

An Entrepreneur's Story

June 2008

Calgary Scientific Inc.

Calgary Scientific Inc. is proving that computer games could save your life some day – in an indirect sort of way. Capitalizing on advances made in the computer gaming industry, the Calgary-based software and intellectual property development company is focused on commercializing advanced visualization technologies for the healthcare field. The result is cost effective, easy-to-use imaging software that can run on both PCs and Mac.

Their patented innovations in 3D and 4D visualization software enhance the use of CT, MR, PET and ultrasound imaging, resulting in improved diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of serious illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, stroke and other life-threatening diseases.

“The core of our technology was developed at the University of Calgary and the Foothills Medical Centre by Dr. Ross Mitchell,” said Tom Kunimoto, Director of Marketing. “It was originally developed in a research capacity for improving the diagnosis of strokes and brain tumors. We are now commercializing what Dr. Mitchell developed and expanding its capabilities to screen, diagnose and treat cardiac disease and other types of cancers.”

Currently, Calgary Scientific is working on two exciting new technologies that stand to have a huge impact on how cancers are diagnosed. The company's virtual colonoscopy technology provides early screening of colon cancer without any invasive camera work.

The second is a computer-assisted tissue identification technology that will be able to differentiate malignant from benign tumors without biopsies.

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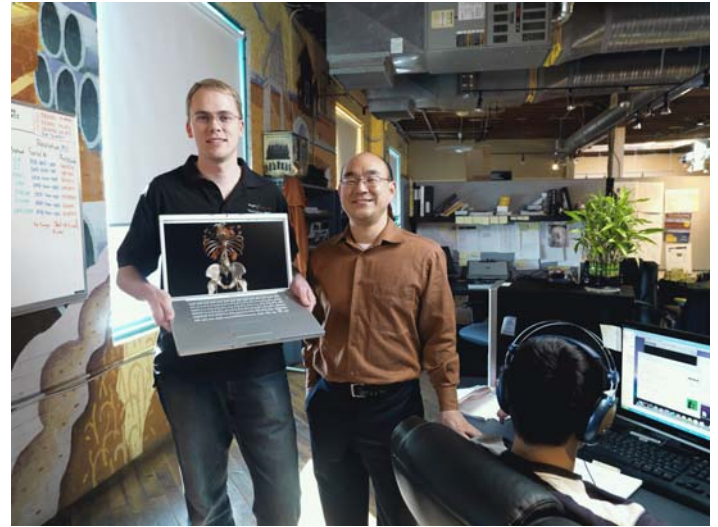


Photo courtesy Government of Alberta

Founded in 2004, Calgary Scientific invests deeply in research to formulate progressive new technologies. It then commercializes these technologies to develop products and solutions that address industry-specific needs. The company has used its solid foundation of business, medical and technical expertise to attract customers, partners and recruit industry experts to join the team.

Chair and CEO, Dr. Byron Osing, PhD, has extensive experience in the successful commercialization of technologies as a founder of Telebackup Systems Inc. and Launchworks, and is a recipient of the Ernst & Young Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year Award for the Prairies Region and Canada's Top 40 Under 40 Award.



Diagnostic imaging is one of the largest growth areas in healthcare as it permits radiologists to quickly and accurately diagnose heart disease, cancers and other critical conditions in a non-invasive manner. “It’s clear that more sophisticated computerized diagnostic applications are needed due to the dramatic increase in the number of imaging procedures,” said Kunimoto.

“Increased accessibility to the diagnostic images and smarter tools for analysis means more efficient use of the radiologist’s time and improved collaboration between medical practitioners and communication with patients.” In the past year, Calgary Scientific released two commercial versions of the product and has 10 partners who are now integrating its software.

During that time, the company has expanded from 25 to 42 employees and continues to grow and provide opportunities for Albertans.



Photo courtesy Government of Alberta

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Being in Alberta has definitely helped Calgary Scientific achieve its current success. “Having a facility and access to resources like the University of Calgary and the Foothills Medical Centre has been huge,” said Kunimoto. “There is significant innovation taking place, especially in areas like cardiology and neurology. Both Calgary and Edmonton are developing world class facilities and attracting top medical people.”

“Support from government programs, initiatives and the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credits along with the commitment the province is showing in diversifying the economy into technology areas has been extremely beneficial for us,” adds Kunimoto.

Relevant location: Calgary

Sectors: ICT, Life Sciences

Innovation system building blocks

- Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research
- Alberta Ingenuity Fund
- Alberta Advanced Education and Technology
- AVAC/IVAC
- Banff Venture Forum
- Foothills Medical Centre
- National Research Council Canada - IRAP
- University of Calgary

Reprinting of this story, in part or in whole, is encouraged if acknowledgement is given to Alberta Advanced Education and Technology.