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Will Computers Teach Humans In 2030?

Canadian Innovators Moses Znaimer & Robert Richards, alongside Google's Larry Page & other Silicon Valley Elite Play Major Role In Creating The World's Most Innovative University

Singularity University To Be Launched In Silicon Valley in June 2009

On **Wednesday, February 4, 2009**, the world's elite thinkers and doers will gather at the famous **TED conference** in Long Beach, California, for the announcement of the launch of **Singularity University (SU)**, a groundbreaking new institution to be located at the NASA Research Park in the heart of Silicon Valley.

But, Canada heard it first! The concept was unveiled at the **2008 ideaCity Conference in Toronto** presented by media and generational innovator **Moses Znaimer**. It was at ideaCity that Singularity University Founding Trustees, futurist and inventor **Dr. Ray Kurzweil**, Chair and CEO of the mighty X PRIZE Foundation **Dr. Peter Diamandis**, and Canadian co-founder of the International Space University **Dr. Robert (Bob) D. Richards**, took the stage in front of 500 awe-struck attendees to let them in on the secret initiative that signals a growing acceptance of a new wave of computing technologies — with revolutionary implications for research and teaching.

So inspired by what he heard, **Moses Znaimer** became the first Associate Founder of SU. "I understand entrepreneurship. Radical ideas like Singularity University can be perceived as risky endeavours. I offered encouragement and start-up capital at an important time in SU's development; when the creators needed it most." Google, under co-founder Larry Page, is the first Corporate Founder. According to SU's website, their respective contributions and credibility are considered "critical to the founding of the institution."

What is Singularity University? The idea came to Diamandis while reading Kurzweil's *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (Viking 2005), while trekking in Chile in January 2007. Diamandis is best known for starting the X PRIZE Foundation, which awards large cash prizes to teams who achieve a specific goal. (In its first challenge, the foundation gave \$10-million to a team that built the world's first working private spaceship.)

In *The Singularity is Near*, Kurzweil forecasts that by 2030, a moment — the "singularity" — will be reached when computers will outthink human brains. He claims that several technologies that now seem grossly undeveloped — including biotechnology, nanotechnology, artificial-intelligence, robotics and genetics — are growing at an exponential rate and will take leaps forward that most people can hardly imagine. Kurzweil presents a vision in which uber-smart computers will irreversibly transform human life, quickly helping researchers cure diseases and vastly extend human life span.

The aforementioned **Dr. Bob Richards**, is another Canadian profoundly involved in SU's creation. Known for his accomplishments in support of humanity's exploration and use of space, Bob is the Founder and CEO of Odyssey Moon Limited, a commercial lunar enterprise based in the Isle of Man and the first official registrant in the Google Lunar X PRIZE competition offering \$20 million to the first privately funded team that can land a spacecraft on the Moon; travel for 500 meters or more across the lunar surface; send back data, photos and video; and do it all by December 31, 2012.

“Human society is nearing the precipice of a technological rollercoaster that we aren’t ready to ride. The Singularity University, a concept first introduced at ideaCity ’08, will help educate and prepare humanity’s future leaders for a world of accelerating technological change and the profound challenges it will bring to our social, legal and moral precepts.” states Dr. Richards.

Singularity University aims to prepare the next generation of technology and thought leaders to address such “grand challenges.” It is modeled on the successful International Space University, founded at MIT in 1987 by Richards and Diamandis, a graduate-level training center to which NASA and other space agencies have sent students for decades. Less than a mile away from the Googleplex, SU will open its doors in June 2009 on the NASA-Ames Research Center campus in Silicon Valley with a nine-week graduate level program, which will be supplemented in future years with executive short courses to help technology entrepreneurs understand the impacts and opportunities of accelerating technological change.

The ideal SU student will be among the smartest in the world, a proven leader and entrepreneur, a multilingual internationalist. Think: the next generation of CEOs. University Deans/Presidents and Government Leaders.

