DIGITAL EDGE

SPRING 2002

INSIDE:

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM RECEIVES $1 MILLION GRANT FROM THE TORONTO STAR

The Journalism Program at Ryerson University recently received a one million dollar donation from the Toronto Star. According to Vince Carlin, Chair of the School of Journalism, it is the ideal gift and couldn't have come at a better time, as much of Journalism's facilities are in need of an upgrade. "When I arrived here four years ago, we still had equipment that we used when the building was first built," Carlin explains. Thus, half of the million-dollar grant will be employed right away to upgrade three of Journalism's main classrooms on the first floor. The other half of the grant will be allocated to an endowment fund that will assist in raising money every year for continuous upgrades. "This will be an enormous help to the Journalism program as upgrading its facilities has been a challenge," according to Carlin.

PART OF THE REASON FOR THE STAR'S CONTINUED SUPPORT IS THE FACT THAT THE JOURNALISM PROGRAM AT RYERSON IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE BEST IN ALL OF CANADA.

The grant was made possible through the efforts of John Honderich, Publisher of the Toronto Star. Honderich has been very good to Ryerson and the School of Journalism over the years. It was through Honderich's initiatives with the corporate side of the Star that this grant was achieved. A ceremony was held recently at the Rogers Centre in honour of the Star's generosity. Both Honderich and Claude Lajeunesse, President of Ryerson University, were in attendance.

The money allocated for the immediate upgrade will be used to purchase a host of new computers to fill all three classrooms. These computers will be more powerful and will be equipped with Windows XP and the latest versions of Quark and Dreamweaver. Quark is the standard magazine and newspaper editing software, while Dreamweaver is a popular web design software. The upgrades also include the purchase of two new servers, which will allow the Journalism program to function more independently from the Ryerson network, as well as the purchase of new switches that will give Journalism's servers better access to Ryerson's network and the rest of the Internet.

In addition to the equipment upgrade, there will be some aesthetic changes to these rooms to reflect the Star's contribution. Thus the three classrooms on the first floor will be painted 'Star' blue. "These classrooms are the heart of our reporting and newspaper streams," says Carlin. "They were designated the Toronto Star wing when the Rogers Centre was first built in honour of the Star's financial support to the school back then." Part of the reason for the Star's continued support is the fact that the Journalism program at Ryerson is regarded as one of the best in all of Canada thus attracting students from all over the country.

USING THE PHYSICS OF REALITY TO DETERMINE

THE DYNAMICS OF IMAGE MAKING

Sajid Haniff, an employee of the Rogers Communications Centre, is currently developing a system of parallel rendering. Parallel rendering involves harnessing the resources of several computers on line to render information far more efficiently. This system, which combines the use of programming language such as XML and C++, takes the information, divides it into segments and sends it out to various computers (according to each computer's ability). Consequently, each computer is utilized to render just a part of the information rather than the whole, thus cutting down the rendering time significantly. The end product is sent back to its source. As a result, certain projects that typically would take days or even weeks to render are completed in a matter of hours, making this a very efficient way of rendering large amounts of data.

Driving Mr. Haniff's work is a project that involves radiosity. Radiosity is the science of calculating the amount of incident light energy on a surface, a mathematical theory that calculates the amount of light energy reflected off a surface. For instance, a photograph is able to accurately capture the amount of light energy reflected off a surface giving the image an uncanny sense of realism. A computer-generated graphic is unable to do so. By employing the principle of radiosity, Sajid is exploring how to make computer graphics duplicate reality by accurately determining the amount of light energy a surface scatters back into the environment.

The theory governing this research is the concept that a surface does not give off light energy on its own. Light energy is incident on the surface and is reflected back into the environment. In other words, a light source emits photons that hit a surface and the surface then scatters energy back into the environment. According to Haniff, in order to duplicate this phenomenon with CGIs (Computer Generated Images), we must understand how reality distributes light energy. Each surface is different and some surfaces scatter more light energy back into the environment than others. When one has figured out how much light is reflected off a specific surface, one is able to model that surface, recreate it and make it almost indistinguishable from reality. According to Sajid, it is a way of using the physics of reality to model the physics of images.

