Celebrating 10 Years of Partnership and Progress

Career Focus Internship Program
Bridging the Skills Gap for Ten Years
March 2009
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR –

Faye West

This year marks the 10th anniversary of ICTC’s Career Focus Internship Program. Over the years, this program has created a strong bridge that our educated youth have crossed to close the gap between post-secondary education and integration into the ICT workforce.

As we all know, Canada’s ICT industry continues to experience a skills shortage. This shortage requires innovative programs that help train youth for ICT occupations and give them the right mix of technical, business, and personal skills to succeed in the industry.

The Career Focus Internship Program is one such program. It clearly demonstrates the win-win benefits of a well-managed internship program that matches talented post-secondary graduates who need ICT work experience with employers that need specific ICT skills. The program has helped small and medium-sized companies obtain funding to help them hire intelligent youth who are eager to work in an ICT occupation, and youth across the country have been given access to ICT occupations that have helped them gain the work experience and skills they need to open the door to a successful full-time career in ICT.

This program has become a shining example of the opportunities that result when government, industry, and academe work together to achieve a common goal of creating a diverse, prepared and highly educated Canadian ICT industry and workforce. ICTC is truly grateful for the collaborative efforts of our funding partner, the Government of Canada’s Sector Council Program, as well as the participation and investment of provincial/territorial governments, employers, and industry partners who have all played an important role in the success of the Career Focus Internship Program.

I invite you to join us in celebrating the past ten years of this program. We look forward to working with you in the future to ensure the continued success of this program and the advancement of quality human resources for Canada’s ICT industry.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT –

Paul Swinwood

After travelling around the country and speaking with partner organizations, funders, interns, and employers, I am grateful for the tireless efforts of each of you. The success of the Career Focus Internship Program is truly the result of a team effort.

One of the hallmarks of the Career Focus Internship Program is its emphasis on immediate and practical solutions to overcome the human resources challenges of our industry. This means rolling up our sleeves and working directly with industry, government, students, and partner organizations to give youth the work experience they need to match the skills that employers require. I can truly say that this spirit has guided the efforts at all levels of this program, including the Board of Directors, the staff, the steering committee volunteers, the partners, and the members. This commitment to success is a testament to the fact that each of you has recognized the very human dimension behind the labour market statistics. This program makes a difference in peoples’ lives and helps individuals and organizations succeed.

The changes we have made over the years to operational aspects of this program are directly the result of our hands-on approach. Changes to internship start dates, internship lengths, and subsidy levels have been neither arbitrary nor haphazard decisions. They are the result of your feedback, an inside look at the needs of companies in today’s knowledge economy, in conjunction with the need of interns.

I celebrate and salute the efforts of each of you. This same spirit of hard work will certainly lead the Career Focus Internship Program to continue to be associated with distinction and success.
TOP TEN SIGNS OF SUCCESS

There have been many striking achievements for the Career Focus Internship Program over the last ten years.

1. Over **600 college and university students** from across Canada have received valuable ICT work experience.

2. An average **eight out of every ten interns** stay as full-time employees.

3. Over **350 small and medium sized** ICT employers throughout the country have received subsidies to help them employ talented youth in ICT occupations.

4. The Government of Canada has contributed more than **$3.5 million to help youth and employers** succeed in the ICT industry.

5. **163 women and 72 visible minorities** have obtained valuable ICT work experience.
6. **100% of employers** say the Career Focus Internship Program is valuable to their company and to the ICT sector.

7. ICT employers from **every province** have participated in the program, contributing over $8.5 million in wages to their local economy.

8. **Eight general job categories, 36 broader occupational streams, four proficiency levels, and multiple skill levels** are involved in this program.

9. Internship subsidies have grown from **$6000/intern in 1998** to **$10,000 in 2008**.

10. The internship period has expanded from **six months to one year** to meet the needs of employers.
About ICTC

The Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) is a not-for-profit sector council dedicated to creating a diverse, prepared and highly educated Canadian ICT industry and workforce. ICTC is a catalyst for change, pushing for innovations that will provide standards, labour market intelligence, career pathways and immigration initiatives for the Canadian ICT industry, educators and governments. We forge partnerships that will help develop the quantity and quality of ICT professionals needed to maintain and improve Canada’s position as a leader in the global marketplace.

Our Role In Bridging The Gap Between Education And Experience

The Career Focus Internship Program is one project that ICTC delivers to industry stakeholders to help post-secondary graduates obtain the skills they need to meet the demands of ICT employers. This program started in 1998, when the Software Human Resource Council (SHRC), now ICTC, launched the National IT Youth Internship Pilot.

Now celebrating its 10th year of operations, ICTC’s Career Focus Internship Program continues to be supported by the Government of Canada’s Sector Council Program. ICTC is responsible for the day-to-day management of the program, such as: screening employer applications, selecting eligible companies from across Canada, and providing eligible employers with a subsidy equal to one-third of the intern’s salary. ICTC pays the subsidy to the employer in instalments throughout the work term.

Employers are required to provide each intern with a quality ICT work experience and a learning plan to guide their development. The intern’s position must also fit into one of ICT’s 36 broader occupational streams at varying levels of proficiency.

