

Atlanticconnection

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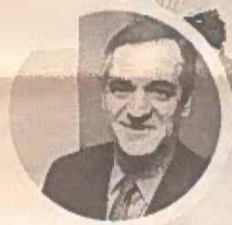
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A Profitable Turn

"Netpreneur" Derek Andrews
at his woodturning studio
in River John, Nova Scotia.



Claire LePage

A Message from the Regional Executive Director

Welcome to the premier issue of *Atlantic Connection* - Industry Canada's Atlantic newsletter.

Working for a department as large and diverse as Industry Canada brings both challenges and rewards. One of those challenges is creating awareness of the many programs and services we deliver and how they come together to achieve the Government of Canada's one clear goal, one clear reward—a better quality of life for Canadians.

This newsletter will help show you the results of our work, and how Atlantic Canadians and businesses throughout the region are benefiting from it every day.

In this and future issues, we'll introduce you to some of the people and organizations who have grown through partnerships, determination and hard work. We'll also get a closer look at some of the Industry Canada employees who make it happen.

From our very public face found in the hundreds of C@P (Community Access Program) sites being used by people in villages, towns and cities throughout the region; to our quieter, behind-the-scenes side monitoring Canadian airwaves, Industry Canada is impacting lives on a daily basis.

I hope you'll enjoy these stories, a celebration of the success our department shares with Atlantic Canadians.

Together we're making a difference-contributing to an innovative society where all Canadians have the opportunity to benefit from economic and social prosperity.

Claire LePage
Regional Executive Director
Industry Canada



Cover Story

A Profitable Turn

When craftsman Derek Andrews first started his woodturning business in Nova Scotia some 10 years ago, most of his sales were to tourists, retailers and at craft fairs. But his business bloomed and opened to the world once he discovered the internet, web sites, and the power of e-commerce.

Andrews was already a regular visitor to the River John library in 1996 when the organization applied to Industry Canada for computers and free local internet access through the Community Access Program (C@P). Although Andrews was already computer savvy, he had yet to discover the internet. He joined the committee.

“One of the reasons I got involved in the C@P site from the beginning is that I didn't have an internet-capable computer at home,” he says. “Having that resource available in the library was very useful to me.”

The first young woman trained by the library in web page authoring went on to teach Andrews the skills he needed to begin his new adventure in cyberspace.

“Getting used to the internet was easy,” says Andrews. “Things got quite a lot more complicated when I started to build the web site. I learned a lot along the way and am still learning today.”

He may not have been entirely sure in which direction he was headed while building his first site, but using it to sell his woodwork quickly became an obvious choice. He relied on the

internet for most of what he learned about marketing and e-commerce, but found that most of it was geared towards big operations, not small businesses like his.

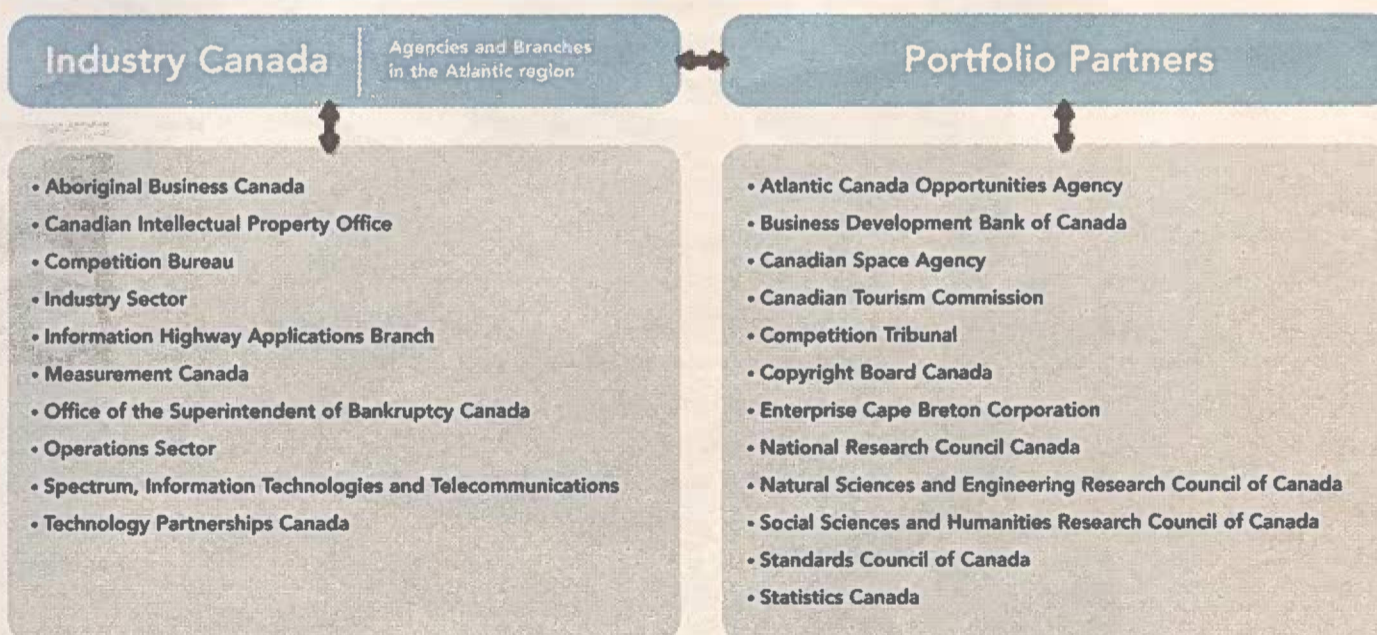
So joining a network of artists and crafts online made all the difference. Talking about marketing with businesses similar to his proved to be an invaluable exchange of experiences and ideas to which Andrews attributes much of his success.