Radiosity is a general rendering equation that describes the propagation of light energy off simple surfaces. It calculates how much light energy a surface reflects and deals with simple surfaces by indicating the amount of light energy that will be scattered back into the environment. However, since most surfaces do not scatter light uniformly, a global illumination factor must be applied. Global illumination takes radiosity much further by determining how the reflected light energy is distributed in an environment. It is the physics of tracing the energy distribution in a room from point to point. This is quite a complex formula and even more complex to code. When successful, the resulting images are far more realistic than regular CGIs. In fact, if the calculations are correct, one can create images almost indistinguishable from reality. Effectively, global illumination and radiosity can trick the mind into thinking that what it sees is real, giving a whole new meaning to the term 'virtual reality.'

SAJID HANIFF

GESTURE-BASED INTERFACE RESEARCH

Ben Bogart and Many Ayromlou of the Rogers Communications Centre, are currently working on a research project that involves a new type of interface. This one is a leap beyond the keyboard/mouse interface we are accustomed to. The project would potentially give the user control over any kind of hardware and software as well as any kind of audio and visual media using simple motion capture. For instance, it would allow the user to manipulate hardware or software with mere body movements (such as hand gestures) allowing anything from adjustments in audio levels to controlling a robotic arm.

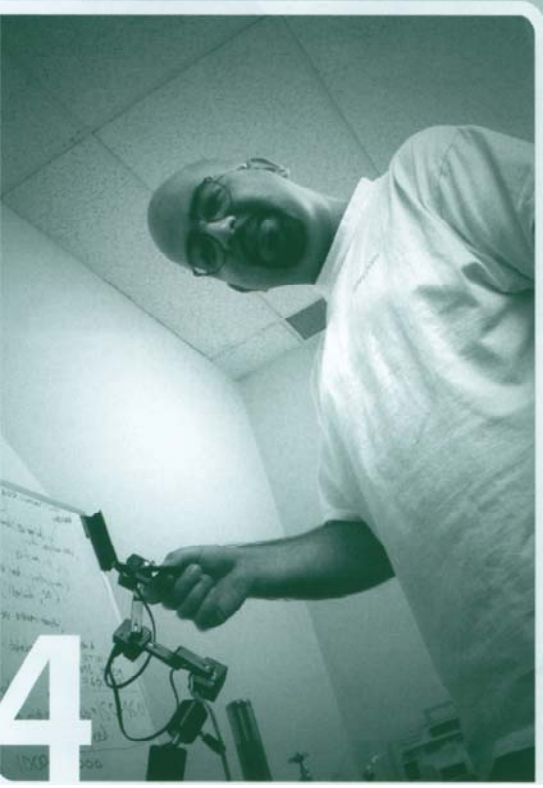
The software being used to develop this project is known as MAX (a Mac based, programming language and signal decoder) as well as SoftVNS (a plug-in for MAX that is able to capture motion). According to Bogart and Ayromlou, the possibilities are endless. Theoretically, one will be able to play a video game without a joystick, manipulate settings on a TV without a remote control, interact with a computer without a mouse or keyboard, and direct a robot arm from miles away.

Since the project began, Mr. Bogart has steadily been experimenting with new hardware and software in an attempt to push the boundaries of gesture-based interface. For instance, he now has more than one Mac G4 at his disposable, which has made the research process far more efficient. One Mac is attached to a camera that is solely used to track motion on an X and Y grid, it interprets that signal and then sends it to the second Mac. The second Mac is attached to three separate cameras. These cameras are used to capture live video signals. As the gestures are being captured and interpreted by the first Mac, one is able to control the video signals being viewed by the second Mac and manipulate them. So in effect, one is able to use gestures to manipulate a live video stream. By utilizing simple hand gestures, one is able to control how three separate video signals on the second Mac are mixed.

Max is the software that makes it possible to manipulate the video signals being received on the second Mac. According to Bogart, it allows him to assign a variety of variables to the second Mac and to control different parameters of its video editing capabilities. By assigning the tracking signal different parameters one can affect the tilting, panning, video gain, colour saturation and aspect ratio of a QuckTime display.

Other input methods besides motion tracking are also being explored. One such method involves the use of proximity sensors, which can sense how close a person's arm is to the computer. This information can then be interpreted and used to control another application or parameter of the software. Muscle flexion is another potential method. By attaching special sensors to a person's arm, a user can manipulate software by flexing or adding tension in their muscles. According to Bogart, theoretically they can map any kind of software application/parameter to any number of input devices and create an interface that is far more instinctual.

ONE WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY A VIDEO GAME WITHOUT A JOYSTICK, MANIPULATE SETTINGS ON A TV WITHOUT A REMOTE CONTROL, INTERACT WITH A COMPUTER WITHOUT A MOUSE OR KEYBOARD, AND DIRECT A ROBOT ARM FROM MILES AWAY.