“The quality of the Career Focus candidates consistently exceeds our expectations. These are bright and extremely motivated people who really excel in our company. The program has helped highlight some remarkable individuals with superb skills that we might otherwise have never found.”

Name: Claudine Mackenzie
Number of Employees: 330 across Canada
Position: HR Employment Specialist
Type of Service/Product: GIS Software Distributors
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A PROGRAM WITH A TANGIBLE IMPACT

The Career Focus Internship Program has a significant impact on SMEs, youth, under-represented groups, Canada’s innovation agenda, skills shortage and regional economies.

A Snapshot of Progress – 1998 vs. 2008

Many lessons have been learned through the years that help employers and interns succeed with the Career Focus Internship Program. As such, it has continued to evolve and progress to meet the needs of the ICT industry.

• Federal subsidies have grown from $6,000 per intern in 1998 to $10,000 per intern in 2008.
• The length of internships has grown from six months to up to one year.
• 26 ICT occupations have grown into 36 job descriptions at three levels of expertise – entry, intermediate, and advanced.
• In 1998, interns had to be placed in ICT companies; in 2008, they can be placed in any ICT occupation for any type of company.
• The scope of experience has shifted from a focus on work placements for technologically-gifted interns, to a focus on developing ICT workers with a broad range of skills, including business, interpersonal and technical skills.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) comprise the bulk of Canada’s ICT sector. In 2007, there were approximately 24,700 companies with less than ten employees, accounting for 81% of all companies in the ICT sector. During the same period, there were only 120 companies with more than 500 employees.

The Career Focus Internship Program directly impacted more than 350 employers across the country. Particularly in the case of the SMEs, access to the program’s subsidies has helped these ICT employers gain access to new talent. The subsidy decreases the risk for employers to employ young graduates and helps them access the incredible talent that is waiting to be nurtured to meet the needs of the ICT labour market. The program has also helped employers to retain competent and trained interns as full-time employees.

In addition, ICTC’s job descriptions, training guides, and procedures help SMEs to develop more sophisticated HR training and development procedures.

Youth Employment

Getting and keeping a first job in the knowledge sector is the number one challenge facing university and college graduates, according to the ICTC 2005 College Survey and the 2007 University Survey.

The Career Focus Internship Program allows youth to experience an ICT job at close proximity. This in turn allows them to make a more informed career choice. Over 600 college and university students from across Canada were given the opportunity to make a meaningful career choice and gain valuable ICT experience. Furthermore, eight out of ten interns were hired as full-time employees by their host employers.

“Finding skilled employees and presenting them with a competitive offer is always a challenge to us. ICTC’s Career Focus Internship Program provides us with the resources and hiring flexibility we need in order to compete in the marketplace. It also allows the organization to change and improve as we continuously review our employee training and development procedures. It helps us keep a fresh perspective on the way we operate, which is a great benefit to us, as well as the employee.”

Name: Bill Lee
Position: Development Manager
Business: Desire2Learn Inc.
Type of Service/Product: eLearning Solutions Provider
Number of Employees: 150
Advancement of Under-Represented Groups of Workers

Women have historically been underrepresented in the ICT workforce. According to ICTC’s December 2007 statistics on gender representation in the Canadian ICT labour force, the percentage of women in ICT is 24.9%. Barriers to women entering the industry range from women’s negative perceptions of the ICT occupations, systemic barriers in post-secondary institutions, misalignment of job descriptions and job requirements, and inadequate support in the workplace for women with young families.

Through the Career Focus Program, 163 women have obtained valuable ICT work experience. Similarly, 72 visible minorities have experienced ICT work experience in the ICT sector. The program continues to provide access to Aboriginal and disabled persons as well.

Addressing Skills Shortage

According to ICTC’s recent report, The Outlook on Human Resources in the ICT Labour Market: 2008-2015, approximately 15,795 to 22,345 ICTC workers will be needed in Canada every year. While labour supply shortages are less acute in a period of economic downturn, companies are still identifying a shortage of workers with skill sets specific to the new economy, namely business, technical, and people skills.

Targeted and structured internships such as the Career Focus Internship Program help provide marketplace experience to recent graduates, helping them to acquire skills they need to succeed in the knowledge economy.

Regional Economic Issues

There are skills shortages in nearly all of Canada’s economic regions; however, these shortages vary within different ICT occupations based on the local markets and talent pool. Through this program, ICTC has been able to work together with employers from various regions to identify the ICT skills that are needed within their local workforce. Companies from every region have been recipients of Career Focus Internship Program subsidies to help them address the specific labour shortages in their market.

Furthermore, employers who have been eligible for program funding have contributed over $8.5 million of wages to regional economies through their matching contribution to the internship subsidies.

“Overall, the Career Focus Internship Program offered me a huge head start. It offered me a lot of support in terms of transitioning from the academic to the professional world, helped me to develop as an employee, and become a well-rounded professional. Being taught by someone with industry experience has changed the way I approach certain situations. My mentor has been really invaluable to my development. My experience as an intern has been instrumental in helping me select my career path.”

