

For immediate release
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Ontario institutions take to ORION's new online collaboration service
O3 celebrates its first year with new features

TORONTO - One year after the launch of O3 Collaboration, a growing number of Ontario researchers and educators are adopting the online service, which is introducing new and stronger capabilities to support their work and research.

Launched in the fall of 2009 in partnership with Kitchener-based IGLOO Software, O3 Collaboration provides members of ORION-connected institutions and affiliated groups with a secure, private online space to share information around research projects, teaching initiatives and other collaborations.

To date, O3 has grown to support more than 40 collaborative research and education groups and projects, involving users representing more than 50 Ontario universities, colleges, school boards and other organizations and institutions that use the service to share ideas and content and manage a wide variety of research and education projects.

Since its launch a year ago, O3 has added numerous features and functions, including a new desktop application that allows users to seamlessly and securely save and download documents from their desktop directly to their O3 Group Space. O3 has also introduced a new BlackBerry application, enabling users to access and contribute content to their online group spaces from their BlackBerry.

"We're extremely proud that institutions and various organizations are coming in and creating their own communities within O3," said Dr. Darin Graham, President and CEO of ORION, Ontario's advanced network organization, which is providing the service at no cost to its members.

"O3 has found particular success with research and teaching groups that have members distributed across multiple institutions and external partners in their communities and industry," says O3 Community Manager Gary Hilson. "By simply signing on, team members can easily begin working together without IT support or firewall configuration."

Mobilizing Minds, a national five-year research project led by researchers, health professionals, young adults, community organizations and experts in knowledge mobilization, is an early adopter of O3 and uses it to bring these stakeholders together to collaborate in a private group space.

"O3 Collaboration has been essential in facilitating communication, collaboration and co-creation amongst our national project's researchers, young adults and community partners," says Jennifer McPhee, Project Coordinator. "The tools allow us to stay connected and continue our collaborative work in between meetings. It's really hard to imagine how this multi-site project would run without the help of O3."

ORION has also provided O3 as an in-kind support contribution towards funded research projects, including most recently, literary researchers at York University, who received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant for a literature digitizing project.

Any member or organization affiliated with an ORION-connected institution may join O3 Collaboration or request an O3 space for private collaboration. O3 Community Manager Gary Hilson is available for on-site or online presentations to demonstrate how groups can bring stakeholders together in their own private collaboration space.



About O3 Collaboration

O3 Collaboration is a suite of collaborative tools and professional networking solutions developed by and for the research and education community in Ontario. O3 is a place where researchers, educators and students can connect to the minds and resources they need to work faster and more effectively. The online service features a suite of tools that members can activate based on their collaboration needs, including blogs, document sharing and versioning, photo albums, wikis and discussion forums. Users can also embed other Web 2.0 applications such as YouTube channels, Flickr photo streams and Twitter feeds and even existing blogs on other platforms such as Wordpress. The O3 Collaboration service is provided by ORION, with assistance from CANARIE, Canada's advanced research and innovation network. Learn more at www.othree.ca.

About ORION

Supporting speeds hundreds of times faster than the Internet, ORION is Ontario's advanced research and education network. A not-for-profit corporation, ORION links 1.7 million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff who depend on ORION for teaching and learning and to enable their research collaborations and discoveries in physics, cancer research, environmental science and technologies, social sciences and the humanities and multiple other disciplines. Part of Canada's advanced network alliance, ORION connects users and institutions to each other and, through CANARIE - Canada's advanced research and innovation network, to high-capacity research and education networks, partners and collaborators across Canada and around the world. Learn more at www.orion.on.ca.

- 30 -

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