



ProtoLaunch winners to be crowned July 30

High school game developers vying for prizes that include studio tour of Ubisoft in Montreal, post-secondary scholarships

The Sault Ste. Marie area is home to an up-and-coming generation of video game developers and the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) is inviting the public to see their talents on display as they compete for a chance to win an all-expenses paid trip to Montreal where winners will tour Ubisoft, the largest video game studio in Canada. The competition presentations and awards ceremony take place on Friday July 30 at 2 p.m. in the Great West Life Amphitheatre at Algoma University.



Above: A ProtoLaunch participant presents his team's game concept.

"I'm constantly being amazed by the work of our participants," said Hammond. "They're all so young and new to many of the concepts of game development, yet they have been consistently delivering work of exceptional quality and creativity."

Participants in the competition are vying for some lucrative prizes. The first place team, as determined by Hammond and the ProtoLaunch competition supervisors, will receive an all expenses paid trip to Montreal in August. While there, they will tour Ubisoft's Montreal studio – the largest video game studio in the world.

(Continued on page 2)

The afternoon event marks the conclusion of the ProtoLaunch year one summer video game design competition. 24 local high school students have been participating in the competition, which began on June 28. The students have been grouped in six teams of four, with each team responsible for conceiving, designing and programming a fully-playable original video game. Winners will

be announced at July 30's event. Guests will also have the opportunity to see and learn about the students' work and to also play the games themselves.

Dwayne Hammond is the Strategic Advisor for Computer Games Technology at SSMIC and is also the lead coordinator for ProtoLaunch.

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Brain Computer Interface lab incorporates

Dr. George Townsend was already a research scientist, lab director and associate professor. Now, he has a new title he can add to his resume: Chief Executive Officer.

With the help of SSMIC's technology development officer Mike McGonigal and director of development Helen Gillespie, Townsend is now the CEO of a technology start-up specializing in brain-computer interface systems (BCI). The new corporation is a numbered company that will operate under the name of Algoma BCI. Being incorporated will help the company pursue patent opportunities (some of which are already underway) and will open up new avenues of attracting funding and investment, in addition to producing revenue.

Brain-computer interface technology



Above (L to R): Mike McGonigal, Jessica Shanahan, George Townsend and Helen Gillespie celebrate the incorporation of Algoma BCI on June 28, 2010.

facilitates direct communication between the human brain and a computer. Brain activity is measured through EEG

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Algoma U welcomes new President

SSMIC's strategic partner Algoma University has entered a new era of leadership with the arrival of President Dr. Richard Myers on July 1, 2010. Myers is the ninth President in the history of the institution, and the second since the university gained independence in 2008.



Myers succeeds outgoing president (and longtime SSMIC board member) Dr. Celia Ross who oversaw the growth and eventual independence of Algoma U from 1998 to 2010.

Myers is a vice-president academic at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

In addition to his teaching and administrative responsibilities at St. Thomas University, Myers has been involved in local, national and international civil society organizations including the New Brunswick College of

Russian elections. He was Chair of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission from 2004-2006.

Myers earned his undergraduate, masters and doctorate degrees from the University of Toronto. Fluent in French, Greek, German and Italian, he has also taught at Hokusei Gakuen University (Japan) and Wenzhou University (China).

He is also the co-author, along with Patrick Malcolmson, of *The Canadian Regime*, a political science text that is now in its fourth edition.



Myers' immediate past position was

Physicians and Surgeons, and the 1993 Canadian mission that monitored the

ProtoLaunch Summer Competition Update, cont'd

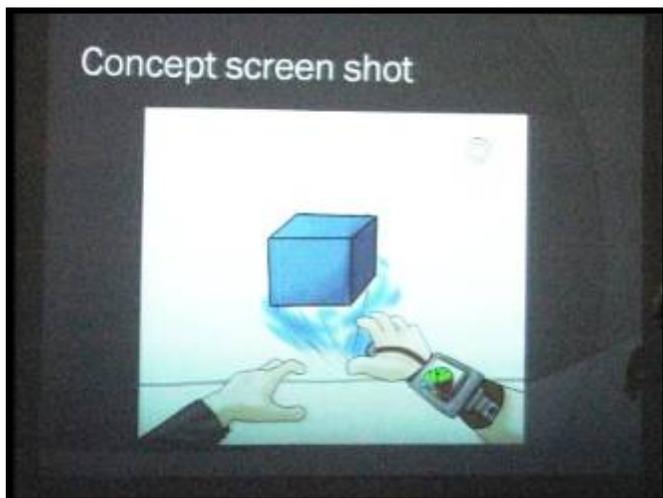
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Seven scholarships will also be awarded to individual participants, worth a total combined value of \$12 500.