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Position: Software Developer
Business: Desire2Learn Inc.
Type of Service/Product: eLearning Solutions Provider
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Canada’s Innovation Agenda
The success of the program, particularly employers’ willingness to provide a first year of employment, creates a supply of talent for the knowledge economy. In particular, it facilitates innovation and growth for smaller companies. This helps these companies to attract financial and intellectual capital, and to remain competitive, particularly with American firms.

Moving Forward – The Importance Of The Career Focus Internship Program In The Future

ICTC is uniquely positioned to build on the past success of the Career Focus Internship Program to provide new and innovative solutions to ICT skill shortages that Canada will face in the future.

Working together with all our partners, ICTC will continue to evolve the Career Focus Internship Program to help our youth gain the work experience and right mix of skills they need to provide quality human resources for the Canadian ICT industry. More specifically, we will be looking at ways to leverage this program to deal with the most pressing HR issues facing our industry today, such as: increasing post-secondary enrolment in ICT occupations, retaining and retraining employees, and integrating internationally educated professionals (IEPs) into our ICT industry.

We welcome and value your participation.

“In order for Canada to have a prosperous ICT industry, we need to invest in our young talent and ensure they have the necessary tools at their disposal. ICTC’s Career Focus Internship Program is a key player in this equation as it continues to engage our country’s youth and ensure they are able to excel in the ICT field. I look forward to continuing my participation in the Career Focus Internship Program, and have recommended it countless times to my business associates. It is an extremely valuable experience for everyone involved.”

For more information about our Career Focus Internship Program or how you can become involved in advancing the ICT workforce in Canada, contact us at:

Information and Communications Technology Council
116 Lisgar Street
Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0C2
www.ictc-ctic.ca
Telephone: (613) 237-8551
Fax: (613) 230-3490

Name: Stephen Chan
Position: CEO
Business: Dapasoft Inc.
Type of Service/Product: Software Development and IT Consulting
Number of Employees: 75
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Advanced Training Services
APPS on the Web Inc.
Apptius Computer Solutions Inc.
ASL Consulting
Atlantis Scientific Inc.
Atoya Learning Inc.
Banks-Hill Systems Ltd.
BDM Information Systems Ltd.
Bluedrop Inc.
Business Technologies Group
Caris
CGK Technologies Group Inc.
Cistech Limited
Clear Picture Corporation
Click Media Inc.
Collaborative Learning Network Inc.
Concertrics Communications Canada
Connes Network Incorporated
Conseillers en Informatique
ConsulNet Computing Inc.
Corporate Mentoring Solutions Inc.
Cryptocard Corporation

Cuesta Systems Inc.
Dapasoft Inc.
DeltaWare Systems Inc.
Diaphonics, Inc.
Discreet
Druide Informatique Inc.
Dymaxion Research Limited
Eagle Professional Resources Inc.
Ecom Media Group Inc.
EEE Systems Group Ltd.
Effectivesite Inc.
EFG Solutions Inc.
eFuzion Incorporated
Emerge Knowledge Design
Emerging Technologies Systems Inc.
Envision IT
ESRI Canada Limited
Etraffic Solutions Inc.
EventIQ Inc.
Exocom Systems
Famic Technologies 2000 Inc.
Food & Beverage Testing Institute of Canada
Forintek Canada Corp.
Frontier Technologies

Gate West Communications
GDS & Associates Sytems Ltd
Gemstart Networks Inc.
Global Advanced Technology
Greenware Environmental Systems Inc.
Groupe Beauchemin, Editeur
Groupe DSI
Harris Computer Corporation
Hartronix Computer Solutions Inc.
HB Studios Multimedia Ltd.
Ibridge Inc.
Informatique GT2000
Infotech Canada Inc.
Interactive Training Systems Inc.
Interfacing Technologies Corp.
Internet Edge Solutions Inc.
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Logical Software Corporation
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MRFGsystems Corporation
MXI Technologies
N-Dimension Solutions Inc.
NetCare Plus
Nexolink Inc.
Nicom Ltd.
Nmedia Solutions Inc.
Noitaminanimation
Novalis Technologies
NovAtel
Nuvo Network Management Inc.
Nvision Software Systems Inc.
OA Solutions
Ominiciel International Inc.
Open Road Communications Ltd.
Paradata Systems Inc.
Pathfinder Technology Inc.
PCI Geomatics Inc.
Pixelera Inc.
Plato Group Inc.
Point2 Technologies Inc.
PowerNet Computer Systems Inc.
Pre2Post Inc.
ProjectLine Solutions Inc.
Prospection
Radcliffe Systems Inc.
Ramius Corporation
RealDecoy Inc.
Reg-iNet Inc.
Réseau Interaction Network
Roy Consultants Group Ltd.
Searchengineposition (Canada) Inc.
Seerx Technologies
ShareLine Systems Ltd.
Smartsfirm Inc.
Source Evolution
Syntapa Technologies Inc.
TAP Ventures Inc.
Technologies for Learning Group Inc.
Tech-Rep Ltd.
Tilcon Software Ltd.
Trihedral Engineering Limited
Triton Data Inc.
Tuff Investment Management Inc.
Tuff Risk Management Inc.
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