

Success Story



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Appear Networks | Stockholm

Ontario student develops intelligent mobility software

OCE scholarship leads to research collaboration between Europe and Ontario

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Hossein Rahnama
*Head Researcher, Ubiquitous and Pervasive
Computing Lab (UPCL)*
Ryerson University

It’s an experience travelers dread – exiting a plane and being totally confused as to how to catch a connecting flight. Where is the right terminal? Which gate? Is the flight still leaving on time or has it been delayed? If only the right information was available the moment you landed.

PhD student Hossein Rahnama and researchers at Ryerson University are developing a computer software application that gives travelers the information they need the moment they are on the ground.

With this application, a passenger can walk off the plane, and using a hand-held information device such as a Blackberry, immediately receive a map of the airport, directions to the correct terminal and gate, the departure time, and other personalized information – even hotels in the area if there is an overnight delay.

Rahnama is the head researcher at Ryerson’s Ubiquitous and Pervasive Computing Lab (UPCL) that partners the university with Appear Networks – a leading mobility software company based in Stockholm, Sweden. Rahnama leads eight researchers (a mix of graduate and undergraduate students) to oversee this and other innovative projects that focus on “context aware mobility.” This concept is based on delivering relevant information, taking into account a user’s location, environment and needs.

The catalyst for this partnership was an International Scholarship provided by the

Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) that gives Ontario students global exposure to exciting technology projects. For Rahnama, the scholarship gave him the opportunity to spend four months in Stockholm, working in Appear’s research facility.

“I was so pleased to get this OCE scholarship,” says Rahnama, who is now completing his PhD in computer engineering. “It opened so many doors. I was involved in exciting research projects and worked with Europe’s top researchers. OCE helped find this opportunity and I gained invaluable experience.”

His work at Appear made waves across Europe. He has already presented his research at events in Malta, Portugal and France. Appear quickly recognized Rahnama’s talent and saw the ideal opportunity to continue working with their skilled intern, as well as the chance to expand its operations into North America. Now, Ontario is an essential contributor in developing the company’s next generation of mobility software.

“Hossein’s internship was extremely successful,” says Xavier Aubry, Appear’s CEO. “Our discussions with Ryerson convinced us they were open to working with innovative software companies like ours. OCE played a key role in establishing this partnership that is the cornerstone of our North American expansion strategy. We believe Ontario is a great place to start.”

