

For Immediate Release

EMILY CARR RESEARCHERS DESIGN DATA VISUALIZATIONS FOR MOZILLA'S NEW LIGHTBEAM FIREFOX ADD-ON

Visualizations for recently launched tool expose online tracking

Vancouver, CAN, October 30, 2013 | [Emily Carr University Research](#) announces the launch of Lightbeam, a new Add-on for the popular Firefox browser that enables users to visualize online data tracking in real time. Mozilla, the developer of Firefox, partnered with the University on a year-long research project to improve Lightbeam's interactive visualizations. The [Emily Carr University](#) team was led by Associate Professor [Amber Frid-Jimenez](#), who worked with student design researchers Sabrina Ng, Joakim Sundal and Heather Tsang and a group of developers at Mozilla, led by Dethe Elza, to develop the visualizations of of the tool which will shed light on the online collection of information by third parties. This research was supported by the Ford Foundation, the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Mozilla Foundation, and is a project of the [Social + Interactive Media \(SIM\) Centre](#), headed by [Kate Armstrong](#).

The research team focused on three key areas of the visualization:

- [Browsing history](#): to interest users in privacy issues with an interface that facilitates exploration of their past browsing history and the third party connections that have been involved in this data;
- [Deep dive into time](#): to provide experts, power-users and those already interested in privacy issues with an interface that explores their relationships with trackers, and their enabling Web sites, to reveal patterns in the near term or over larger anonymized, aggregated datasets in the future;
- [Metrics as widgets](#): to provide users with an interface that displays simple figures and browsing history in real-time as single numbers and visual graphs.

The Lightbeam visualizations demonstrate the forward-looking research in social and interactive design provided by Emily Carr University. The Lightbeam visualizations will be important to helping web users understand the role of third party data tracking that shapes so much of the web and make informed choices about their data collection practices.

"Emily Carr University's visualization research for Lightbeam enables users to understand their personal relationship to online tracking," says Emily Carr's [Amber Frid-Jimenez](#), Associate Professor, Faculty of Design + Dynamic Media. She continues: "Our visualizations for Lightbeam will contribute to increased transparency about how personal information is collected and propagated by third parties, a key issue of online privacy."

"The collaboration between Emily Carr University and Mozilla shows how our innovative research partnerships give students real-world experience and demonstrates the importance of art and design in

contemporary culture and industry,” adds [Kate Armstrong](#), Director, [Social + Interactive Media \(SIM\) Centre](#). “The striking visualizations developed by Frid-Jimenez and her students make it incredibly easy for users to immediately understand how their online behaviours are being tracked, so that people can tell who is watching.”

To access photos, visualization images and graphs, please visit:
<http://research.ecuad.ca/simcentre/2013/10/28/press-package-lightbeam/>

About Emily Carr University of Art + Design

Emily Carr University of Art + Design, established in 1925, is a world leader in education and research. Encouraging experimentation at the intersection of art, design, media and technology, our learning community merges research, critical theory and studio practice in an interdisciplinary environment. Alumni and faculty are internationally recognized as award-winning creators and thought leaders who have enormous impact on both the cultural sector and economy. We engage students, industry, and society to continuously explore and think differently about creativity and how it shapes our world. Emily Carr is building a state-of-the art campus for 21st century learning at Great Northern Way. The University will be at the centre of a new social, cultural, educational, and economic engine for British Columbia. Find out more at ecuad.ca.

About the SIM Centre

The Social + Interactive Media Centre is a research centre that supports a wide range of applied social, interactive and design projects. Funded by a 5-year grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the centre offers BC companies a way to tap the design, creative and technical expertise of Emily Carr faculty and students.

About Mozilla

Mozilla has been a pioneer and advocate for the Web for more than a decade. We create and promote open standards that enable innovation and advance the Web as a platform for all. Today, hundreds of millions of people worldwide use Mozilla Firefox to discover, experience and connect to the Web on computers, tablets and mobile phones.

Our mission is to promote openness, innovation & opportunity on the Web. At Mozilla, we're a global community of technologists, thinkers and builders working together to keep the Internet alive and accessible, so people worldwide can be informed contributors and creators of the Web. We believe this act of human collaboration across an open platform is essential to individual growth and our collective future.

For additional information, contact:

Karin Watson, Media Relations
Emily Carr University of Art + Design
kwatson@ecuad.ca | 604-630-4566

Barry Patterson, Executive Director, Communications
Emily Carr University of Art + Design
bpatterson@ecuad.ca | 604.839.3078