ProtoLaunch has been funded with a \$461 800 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. During the school year a series of free-to-attend ProtoLaunch workshops are held featuring expert guest speakers from the gaming industry. The 2009-2010 year saw speakers from game studios such as Ubisoft, Electronic Arts, Rockstar Games, Bedlam Games and Enemy Airship. When the school year ends, the five-week long game design competition begins. In addition to having the chance to win prizes, participants in the competition are paid for their time (40 hours per week) and gain a unique summer job experience. The finished

games will be eventually hosted and made available to the public on the SSMIC website at www.ssmic.com.

ProtoLaunch is run in partnership with SSMIC, Algoma University, Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology, YMCA Employment and Community Services, Anishinabek Information Technology Centre (AITC) and Children's Rehabilitation Centre – Algoma. The program has initially been funded for three years: 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.



reinforced our belief that there is tremendous potential gaming talent in our midst here in Sault Ste. Marie and area. We're looking forward to continuing the momentum of this exciting program and to developing the skills of our youth during ProtoLaunch's next two years and beyond."

"ProtoLaunch is a trailblazing program that shows the positive results that can be achieved when local organizations work together," said Tom Vair, executive director, SSMIC. "We're very excited to see the finished products of these very talented and dedicated young people. The ProtoLaunch workshop series and summer competition has

Top: Artistic rendering of a preliminary game concept.

Left: Screenshot of the completed game demo at the ProtoLaunch mid-point.



To learn more about ProtoLaunch visit www.facebook.com/ProtoLaunch or contact Dwayne.Hammond@algomau.ca



SSMIC appoints new business development manager

The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mike Pratt as business development manager. In his new role, Mike will work with SSMIC's Business Incubator clients and provide guidance and assistance to science and technology-based small businesses (SMEs) in the Sault Ste. Marie region. He will also launch and manage various market development projects and workshops.

Prior to joining the Innovation Centre, Mike worked for SITTM Technologies Inc., a Sault Ste. Marie based developer of biodiesel production technologies. Mike has extensive experience in the renewable energy sector as well as experience in small business consulting, particularly for start-ups. Mike holds a



Bachelor of Business Administration degree with specializations in Marketing and Accounting from Algoma University. In his

spare time, he volunteers as a football coach with the Sault Sabercats, a 19 and under football club that competes in the OVFL.

"Mike's direct experience working with start-ups and ability to consult with small business is a great fit for our team and we are pleased to have him join the Innovation Centre," said Tom Vair, executive director, SSMIC. "His background working with government

funding programs and experience in the renewable energy sector also makes him a welcome asset to our organization and our clients."

"I was especially attracted to the business development manager position at the Innovation Centre because it presents an opportunity to work with creative and energized individuals who are excited to do business in Sault Ste. Marie," said Mike. "I'm looking forward to applying my knowledge to support the growth of companies in emerging sectors."

Mike will be based in the SSMIC headquarters located on the campus of Algoma University. SSMIC and the business incubator are set to move into the new Bio-Sciences Technology and Convergence Centre which is planned to open at Algoma University in spring 2011.

Eye on Guy Thiffault

The Township of Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional in cooperation with the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) welcomes Guy Thiffault as the rural community renewable energy intern.



Above: Guy Thiffault hopes to become the new "go to guy" for renewable energy in the Algoma region.

In this youth internship position, Guy will assist rural communities in developing information relevant to residential, small business and institutional renewable energy opportunities in Ontario and participate in outreach and strategy programs to improve awareness of energy conservation, renewable energy

alternatives and green/clean building design and retrofits. "I will be contributing to the Green Map project as well as providing a link between rural landowners seeking green/clean energy alternatives and the companies/businesses who can provide the technology," said Guy. Guy is located at Sault College in Sault Ste. Marie and will work cooperatively with renewable energy colleagues and partners in the Sault including SSMIC.

