



Ontario's Regional Economic Development and Innovation Newsletter

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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[Immigration policy has desired effect of increasing immigrant employees in IT](#)

Statistics Canada

According to a profile of Canadian IT workers, the number of immigrant employees in 2001 was proportionately higher in IT occupations than in the general workforce, suggesting that a 1997 policy of making it easier for immigrants seeking computer-related jobs to enter Canada had the desired effect. The profile reveals that nearly 3% of all employed Canadians worked in an IT occupation. These IT workers tend to be relatively young and highly educated, earned more money on average in 2001, and did not work longer hours than their counterparts in other occupations.

EDITOR'S PICK

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[A Decade of Growth: The Emerging Geography of the New Economy - 1990 to 2000](#)

D. Beckstead et al., Statistics Canada

This study examines the geographic structure of Canada's high-tech landscape from 1990 to 2000 and finds that, unsurprisingly, Canada's high-tech revolution is disproportionately a "big city" phenomenon. Although Ottawa cemented its position as a high-tech city during the decade with 9% of its workforce working in IT by 2000, Toronto was the true employment centre for firms in ICT industries with some 200,000 ICT workers, compared to just under 50,000 in Ottawa. Montréal had the second largest ICT workforce in Canada, but at just under 90,000 workers, its local ICT sector was less than half the size of Toronto's. Montreal, however, together with Calgary, enjoyed strong employment gains in R&D intensive science industries. The study notes that these long-run employment gains remain largely intact in the post-2000 period.

INNOVATION & RELATED POLICY

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[Competing For Talent: Implications For Social And Cultural Policy In Canadian City-Regions](#)

B. Donald et al., prepared for Strategic Research and Analysis, Department of Canadian Heritage

This paper examines the implications of Richard Florida's talent model for Canadian cities and social policy. In Florida's model, knowledge workers who he refers to collectively as the 'creative class' pursue employment opportunities less on the qualities of the firm and more

on the qualities of the place in which a firm is located. Three social policy areas are examined in detail in the paper: (1) policies for economic opportunity and social inclusion; (2) policies for nurturing cultural vitality in land development and urban public space; and (3) policies for promoting social inclusion in everyday cultural consumption activity. The authors argue that policies supporting the health and vitality of Canada's city regions must ultimately lie at the intersection of the talent model and social policy and not – as has been widely thought – from talent model policies which simply market cultural consumption for the creative class. Investing in policies that support social inclusion and celebrate cultural difference is equally important for creating and maintaining the necessary conditions for economic success.

Cluster Policies

P. Boekholt and S. McKibbin, Technopolis Group, for the European Trend Chart on Innovation

This report shows just how varied cluster policies among EU member states are, with some closely linked to either S&T policy, industrial policy, regional development policy, or a combination of the three. When policies aim at strengthening existing 'traditional' clusters, they are typically positioned in industrial policy or regional regeneration strategies, those aimed at encouraging the emergence of new clusters in high-growth industries are typically a part of science and technology policies. As for type and content, some initiatives are about strengthening the 'triple helix' relationships (university-industry-government), while others focus more narrowly on R&D cooperation between companies and between companies and research organizations. A third type focuses on encouraging co-operation between companies, regardless whether this is about R&D, thus strengthening the value chain in existing clusters. And while all three levels of government implement cluster policies, an emerging trend involves closer co-operation between the national level providing the framework support with regional agencies implementing the initiatives.

Entrepreneurial Spawning: Public Corporations and the Genesis of New Ventures, 1986-1999

P. Gompers et al. NBER

This paper examines the factors that lead to the creation of venture capital backed start-ups, or 'entrepreneurial spawning', and arrive at some important policy implications. The authors find that the most prolific spawning firms were public companies located in Silicon Valley and Massachusetts that were themselves once venture capital backed. Less diversified firms are also more likely to spawn new firms though at levels inversely proportional to their sales growth. Overall, these findings support the view that entrepreneurial learning and networks are important factors in the creation of venture capital backed firms. There are several policy implications. Entrepreneurial activity in a given region has increasing returns and stimulating entrepreneurship in a region with few existing entrepreneurial firms is difficult. Also, policies that have sought to foster entrepreneurial and venture capital activity by providing capital or investment incentives may not be enough. Instead, regions may need to attract firms with existing pools of workers who have the "training and conditioning" to become entrepreneurs.

Education and Training for the Information Technology Workforce

C. A. Meares and J. F. Sargent, Jr., U.S. Department of Commerce

This comprehensive report describes the current landscape of the IT workforce in the United States with the goal of informing policymakers responsible for developing related education and training policies and programs. The report finds that jobs in the IT field are varied, complex, and specialized, as are the knowledge, skills, and experience required to perform them. Employers seek workers who possess a specific combination of technical skills and experience, often coupled with a college degree, soft skills, and business or industry knowledge. And typically, employers prefer candidates with the exact skill fit who require no additional training. There is no single path to prepare a worker for a professional IT job. The IT education and training infrastructure has grown significantly in size and scope over the past decade culminating in a vast array of IT education and training opportunities, with different types of programs and curricula serving different purposes. The training landscape is complex and challenging to navigate.

This report contributes to our understanding of the Californian economy and in particular the prospects for a resurgent Silicon Valley. Using two longitudinal databases, the author investigates firm formation, growth, mortality, and migration in Silicon Valley during the 1990s. The study reveals that new firms – those founded after 1990 - were crucial to the region having been responsible for almost all the job growth. These start-ups also had quick access to venture capital, giving them a 'head start' advantage in the high tech industry. As for firms relocating outside the Valley once established, the study finds that while more establishments move out of Silicon Valley than in the past, the portion has been small. Moreover, those that did typically stayed in close proximity to the Valley. The author concludes by emphasizing the importance of state and local government support for innovation, policies that promote firm formation and the importance of recognizing the relationship between Silicon Valley and the surrounding Bay area in terms of firm relocation and transportation.

