



Photo of the Toronto skyline by Wladyslaw, from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under the Free Art license.

Libre Graphics Meeting 2015 Toronto proposal

Team and contact

Currently: ginger coons – ginger@adaptstudio.ca

Short term goal: Identify and recruit more members to the local organizing team, as well as individuals who are not local, but have a strong stake in planning the meeting.

Partners

Confirmed: University of Toronto

Potential: Local hackerspaces, LUGs, community groups, F/LOSS advocacy organizations

Date

Proposed date: April 30-May 2 2015

These dates are during the university's intersession period between the winter and summer semesters.

Booking desirable rooms is much more feasible during this period than it is during other periods.

Venue: University of Toronto



University College at night. Photo by Raysonho, CC0, retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.

Organized as a collection of semi-autonomous colleges and faculties, the university was founded by royal charter in 1827 and called King's College (a college which still exists, under the name University College). For the first 23 years of its existence, King's College adhered to Anglican religious observances. The university was secularized and renamed, getting its current name, in 1850.

Some particular highlights of the university's output include the discovery and development of insulin; Marshall McLuhan and the so-called Toronto School of communication theory; and the world's first anti-gravity suit. Famous alumni include Clara Brett Martin, the first female barrister in the British empire; Roberta Bondar, the first female Canadian astronaut; four Canadian prime ministers; John Charles Fields, founder of the Fields medal for mathematics; and directors David Cronenberg and Atom Egoyan.



A typical lecture hall at UofT. Photo by Benson Kau, licensed CC BY-SA 2.0. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.

University of Toronto is the largest university in Canada, with 83,000 students spread over three campuses. The downtown campus has grounds covering 71.5 hectares, right in the middle of downtown Toronto. 45 lecture halls offer a total capacity of 10,773 seats on the downtown campus. Campus-wide wifi is available, and classrooms in the more modern buildings are well-provided with electrical outlets. A variety of different classroom formats are available for use, including lecture halls, small seminar rooms, and classrooms. Most classrooms have built-in AV and projection.



Robarts Library on the downtown campus of University of Toronto. Photo by Stefan Powell licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0, retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.

F/LOSS at UofT

All three campuses of the University of Toronto are active participants in the Wikipedia Education Program. Computer labs in the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering have access to computer labs running Linux. University of Toronto is also home the Citizen Lab and the Knowledge Media Design Institute, both of which have an active interest in the use and development of F/LOSS tools.

Toronto



Kensington Market, one of Toronto's most eclectic neighbourhoods, during a Pedestrian Sunday event. Photo by DoubleBlue, CC BY-SA 3.0, retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.

Toronto is the largest city in Canada, and the capital of Ontario, Canada's most populous province. The city of Toronto is home to 2.6 million residents, while the metro Toronto area has 5.5 million residents. Established as the city of York in 1793, Toronto has grown from its predominantly British roots to become one of the most diverse cities in the world, with nearly half of the population comprised of immigrants to Canada. 30% of recent immigrants to Canada make their home in Toronto. City services are offered in 140 languages.

Located on the shore of Lake Ontario, Toronto has a wealth of green space. 1,600 parks and public beaches make up 13% of the land area in the city of Toronto. In addition, there are 600km of recreational trails for walking, running, hiking and cycling. A particular highlight in the city's park system are the Toronto Islands, a chain of small islands in Lake Ontario which are accessible by ferry.

Though Toronto is a relatively young city by global standards, it makes good use of its heritage. The Distillery District, to the east of downtown, is a shopping and entertainment district built in an area

which was known in the 19th century for alcohol production. Nearby is St. Lawrence Market, which was named the world's best food market in 2012 by *National Geographic*. Some neighbourhoods in the downtown area retain their original 19th century row houses. The Annex (to the north of downtown) and Cabbagetown (east of downtown), are neighbourhoods typical of this style, with closely clustered houses, mature trees and narrow streets.

Toronto's neighbourhoods and architecture are increasingly varied. The row houses of the 19th century have given way to the Brutalist architecture characteristic of the 1960s and '70s, the glass skyscrapers of the '80s and '90s, and now to an obsession with landmark architecture, as seen in the Sharp Centre for Design (pictured below) at OCAD University, Toronto's major art university.

Festivals are a major part of Toronto's event calendar, with the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) acting as one of the keystones. The Caribana parade, a major celebration of Caribbean culture, and the Pride Toronto festival are also major events which combine a good party with commitment to diversity and inclusion. There's also okay beer. Toronto is home to ten craft breweries.



The Sharp Centre for Design at OCAD University, from Wikimedia Commons, released into the Public Domain

F/LOSS in Toronto

Toronto has an active LUG (<http://gtalug.org/>). A number of meetups, such as #DevTO, HackerNest, a wearable computing group called We Are Wearables, Girl Geeks Toronto, Python Toronto and CreateInTO, among others, are active. Most host at least one meetup per month. There are two active hackerspaces in the city: Site3 (<http://site3.ca/>) and HackLab.TO (<http://hacklab.to/>). In addition, a number of arts centres do work sympathetic to F/LOSS. Most notably, Interaccess (<http://www.interaccess.org/>, founded in 1983) is one of the pioneering new media art centres in Canada. The Mozilla Toronto office is home to a branch of the Hive network, offering education in F/LOSS tools to community groups which serve youth. Toronto is also host to a popular annual Mini Maker Faire and is the founding place of the Ladies Learning Code series of workshops.

