



For immediate release
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Study shows ORION helps support over 2,100 jobs and provides other major economic benefits

TORONTO – A new study indicates Ontario's ORION network helps support over 2,100 jobs, and contributes an estimated \$147 million to Ontario GDP annually. It notes that Ontario would experience additional economic benefit by upgrading ORION to keep pace with the rapidly growing needs of Ontario's research and learning communities and remain globally competitive.

Those are the findings of a new study by PricewaterhouseCoopers, which looked at the economic impact of ORION, Ontario's leading-edge research and education network.

"This provides clear evidence that sophisticated infrastructure like ORION directly supports research and discovery, retention of highly qualified people in Ontario, and future economy jobs. This is vital to advancing innovation, commercialization and the competitiveness of the Ontario economy," says President and CEO Phil Baker.

ORION is gaining support for its plans to leapfrog from its current 10 gigabit-per-second infrastructure to 100 gigabit-per-second and expand to new research and learning facilities. "When fully implemented, this will make Ontario a world leader in research and education capabilities," Baker said.

Research and education leaders are adding their voice to the call to upgrade Ontario's research network infrastructure. They say ORION is essential to their work and that without the network, day-to-day research activities would diminish and jobs dependent on ORION connectivity would be lost.

Study findings confirm that ORION provides Ontario with key competitive advantages, from helping to attract and retain research talent, to allowing researchers to engage in world-leading research and undertake global scale research initiatives here in the province.

As the study also points out, ORION facilitates regional economic development and supports research that would simply not be possible otherwise, citing the example of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, which relies on ORION for educating and retraining doctors and other health care providers in Northern Ontario.

Based on ORION traffic growth and general trends in research, demands on ORION are expected to increase significantly over the years to come, said the report.

"Ontario has the opportunity to extend ORION's footprint to additional centres of innovation and commercialization and upgrade its network infrastructure to again be at the leading edge of network technologies for research and discovery," says Baker.

"We must ensure our innovators are not constrained by previous generation technologies and that we stay ahead of new and innovative research applications, methods and techniques in Ontario," he says.

An Executive Summary of the report findings is available from the ORION web site at www.orion.on.ca/news/pdf/pwc_orion_study.pdf

About ORION

ORION is Ontario's ultra high-speed research and education network. It supports 1.7 million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff who depend on ORION for access to online resources, for cross-institutional teaching and learning opportunities, and for research collaborations in many fields such as physics, global warming, cancer detection and treatment, human genome discoveries, environmental science, economic modeling, social sciences and the humanities, and new technologies. ORION links users and institutions to each other and through CANARIE - Canada's advanced research and innovation network - to partners and collaborators across Canada and around the world.

Visit www.orion.on.ca.

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