"In this position, I hope to gain GIS experience and learn more about our local green/clean options," said Guy. "I would like to play a role in the Algoma region's green/clean movement and eventually be seen as a sort of "go to guy" (pun intended) when it comes to green energy in our area."

Born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie, Guy is a recent graduate of the Sault College GIS program. He also has diplomas in Ecosystem Management and Integrated Resource Management technology. He was most recently employed by Essar Steel Algoma and after being laid off, was afforded the opportunity to return to school via the "second career" program.

"I think that SSMIC is doing a great thing for our community/region," added Guy. "All the staff I've met so far have been extremely nice and supportive and I hope I can continue to be a part of the team over the long term."

More staff changes at SSMIC

The onset of summer has seen a lot of transitions take place at SSMIC. While several new staff members have been welcomed on board, the organization has also had to say farewell to some familiar faces.

Former Business Development Manager **Tim Harmar** has returned to the consulting firm of Shelby Environmental Services Limited.

Long-serving Office Manager and Finance Officer **Lois Conyers** accepted a new position as a Finance and Administration Officer with Parks Canada.

On the Board of Directors side, two dedicated board members have recently moved on. **Lynn Watkins** stepped down in March and former Algoma University President **Dr. Celia Ross** gave notice in June that she would be leaving the Board as well given her retirement from AU.

SSMIC would like to thank Tim, Lois, Lynn and Celia for all of their hard work and contributions. Best wishes for the future!

On one final note, SSMIC would also like to wish longtime incubator client **Miramar Design Studio** continued success at their new location in the Walrus II building at 464 Albert Street.



Green Expo held in Desbarats, July 23 and 24

Science
Spotlight

Cottagers and landowners, as well as residents of the Algoma district were able to learn about some of the exciting environmental projects, products and services happening locally at the 2010 Green Expo.

The 2nd annual free two-day event took place on July 23 from 3 and July 24 from at the Johnson Township Community Centre in Desbarats, ON.

Hosted by the East Algoma Stewardship Council, in partnership with the Township of Johnson, The Kensington Conservancy, the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC), the Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition (CAFC) and Clean North, the Green Expo presented local solutions to many global challenges.

SSMIC staff members Ross MacLeod, Nicole Gareau and Guy Thiffault were on hand at the expo to talk about alternative energy and bioproducts projects that are currently underway.

New to the 2010 Green Expo was a canning workshop hosted with Benardin that saw chef Emerie Brine teaching canning techniques to preserve locally grown produce. A number of presentations and a screening of the documentary *Fresh* also took place.



Errol Caldwell, research director for SSMIC at the ISRI booth at the 2010 Green Expo in Desbarats

To cap off the event, the CAFC hosted a fundraising dinner on July 23 at 6:30 p.m. to support the CAFC's goals to protect, improve and restore water quality in Central Algoma. The dinner featured local produce and local meats,

CAFC projects provide information and practices that will enable the general

public to become good stewards of our natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.



Brain computer interface lab incorporates, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

electrodes that are placed on the patient's scalp.

The technology offers a means of communication for patients who suffer from certain diseases, neuromuscular disorders or paralysis. Townsend has been active in the research field for a number of years and one of the systems developed at the Algoma BCI lab was featured on American news program [60 minutes](#).

The lab works collaboratively with several partners including East Tennessee State University, North Florida State University and IMEC of Belgium, the latter of which provided the main chip for the EEG amplifier used by Algoma BCI.

An exciting new research initiative that is underway for the lab is an ALS homestudy project. ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease) is a progressive

disease that causes a loss of voluntary muscle control. The goal of the homestudy project is to identify local ALS patients who are in the early stages of the disease and familiarize them with BCI technology so that they will be better prepared to face future challenges as the disease advances.

The lab has opened a dialogue with the local ALS Society support group in preparation for working with local ALS patients. The homestudy will see the lab leave the BCI equipment with the patient and their care-givers for several weeks so that they will be able to learn how to use the technology within the comfort of their own home. The first homestudy has tentatively been scheduled for August.

Townsend is aided in his work by two staff members. Algoma University psychology graduate Jessica Shanahan is the BCI lab coordinator, responsible for administering experiments, participating in data analysis and locating sources of funding for projects. Jessica

was also the 2010 Innovation Graduate of the Year at the 5th Annual SSMART Innovation Awards, held this past June.