Today, 40% of his sales are through the internet, 90% of which are US customers. And instead of relying on seasonal sales, he now sells all year long, and enjoys being able to sell directly to his customers.

And Andrews' enthusiasm for e-commerce is catching on: the C@P site's most recent summer student just helped another River John craftsman develop a website to sell his wooden walking canes, and a local sheep farmer has started a brisk business in specialty knitting needles.

“A lot of sweat equity goes into making a successful website,” he says. But it's well worth the effort. “It's like having a shop open 24 hours a day.”

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Francommercialization

Canada's linguistic duality is at the heart of our identity. Over 6.8 million francophones live in Canada, and though the majority live in Quebec, one million live in minority communities across the country. Industry Canada works with other organizations to help French language and francophone culture thrive in Atlantic Canada for generations to come.

It became clear to the CÉNB that Research and Development and commercialization had become key to the business world.

When the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick (CÉNB) opened its doors 25 years ago, their mission was to contribute to the economic development of New Brunswick through the promotion of francophone businesses and entrepreneurship.

It became clear to the CÉNB at a francophone business summit the organization held last May, that Research and Development (R&D) and commercialization had become key to the business world. They knew there was still work to be done in relaying that message to businesses who were trying to keep pace with the demands and opportunities of a more global economy.

So in a move to generate more awareness amongst the New Brunswick R&D communities, the CÉNB and Industry Canada unveiled a new recognition program to a room full of entrepreneurs at the CÉNB's annual banquet last November.

Following on the heels of their Aboiteaux Award-Innovation, the new Aboiteaux Award-Research and Development honours those who bring the fruits of R&D to the marketplace.

"There's a lot of good innovation and R&D already taking place, but people aren't necessarily aware of it," says Aucoin. "Praising each other's work and accomplishments and showcasing success is a good thing to do to help create awareness."

The first winner will be announced this June at Rendez-Vous Acadie Quebec—a conference designed to help these two francophone communities join forces, collaborate in business, and build on each other's growing strengths in order to better take on the challenges of globalization.

www.cenb.com



Paul Aucoin, President of the Conseil Économique de la Nouvelle-Brunswick, worked with Industry Canada to develop an award that recognizes excellence in bringing the fruits of Research & Development to market.

"The francophone business community in New Brunswick is only two generations old," explains Paul Aucoin, President of the CÉNB. "Primarily, up until the '50's or so, we were more often employees than employers... In making the move from job creation to wealth creation, we thought it was important to form a group that was able to function in French."

Twenty-five years later, the CÉNB is still keeping their fingers firmly on the pulse of global business trends to help francophone businesses adapt and remain competitive.

Different Wavelength

A staggering amount of detail needs to be attended to prior to, during, and after a world leader's visit to another country, and US President George Bush's trip to Halifax in December was no exception.

From arranging access for international, national and local press, to finding suitable venues for events, everything is carefully organized and orchestrated. Perhaps the biggest concern is security... in the sky, on the roads, indoors and out, even through the air.

Enter Industry Canada's Spectrum, Information Technologies & Telecommunications (SITT) branch, who in addition to many other functions, is responsible for making sure that operators of wireless communications systems—everything from TV stations, to cell phones, to emergency services—have their own uninterrupted radio frequencies.

So when the President's staff arrived in Halifax with scores of wireless devices, it was up to the people at the Spectrum office to coordinate access to the radio spectrum and make sure they were secure frequencies.

Quite a task considering that numerous bands and channels are already assigned to users in the Halifax area, some of them shared. Making room for the President's wireless needs in this congested environment was a challenge.

"Making sure that frequencies requested will work is important for something like the Bush visit," says George Hastings, Director of Industry Canada's SITT branch in Nova Scotia. "They require radio spectrum free of

interference and we must ensure they will not affect existing users. This is the challenge in managing such a visit."



Spectrum Management Officer Manuel Escobar shows the electronic equipment in the rear of the branch's mobile monitoring vehicle, which is in turn remotely controlled by computer by Management Officer Gwen Arthurs from the operators position in the front of the vehicle.

Although the Bush contingent arrived with their own scrambling technology, Hastings explains that all the encryption in the world won't work if the channels are blocked by other users.

"The Margin of error is not great. There's no room for interference if something is going wrong with the visit," he says.

