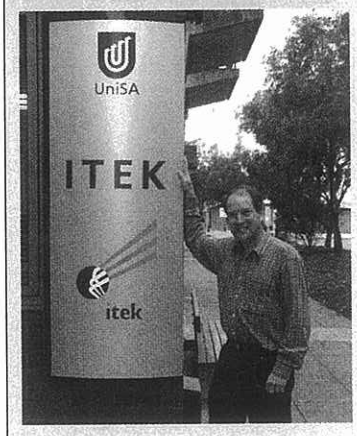
UniSANews

University of South Australia

September 2006



This little product went to MARKET

by Vincent Ciccarello

Long before high-speed telecommunications and laissez faire economics, getting a product to market literally meant that: loading the fruits of one's labour onto a cart and transporting them to a marketplace for sale.

It is a far cry from the modern-day challenges of transforming sophisticated, highly-technical university research into viable products that can compete in a global economy.

But for more than five years, Itek, the commercialisation business of UniSA, has met those challenges. And the company seems poised to build on its already impressive track record of getting UniSA research from the laboratory into the community at large.

Greg Macpherson (pictured above), Itek's commercialisation manager, said some 16 technologies ranging from anti-cancer and wound healing therapies to plasma nanocoatings are at an advanced stage of development. They promise to provide a significant boost to Itek's $7 million annual turnover from its numerous "spin out" businesses, product licensing arrangements and investments, which include telco business Cohda Wireless, skin cancer drug business PharmaQuest, accreditation software company GTA, and pollutant remover CleansAll.

"A couple of the new products under development could be available on the market within 18 months," Macpherson said.

Trials are also about to commence on a revolutionary nanocoating, developed by UniSA's Ian Wark Research Institute, to improve the success of orthopaedic and dental implants.

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"This has the potential to significantly reduce the revision rate for orthopaedic reconstruction and trauma," Macpherson said. "Today about 17 per cent of implants require replacement due to loosening or infection, because of poor integration between metal and bone. The Wark™ Nanocoating offers a breakthrough in bone to metal bonding that will improve the success rate of surgical implantation."

The project team is currently in discussions with major orthopaedic companies about adopting the nanocoating, which will give companies significant competitive advantage and offer patients improved surgical outcomes.

An augmented reality system, developed by the School of Computer and Information Science's Wearable Computer Lab, integrates computer-generated graphics and sound into the real world. Courtesy of A-Rage (Augmented Reality Active Game Engine), an Itek "spin out" business, a prototype head visor, backpack and video game have already grabbed the attention of major businesses in the video game industry.

Itek recently showcased nine of its current technology projects – and UniSA's research capabilities – at the Commercialisation Expo 2006 in Melbourne. The event, which brings research organisations and industry together, was the second of its kind in Australia.

"The intention is to develop the Expo into a major place where businesses would go to find university technology," Macpherson said. "It's still relatively new but it will grow into a place where, as a commercialisation business, we can go and present technology and UniSA's research capability and we'll find companies coming to us."

For further information about Itek, visit www.itek.com.au or contact Greg Macpherson on +61 (0)8 8302 5317.