Network for Effective Collaboration Technologies through Advanced Research (NECTAR) – A Report on Five Years worth of Achievement

Panel Members:

Associate Director and Moderator:
Professor Kellogg Booth, University of British Columbia

Theme Leaders:

Theme 1: Professor Saul Greenberg, University of Calgary
Theme 2: Professor Carl Gutwin, University of Saskatchewan
Theme 3: Professor Ron Baecker, University of Toronto, and NECTAR PI

NECTAR, a NSERC network of some of Canada's leading researchers in human-computer interaction (HCI) and Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), consists of members from 6 universities across Canada; University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, University of Saskatchewan, University of Calgary, Queen’s University and Dalhousie University.

It was awarded Cdn. $5.5M in research funds from NSERC with additional support from industry sponsors, most notably Smart Technologies and Microsoft. Over the past five years more than 200 professors, students and postdocs have participated in NECTAR research and contributed to over 500 publications. Several have also spun off successful technologies and companies.

Focusing on collaborative technologies, NECTAR has concentrated on the investigation of technological and social issues to make computer-supported collaboration more efficient, more productive and more natural. The work has centered around three specific themes:

Theme 1
A Virtual Commons - Using Awareness to Move into Collaboration
Researching and articulating how people maintain awareness of others and of communal events and artifacts, and how people use that awareness to initiate collaboration in both real-world and computerized environments.

Theme 2
High-Performance Workrooms - Interaction with Shared Displays and Workspaces
Developing a detailed understanding of how people interact over real-world surfaces, and of the limitations imposed by current computational displays and workspaces.

Theme 3
The Extended Presentation Room - Scalable Interactive Audiovisual Communications
Providing groups with a flexible and scalable technology that manages presentations to both small and large groups in real-time and retrospectively, and that engages all participants and allows them to interact.

The Theme Leaders will report on achievement of their respective Themes providing details of related research and tech transfer that has taken place over the five year duration of NECTAR. Challenges for the future will also be stressed.