Evaluation of NRC's Digital Technologies Research Centre

Results: What did we learn?	• In the past five years, DT has been successful in contributing to the advancement of the field with the substantial research contributions made by its world-class researchers, especially in the areas of machine translation, sentiment analysis, and computer vision and graphics. • Clients of the DT Research Centre are highly satisfied with the services provided by DT scientists as well as with their expertise. The majority of clients noted increased knowledge as a result of working with the DT Research Centre and most of the projects resulted in de-risking research and development. • The field of digital technologies continues to be highly relevant and the Digital Technologies (DT) Research Centre has the potential to address NRC, Government of Canada, and broader industry priorities and needs. However, the research centre does not have enough staff to meet those current and upcoming needs nor does it have access to the type of equipment it requires. In addition, it currently lacks a clear vision and strategy that takes into account these requirements.

Recommendations	• To assist the Research Centre in its way forward, the evaluation made three recommendations:
	
	   o Develop a comprehensive strategic research plan. The plan should clarify the mission and vision of DT and explore how researchers can focus more time on research projects. Based on the priorities identified, a strategy to work with key partners should also be developed.
	
	   o Promote stability of staff by developing a formal human resources plan. The plan should align with DT's strategic research plan, and focus on how to recruit and keep staff. There should be strategies around the hiring of graduate and postdoctoral students, beyond project-specific needs, with consideration of diversity.
	
	   o Ensure that researchers have access to the equipment they need (hardware and software). For example, DT could consider working with new Collaboration Centres to access equipment in conjunction with universities.
	
	• The recommendations were accepted by the Research Centre. Go on the NRC's evaluation webpage for a copy of DT's action plan to address the recommendations.

About the Digital Technologies Research Centre	• DT aims to develop game changing information technologies that collect and make sense of vast amounts of data, creating prosperity for Canada. Through world-class research, DT works with industry to develop and commercialize technologies, and addresses social challenges critical to Canada and the world. • In the past five years, DT led two programs: the Multimedia Analytics Tools for Security (MATS) program and the Learning and Performance Support Systems (LPSS) program. Expenditures associated with MATS and LPSS projects totalled approximately $24.8 million and generated $8.1 million in revenues. • DT also supported over 10 other NRC programs such as the Canadian Wheat Improvement program and the Industrial Research Assistance Program. • On average, the DT Research Centre employs 84 full time employees per year.

About the Evaluation	• The evaluation of the Digital Technologies Research Centre was conducted by the NRC's independent evaluation team and assessed activities that took place in the past five years (2012-13 to 2016-17 fiscal years).
	• The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative research methods (including a document and data review, interviews, and a peer review) to assess the performance, capacity, and relevance of the DT Research Centre.