MANY AYROMLOU

BEN BOGART

DMP OFFICE REVAMPS PARIS

Paris (Packetized Automatic Routing Integrated System) is a multimedia educational tool that was originally pioneered by Alex Bal of Image Arts, Judy Britnell of the Interpersonal Skills Learning Centre, Cathy McCarthy of the School of Social Work, Ron Rankine of the Rogers Centre, and Sandra Samuels of Geriatrics. All were instrumental in the development of the original project, which was conceived in May of 1992 as one of the city's first high speed broadband applications. It involved video, audio and text, and was originally designed to run on a 486 PC with 8Mg of RAM, a DVI video card to display video, an Mmotion card, and a Network card using IBM network technology that supported one gigabit per second fiber optic data network.

The project began when the Interpersonal Skills Learning Centre and the New Media Group of the Rogers Communications Centre approached Ryerson Faculty in various health care Departments about designing multimedia educational tools for the PC platform. The purpose of the project was to teach students (as well as health care professionals) the dynamics of human interaction, communication and interpersonal skills.

The premise of the project is based on a popular teaching method: simulation. Simulation is used in a variety of disciplines where "simulators" are brought into the classroom to act out or illustrate a medical or social problem. Students are asked to interact with them in an attempt to address the problem. This method allows students to gain valuable insight in a "hands on" fashion when dealing with people in crisis outside of an actual real life situation. Students are given the opportunity to practice their skills prior to handling authentic clients or patients. The Paris prototype was conceived with this teaching methodology in mind and was designed to be multidisciplinary, branching outside of the educational healthcare field, despite the fact that the video content deals with a health care scenario.

Paris is the case study of an 87-year-old man named Mr. Paris who has suffered a heart attack and is about to be released from the hospital. Before his release, a team of hospital staff including a nurse, doctor, dietician and a social worker meet with Mr. Paris to determine his preparedness for discharge. The project is composed of a series of simulations each concentrating on a particular problem involving interpersonal skills and communications issues. The video, which is displayed via a QuickTime platform with 1024x768 resolution, not only allows the student to witness the interviews, it provides an insight into what each person is thinking during the interview, showing how thoughts may actually differ from what is spoken aloud as well as various perspectives on the situation.

In the summer of last year, the Digital Media Projects Office (DMP) was offered the task of modernizing and revamping Paris. Wendy Freeman, Coordinator of the group and Instructional Designer, was asked to manage the project. She enlisted the expertise of Jeremy Littler, Multimedia Production Specialist, Mark Huras, Multimedia Author and Consultant, and Phil Pang, an RTA student. Pang had the enormous challenge of retrieving the original video content and re-editing it. This required looking at over one hundred hours of footage, selecting the best, digitizing it and cleaning up the video and audio to ensure maximum quality for the final edit. Jeremy and Mark were tasked with engineering the PC and Internet applications through which the video content would be carried.

Once the video was re-edited it was compressed to fit onto a CD-ROM. The interface was designed by Littler and engineered to work off the CD-ROM through a Windows platform. Paris can be run from any PC with the following minimum requirements: Pentium II 266, 128 mgs of RAM, any version of Windows, 1024x768 display, 65,000 colours, a sound card and QuickTime (version 3.0 or later). It can be run from the hardrive or directly from the CD-ROM. In addition, Paris contains a built in browser which can be used to access a database with information directly related to the project or any website with information related to the project.

According to Littler, this is what makes Paris revolutionary. He remarks that an embedded web browser is something that "I haven't seen anywhere else." It allows students to access a database on the web and participate in a group discussion with other students. It also allows students to submit answers in response to the video content and perform exercises related to the project in cooperation with other students, thereby creating a more collaborative learning process. The built-in browser permits the Paris project to remain dynamic, for although the CD-ROM itself remains static, the database can always be updated and refreshed when the need arises. Be that as it may, the CD-ROM is a stand-alone product and one need not have access to the web in order to benefit from it.

Jeremy Littler was responsible for designing the graphics and the interface as well as authoring the front-end code needed to run the project. Mark Huras was responsible for writing the back end Cold Fusion code for the database as well as the front-end Cold Fusion code. The finished product is now being used as a teaching aid.

