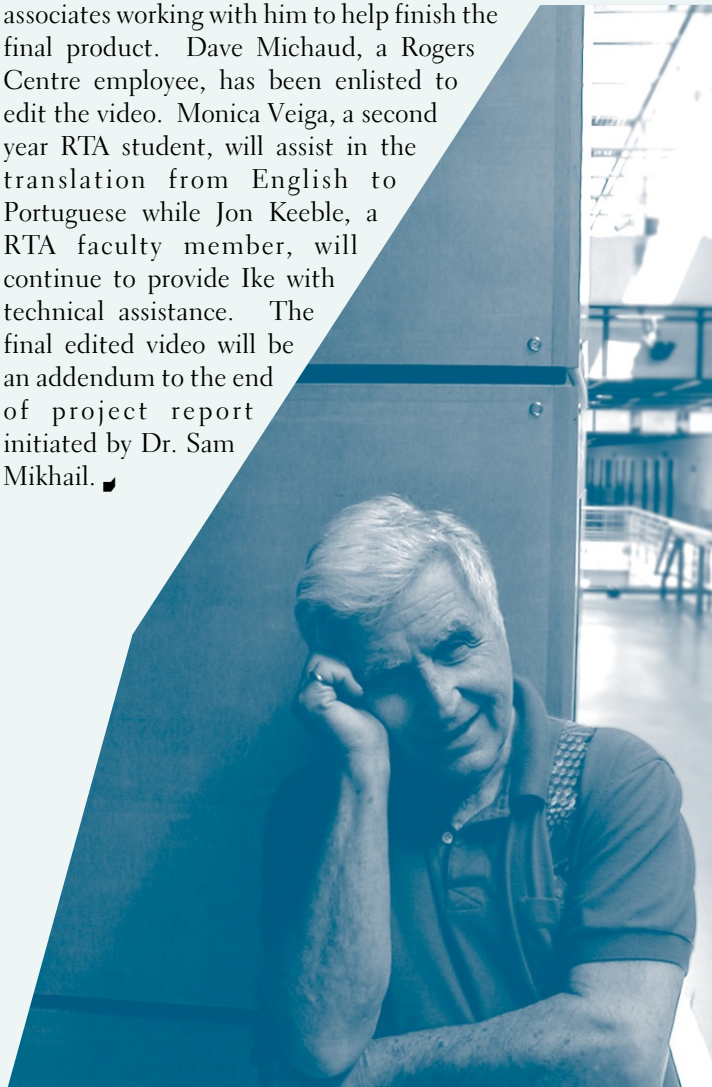
Industries (FIEB). This endeavour is known as the Brazil Project. For their training, the participants of the Project were mandated to create several presentations using a multi-media setting including elements of HTML coding. All the presentations involved current environmental issues. The distance education component of the Brazil Project also focused on environmental issues. These programs were divided into three categories: environmental pollution, environmental management and environmental education.

The year 2001 marks the end of the Brazil Project. Sam Mikhail, a University of Cairo and University of Toronto graduate, who has been with Ryerson since 1965, has been the leader of the Brazil Project since its beginning. For the "end-of-project" report, Dr. Mikhail was sent to Brazil to visit eight cities and gather information concerning the outcomes of the project in order to evaluate its success. Mikhail felt that this information should also be documented in a video and DVD format, and asked the Rogers Centre to do it. Ike Morgulis was asked to oversee this final phase of the Project, n

which involved traveling to Brazil to interview members of various SENAI Centres. Subsequently, Sam and Ike left for Brazil on October 16th of last year. They visited 8 cities in southern Brazil conducting interviews at various SENAI Centers. Ike returned on November 8 with over forty hours of footage, still less than what is required to accurately evaluate the success of the project. To Ike's delight, he will have to return to Brazil to shoot more footage.

Once all the shooting is completed, Ike will have an entire team of Ryerson employees and associates working with him to help finish the final product. Dave Michaud, a Rogers Centre employee, has been enlisted to edit the video. Monica Veiga, a second year RTA student, will assist in the translation from English to Portuguese while Jon Keeble, a RTA faculty member, will continue to provide Ike with technical assistance. The final edited video will be an addendum to the end of project report initiated by Dr. Sam Mikhail. ■

Ike Morgulis: Brazil Project videographer



# THE NEW MEDIA

## TRAINERS ALLIANCE IS RIGHT ONTARGET

The New Media Trainers Alliance (NMT) is a coalition of Toronto area schools involved in New Media Training. Along with Ryerson, current members include Centennial, Seneca, Sheridan, Humber and George Brown Colleges along with the International Academy of Design. The Alliance is devoted to strengthening Toronto's position globally as a New Media production Centre and focuses on the region's educational strengths.

Recently, the NMT was awarded a grant, which has given birth to the OnTarget project. OnTarget was created for the purpose of linking high school students and post secondary students, who are interested in a career in New Media, with potential employers in that field. The program provides these students with resources and training while giving employers a human resource pool from which to enlist potential employees.

For this project, the New Media Trainers are working with other partners including the Multimediator Strategy Group, SMART Toronto, IMAT and the Ontario Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology. The Alliance is focusing on an Online Colloquium as a central part of the OnTarget project. The Online Colloquium will provide a multi-school training course in New Media that will be taught over a broadband network. The course itself will offer students the opportunity to examine new media from an entrepreneurial point of view. They will be expected to produce a multimedia piece which will include a video documentary, a website, a CD-ROM and any other format the students wish to explore. The piece will showcase New Media knowledge accumulated over the past several years here in Toronto and will be another means of facilitating the training of students in the field of New Media. ▀

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The ceremony received support from major sponsors including CHUM Television, which erected a 5000 square foot tent just outside the Rogers Centre's North door. It became known as CHUM Television's virtual city, the focal point of the show, and included four licensed bars. Talk TV, another TARA sponsor, provided a Talk TV chat room at the fifties/sixties location set. The set-up included four mobile Speaker's Corners units where people provided feedback and comments about the show and voted on the viewers' choice awards.

The TARAs welcomed a number of guest celebrities including Pamela Wallin, Colin Mochrie and Ed the Sock. Tyler of the Bare Naked Ladies, the real Erin Brockovich and a number of sport and entertainment celebrities loaned their support to the event by sending video post cards to congratulate the winners.

The TARA awards were celebrated at the Rogers Centre on April 12th of this year. Broadcasts include the Rogers Community 10 Channel (May 5th, 2-4 PM), CMFT (August 19, 2-4 PM) and Toronto Star TV who managed the live web cast. With all the work and elements involved in this year's ceremony, one thing is certain; it will be hard to top this production in years to come.

The other hardworking members of this year's executive committee for the TARA Awards are listed below in alphabetical order:

Jason Agnew - Segment Producer  
Kerry Connelly - Artistic Director  
Josie Dye - Talent Coordinator  
Jeff Findley - Technical Producer  
Ian Gadsby - Director  
Erin Jandcui - Marketing and Promotions  
Cara Lewis - Watts Set Designer  
Graham Lindsey - Interactive Producer  
Josh Shiaman - Creative Director

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