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Toronto firm helps launch Canada's most advanced communications lab

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KEVIN CROWLEY
RECORD STAFF

WATERLOO -- One of Canada's leading technology companies is helping the University of Waterloo establish the most sophisticated multimedia communications research lab in the country.

Toronto-based Leitch Technology Corp. is providing \$330,000 in cash and equipment to create an 1,100-square-foot lab in the new Centre for Environmental and Information Technology building, which is scheduled to open in September, 2003.

The new lab will be nearly twice as big as the university's existing multimedia communications lab.

Officials hope the new facility will become a magnet for the world's most talented researchers, said UW president David Johnston.

Multimedia communications involves the integration of telephone, television and computer technologies.

The seamless interaction of such devices is expected to have a huge impact on business and individual lives, especially with the rapid growth of wireless and mobile technologies.

Coupled with previous research support from Leitch and equipment funding from the federal and provincial governments, UW has received nearly \$800,000 in recent support for multimedia communications research.

The lab's lead professor is En-Hui Yang, an internationally renowned researcher in the area of data compression and information theory. Yang also holds a Canada Research Chair in information theory and is a past winner of a Premier's Research Excellence Award.

He currently leads a team of international graduate students in the university's existing multimedia communications lab.

"It is very exciting to note that, through this partnership, one of the industry leaders in the area of multimedia communications is supporting the forward-looking, cutting-edge work of a leading researcher in this field," said Sujeet Chaudhuri, UW's dean of engineering.

Stan Moote, Leitch's chief technology officer, said the company will benefit from having students work on its equipment, but the donation is also intended to help maintain the university's international reputation.

"I do hope this gift will assist the university in maintaining its reputation as a centre of excellence," said Moote, a UW grad himself.



Joking about a "large" cheque for \$330,000 presented by Leitch Technology Corp. to set up a lab at the University of Waterloo are (left to right) UW president David Johnson, Prof. En-hui Yang, and Stan Moote, senior vice-president and chief technology officer at Leitch.

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