LSSU Electrical Engineering grad Jon Pasiak provides technical support for the lab as the electronic development assistant. Jon specializes in circuit board design and assists with developing and debugging projects.

Funding for the ALS homestudy project has been provided by the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie & Area, as well as Algoma University. Major annual funding is also provided to the lab by the Wadsworth New York State Department of Health. FedNor and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) have also contributed approximately \$100 000 over the past three years to assist with hiring interns.

Keep reading Eye on Innovation for further updates on Algoma BCI and other start-up success stories!

Virtual phone numbers now available in Canada

Virtual phone numbers are now available in Canada, thanks to the VoxOx software system. VoxOx is owned by parent company TelCentris Incorporated, based in San Diego, California.

In an example of how virtual numbers work, a person living in Montreal could purchase a virtual number in Toronto. The person's friends in Toronto could then call the virtual number and have their call to Montreal friend be treated as a local call. Similarly, businesses could purchase local numbers in several different cities and route the virtual numbers to a remote head office.

Each virtual number costs \$1.95 per month or \$19.95 per year and includes support for inbound SMS and fax, as well



as call forwarding capabilities. Customers can also do a "vanity" search for memorable digits and word spellings.

VoxOx is web-based software that enables users to make and receive telephone calls from conventional telephone numbers over the Internet using VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). The software is also cloud-based, meaning users can access it from any location with an internet connection, with any updates made to their account being instantly saved in the cloud.

Initially only available for the area codes of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton, up to 20 additional Canadian cities are expected to join the list in the near future.

Innovation Centre hopes to make RAIN

Local partners under the leadership of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) have banded together to launch a new project dedicated to improving agricultural innovation within the Algoma District. Funds have been secured to hire a consultant to complete phase one of establishing the Algoma Rural Agricultural Innovation Network (RAIN).

"The establishment of RAIN in the Algoma District has the potential to create jobs and opportunities in northern Ontario and provide support for agriculture and our rural sector," said Errol Caldwell, research director, SSMIC. "RAIN will provide key information and support to local growers, woodlot owners, rural businesses and clients to improve opportunities for maximizing the collection and communication of information, the value of rural based crops, commodities, products and services. RAIN would eventually be engaged in other areas of innovation and value added economic activities deemed of important to RAIN members and for the private sector and rural economic development."

SSMIC is the project lead and has partnered with the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie & Area, the East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, the NORDIK Institute at Algoma University, Algoma Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Algoma Federation of Agriculture and Innovation Initiatives Ontario North.

In addition to partner support of \$2500, SSMIC received \$2500 from each of the

East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation and the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste Marie & Area to hire a consultant for phase one of the project. Contractor Jessica Bolduc from The Possibilities Group was chosen



Above: Errol Caldwell

to fill this role following a competitive process and will work under the general guidance of SSMIC and a focus group comprised of rural representatives.

Once determined, the roles of the RAIN would form part of a funding application to appropriate programs as a three-year pilot. It is expected that RAIN once established, would become another partnership between the Innovation Centre and Algoma University where it could be located along with the existing NORDIK Institute.

Crucial to the success of bringing the RAIN vision to this preliminary stage has been the support of project partners.

"The East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation and the Community Development Corporation Sault Ste. Marie & Area have a long history of contributing to economic development initiatives within the Algoma area. Both agencies recognize the excellent economic value-added potential of the RAIN project," said Caldwell, "We

would like to acknowledge the contributions of all of our partners in getting this project off the ground."

Phase one of the RAIN project is expected to be completed within 4 months. During this time, Bolduc will confirm support from rural stakeholders, develop the terms of reference for establishing a future RAIN, determine the priority projects and services as determined by members of existing rural organizations and assist in the development of a funding strategy for stage two for the project that would establish RAIN as a three year pilot for longer term application.

The Innovation Centre is encouraging anyone wishing to provide ideas or input to phase one of the RAIN project to contact either [Errol Caldwell](mailto:Errol.Caldwell@ssmic.ca) at 942-7927 ext 3147 or Jessica Bolduc at (705) 575-3394 or Jessica.fbi@bellnet.ca to arrange for an interview.

