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**H.R. MacMillan Space Centre gives digital media students a chance to go boldly where no one has gone before**

**Vancouver, BC, May 6, 2013** – H.R. MacMillan Space Centre's plans for a major digital upgrade for the planetarium is not only good news for its thousands of visitors, it's a win-win for its partnership with the Centre for Digital Media (CDM). Starting this week, a group of CDM Master's students will be working on the design of a made-in-Vancouver immersive musical experience that will capitalize on the forthcoming new technology.

"We are excited to leverage Vancouver's reputation as a North American digital production hub and put the future of some of H.R. MacMillan Space Centre's programming into the hands of the next generation," said Rob Appleton, Space Centre executive director.

This summer, the planetarium will undergo installation of a full-dome digital projection system which has been adopted by other planetariums across Canada. Using a Colorspace system with six video projectors to create a 4K image, the new projection system will replace the 35mm slide-based full-dome system that's been in use for decades. According to Appleton, shows that are created for the new projection system can now be licensed to the other planetariums, giving CDM students important national exposure.

"In the past, digital media was singularly associated with entertainment products such as games and animation, but now it is being recognized as needed everywhere and for every sector. The Space Centre is a perfect example of this, and a stellar opportunity for CDM students to have a unique learning opportunity with a new technology. Even if the technology is not in the palm of one's hand, it's still the future," said Dennis Chenard, CDM director of industry relations.

The practical and innovative applications of digital media extend beyond mobile gaming and into health care, government, e-commerce and other fields. The partnership with the Space Centre will allow CDM students to explore new ways to produce shows for a full-dome HD video projection environment – a radical change from the tried-and-true slide projector system and laser shows. They will get to push the envelope and help define the future of projection technology with a show that may even have interactive elements.

The Space Centre/CDM partnership is an example of the kind of collaborative, far-sighted thinking that keeps the mother ship of Vancouver astronomy afloat in a changing market, despite the fact that it is a non-profit organization fueled by sponsorship and donor dollars. The Space Centre has had similar partnerships in place with Bardell Entertainment for the production of new planetarium shows, and Shaw Cablesystems for "Ask an Astronomer" TV spots.

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonders of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of Earth science, space science and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

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