LORI BECKSTEAD
HAS CAUGHT THE SPIRIT

LORI BECKSTEAD

Assistant Professor in the School of Radio and Television Arts, Lori Beckstead, was recently appointed the Director of Ryerson's SPIRIT Radio, a student run digital radio station. Spirit was established in January 1997, making it one of the world's first Internet radio station. After overseeing SPIRIT's substantial equipment upgrade, Beckstead has turned her attention to developing content for the radio station. At this time, there is an automated system set up to play music 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Anyone can go to the site, click "tune in live" and consequently receive a live, automated stream of music. In addition, the station recently launched its student run program platform and from 11 am to 10 pm, Monday to Friday, listeners can treat themselves to original, student produced programming.

According to Beckstead, one of the goals this year is to change the conception that SPIRIT is solely radio. Video productions are becoming an ever-increasing presence on the station's platform. For instance, Rick Grunberg's second year TV studio class has been using SPIRIT as a means of airing live student video productions. The objective is to make SPIRIT a multimedia broadcasting outlet and to have students use it as much as possible towards that end, creating an excellent opportunity for students to showcase their work to a much larger audience. Subsequently, Beackstead has been working hard at getting the message across to faculty that SPIRIT is available as a means of broadcasting student work.

Some of SPIRIT's original programming is supplied by first year RTA students from their radio production classes. However, there are many students who want to volunteer their time outside of class hours. Many of these students have already been interviewed, trained and are now operating the station with their own original programming. "The main thing we're looking for," says Beckstead, "...is students who are committed, students who will show up and air their program when they are scheduled to." Since the station is an RTA initiative and RTA funded, preference is given to RTA students, however, the station is open to receiving applications from students of other Ryerson programs, and although much of the station's program platform has already been filled, there is still room for more applicants. Information on the application procedure can be found at SPIRIT's website: www.spiritlive.net, which is also the URL for accessing their programming.

The students who make up the core staff of SPIRIT are hired through the Work Study Program. Noah Zivitz, a second year RTA student, is the station Manager/Music Director, responsible for shaping the music program while Mike De Eyre, Program Director, supervises the various student produced programs. However, the goal is to make SPIRIT a campus style station with a wide variety of musical styles, depending upon the kind of original programming the students want to air. In other words, SPIRIT is more about block programming than about any particular musical style. Beakstead hopes to have a celebratory event to commemorate the launch of the station's new platform, but no date has been set as of yet.

QUEBEC SYNERGIZES
NEW MEDIA IN OLD MONTREAL

A construction boom is taking place on the western edge of Old Montreal. It is testament to a focused approach to New Media business development by the Quebec government. With occupancy rates higher than anticipated, the activity also reveals the beneficial economic effects of New Media in a knowledge-based economy. Known as the Cité du Multimédia, the area is one of 44 tax credit zones located in Quebec. However, this one is specifically targeted at developing Montreal's New Media industries to compete on a global level.

Modeled after Ireland's experience in attracting information technology related industries, the Cité du Multimédia showcases how government, education and industry can work together. Collectively they have focused resources to develop the skills, talents and full time employment based around New Media in the "new" economy. Unlike Toronto's New Media scene, which is currently fractured with a number of organizations representing different factions within the local Information Technology and New Media industries, Montreal's effort is focused through one organization known as the Alliance numériQC. The Alliance numériQC has government, industry and education at the table in a coordinated effort to strengthen and grow Montreal's media sector.

The Quebec government has come to the table due to an employment crisis that has seen much of the manufacturing industry that used to sustain the local economy leave the province. To attract investment the Cité du Multimédia was set up as a tax credit zone. Rates for space in the neighborhood are favorable ranging from $28 to $30 per square foot with a one time development charge of $20,000.00 for every 1000 square feet leased. For companies located inside its boundaries and involved in media related IT activities, the tax incentives are quite attractive. They include tax credits of up to 40% ($15,000.00 max) of each employee's salary and are in effect until 2011.

However, what makes the effort interesting to educators is how Quebec has made research and knowledge growth the key to long-term sustainability of the New Media industry in Quebec. Materials for research inside the zone qualify for a 65% credit when both Federal and Provincial tax credits are applied. Positions involved in research receive the 40% credit, however they do not have a maximum tax credit amount applied to them. To attract the world's top minds, foreign instructors who teach inside the Cité du Multimédia have a five-year provincial income tax break. What makes the tax breaks even more attractive for investment in Quebec is that the government will arrange for loans on which the tax incentives can be borrowed "upfront".

