

Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development  
Government of British Columbia

## ***SEABED SURFING FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR LIVING ROOM***

By the time the 2010 Winter Games begin in February, researchers around the world – as well as students and members of the public – will be “surfing the seabed” off the west coast of Vancouver Island, becoming virtual explorers of Earth’s final frontier. They’ll be using NEPTUNE Canada, the world’s first regional-scale underwater ocean observatory that plugs directly into the Internet.

- An immense wealth of data will be continually transmitted via high-speed fibre optic communications from on, in and above the seafloor to an innovative data archival system at the University of Victoria, which is leading this project.
- Access to this material – both live and archived – will be free throughout the 25-year project.
- Two years ago, the University of Victoria began laying more than 800 kilometres of cable for NEPTUNE Canada on the ocean floor off Vancouver Island’s west coast.
- The underwater power sources and most of the instruments were installed this summer – the most complex process of its kind ever attempted in the world, involving three ships, a robot submersible and several round trips between port and the cable array. A major partner involved in this project is Alcatel, based in France.
- The project will add to the understanding of the effect of climate change on the major marine ecosystems of the Pacific coast. A better understanding of regional offshore climate will help predict long-term climate trends leading to better management of fisheries, forestry, agriculture and other industries.
- NEPTUNE Canada is a \$94.6-million project that has received \$42.9 million from the Government of B.C. to take ocean science to new heights – and depths.

### CONTACTS

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Project Director

NEPTUNE Canada

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Chris Barnes has led the project since its announcement in 2003. He is familiar with all aspects of the project including the installation process, the science driving the project and the anticipated research that will be accomplished.

**Mairi Best**

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Mairi Best guides the development and integration of the many community scientific experiments within the expanded science program of NEPTUNE Canada. She can discuss the science behind the NEPTUNE Canada project.

**Benoit Pirenne**

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Benoit Pirenne is in charge of all data management and archiving, from system development to operations, of NEPTUNE Canada. Prior to coming to the University of Victoria in 2004, he spent 18 years at the European Southern Observatory.

WEB RESOURCES

- NEPTUNE Canada's website, which contains video, stills, background and other info about the project – <http://neptunecanada.ca/>
- A news release about the University of Victoria's partnership with French firm Alcatel-Lucent for the NEPTUNE Canada project – <http://communications.uvic.ca/releases/release.php?display=release&id=678>
- Alcatel-Lucent's news release on partnership with University of Victoria – <http://www1.alcatel-lucent.com/lead/neptune.htm>
- Ocean Networks Canada, the not-for-profit society created by the University of Victoria to build and sustain Canada's world leadership in ocean science and technology through the NEPTUNE Canada and VENUS ocean observatories – <http://www.oceannetworks.ca/>

MEDIA COVERAGE

- [Keeping watch on the planet from the bottom up](#), Globe and Mail, July 5, 2009
- [Emperor, Empress of Japan visit BC marine institute, view Neptune project](#), Canadian Press, July 12, 2009
- ['Nodes' power \\$100-million NEPTUNE quest](#), Victoria Times Colonist, July 4, 2009

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