



Media Release

Communiqué

University of Calgary researcher to lead national research team investigating driver interaction and telematic systems and sensors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2003

Calgary, AB: Intelligent systems and sensors can assist drivers as they travel in their cars, but drivers with different profiles will interact with them in unique ways. Creating a knowledge database of how driver profiles such as commuters, leisure drivers and the elderly use and interact with these systems and sensors is the goal of a national research team being co-led by a University of Calgary researcher. Dr. Jeff Caird, an associate professor in Social Sciences, is coordinating the team that consists of researchers at Carleton University, University of Calgary, University of Guelph and the University of Montreal. The team was recently awarded funding of up to \$2.7 million from the AUTO21 Network of Centres of Excellence and several industry and public sector supporters. The project is being co-led by Dr. Ata Khan at Carleton University.

Dr. Caird says telematics systems and sensors can provide a wealth of information to a driver, but it is important that the driver not be overloaded to the point it affects their safety. Commuters hurrying to work will interact differently with other drivers, the road and telematic systems than elderly drivers who may have slower response times and visual or dexterous limitations.

“Using driving simulators allows us to investigate how drivers react in real-time situations without risk of accident or injury,” says Dr. Caird. “The knowledge database will help determine what systems and sensors can be used effectively. It will also assist with regulations and policy development.”

Dr. Dennis Salahub, University of Calgary vice-president (research & international), says the U of C and Dr. Caird are natural choices for co-leading the AUTO21 project. “The U of C is a leader in the area of understanding human behaviour and – thanks to Dr. Caird – home to one of the most advanced driving simulators in the country. We are proud to contribute to enhanced road safety through Dr. Caird's project.”

Dr. Donald Kline, a University of Calgary psychologist, was one of the principal architects of the application and will also be involved in the project.

“We are pleased to support this innovative project that will enhance tomorrow's vehicle,” says Dr. Peter Frise, CEO and Program Leader of AUTO21. “In addition to the technical knowledge created, the project provides an excellent training opportunity for about 25 students at the four universities to work with expert researchers and also collaborate with industry representatives. This experience will help develop the students into the innovators of Canada's future automotive sector.”

1/2

The project is one of seven new research projects worth a total of \$6.5 million being supported by the AUTO21 Network of Centres of Excellence and industry. AUTO21 is a federal program that supports 28 other auto-related R&D projects at 33 universities across Canada, with combined federal and industry funding of more than \$8 million per year. The new projects add 32 researchers and 53 student researchers to the AUTO21 investigative team. Over 250 university and industry researchers, and more than 250 graduate and post-graduate students are already part of the AUTO21 team. AUTO21 is funded by the Networks of Centres of Excellence of Canada program.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Stephanie Campeau
Communications Manager
AUTO21 Network of Centres of Excellence
Tel: (519) 253-3000, ext. 4129

Gregory Harris
Media Relations Advisor
University of Calgary
Tel: (403) 220-3506
Cell: (403) 540-7306