In Montreal's New Media Corridor, education is seen as an important synergistic link. Through Alliance numériQC, pure and applied New Media research from Montreal's Concordia and McGill Universities are often showcased to explore the possibility of spinning out into the private sector. In applied education, innovation in programs from both public and private organizations is encouraged. Through Alliance numériQC, training institutions and the Quebec government can develop new media courses that relate to both current and future needs. Innovation in applied new media education comes from a variety of organizations, for example, the Montreal High School system that has developed one of North America's first programs in Digital Media Asset management. Innovation in education is even found inside the Cité du Multimédia. CyberCap, which is a new media training organization, focuses on training disadvantaged youth multimedia skills in the same manner that Toronto's "Beat The Street" focuses on literacy skills. Montreal's LaSalle College Group also operates its distance education development group that creates materials for its on-line courses. LaSalle College is located inside the Zone to take advantage of the tax credits for the people it employs.

To assist the New Media industry in making the leap from education or ideas to entrepreneurial practice, Alliance numériQC awards 2.3 million dollars of grants annually, offering up to $50,000.00 per startup company, to develop business plans. This helps seed young entrepreneurs who may be newly graduated artists or technicians with the appropriate business skills giving their company some chance of surviving in a competitive business environment. The organization also acts on behalf of the Quebec Government by screening business plans of Cité du Multimédia candidates and seeding upcoming artistic talent through the sponsorship of awards at local new media events such as Montreal's annual Experimental Film Festival.

The Quebec government has identified that almost 1800 companies derive more than 51% of their income from the creation of electronic services or media. These are defined as multimedia companies. Of these, almost 1400 are located in the Montreal area. These companies account for more than 4 billion dollars of economic activity and multimedia alone accounts for 25,000 full time jobs in the province. They estimate that the entire sector employs about 63,000 people, making it an important part of Quebec's economy. This recognition of the importance of New Media to the economy, and the ability to seed the sector after bad economic times caused the Quebec community to pull together and focus it's efforts through the Alliance numériQC. The belief is that by the time the tax incentives end in 2011 there will be enough of a sustained knowledge base and infrastructure in place that Montreal's economy will benefit from New Media well into the future.

This report was prepared by Brad Fortner of the Rogers Communications Centre who recently participated in a trip to the Cité du Multimédia that was organized by SMART Toronto's New Media Trainers Alliance.

DR. GENE ALLEN

The School of Journalism recently welcomed Dr. Gene Allen to its team of professors. Dr. Allen, who has worked in the field of journalism most of his life, became a faculty member in August 2001 where he now teaches copy editing and newspaper layout to third year, undergraduate journalism students as well as first year graduate students. In addition, he teaches introduction to TV news to second year undergraduates. According to Dr. Allen, he responded to this opportunity to teach at Ryerson because of his interest in the area of academics and, in particular, academic research.

Dr. Allen comes to Ryerson highly qualified. His academic background consists of a B.A. in History and Philosophy from the University of Toronto, a M.A. in History from York University, and a Ph.D. in Canadian History from the University of Toronto. His work in the field of journalism began as a Copy Editor for the Globe and Mail, a publication he worked at for ten years. At the Globe and Mail, Dr. Allen moved from Copy Editor to Assistant City Editor, to Ontario Editor and then to Foreign Editor. He was also the Ontario politics reporter in the late 80's and early 90's where he covered the first two years of the NDP administration.

In 1991, Dr. Allen began working for CBC where he filled the role of Assignment Editor for both the National TV newsroom and for the CBC radio program: Morningside. Eventually, Dr. Allen found himself in the TV documentary unit where he worked on Dawn of the Eye, a six-hour series on the history of newsreel footage and TV news over the last 100 years. Dawn of the Eye was broadcast on CBC in Canada and on the History channel in the U.S. where it won a Cable ACE award for best documentary series of 1997. Dr. Allen moved on to the award winning Canadian history series entitled Canada: A People's History, where he functioned as the Senior Producer and Director of Research. The epic documentary is a 32-hour television series on the history of Canada, jointly produced by CBC and Radio-Canada. It was broadcast on both national networks in 2000 and 2001 and is being used as a teaching tool across Canada. Dr. Allen was also the senior editor for the accompanying two-volume book of the same title. The documentary won a Gemini award for Best Documentary Series for its first season.

Although Dr. Allen is now teaching at Ryerson, he still plans to maintain his ties with CBC, working for them on a part-time basis developing other projects. In fact, he currently has another series in development, a documentary chronicling the Canadian experience. Now that he has settled into faculty life here at Ryerson, Dr. Allen hopes to find time to conduct his own research on the history of journalism. He is particularly interested in how economical and technological changes in the news industry have also changed the nature and content of news itself.

