



**For Immediate Distribution  
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**2007 ORION Awards**

***Celebrating Ontario's contribution to research, teaching and learning***

TORONTO - Ground-breaking innovations, from advanced visualization tools to startling computer simulations unraveling the mysteries of the universe are being celebrated at the annual ORION Awards in Toronto today.

Presented at the Ontario Research and Education Summit at the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, the awards recognize achievements in research, education and scientific discovery.

"Educators, scientists and researchers are taking advantage of the enormous potential made possible through sophisticated technologies, placing Ontario at the cutting edge of innovation and scientific research," says Phil Baker, President/CEO of the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION), which presents the annual awards.

**ORION Award winners for 2007 include:**

**The ORION Leadership Award** recognizes the achievements of an individual for significant contributions to advancing research, education, science, or discovery through the development and/or application of innovative information and communications technologies.

Winner – **Dr. Nicolas Georganas** is one of Canada's most accomplished information technology and networking research pioneers. The Associate Vice-President of Research (External) at the University of Ottawa, he has made substantial and enduring technical contributions in computer, cellular and multimedia networking and helped train and mentor the community researchers that have made Ontario a global leader in information technology. Recently invested as an Officer of the Order of Canada, Dr. Georganas is widely regarded as one of the "fathers" of high technology in Canada. He has made important contributions from the underlying mechanisms of the Internet to some of the most advanced broadband applications including immersive, haptically-enabled distributed virtual environments.

Award of Merit – **Dr. Ronald M. Baecker**, University of Toronto Professor of Computer Science, is widely recognized as one of the world's pioneers of computer animation and leading authority in the field of human-computer interaction. From his early research at MIT, where he pioneered the use of computers to enable artists to interactively create animated films, Dr. Baecker's 40-year research career spans applications to education, medicine, and design. Founder of the world-renowned Knowledge Media Design Institute (KMDI), Dr. Baecker has accumulated a long list of international awards and citations, making him one of Ontario's most accomplished and celebrated innovators.

**The ORION Discovery Award** recognizes research and scientific initiatives that successfully apply and leverage the unique capabilities of advanced networks and technology platforms to achieve significant outcomes in research and discovery.

Winner – **The EUCALYPTUS Project**, at the Carleton University Immersive Media Studio (CIMS), is taking the design and collaborative technology world by storm, with startling innovations in high-definition visualizations that are expected to lead to new applications ranging from architectural design and gaming to emergency response and the performance arts. Using advanced networks like ORION and state-of-the-art User-Controlled Lightpath (UCLP) technology developed by CANARIE, the project allows dispersed teams at multiple locations to collaborate and visualize in real-time by sharing computational resources, geometry datasets, and multimedia content. It is an Ontario technology success story being showcased in the international research and education community that has introduced meaningful innovations to the worlds of design, business and entertainment.

Award of Merit – The Black Holes and Cosmic Evolution Project, led by a team of Ontario and US researchers using some of Canada's top supercomputers, successfully addressed one of the world's computational Grand Challenges, and effectively confirmed that black holes have played a role in the evolution of galaxies. The research, generating a computer simulation of six billion years of cosmic history, was one of the world's largest computer-based simulations of its kind. It involved high performance computing facilities at SHARCNET and HPCVL in Ontario and WestGrid in Alberta, interconnected over Canada's advanced, ultra-high speed Canadian research networks, including ORION, Netera, BCnet and CANARIE.

**The ORION Learning Award** recognizes the achievements of faculty, students and/or staff in promoting successful examples of collaborative teaching, learning and training.

Winner –**The Institute for Knowledge Innovation and Technology (IKIT)**, based at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), is having a growing impact on the world of education. IKIT has been a global leader in research-based innovations in theory, pedagogy, and technology, all aimed at making citizens part of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century knowledge-creating culture. It has brought awards and innovations to Ontario, including the first collaborative networked learning environment. IKIT hosts the Knowledge Society Network, uniting innovators worldwide who are using IKIT's ground-breaking Knowledge Forum software and producing striking advances across sectors and at all levels from pre-kindergarten to professional continuing education.

Award of Merit – The Learning Connections Project brings together a dedicated group of partners and champion teachers who are learning how to make full use of the Knowledge Age's endless resources and new, interactive technologies to raise the literacy and numeracy levels for Ontario students. The project, which reaches out to nine school districts throughout Ontario, has helped transform teacher practice with the goal of raising student achievement in literacy and numeracy by using videoconferencing, web streaming, and other collaborative technologies and interactive resources. It points to powerful results in supporting curriculum and professional learning that engages teachers and students, and helps Ontario keep at the leading edge of education, teaching and learning leadership and innovation.

#### **ABOUT ORION ([www.orion.on.ca](http://www.orion.on.ca))**

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) is Ontario's ultra high-speed research and education network which connects all of Ontario's universities, most colleges, several medical and other public research facilities and a growing number of school boards to one another and to the global grid of research and education networks. Stretching 5,800 kilometres over 21 communities throughout Ontario, ORION connects over one million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff to critical infrastructure for research, education and innovation. [www.orion.on.ca](http://www.orion.on.ca).

Learn more about the ORION Awards at <http://www.orion.on.ca/2007orionawards>.

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Full descriptions of the winners are available here:

[http://www.orion.on.ca/2007orionawards/pdf/Backgrounder 2007 Winners.doc](http://www.orion.on.ca/2007orionawards/pdf/Backgrounder%202007%20Winners.doc)

Download high-resolution images of the ORION Award graphic at this location:

<http://www.orion.on.ca/2007orionawards/logos.html>

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