Intangible as managing invisible radio waves may seem, the Spectrum office staff did what they do best before, during and after the visit, and everything went off like a breeze.

www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/sitt/portal

Making room for the President's wireless needs in this congested environment was a challenge... "The Margin of error is not great."

Compound Interest

Blueberries, soy, and green tea are just a few of the more common products to make the news of late for their purported health benefits. According the *Nutrition Business Journal*, the global nutrition industry is valued at more than US \$182 million.

“Many people consume one form of natural product or another because they believe it will improve their health, but they don’t always understand how or why it works,” said Dr. Michael Mayne, Lead Scientist at the National Research Council Institute for Nutrisciences and Health in Charlottetown, PEI. “At our new Institute, our scientists are interested in finding out how compounds found in nature can be used to benefit human and animal health.”



Dr. Michael Mayne, foreground, in his lab at the NRC-INH.

For example, Dr. Yanwen Wang is studying how soy protein might be used to lower cholesterol. The institute’s research focuses primarily on three areas: neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease; obesity-related disorders such as diabetes; and infection and immunity disorders such as viral infections.

The interest in life sciences and bioresources is strong throughout the research community in the Atlantic Provinces. And PEI is no exception, with several hundred people employed in the growing biotechnology field within government, academia, and private industry.

With an innovative approach, this Industry Canada partner has created a unique institute where scientists from the three sectors will work side by side under the same roof rather than in independent research “silos”.

“Just because you have all the ingredients doesn’t mean you can make cookies,” says Dr. Mayne. “We see the NRC as one of the key components that will bring everything together.” Supported by the University of Prince Edward Island and the federal and provincial governments, the facility will be the research engine of the biosciences cluster that is developing in the region.

In addition to tackling critical health issues, the new institute will have a big impact on economic development. Although the numbers are hard to nail down exactly, Mayne envisions a time 10 years down the road when the facility will work with a \$20 million operational budget, employ 200 scientists and support staff, and bolster the corporate sector through its industry incubator space within the Institute. A good economic fit for a province that is embracing innovation.

“With our focus on improving health and economic development, we’re a prime example of what NRC calls ‘putting science to work for Canada,’” says Dr. Mayne.

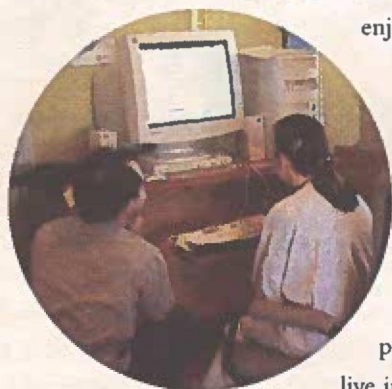
www.inh-isns.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca

The National Research Council of Canada is a member of the Industry Portfolio. Industry Canada works in partnership with the members of the Industry Portfolio, such as the NRC, to leverage resources and maximize synergies in a number of specific areas such as innovation and growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

All for the Web

Kier Martin was a youth C@P (Community Access Program) intern at St. John’s Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) five years ago, when his supervisor sent him off in a taxi to sit in on a session about a new technology. That short trip would end up enriching the lives of people with disabilities from one end of Newfoundland and Labrador to another.

At the meeting, Lawrence Eutenier, Manager of Industry Canada’s Web Accessibility Office, described their new adaptive computer technology. Called Web-4-All, it uses “Smart Cards” to help people with disabilities enjoy the benefits of cyberspace like everybody else.



Kier Martin, kneeling, offers some computer tips to a visitor at the St. John’s Independent Living Resource Centre.

Photo courtesy of the Independent Living Resource Centre

With the swipe of a card, people with special needs can access features like magnified screens, words read aloud, and alternatives to keyboards, that enable them to use a regular public computer as if it were designed just for them.

Open to people with all types of disabilities, the ILRC provides their visitors with services designed to help them live independently. With a C@P site already in place, Web-4-All seemed like a natural addition to the centre’s offerings.

“The ILRC’s principal mandate is to empower people, and Web-4-All seemed like the perfect fit,” says Martin, now the ILRC’s Program Coordinator. “It jived well with what we were already doing. Putting a Smart Card in our clients’ hands made perfect sense.”

He adds that in a society where more and more options and opportunities are being offered on line, the internet bridges gaps, addresses what’s going on in

other places, and empowers clients by allowing them to control where they go and what they do on the web.

The centre hired eight youth with disabilities to show every C@P site in St. John’s that adaptive technology not only works, but is inexpensive too.

“A lot of people benefited from the technology, and we found that people from outside St. John’s wanted it too”, says Martin. “So we hired 16 more youth with disabilities who crossed the province in the dead of winter to install and promote Web-4-All in their communities.”

The 72 sites they installed throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have opened up a world for many people who were unable to access it before. Not only that, but the youth running the program end up so well trained that private companies consistently pluck them up and hire them.

“Contributing to the success of the project—in addition to the energy and creativity of the youth—was the community getting together,” says Martin. “Organizations like libraries, C@P and Industry Canada really supported the idea that access to computers should be for everyone. Web-4-All is a great way of addressing that philosophy.”

www.ilrc.nf.ca