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# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 19, 2009

## **Local Researchers Awarded Funds for Canada-Wide Rollout of Revolutionary Biomedical IT Resources**

Vancouver, BC – Biomedical researchers face many problems as they try to understand and develop new interventions and treatments for disease. One of the major challenges is the length of time it takes to find the right data and the right way to analyze it. But researchers across Canada got a boost last week when Canada's Advanced Research and Innovation Network (CANARIE) awarded \$927,000 for the C-BRASS (Canadian Bioinformatics Resources As Semantic Services) project.

C-BRASS is a multi-center initiative, led by the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital and the University of British Columbia, in collaboration with researchers at Carleton University and the University of New Brunswick. The grant funds the deployment of two novel Internet platforms - CardioSHARE and SADI - nationwide, and establishes courses to train highly qualified Canadian personnel in these new Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 technologies.

CardioSHARE and SADI were developed by Providence Heart + Lung Institute researchers in collaboration with regional and international partners. CardioSHARE was created three years ago with funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon. Its aim is to make the discovery, integration, and analysis of biomedical data on the Web as straightforward as simply asking a question, in a very natural way. In parallel Microsoft Research funded the invention of a new data-integration technology - SADI - that enables data and analytical tools on the Web to be self-explanatory. This allows machines to make many of the complex decisions about where and how to retrieve and analyze data, leaving the researcher free to focus on what the results mean and how this new knowledge can be used to improve the health of Canadians.

Together, these two technologies have resulted in a knowledge-discovery platform for biomedical researchers that is unique in the world.

"Together, we are revolutionizing the way cardiac researchers share and retrieve information," said Bobbe Wood, President and CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon. "This collaboration promises to accelerate cardiac research in British Columbia and beyond."

"My laboratory's IT research puts the biomedical researcher front-and-center. Everything we do is aimed at enabling them to have greater insights, sooner, and thereby accelerate the discovery of causes, treatments, and interventions for the most critical disease burdens in Canada," says project leader, Mark Wilkinson, a bioinformatician at the Providence Heart + Lung Institute. "Making the researcher's computer, and the Web itself, 'smarter', is a key enabler for health research – reducing cost, and improving the quality and accuracy of research output by expanding the amount of data at the researcher's fingertips."

Michel Dumontier from Carleton University expanded on the same theme, "The C-BRASS initiative is really quite revolutionary in terms of the delivery of data and services. It will certainly further our

efforts to build a distributed platform for personalized medicine that uses intelligent information systems to answer sophisticated questions about, for example, the efficacy of drugs, which in many cases strongly depends on an individual's genetic background."

Christopher Baker, lead investigator at the UNB collaborating site put the significance of the initiative in perspective, "Never before have we been so limited by the technologies we depend on for our in silico research. SADI comes at a critical time and we look forward to sharing this innovation with bioinformatics resource providers and the life science community at large."

C-BRASS is part of CANARIE's flagship Network-Enabled Platform (NEP) Program, which to-date has awarded \$27 million in funding to almost 20 IT research projects across the country. The NEP Program funds the development of tools and software that help researchers, in a wide range of disciplines, to fully exploit the massive amounts of data and research that flow along the CANARIE Network. "What's exciting about a project like C-BRASS is that it will allow researcher to be researchers, rather than IT experts expected to figure out complicated technical issues. C-BRASS will enable researchers to focus on their own important discoveries and innovation. And that's something CANARIE is absolutely committed to supporting," said CANARIE President Guy Bujold.

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#### **About CANARIE:**

CANARIE Inc. is Canada's Advanced Research and Innovation Network. Established in 1993, CANARIE manages an ultra high-speed network, hundreds of times faster than the internet, which facilitates leading-edge research and big science across Canada and around the world. More than 39,000 researchers at nearly 200 Canadian universities and colleges use the CANARIE Network, as well as researchers at institutes, hospitals, and government laboratories throughout the country. The CANARIE Network enables researchers to share and analyze massive amounts of data, which can lead to ground-breaking scientific discoveries. CANARIE's network, programs, and strategic partnerships with 12 regional networks in Canada, and 100 international networks in more than 80 countries, stimulate research that delivers economic, social, and cultural benefits to Canadians.

About SADI: <http://sadiframe.org>

About CardioSHARE: <http://biordf.net/cardioSHARE/>

CANARIE is a non-profit corporation supported by membership fees, with major funding of its programs and activities provided by the Government of Canada. For additional information, please visit: [www.canarie.ca](http://www.canarie.ca).

#### **About the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital**

The only organization of its kind in Canada, the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital unites all of Providence Health Care's heart and lung research, education and care programs under one umbrella. Home of the provincial heart centre, the Institute's cardiac program provides a full spectrum of care for patients with critical heart failure – from medications, to heart transplant and rehabilitation. For more information, visit [www.heartandlung.ca](http://www.heartandlung.ca).

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon is a **volunteer-based** organization that leads in **eliminating heart disease and stroke** through the advancement of research and its application, health promotion, and advocacy.

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