DR. GENE ALLEN

ALBERT DUAN CONDUCTS RESEARCH IN 3D ANIMATION

Albert Duan, a visiting scholar from China, has been conducting research here at the Rogers Communications Centre on a provincial scholarship from Xihn Radio and TV University located some 500 km from Beijing. Xihn is the University from which Albert graduated in 1982 and the same place he has been employed ever since. Although new to Canada, Albert has visited North America before, having spent a year in Texas at Houston University between 1988 and 1989. Albert arrived in Canada for the first time in March of 2001. Since then, he has been working hard researching various multimedia applications for 3D animation software.

In his native China, Albert's official title at Xihn University is Computer Engineer. However, because the University is so small, Albert fills a variety of roles at Xihn including Computer Programmer, Campus Night Manager and Instructor. Most of the University's curriculum is offered on-line using distance education methodology, which is also one of the specializations of Xihn, in addition to multimedia applications.

Since his arrival, Albert has been investigating various 2D and 3D animation software including Macromedia Flash, 3DS Max 4, and Atmosphere, the newest 3D animation software from Adobe. Albert predicts that the future of the Internet is 3D space, which is already becoming far more prominent on the Web. However, according to him, this does not mean that 2D animation software such as Flash will become obsolete. It just means that there will be more reasons to combine 2D and 3D software resulting in more dynamic web sites. In fact, Albert has been experimenting with various web-based, multimedia applications in which the two types of software can be merged for maximum benefit. One such trial involves turning the Rogers Centre into a 3D virtual space on the Internet. Using still pictures and Adobe Atmosphere, Albert has been able to turn the Rogers Centre into a 3D environment in cyberspace, one in which a browser can explore at will. The power required to process 3D animation is quite enormous, but Albert is examining various ways to compress the information and make it easier to download.

Albert is set to return to China in March 2002, but before leaving, he would like to transform all of Ryerson University into a 3D environment on the Web. It's an enormous task, but according to Albert, it would be well worth it. If successful, Ryerson would be the first University to have its entire campus represented in cyberspace via 3D animation. Browsers would be able to access the Ryerson website and get a virtual, 3D tour of any building on campus.

The virtual 3D tour of the Rogers Centre can be accessed on-line at the following URL: http://www.rcc.ryerson.ca/usr/albert/rccmap/main.html. You will need to download the Atmosphere browser, which can be found at: http://www.adobe.com/products/atmosphere/betareg_player.html. Simply follow the instructions and download the browser only. If you wish to see more of what Albert has been working on visit: http://www.rcc.ryerson.ca/usr/albert/.

USING STILL PICTURES AND ADOBE ATMOSPHERE, ALBERT HAS BEEN ABLE TO TURN THE ROGERS CENTRE INTO A 3D ENVIRONMENT IN CYBERSPACE, ONE IN WHICH A BROWSER CAN EXPLORE AT WILL.

THE ROGERS COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE WELCOMES THREE

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

THE ROGERS CENTRE RECENTLY UNDERWENT SOME PERSONNEL CHANGES AS THREE NEW STAFF MEMBERS WERE WELCOMED TO THE FAMILY. ALL THREE STAFF HAVE BEEN AN INVALUABLE ADDITION TO THE ROGERS CENTRE COMMUNITY.

THEA FAULDS

Thea Faulds, a graduate of the Image Arts/New Media program, recently accepted the Television Facility Assistant position in the Video Post Production area and began her duties at the "front desk" in the beginning of September 2001. As the "front desk" person, Thea is responsible for administrating and facilitating the operation of all the Post Production resources in Video Post. In addition, Thea provides extensive technical support to students when accessing these resources.

Although new to this position, Thea is by no means a stranger to the Rogers Centre. She has worked here before as a Teaching Assistant for Lila Pine (an Image Arts professor) where she provided supervision and technical support to students in the editing facilities. Thea has also provided research support to the Interactive Broadcast Ontario project and has aided in the operation of Television Studio C. In her spare time, Thea can be found working on her already three-years-in-the-making zombie movie entitled Grave Dirt Under the Fingernails. Thea started the 16mm black and white film while studying at Ryerson and plans to finish it by next year. When Thea is not working on the film, she can be found driving her Hearse, adding to her tattoo collection, raising sea monkeys or playing base guitar for her all-girl, punk band, established with Sally Goldberg, called Minicue.

