



**BEVERLY TIRE & AUTO**  
Visit [www.beverlytire.com](http://www.beverlytire.com)  
For a location near you!

**DID YOU KNOW...**  
That in addition to being leading experts on tires and tire care, we also provide full mechanical services to help keep your vehicle running in top condition.

**CLICK HERE**

The **R**ecord.com

[\[Close\]](#)

## UW digital media lab moving to The Museum

BY SCOTT NOWOSELSKI, RECORD STAFF

A lot of people in Waterloo Region are part of a cult and they don't even know it.

"We live in a technoculture, a 'cult' [or] culture of the new," University of Waterloo English professor Marcel O'Gorman said over an online computer chat. "We are always developing new ways to overcome our human limitations, transcend space and time and the limits of the human body. But we have no time to stop and think about what we're doing.

"I think we've reached a crisis point — again — in our culture of unthoughtful consumption. And we need places where people can be thoughtful."

Starting next month, a group of students and researchers at the UW Critical Media Lab will bring some analysis of that culture to downtown Kitchener, setting up shop inside a new laboratory at The Museum on King Street East.

The lab will analyze digital media to see the impact it has had on society in Kitchener and around the globe, considering things like the way Twitter has affected people's ability to communicate.

The lab's analysis is far-reaching, however, defining digital media as any information that is created and shared virtually rather than physically. After being founded by O'Gorman and UW's English department in 2008, the lab has continued to explore the impact of technology on the human condition through the lens of the social sciences.

Over the past year, students and researchers have worked on a myriad of projects, featuring everything from cows that have had their lactation cycles tweeted to digital tabletop games that took traditional board games and turned them into digitalized versions of themselves.

The lab then takes its projects and tries them out, seeing how people react. In that sense, moving the lab from the university to the heart of downtown Kitchener should only help improve the centre's research, according to UW English professor and acting lab director Neil Randall.

"It makes sense to have people playing with our projects, especially when we're working on something like a game," he said.

And while the university's lab will bring a digital media hot spot to the downtown core, they aren't the only ones focused on digital media in and around Waterloo Region.

Aiming for an October opening, The Communitech Hub: Digital Media and Mobile Accelerator will begin playing host to local digital media startups and more established businesses when they set up in the Tannery building at Victoria and Joseph streets.

The Hub will be working to grow digital media businesses in the region.

"By having more established companies in the same building as the early-stage companies, we just hope it will increase the collaboration, and really help accelerate some of the early-stage companies' growth," said the Hub's Steve Currie.

The Critical Media Lab, by contrast, is interested less in the marketability of digital media than the impact it has on society. For O'Gorman, it's that reason which makes the move downtown especially exciting.

"This is why the lab is not hidden behind a door with a plaque on it, somewhere behind the moat of UWaterloo," he said. "We want to engage the public. We want to get involved in public dialogue and public education."

[snowoselski@therecord.com](mailto:snowoselski@therecord.com)

The **R**ecord.com



© Copyright 2007 Metroland Media Group Ltd. All rights reserved. The reproduction, modification, distribution, transmission or republication of any material from [www.thespec.com](http://www.thespec.com) is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of Metroland Media Group Ltd.

