



For immediate release
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ORION introduces O3 Collaboration

Research network unveils free collaboration service for researchers and educators in Ontario

(TORONTO) – The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) wants Ontario researchers and educators to re-think how they collaborate and interact with colleagues, by providing an online collaboration and professional networking service.

Launched at the Royal Ontario Museum today, O3 Collaboration gives researchers and educators a powerful combination of the latest social networking and content management tools to help accelerate research and support advanced teaching and learning.

“We’re very proud to make the service available to every researcher, scientist, teacher, faculty and student at institutions connected to ORION,” says Phil Baker, ORION President and CEO. That includes the more than 1.6 million K-12 and higher education students and more than 125,000 researchers, teachers, faculty and staff connected to ORION in Ontario.

ORION is also making the service available to research projects funded by the federal and provincial funding agencies.

Introduced as a value-added service for ORION-connected institutions, O3 was designed and developed by members of Ontario’s research and education community, which identified a growing need for a common, purpose-built collaboration service.

Available at no cost to researchers, students and educators at ORION-connected institutions, O3 is designed to become the “go-to” place to find colleagues and experts working on related topics or similar themes, share ideas, gain feedback from different academic perspectives on early research, build communities of interest, and work with team members online.

Users can take advantage of all the usual Web 2.0 tools, including sharing and editing documents, posting photos and videos for comment, creating blogs, Wikis, forums and events calendars, all in one online location that also features powerful professional networking tools.

As well as facilitating collaboration, it is hoped that O3 will also foster the sharing of ideas and research results, and connecting colleagues across academic disciplines. “O3 is the place where researchers and educators can connect to the minds and resources they need to work faster and more effectively,” says Gary Hilson, O3 Community Manager.

York University and its knowledge mobilization partners in ResearchImpact have been using O3 since its pilot launch earlier this year.

“Transforming research into better public policies, more effective professional practice and new commercial products requires researchers and partners to collaborate in novel ways,” says Dr. David Phipps, York University’s Director, Research Services & Knowledge Exchange. “O3 provides many of these tools to help foster collaboration, manage content and enhance dissemination of the products of research and knowledge mobilization.”

Nearly 200 users have already signed on as early adopters as well nearly a dozen “sub-communities” comprised of research and teaching groups using O3 for private collaboration. A series of how-to webinars is planned for the fall, and ORION will continue to run on-site demonstrations at post-secondary institutions around the province.

“Launching and promoting O3 Collaboration is consistent with our efforts at raising awareness and outreach to the user communities, and – like our national network, CANARIE – leveraging the unique capabilities of advanced networks to support research and innovation,” said Baker.

About ORION

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) is Ontario’s ultra high-speed research and education network. It 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, as well as to CANARIE, Canada’s advanced network organization, and to the global grid of research and education networks. ORION now connects over 1.7 million Ontario researchers, scientists, students and teachers to critical infrastructure for research, education and innovation. Learn more at www.orion.on.ca.

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