

SPEAKING NOTES

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MINISTER OF STATE (SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY)**

**16TH ANNUAL GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY
EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE (GTEC)**

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Canada 

(Acknowledgements of M.C., event organizers, dignitaries in attendance, as appropriate)

Thank you for inviting me to kick off the 16th edition of GTEC.

I want to thank and congratulate the conference organizers and exhibitors for putting together a first-class event.

As Canada's Minister of State of Science and Technology, I am pleased to participate in this year's GTEC.

As you know, two years ago, Prime Minister Stephen Harper launched our government's Science and Technology Strategy.

Since then, we have been delivering on our commitments by investing heavily in science and technology to create jobs, strengthen the economy and improve the quality of life for Canadians.

In fact, our government is now investing more in science and technology than any other government in Canadian history - \$10.2 billion every year.

This year, faced with the global recession, we decided to invest an additional \$5.1 billion into S&T as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan. We've put \$2 billion into upgrading our country's labs, research and training facilities at universities, colleges and Cégeps, as well as \$750 for scientific equipment at our post-secondary institutions through the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

We're investing \$250 million into modernizing federal government laboratories, \$1 billion into clean energy technologies, \$200 for the National Research Council's Industrials Research Assistance Program, \$110 million for the Canadian Space Agency and \$87.5 million for Arctic research.

There is \$500 for the Canada Health Infoway, and more money for Canada Graduate Scholarships and industrial internships.

We are doing this because innovation and research are the key to Canada's future prosperity.

It is for this same reason that our government is committed to developing an action plan on the digital economy – one that will secure Canada's position at the leading edge, driving innovation and prosperity for decades to come.

As you know better than most, ICTs have a profound impact on businesses and governments, enabling them to better serve their client bases, near and far. It transforms how they expand their reach, enhance their ability to access information and customize their products. Saving time. Improving quality. And making their operations more efficient. It was said to me recently that the digital revolution is as profound as the industrial revolution.

As part of the Economic Action Plan, we have clearly demonstrated an understanding that the ICT sector is an important part of Canada's economic past, present and future. To that end, we are making significant investments to support the digital economy.

For example:

- \$225 million is being invested over three years to develop and implement a strategy on extending broadband coverage to unserved communities;
- a 100-percent capital cost allowance was introduced for computer hardware and systems software; and
- eligible research expenditures under the scientific research and experimental development tax credit are being increased to encourage innovation.

I should add that earlier this year, Minister Tony Clement and I participated in the Canada 3.0 Conference, at which we heard from a number of ICT industry players. It was clear that we have the people and the technology to make Canada a powerhouse in the digital economy, and we will be exploring ways in which we can capitalize on the private sector's expertise to make it a reality.

Complementing our Economic Action Plan, is the S&T Strategy. When we launched it in 2007, the ICT sector was identified as a key driver, and we have followed through on that vision.

We have provided substantial new funding for Canada's world-renowned Networks of Centres of Excellence program. The Centres have an enviable track record of harnessing the research strengths of academia, industry and government to make a difference on issues of social and economic importance.

We also invested \$350 million over five years to create the new Centre of Excellence for Commercialization and Research to explore and exploit the commercialization of technologies, products and services.

And we've followed up on the recommendations of the Science, Technology and Innovation Council. It was set up to identify sub-priorities under our S&T Strategy in areas of strategic importance to Canada.

The Council recommended that we focus our investments in areas with particular promise. Chief among them are new media, animation and games, wireless networks and services, broadband networks and telecom equipment.

Ladies and gentlemen, as much as we want to encourage economic growth and job creation, we are also looking for new ways to address challenges in serving the public.

New technology tools offer tremendous potential to improve the delivery of government services to Canadians – potential we are starting to realize.

Many of you in the private sector are likely already aware of the online service offerings designed to help business get up and running and succeed in a global economy.

Those of you who attended last year's GTEC also witnessed the launch of new ICT applications within the federal government, such as GCPedia. It's an invaluable tool for internal government collaboration and knowledge sharing. This collaborative workspace creates a fluid inter and intra-departmental work environment, increasing the speed of communication and decision-making.

GCPedia has already proven its worth in the first year of its existence. As of late September, there were over 8400 registered users currently working on more than 4100 articles in English and French. GCPEDIA allows us to capture the social capital of an entire generation of public servants in an indexed and searchable database that future generations can leverage and add to. The ability to quickly capture and access large sums of information makes us better equipped to serve Canadians.

New technology tools are proving especially useful to federal policy makers. For instance, we are increasingly harnessing the power of the Internet to improve citizen engagement. Our recent consultations on Copyright reform made use of web sites, blogs, Twitter and YouTube. We received over 8000 submissions and over 31,000 unique visitors to the web site and more than 2500 comments on the discussion forum.

We are also capitalizing on new technologies to improve emergency preparedness planning for situations like the H1N1 outbreak anticipated this fall. ICTs give us the speed we need to coordinate and rapidly deploy emergency personnel and resources. They also offer flexibility for our

employees, enabling people to work remotely if necessary in order to ensure business continuity.

Some of the greatest benefits of new technologies are evident in our own workforce. We are making it easier for our employees to work with each other using new platforms like the Industry Canada wiki. The advantages of this kind of collaboration in real time are invaluable.

Working together, we can maximize the skills and strengths each of us bring to the table to attain our collective goal of better service delivery.

As I look out over this auditorium, I am reminded, yet again, that there are incredible opportunities for a country as rich in talent and technology as ours.

And, as GTEC makes clear year after year, the Government of Canada is determined to fully capitalize on them.

So I wish each of you every success over the next several days to advance our shared objective of building a dynamic, competitive, 21st century economy.

All the best for a most productive and rewarding conference.

Thank you.

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