



For Immediate Release

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Ontario art, heritage, science exhibition, and design groups look to global connections and technologies

TORONTO - Representatives from Ontario's top art, cultural and science exhibition institutions have agreed to move quickly to take full advantage of advanced technologies and global connectivity over high-speed telecommunications networks.

Gathering at the start of the two-day Ontario Research and Education Summit at the MaRS Discovery District today, a group, led by the President of the Ontario College of Art and Design, Sara Diamond, agreed to strike a working group of organizations with interests in art, heritage, and science exhibition and learning. The group will explore how best to make use of new, collaborative technologies, and how they can make a contribution to innovation.

Joining OCAD in the discussion were representatives from the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, York University Fine Arts and Visual Arts departments, the Ontario Science Centre and the Carleton University School of Architecture. Participants agreed to expand the working group to include representatives from other institutions and from other parts of Ontario.

The roundtable focused on how institutions in the arts, culture and education-related exhibit centers, such as science centers, can be transformed through the adoption of new and advanced networking technologies and the global connectivity provided by the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) and other advanced research and education networks, such as Canada's CA(*)net 4 and Internet2 in the United States.

Among the participants was Dr. Louis Fox, vice provost of the University of Washington and head of the Internet2 K20 Initiative. The US-based initiative brings together primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, libraries, and museums to explore how new advanced networking tools, content, and applications can enhance the learning experience across all educational sectors in the United States and around the globe.

The discussion also touched on the role of art and design research and collaboration with science, medicine and other disciplines, as well as new partnership opportunities for art and design institutes, galleries, museums and science centres in this new environment.

The roundtable set the stage for June 6 session at the Summit, led by Sara Diamond, looking at how next-generation technologies and expanding networks of people, tools and resources are re-shaping the way we approach art and design. "Ontario and Canada have among the world's most creative and innovative people, and we can become global leaders in this new environment of networked, digital media and design," says Diamond.

"These discussions are important first steps," says Phil Baker, President/CEO of ORION, which hosted the roundtable and is staging the annual R&E Summit. ORION is Ontario's ultra-high speed optical network that connects some 70 institutions to each other, and to the global grid of research and education networks.

- 30 -

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