RAIN Project Partners

To learn more about some of the partners involved with the RAIN project, please visit the websites below:

Nordik Institute

<http://www.nordikinstitute.com/>

CDC of SSM & Area

<http://www.ssmcdc.com/>

East Algoma Community Futures

<http://www.eastalgomacfdc.ca/>

Innovation Initiatives Ontario North

<http://www.ion.ca/>

Tax changes may spark high-tech growth in Ontario

Ontario's 5 500 plus IT companies stand to benefit from changes to the provincial tax code.

As of July 1st, high-tech businesses such as software and IT firms are now receiving a 13 per cent input tax credit (ITC) to offset the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) they pay on items like computer hardware, software, storage equipment, servers and related purchases. Many businesses that are reliant on the high-tech sector have also begun receiving ITC's on their software purchases, to further encourage growth of the IT sector.

A government press release also notes that there will be no new taxes introduced on high-tech goods such as

smartphones, laptops and GPS systems as a result of the implementation of the HST.



"The HST resolves a major barrier to investing in the kinds of things that will make Ontario business more competitive, attract more investment, and grow faster," says Bernard Courtois, President and

CEO of the Information and Technology Association of Canada.

Also as of July 1st, cuts have also been made to the Corporate Income Tax rate (CIT), with the CIT rate for small businesses being cut to 4.5 percent from 5.5 per cent and the general rate falling to 12 per cent from 14 per cent. The general rate is slated to be further decreased to 10 per cent by 2013.

Tax credits for research and development have also been put in place to encourage R&D by high tech firms. Available tax credits can reduce \$100 spent on R&D to as little as \$36.

With files from Ontario News

URISA Ontario highlights CGC child care project

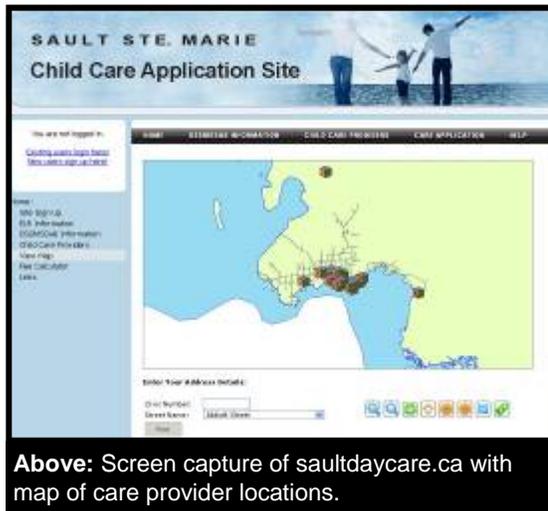
The work of SSMIC's Community Geomatics Centre (CGC) was spotlighted in a recent edition of the URISA (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association) Ontario newsletter.

An article written jointly by Sam Henderson and Chuck Shannon of the CGC explains how the CGC developed a Centralized Child Care Waiting List Management System for the District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Service Administration Board (DSSMSSAB) in 2009.

The completed project features a website (www.saultdaycare.ca) that was launched publicly in October of 2009. Parents can use the website to find suitable child care and apply to programs of their choosing, while care providers use the system to match available spaces with interested families.

Sam and Chuck explain that a variety of technologies were used to build the website. Cascading style sheets gave the site its look and feel while also allowing for design elements to be easily adjusted. The functionality of each page was developed using Visual Basic.Net 2005 which was then connected to a Microsoft SQL server database. Lastly, an ArcGIS Server Map Service was utilized to show interactive maps displaying child care provider locations throughout the city.

There is extensive use of GIS throughout the website. In addition to child care providers, parents can view



Above: Screen capture of saultdaycare.ca with map of care provider locations.

interactive maps that display the locations of schools, bus routes, bus stops and their own home.

For care providers and DSSMSSAB staff the website offers a streamlined way to manage waiting lists. DSSMSSAB workers are responsible for follow-up contact with parents after successful placements are made and the CGC created several specialized reports to help staff manage daily administrative tasks.

If you have a youngster in your family who might need daycare or other child care services, be sure to visit www.saultdaycare.ca. Keep reading Eye on Innovation as we will continue to showcase GIS projects and the work of the Community Geomatics Centre!

