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Hon Paul Swain

New ICT research group links NZ and overseas developers

The Communications Minister Paul Swain has announced details of a new ICT research group that will see New Zealand and overseas companies working in partnership in the field of mobile communications.

Mr Swain has used his keynote speech to the Mobile Commerce World conference in Melbourne to formally announce the launch of the MediaLab South Pacific Mobile Research Group.

"This is a consortium that will be partnering New Zealand researchers with international network operators and handset manufacturers," says Mr Swain.

"They will be setting up a platform for designing, building and trial deploying mobile applications."

"This is an exciting and innovative development in the field of information and communications technology, and is exactly what the government wants to achieve with its focus on ICT as part of the Growth and Innovation Framework."

"New Zealand is an attractive testbed for wireless and mobile technologies for many reasons, such as the deregulated environment made possible by the 2001 Telecommunications Act; the amount of spectrum available; low development costs; telcos deploying both US and European standards; and our demographics."

"I wish the Mobile Research Group every success" says Mr Swain.

The Mobile Research Group (MRG) is a MediaLab South Pacific initiative led by Scott Jenson and supported by members of MediaLab.

MediaLab South Pacific has received \$311,000 in government assistance towards its establishment over the past two years. As the MRG develops MediaLab will be seeking partnership with the government to meet industry support.

Mr Jenson is the former head of the Symbian Design Lab and was also instrumental in the development of Macintosh and Newton Operating Systems.

The MRG aims to bring together ICT developers to research and create new wireless technology concepts that are people-centred and demonstrate a strong understanding of consumers needs.

Some examples of early stage concepts for text and multimedia applications include:-

- 'Text home!' - A simple text terminal for the home landline so that you can 'text home' or send pictures and your message or image will be instantly displayed on a screen on your refrigerator, electronic noticeboard, TV etc

- "Who's in?" display on the fridge or TV. Your mobile phone is recognised as soon as you walk in your door. With all the phones in the building showing up on screen, this could also act as an intercom.
- 'Mobile calls' become 'landline calls' - Bluetooth/Wi-Fi pod in the building so mobile calls are instantly re-routed to your landline.

MRG Research Partners include:-

- Massey University
- Victoria University Wellington
- University of Waikato
- Canterbury University
- Otago University
- Industrial Research Limited

Useful websites:-

Mobile Commerce World Conference: www.mobilecommerceworld.com

MediaLab South Pacific: www.medialab.co.nz

Scott Jenson: www.jenson.org

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