“We are now in the steep part of the exponential trajectory of information technologies in a variety of fields including health, nanotechnology and artificial intelligence,” said Kurzweil. *“It is only these accelerating technologies that have the scale to address the major challenges of humanity ranging from energy to the environment, to disease and poverty. Singularity University is poised to foster the leaders who will create a uniquely creative and productive world.”*

Anyone interested in Singularity University will want to attend ideaCity 2009, the conference’s 10th Anniversary, scheduled to take place in Toronto from June 17 – 19, where Moses has already booked **Dr. Pete Worden**, Director of NASA’s Ames Research Center (ARC) at Moffett Field, California. Dr. Bob Richards, Dr. Peter Diamandis, International Space University President Dr. Michael Simpson and Dr. Ray Kurzweil have also been invited to attend. For details and registration information on ideaCity 2009, visit: <http://www.ideacityonline.com>

ABOUT MOSES ZNAIMER: It is well known that Moses Znaimer transformed the aesthetics, politics and economics of television. His groundbreaking concepts such as Speaker’s Corner, Televised Diversity and the Streetfront/Studioless operating system, were at the core of the over 20 popular and independent Stations and Channels he co-founded, including Citytv, Bravo!, Fashion Television, Canadian Learning Channel, CablePulse24, not to mention MuchMusic and MuqiquePlus, which served to define a generation of Canadian youth in both official languages.

Now, Moses is defining A New Vision of Aging for the 14.5 million Canadian Zoomers (Boomers With Zip!), the population traditionally and formerly known as 45plus. Moses is the President of **CARP**, Canada’s largest and most powerful organization serving the interests of the 45plus, and the CEO of ZoomerMedia Limited (TSXV: ZUM) which publishes the new ZOOMER Magazine, a suite of e-newsletters and websites including <http://www.CARP.ca>, the authoritative Zoomer content supplier to Yahoo! Canada, MSN Sympatico and LavalifePrime <http://www.50plus.com>, and the social networking site <http://www.zoomers.ca>, and produces the **ZoomerShow**, Canada’s first large scale consumer tradeshow and lifestyle expo serving the 45plus and those who love and are responsible for them.

Moses is also the proprietor of English Canada’s only commercial all-classical radio stations, The New Classical 96.3 FM & 103.1 FM, as well as classic pop station The New AM740 – Zoomer Radio, a rare 50,000 watt clear channel frequency that reaches Ontario, Quebec and 28 US states. For more information: <http://www.mosesznaimer.com>

ABOUT ROBERT D. RICHARDS: Dr. Robert “Bob” D. Richards is the Founder and CEO of Odyssey Moon Limited, a commercial lunar enterprise based in the Isle of Man and the first official registrant in the \$30M Google Lunar X PRIZE competition. He is also the Director of Space Technology at Optech Incorporated of Canada, where he presided over the first commercial lidar scanner flown in space as well as the first meteorological lidar flown to another planet aboard the NASA Phoenix Mars Lander. Dr. Richards studied aerospace and industrial engineering at Ryerson University; physics and astronomy at the University of Toronto; and space science at Cornell University, where he became special assistant to Carl Sagan. In 1987, he founded the International Space University (ISU) with Peter Diamandis and Todd Hawley, where he served as the university’s first Associate Administrator for Strategic Planning and chaired the board’s administrative and strategic planning committees during ISU’s first phase of development. For more information: <http://www.robertdrichards.com>

ABOUT NASA AMES RESEARCH CENTER: Ames Research Center, one of 10 NASA field installations, is located in the heart of California's Silicon Valley at the core of the research cluster of high-tech companies, universities and laboratories that define the region's character. With over \$3.0 billion in capital equipment, 2,300 research personnel and a \$600 million annual budget, Ames plays a critical role in virtually all NASA missions in support of America's space and aeronautics programs.

As a leader in information technology research with a focus on supercomputing, networking and intelligent systems, Ames conducts the critical R&D and develops the enabling technologies that make NASA missions possible. Ames also is a leader in nanotechnology, fundamental space biology, biotechnology, aerospace and thermal protection systems, and human factors research. Ames research in astrobiology focuses on the effects of gravity on living things, and the nature and distribution of stars, planets and life in the universe. For more information: <http://www.nasa.gov>

IMPORTANT WEBSITES:

<http://www.singularityu.org>

www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/home/index.html

www.mosesznaimer.com

<http://www.robertdrichards.com>

www.ideacityonline.com

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