Congratulations Chuck

A big congratulations to Chuck Shannon who received his GISP certification this month.

A GISP is a certified geographic information systems (GIS) Professional who has met the minimum standards for ethical conduct and professional practice as established by the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI).

To become a GISP you must fulfill a number of criteria in – educational attainment, professional experience and contributions to the profession – and possess at least 4 years of professional GIS experience.

Chuck joins fellow GISP certified SSMIC staff members Marie Alexander, Gerry Belanger, Craig Martin, Chris Sambol and Paul Beach.

Congratulations again Chuck!



UPCOMING EVENTS:

AUGUST

Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

• **August 2, 2010**

Civic Holiday - SSMIC offices closed

**Workshops, TAG
Luncheons, IT
Breakfasts and other
events return this Fall!**
**Stay tuned for the August
issue to find out more.**

Visit www.ssmic.com to view an
updated calendar of events.

For more information
about any of the events
or to RSVP contact
Mei Ling at: 942-7927 X3122 or
mling@ssmic.com

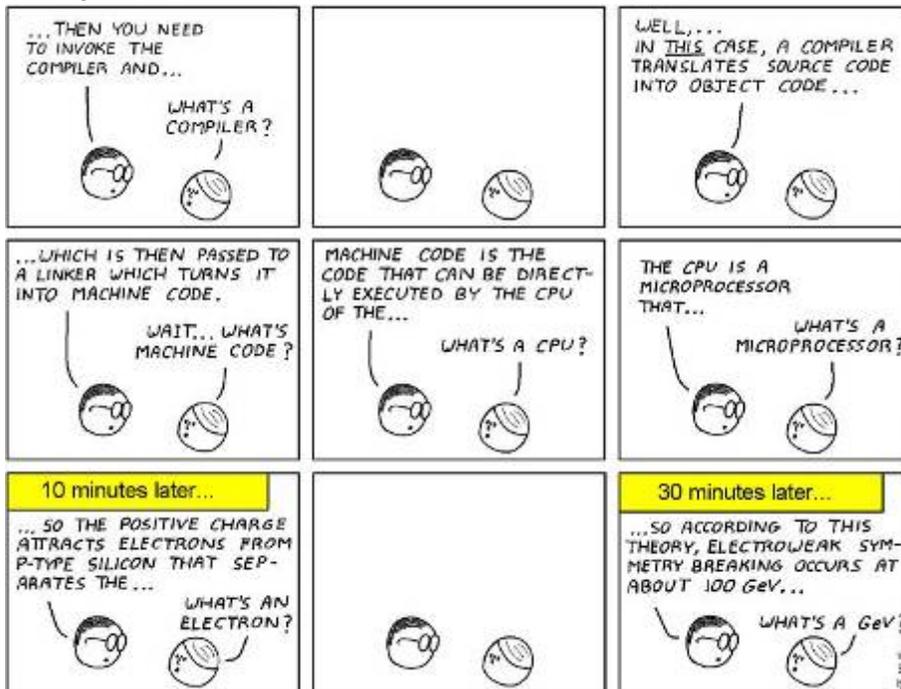
Verbatim

"Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship. The act that endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth."

- Peter Drucker,

American writer and management consultant

Computer Science 101



<http://abstrusegoose.com>

iPad sales eclipse 3 million mark in just 80 days

Apple Inc. said it sold three million iPads in the tablet computer's first 80 days on the market, a performance that cements the device's position as a driver of the consumer electronics giant's rapid growth.

Sales of the touchscreen device, the first of a new category of tablet devices aimed at consumers, mark another

triumph for Apple, which has successfully redefined the mobile market. The figures trump analysts' initial estimates for sales of roughly 1.7 million iPads in the quarter ending June 30.

The iPad represents one of the fastest-selling new products in Apple's history. Even Apple's popular iPhone, now the company's biggest revenue driver, took more than two months to

crack the one-million mark after it debuted in June 2007.

In addition to the iPad, a new generation of its iPhone will go on sale Thursday amid expectations it too will generate blockbuster sales. A new version of its mobile operating system, iOS 4, was released on Monday and is expected to lure more customers to Apple's handheld products.

Are you an entrepreneur or part of a SME that would like to be profiled in a future edition of Eye On Innovation?

Contact: mling@ssmic.com

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