



Nortel Network's Multi-Million Dollar Broadband Gift Advances B.C.'s Communications Technology

Donation will connect post-secondary schools, benefit local industry

Nortel Networks has donated optical network equipment valued in the millions to UBC's Faculty of Applied Science it was announced today. With core switches capable of switching packets at 10 Gigabit-per-second speeds over optical links, it is enough telecommunications equipment to fuel the communications needs of a country the size of Switzerland.

The gift of hardware and software will give students access to some of the world's most advanced telecommunications technology. It will also allow researchers to conduct leading edge projects in areas ranging from fibreoptic communications components to fuel cell power supply-research that will benefit B.C.'s telecommunications, high-tech and communications industries, as well as higher-education and research activities for the next generation.

The Nortel Networks contribution will be used to create an experimental research network. Based at UBC, it will link researchers in telecommunications and network research with colleagues at the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, University of Northern British Columbia and the British Columbia Institute of Technology to promote innovation and collaboration in Internet technologies. When operational, it will be one of the largest networks of its kind in Canada.

"Nortel's generous gift helps position UBC as a leader in telecommunications research," said UBC President Martha Piper. "We're extremely pleased to have their support and to become the hub of this important research network that will benefit the economies of British Columbia and Canada."

In addition to the initial donation of broadband networking technology, Nortel will also act as technology advisor, providing an industry partner for UBC researchers. A partnership with BCNet, a non-profit society for the development of advanced networks within the province, will provide optical fibre infrastructure and technical consultation.

"This is a truly an impressive development that will enhance innovation opportunities for researchers and students," said Don Avison, President of The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia. "Nortel's donation is particularly encouraging as it comes at a time when our universities are working in partnership with the B.C. government and industry to double the number of graduates in electrical and computer engineering, and computer science."

Research projects currently underway in UBC's Faculty of Applied Science which will benefit from the broadband network include re-vamping network protocols, fibreoptic telecommunications diagnostics and developing power sources for new TV networks. These projects will ultimately be visible in consumer products such as voice-over Internet, interactive 3-D gaming, HDTV, remote instrumentation, video-streaming and large-scale distributed digital storage.

"The Nortel contribution will significantly advance both research and student learning," said Faculty of Applied Science Dean Michael Isaacson "The experimental research network will be a great benefit, both directly and through engineering graduates trained with this technology."

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