

select ONTARIO PROFILES



Dr. Jimi Tjong, Frank Fasdani, Don Gilbert, Mike Vince, Aaron McKey and Chris Bolen at the official opening of the Ford Powertrain Engineering Research and Development Centre.

New Windsor R&D Centre aims to keep Ford of Canada in the fast lane

AUTO

Company: Ford of Canada's Powertrain Engineering Research & Development Centre

Product: R&D for Automobiles

Location: Windsor, Ontario

Ford of Canada's Windsor, Ontario research facilities, part of the company's large Windsor complex, beat out three other labs to become the site of the new **Powertrain Engineering Research and Development Centre (PERDC)**. It's a significant win, one that makes Windsor the second-most important R&D location for Ford outside its world headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan.

Located at Ford's bustling Essex Engine Plant in Windsor—a key source of the company's global engine production—the new, \$13 million facility will focus its research on reducing noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) in engines and transmissions. Data collected from this testing will provide design engineers with a critical baseline to help determine the level of improvement in NVH that will result by redesigning certain components in future engines or transmissions.

"Research shows that quietness is a key demand of consumers," says Jimi Tjong, Ford's Staff Technical Specialist and PERDC founder.

Initially, testing will focus on Windsor-produced engines and transmissions, but Tjong's objective is to make PERDC the testing lab for Ford Motor Company engines from around the world.

"As a global operation, the Centre could make a strong contribution to customer satisfaction everywhere," he says.

Tjong, along with nine Ford engineers, a group of technicians and eight "A" average graduate students from the **University of Windsor's** Faculty of Engineering make up PERDC's research team. Tjong credits them with winning the new facility.

"Our researchers are smart, creative and willing to work three shifts a day to produce test results faster than anywhere else," he says, adding, "PERDC will help us keep our best researchers here in Ontario."

Expert predicts Toronto will reach new heights as a high-tech hotspot

SITE SELECTION

Company: Carnegie Mellon University and University of Toronto

Product: Site Location Research

Location: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Toronto, Ontario



Richard Florida, H. John Heinz III Professor of Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University

Toronto the new Boston? It could well be, says Richard Florida, H. John Heinz III Professor of Regional Economic Development in the **Heinz School of Public Policy and Management** at Pittsburgh's **Carnegie Mellon University**. He's also the author of the best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Florida, along with Meric Gertler, Professor of Geography and Planning at the **University of Toronto**, recently completed a study of Canadian cities and their performance in high-tech endeavours. It builds on similar studies conducted in the U.S.

Florida says that, like Boston, Toronto has the ability to produce, attract and retain world-class workers—the people who provide the ideas, know-how, creativity and imagination that fuel the economy—and that's crucial to success in today's knowledge-based economy.

“In the past, businesses located near raw materials,” he says. “Today, they gravitate toward talent pools. That means that what matters most now is the ability to attract potentially mobile, much sought-after talent.”

So what attracts talent to certain cities like Boston and Toronto? Florida's research indicates that today's knowledge workers are drawn to high-energy urban areas that have a rich cultural scene, a high concentration of people working in cultural and creative occupations, a high concentration of foreign-born residents and a large diverse population—all of which both cities have.

“There's a strong set of linkages between creativity, diversity, talent and technology-intensive activity,” says Florida. “The most successful city-regions anywhere are the ones with a social environment that is open to creativity and diversity of all sorts.”

It explains why Toronto is a high-tech hotspot—and why it's likely to grow even more in importance over the next few years.

And it's not just Toronto that has the “creative capital” to fuel economic growth. Florida's study shows that smaller Ontario cities such as Ottawa, Kitchener and London also have the right stuff to grow and compete in today's world.



Governments from around the world are knocking on Teranet's door

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Company: Teranet
Product: e-services
Location: Toronto, Ontario

Where do governments eager to streamline processes and cut costs go to find solutions? More and more of them are finding their way to Toronto, Ontario-based **Teranet**, a leader in e-government services.

Teranet was established in 1991 as a unique private-public partnership with the Ontario government, with both sectors kicking in \$29 million in start-up funding. The company's first contract was to take Ontario's huge land registry system and automate it—a big challenge considering the system included some four million registered pieces of property in 63 locations on 400 million pieces of paper, some dating back to the 1700s.

But Teranet succeeded. Now nearly all land registry documents in Ontario are available online and transactions are conducted electronically through the company, a saving to the province of \$300 million in personnel and office costs so far.

It's something no one else in the world is doing, according to Teranet's President, Aris Kaplanis. And that's what enticed him away from a U.S. computer giant 12 years ago to launch the company. Mr. Kaplanis credits Teranet's success with Ontario's innovative environment and bright minds.

"It's the ideal place for a cutting-edge company like ours," he says. "There's a great talent pool of IT workers to draw from,



Teranet President, Aris Kaplanis

competitive business costs and a government committed to the success of its high-tech sector."

With a growing list of clients that include the governments of the Czech Republic, Korea, Lebanon and Puerto Rico, as well as a number of municipalities in Canada, Teranet employs close to 800 people. Last year the company recorded revenues of \$170 million.

And Teranet keeps growing and innovating. The company has built on its original model and today it offers groundbreaking e-services for customers in government, real estate, legal and financial services.

Skyline of Downtown Toronto, Ontario



Toronto a magnet for top-notch medical researchers

LIFE SCIENCES

Company: Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute,
Mount Sinai Hospital

Product: Life Sciences Research

Location: Toronto, Ontario

Toronto, Ontario continues to attract the best and brightest medical researchers from around the world. Among the latest to call Toronto home are Dr. Mei Zhen and her husband, Dr. Chi Yip Ho, both biologists and both internationally recognized in their areas. Two years ago they were doing post-doctoral work in the San Francisco Bay area and looking for permanent research positions. They were offered jobs all over the U.S. and Canada.

“We wanted to go where the research was world respected and where there would be equal opportunity for our careers,” says Dr. Ho. “We also wanted to work in a city that was safe, clean, affordable and culturally vibrant,” adds Dr. Zhen. “Toronto was the only place that met all our requirements.”

Both scientists got positions at **Mount Sinai Hospital** and affiliations with the **Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute**. Dr. Zhen’s work involves studying how the brain develops with the aim of finding treatments for neurological disorders; Dr. Ho, as director of the Microarray Laboratory, combines biology and computing to study 20,000 genes at a time, accelerating research into the functions of each individual gene. He and his colleagues at the lab are also heading one of just four Canadian research teams to receive **Canadian Institute of Health Research** (CIHR) grants to study the SARS virus, with the goal of developing both a vaccine and a quick diagnostic tool.



*Dr. Chi Yip Ho, Director, Microarray Laboratory,
Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, Mount Sinai Hospital*

*Dr. Mei Zhen, Assistant Professor, Department of Medical
Genetics, University of Toronto*

“Toronto is a wonderful place for research,” says Dr. Ho. “Not only does it have the critical mass, it’s a highly collaborative environment, which is very important today when research is so cross-disciplined.”

Dr. Zhen agrees. “The great thing about Toronto is that if you need help with something, all you have to do is pick up the phone and ask.”



*Microarray Robot, paints microscope
slides with the DNA of fish. This leading
technology enables thousands of genes to
be studied at once, making experiments
faster to complete.*

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