

REAP Showcases Latest in Arts-based Innovation at Congress 2012

Waterloo, ON - May 28, 2012 - The University of Waterloo's newest high-tech accelerator is showcasing interactive digital display technologies from its arts-based 'sandbox for serious play' - the FELT Lab - throughout Congress 2012.

Research Entrepreneurs Accelerating Prosperity (REAP) is bringing to this year's Congress some of the innovative technologies --focused on interactive display environments and applications (IDEA) -- from the FELT Lab. Launched in November, FELT is a community-based lab in St. Jacobs, Ontario, where Quarry Integrated Communications, Christie Digital, and other industry partners collaborate with academia to envision and develop new ways for display technologies to anticipate and meet people's needs.

REAP is also hosting six 'thinkering' sessions in the FELT Lab. Thinkering combines tinkering with technology, and the brainstorming of new combinations and applications. During six one-hour evening sessions (two per evening on May 27, 28 and 31), participants play with the lab's interactive technologies, while 'thinkering' about the 21st century classroom.

"We're delighted that REAP is joining us to demonstrate this unique approach to involving the social sciences and humanities in technology innovation and entrepreneurship," said Alison Hebbs, Director of Policy and Communications for the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, the group that organizes Congress each year. "The REAP showcase demonstrates how research innovation can help students create opportunities for themselves and others, both driving the economy and creating societal benefits for Canadians as well."

The technology showcase will be part of the REAP Recharge Lounge in the University of Waterloo's Dana Porter library, where forum participants can relax while their devices recharge. They can also revitalize their thinking on the possibilities offered by IDEA, while viewing and/or interacting with content on nine installations which include:

ArtAllies Interactive Gallery - The works of various Waterloo Region artists will be projected life-size on a six-by-eight-foot screen. Art lovers can navigate - or virtually tour - the exhibition, not by walking around, but with hand gestures.

Video Wall - This custom video player system uses background subtraction to do more than just superimpose something on an image. It fully immerses people into any scene, whether a boxing ring or the Great Wall of China.

Apptui Mobile Device Interface - Congress participants can navigate content with their personal devices, while learning about a technology that turns any device into a remote control.

GestureTek Mini-thinkering - REAP's research entrepreneurs - undergraduate students from across the university, also known as REAPsters - will demonstrate a multi-touch display technology and help congress participants envision the opportunities offered by 32-touch points.

REAP is also helping to introduce a new online news site for the high-tech accelerator sector - The Accelerator Gazette. REAP is sponsoring The Gazette, as part of its mandate to research and report on best practices for accelerating high-tech enterprise from around the world.

The lounge features work by the Simulated Environment for Theatre research team. SET is a 3D environment for reading, exploring and directing plays. Using the Unity game engine, users can both author and play back digital theatre productions.

"Congress 2012 presents a wonderful opportunity to showcase some of the innovative research and teaching underway in the social sciences and humanities," said Jill Tomasson Goodwin, Co-founder of REAP. "We look forward to showing how young researchers take the lead in innovating new solutions to emerging challenges."

REAPsters and staff will be on hand to explain how REAP's approach - involving arts-led research entrepreneurship, applied design thinking, a focus on IDEA, private-public partnerships and more - can help increase individual and Canadian prosperity.

For more information on Congress 2102, please visit www.congress2012.ca .

About REAP

Research Entrepreneurs Accelerating Prosperity (REAP) www.reapwaterloo.ca is a non-credit program at the University of Waterloo that pays undergraduate students while teaching them to develop new uses and markets for interactive display technologies. The goal is to research ways of innovating such technologies, creating entrepreneurial opportunities leading to greater prosperity for Canada.

About the FELT Lab

The FELT Lab is a community-based digital media laboratory. Opened last fall by founding partners REAP, Christie Digital Systems Canada and Quarry Integrated Communications, it is a digital sandbox for serious play. Industry and academia gather to envision products and services that create new opportunities in interactive display environments and applications, or IDEA.

About the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences

Organized by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Congress is the largest interdisciplinary conference in Canada. Described as a "conference of conferences", Congress involves close to 70 academic associations that represent a rich spectrum of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including literature, history, theatre, film studies, education, music, sociology, geography, social work, and others.

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