EVENTS

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Clusters, Industrial Districts and Firms: The Challenge of Globalization

Modena, 12-13 September, 2003

Organized in memory of Professor Sebastiano Brusco, this conference focuses on the international competitiveness of industrial districts and clusters, and the effects that globalization has on SME's and their interactions with markets and institutions. Questions to be raised relate to how clusters' internal networks, productive patterns and specializations are changing; how the cluster firms themselves are changing; what factors determine the competitive advantage of industrial districts; and finally, how their international competitiveness can be enhanced. Invited speakers include Charles Sabel, AnnaLee Saxenian and Frank Wilkinson.

Business Innovation and Growth from the Exploitation of Academic Research (BIGEAR) Open Conference

Vienna, 18-19 September 2003

This conference will be an open meeting to present and discuss good practice and issues on Business Innovation and Growth from Exploitation of Academic Research. Supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise as part of the Innovation and SMEs program, BIGEAR aims to understand and disseminate best practice in the effective exploitation of academic research to stimulate business growth in Europe.

Communities and Technologies (C&T 2003)

Amsterdam or Bonn, 19-21 September, 2003

This international conference is a forum for stimulating and disseminating research into all facets of communities and information technology. Attendees represent multidisciplinary research efforts from applied computer science and social science. The 2003 conference will focus on presentations and discussion of empirical and conceptual research on a wide range of topics including (Virtual) Community formation and development; Virtual communities vs. location-based communities; Digital cities, and Design methods for communityware.

The Knowledge-based Economy and Regional Economic Development: An International Perspective

St. John's (Newfoundland), 3-5 October, 2003

This conference offers an opportunity for European and North American researchers and policy-makers to meet and debate the issues pertaining to regional economic development as these areas become increasingly exposed to the forces of the new economy. Sub themes include: the role of the education sector in facilitating economic development in the knowledge economy R&D; innovation and productivity; connectivity, ICT and economic development; e-governance and the role of government in facilitating economic development in a knowledge economy; and economic development and economic clusters in the knowledge economy.

SSTI's 7th Annual Conference: Building Tech-based Economies: From Policy to Practice NEW!

Seattle, 21-22 October, 2003

This year's highly regarded SSTI conference on technology-based economic development features a range of topics, two of which - technology entrepreneurship and research

universities' contribution to local and state economic growth –involve multiple sessions that will explore the topics in depth. Other sessions will focus on the right tools to improve program performance and expand reach, financing life science firms, the future of manufacturing, and rural tech-based economic development.

Information Technology in Regional Areas Conference (Itira)

Caloundra (Australia) 5-7 November, 2003

This conference will focus on strategies that link ICT-enhanced economic, social and cultural development efforts and opportunities in such areas as electronic commerce, community and civic networks, tele-centres, electronic democracy, on-line participation, self-help and virtual health communities, advocacy, and cultural enhancement. This event, geared to practitioners, and policy makers in developed and developing countries, will provide a platform for sharing ideas across practice, research and policy.

The New Rural Community: Problems and Prospects

Guelph (Ontario), 7 November, 2003

In the context of the challenges faced by rural communities as a result of the social, political and economic restructuring now underway, this conference addresses four sub-themes. These are the new rural landscape (how do we reconcile the built and ecological landscapes of our rural communities to achieve environmental sustainability); the new rural government (what impact does the restructuring of the nation state have on power relations and public accountability?); the new rural economy (what are the repercussions of re-defining economic relationships for rural communities); and the new rural resident (how do we build inclusive rural communities?).

Clusters 2003 Conference NEW!

Montreal, November 7-8, 2003

The Conference will bring together university and industrial decision makers and their municipal counterparts with a view to fostering debate and discussion about best practices with respect to the creation, management and development of technology clusters. Clusters 2003 *will focus on municipalities*: the academics and business representatives in attendance will be seconded by municipal or regional representatives. Clusters being by their very nature regional entities, the conference will be an excellent opportunity to raise cities interest in the scientific and technological issues at stake.

What Do We Know About Innovation? A Conference in Honour of Keith Pavitt

Brighton, 13-15 November, 2003

This conference is in recognition of the lifetime contribution of Professor Keith Pavitt to the study of innovation. Keith's work was based on a deep empirical understanding of innovation and firm behaviour, and he placed particular emphasis on the development of new data, methods, and taxonomies. His contributions spanned economics, management and science and technology policy. The conference is organized around the major themes of his work, including the structure, dynamics and management of innovation processes, the relationship between basic research and technical change, knowledge and the theory of the firm, the globalization of R&D, and science and technology policy.

New Directions in Technology Management: Changing Collaboration Between Government, Industry and University

Washington D.C. 3-7 April, 2004

This Conference of the International Association for Management of Technology will discuss new directions in technology management and their influence on innovation and the creation of economic growth and prosperity. Special attention will be give to the necessary mechanisms of knowledge generation, science and technology policy, and the collaboration required to accomplish national and organizational objectives. Best practices in technology development and utilization will be presented. The academic institution's role in preparing the needed human resources for the technological environment of the 21st century will also be addressed. *Submission of Abstract*: October 15, 2003.

The 4th Congress on Proximity Economics Proximity, Networks and Co-ordination

Marseilles, 17-18 June, 2004

This conference is geared towards all of the scientific community interested in the proximity concept, as it relates to everything from industrial organization to networks of public health. The call for proposals, which is open until October 31st, 2003, will give priority to either

theoretical or empirical communications likely to produce a better understanding of the conceptual links between proximity, networks and co-ordination.

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