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GTMA Partner Network Paves the Way for Ubisoft Investment in the GTA

TORONTO, JULY 8, 2009: The Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA) strategy of collaboration has paid off with the announcement by international interactive entertainment giant Ubisoft that the company will establish a new studio in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Ubisoft's decision to invest in the GTA followed a sustained collaborative marketing effort by the Ontario Government and the GTMA through the Ontario Technology Corridor (OTC) initiative to present a compelling case for investment to the rapidly growing firm. The OTC initiative is made possible by funding support from Invest Canada - Community Initiatives, part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada's Global Commerce Support Program.

Ubisoft, which announced the investment on July 6, is the creator, publisher and distributor of 17 multimillion-selling products including such legendary interactive game successes as Prince of Persia®, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell®, Assassin's Creed®, Rayman® and Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six®. The company, which has facilities in 28 countries, already operates studios in Montreal, Quebec City and Vancouver.

The Ontario Ministry of International Trade and Investment led the way in efforts to attract Ubisoft to Ontario. The GTMA, the lead international marketing agency for the Greater Toronto Region, supported the ministry by assembling a team of experts to assist Ubisoft as the firm worked through the decision-making process. Key GTMA partners on the team included representatives from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the City of Toronto, Cybernomics, Ian Martin Limited, Herman Miller, DTZ Barnicke, Seneca College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UIOT).

"The process took more than two years," said Gerald Pisarzowski, the GTMA's Vice-President of Business Development. "It required a sustained collaborative effort over that period by the Province of Ontario, the OTC, ourselves and our partners to reach a successful conclusion. It's an important lesson on the critical importance of cooperation in attracting and closing direct foreign investment deals."

The GTMA team briefed Ubisoft on the GTA's digital media and IT sectors, reviewed skills availability and costs within these sectors, and provided a detailed look at related post-secondary educational programs at Seneca College and UOIT. Members of the team also provided expertise on accounting and tax credit issues as well as real estate.

"We are incredibly excited to finally tap into the remarkable talent Ontario has been developing over the years," said Yannis Mallat, CEO at Ubisoft in Montreal. "Toronto's unique pool of experienced video game industry and film industry talent will allow us to develop a team with exceptional ability to help us realize our goals for creating brands with universal appeal that extends beyond the world of video games."

Tracey Jennings, the Canadian leader of the Entertainment and Media practice at PwC comments, “Even in a tough economy, PwC’s Global Entertainment and Media [Outlook](#) showed the Canadian video game market growing 24% in 2008. We forecast that it will remain one of the fastest growing segments through 2013 propelled by changing consumer behaviors and enabling technologies. With this announcement, along with multiple other recent government initiatives, Ontario is well positioned with other provinces to compete in the global digital media industry.”

The Ubisoft decision is a big win for the GTA, a win that extends well beyond the economic impact resulting from the establishment of a new, advanced, dynamic knowledge-based company in the region. Ubisoft’s commitment to this market could transform the GTA’s interactive digital media cluster by creating a tipping point for other major players as they make expansion decisions and hunt for talent.

“For years, many of our most skilled young people had to leave the GTA to establish careers in the interactive digital media field,” Pisarzowski said. “Investments like Ubisoft’s, and others that will follow, not only help to keep talented young people here, but also make it possible for many of those who have left to return home to advance their careers.”

Ubisoft expects the Toronto studio to create approximately 800 new jobs in the GTA over the next decade. The company has already begun hiring, and expects to launch operations here by the end of 2009. The Province of Ontario will contribute \$263 million to help finance the investment, which is expected to total nearly \$800 million.

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Read [Ubisoft’s July 6 investment announcement](#).

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