

## 1. Summary of Planned Activity

Interactivity matters. In contemporary Canada interactive multimedia has become an important medium for communication, art and research. Content across the Internet, digital games, mobile technologies, art installations, kiosks, and participatory environments are changing how we learn, entertain, and communicate. This is an era where miniaturized technology, embedded computing, and wireless access are becoming pervasive. Where is this ubiquitous computing and interactivity leading us? Is it changing the knowledge we create, communicate, learn, and exhibit? What role does interactivity play in our increasingly global yet diverse culture? How can the humanities, arts and social sciences address these changes? **Interactive Matter (iMatter)** brings together digital humanists, media artists, and others for whom the creation and interpretation of interactive works are part of research practice.

We face these questions when considering our current and unprecedented generation gap. A rich range of interactive media already dominates the culture consumed by Canadian youth. Students entering our universities and getting their first jobs are “digital natives,” the first generation born into computer culture (Appendix 1). Professors and employers are overwhelmingly “digital immigrants.” Now is the time to address this generational divide in higher education and research. iMatter will span the generations developing a national network in which undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, applied researchers, and arts organizations can meet. Further, iMatter will mobilize research through public arts venues and develop a national discussion around interactive arts learning.

iMatter has developed six **collaboratories** of researchers that stretch across Canada building on the breadth and depth of new media research already taking place in different disciplines and sectors. Each collaboratory will facilitate the collaboration of a regional group of **multi-disciplinary** researchers from the humanities, social sciences, fine art, and design together with interested computer scientists and engineers. The collaboratories also allow iMatter to connect **across sectors** including applied researchers in colleges, and those in arts organizations. The collaboratories facilitate an emerging type of collaboration, **research/creation**, appropriate for creative digital research across disciplines and sectors that traditional university structures make challenging. The collaboratories link strongly to industry and community groups in order to mobilize theory, practice, research, and creation across publics and across a range of dissemination venues from the web portal to the museum.

iMatter will connect the six regional collaboratories through shared activities into a **national network** to share resources, develop common learning strategies, connect researchers interested in common themes, document emerging ideas, and connect with associated scholarly associations. Research/creation ideas will emerge from the collaboratories, be documented through the web portal and be shared as poster/prototypes at an **annual conference** coordinated with a public interactive **arts festival**. These festival/conferences will take place at a different collaboratory each year allowing a national network and international research/creators to engage regional groups across Canada. The network will also facilitate **training** using conferencing tools and workshops, sharing of **methodologies** and digital techniques through meetings, and development of documentation and **preservation** practices for interactive work.

Interactivity doesn't fit traditional disciplinary lines or practices. iMatter is configured to foster the collaborations that cross the disciplinary, sectoral and cultural lines needed for this emerging and strategic area of creative knowledge.