SALLY GOLDBERG

Another new member of the Rogers Centre family is Sally Goldberg. Sally recently completed the Advanced Standing program in Radio and Television Arts and is now the Lab Assistant in the Video Post Production area. Some of Sally's duties include conducting editing workshops for RTA students, providing technical support to students in the editing facilities and lending assistance in the dub area. Before coming to Ryerson University, Sally completed a degree in Journalism at Carleton University where she also minored in Film Studies. Sally also works part-time on an on-call basis for the Weather Network. She began her new position with the RCC at the end of August. In

her spare time, Sally enjoys playing the piano, playing guitar and functions as lead singer in the garage girl band she founded with Thea Faulds called Minicue. Sally gives guest lectures on Media Theory in her spare time.

DAVE HAN

The Rogers Centre would like to welcome back Dave Han, a former RTA student and part-time employee of the Rogers Communications Centre, who has recently returned as a full time staff member. Dave's new position is TV/Interactive Lab Assistant. As a Lab Assistant, Dave will provide technical support to RTA students in a variety of ways including interactive media content creation, web and graphic design, video and film post production, visual effects compositing as well as studio and field acquisition. In his spare time, Dave has been working at promoting his fourth year practicum project entitled: the-COMmies.com a half-hour satire about the dot-com revolution. The COMmies.com, which was co-produced and directed by Dave, is a story about four people who start up a web-based company in 1999 amidst the onslaught of dot-com companies that flooded the Internet, who inevitably fail. Dave recently responded to an open call from CBC Vancouver, looking for innovative TV programming that was 'convergence minded' or that incorporated Web technology. Dave's Practicum was ideal because it involves a real website that is an essential part of the story.

CANARIE ASSISTS WITH ACCESS GRID DEVELOPMENT AT RYERSON

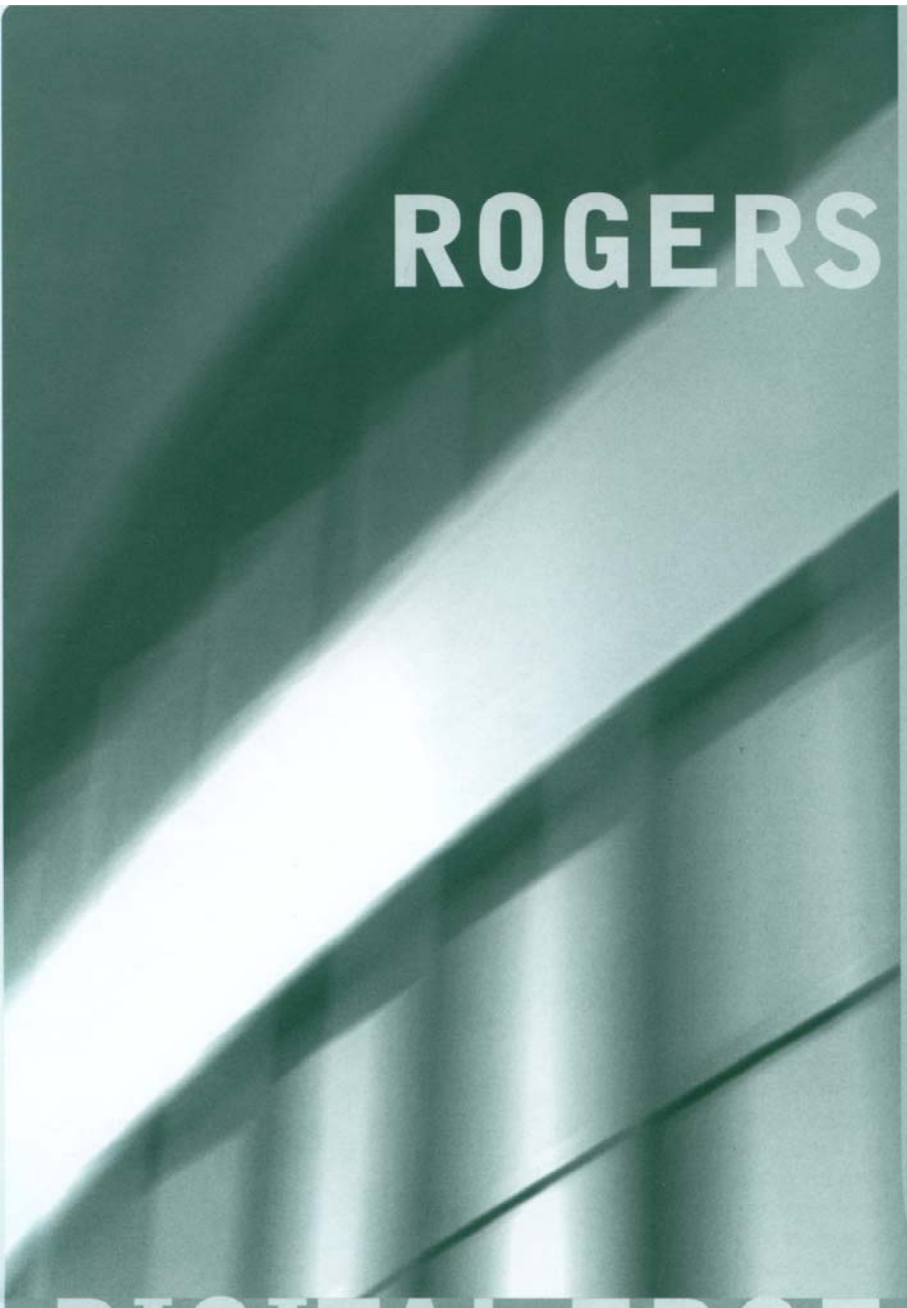
In conjunction with the University of Calgary and Sheridan College, Ryerson University will assist in the development of the Access Grid in Canada. Access Grid is an Internet based conferencing application developed using multi-cast backbone protocol. It allows research teams, separated by great distances, to collaborate on the same project simultaneously using high quality video, audio and data sharing. Aided by CANARIE Inc., the Rogers Centre will explore the use of broadband technology and how it could be used to improve on long-distance communication among research teams via video conferencing, video streaming, and real-time simulation or modeling.

Access Grid was developed because of the limitations of Multicast Conferencing made possible by Mbone technology. With Multicast Conferencing, one is able to conference with many people simultaneously. However, Multicast Conferencing effectively limits the number of people that are able to work from one workstation as each workstation is equipped with a single video port; meaning that realistically, only one person can conference with others from one workstation. This is not the case with Access Grid. Access Grid provides multiple video ports that feed into a huge display area so that a group of people at one workstation (i.e. one node) can conference with a group of people at several other nodes; creating a much more dynamic conferencing experience and facilitating multi-node to multi-node conferencing between multitudes of people. In other words, with Multicast Conferencing, an individual at a single work station can conference with several individuals at several other workstations; but with Access Grid, a group of people at a single node can conference with several groups of peoples at several other nodes.

Ryerson was selected to participate in this study, which is funded by CANARIE, to examine interface and usability issues associated with Access Grid, along with the University of Calgary and Sheridan College. The Rogers Centre itself is being used as a test location for this research. A multi-camera environment has been established, allowing staff at the Rogers Centre to conference with others outside the Institution. According to Many Ayromlou, one of the key research personnel at the Rogers Centre, Access Grid is a bandwidth intensive application and institutions should take this into consideration before deciding whether to implement it within their organization. At the end of the study, the research team will submit a publication citing recommendations on the strengths and weaknesses of Access Grid and how to improve it in collaborative research applications.

MANY AYROMLOU

ACCESS GRID PROVIDES MULTIPLE VIDEO PORTS THAT FEED INTO A HUGE DISPLAY AREA... CREATING A MUCH MORE DYNAMIC CONFERENCING EXPERIENCE AND FACILITATING MULTI-NODE TO MULTI-NODE CONFERENCING BETWEEN MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE.



ROGERS TURNS TEN

The Rogers Communications Centre at Ryerson University is currently approaching a milestone. It was ten years ago that the Rogers Centre first opened its doors and ushered in a new generation of innovation in the development of Communications Technology. Born out of Ryerson's commitment to research, the Rogers Communications Centre continues to break new ground in the Communications field.

Since its opening in 1948, Ryerson has had a history of pioneering communications technology; being the first institution to produce a multi-camera, live TV broadcast in all of Canada. Since then, Ryerson has remained committed to embracing innovation. As a result, in 1993 Ryerson was granted University status, allowing it to place greater emphasis on research and development. It was in the midst of Ryerson's commitment to progressive thinking and groundbreaking research that the Rogers Communications Centre was established.

Housing many of Ryerson's state-of-the-art research facilities including a Dolby Digital surround sound studio, the Rogers Centre has focused on the development of digital communications technology; spearheading research in such areas as High Definition Television production, Interactive Television, DVD technology, Digital Terrestrial TV and Radio broadcast, Virtual Lesson Technology (VLT) and much more.

As stated, this year marks the tenth anniversary of the Rogers Centre's official opening. So keep your eyes and ears open, as there will be special announcements to mark this occasion.

DIGITAL EDGE

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