In addition to traditional hackerspaces, Toronto is also home to a number of commercial ventures inspired by hackerspaces, such as the Toronto Tool Library (<http://torontotoollibrary.com/>) and Maker Kids (<http://www.makerkids.ca/>) which charge for access to tools and offer structured educational programs.

Public cultural institutions are also often sympathetic to F/LOSS. The Royal Ontario Museum, a large public museum, recently hosted a Wikipedia edit-a-thon. The Toronto Public Library has recently started an initiative to build “Digital Innovation Hubs” in libraries, with one already open at the Toronto Reference Library. These spaces offer the public access to tools like 3D printers, Arduinos, Raspberry Pis and workstations equipped with both proprietary and F/LOSS design software.

Safety and security

Toronto has the lowest per capita crime rate in Canada. Police are generally held to a high standard of behaviour, with municipal police independently audited by provincial oversight bodies. Emergency services are readily available. Dialling 911, which is a standard number throughout urbanized portions of North America, results in contact with a central switchboard capable of dispatching police, paramedics or fire services.

How to get there

By air

Lester B. Pearson International Airport (YYZ), located 25km from downtown Toronto, is the busiest airport in Canada and a major Star Alliance hub, with service to ~180 cities. This includes 42 flights/week to London Heathrow, 13/week to Paris CDG, 19/week to Frankfurt, 17/week to Hong Kong, 14/week to Mexico City, 128/week to Chicago, 70/week to Boston, and over 300/week to various airports in New York City, among others. There is also a secondary airport in downtown Toronto, Billy Bishop Airport (YTZ), which offers flights to various North American cities.

All prices are for economy fares, based on purchasing one month in advance

New York LGA->YYZ - \$327
New York JFK->YYZ - \$327
Newark EWR->YYZ - \$327
Newark EWR->YXZ - \$293
Los Angeles LAX->YYZ - \$753
Boston BOS->YYZ - \$401
Boston BOS->YXZ - \$358
Montreal YUL->YXZ - \$244
London LHR->YYZ - \$1085
Paris CDG->YYZ - \$1192
Madrid MAD->YYZ - \$1353
Moscow DME->YYZ - \$2014

By train

Trains in Toronto mostly service Canadian destinations. Though Amtrak service to the United States is available from Union Station (Toronto's major train station, located downtown, in the business district), it is limited. The suburban train service, GO (operated by the provincial government), runs as far west as Kitchener (~100 km away, roughly an hour by train, at a cost of \$16 for a one way trip) and as far east as Oshawa (~60km). VIA trains (operated by the federal government) service the entire country, but are impractical for very long distances (eg: Vancouver). A trip from Montreal (~500km away) or Ottawa (~450km) is viable, with a duration between four and five hours, and a one-way cost as low as \$39.

By bus

Toronto is serviced by GO, Greyhound and Megabus inter-city bus services. Prices and routes vary wildly by provider. The Toronto Coach Terminal is located centrally, near a subway station and a streetcar line.

By car

Toronto is serviced by a number of major highways. The 401, a major east-west artery, begins near the Canada-US border, at the Windsor-Detroit crossing, and goes as far east as the Ontario-Quebec border. The 400 and 404 highways service communities north of the city. The Trans-Canada Highway, which traverses the entire country, also services Toronto.

Public transport

Toronto has a comprehensive public transit network, made up of subways, buses and streetcars in the city, and regional bus and train service to outlying suburbs. Fare on the city's transit network, the TTC (<http://ttc.ca/>), is priced at a flat rate: \$3 per trip for a cash fare. A weekly pass, which provides seven days of unlimited travel, is available for \$39.25.

Transit service is available from both of Toronto's airports. From Pearson, a bus called the "Airport Rocket" runs to the westernmost subway terminus. From Billy Bishop airport, a free shuttle bus runs to Union Station.

Toronto has reasonably good cycling infrastructure. Comprised of painted bike lanes, a limited number of divided bikeways, and a good network of off-street trails, most streets are bike-friendly. Post-

and-loop bike locking areas are readily available on most streets. A Bixi bike-share service is also available throughout downtown.

Visas

Citizens and residents of the United States, as well as most Europeans, can visit Canada without a visa. Residents and citizens of many Asian, African, Middle Eastern and South American countries may require a visa. A comprehensive list is available from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas-all.asp>

For those requiring visas, the process is relatively simple. Applications for visas can be filed online or on paper. For paper applications (including applications from residents of countries which require biometric data), Canadian visa offices are available in most countries.

Accommodation

Hotels and guest houses are available at a variety of price points, starting at around \$100/night for a standard hotel room. Airbnb has hundreds of listings in Toronto, with two-bedroom apartment rentals downtown starting at \$150/night.

Food

Toronto can accommodate almost any dietary preference or requirement. Halal, vegetarian and gluten-free options are all widely available. Near the University of Toronto campus, a number of affordable options are available, with a meal costing under \$10. Options near campus include Middle Eastern fast food (falafel, shawarma, etc.), Korean, a number of pubs with typical pub fare, Italian (North American-style Italian, mostly pasta), Indian, and a number of sandwich shops. The university is also near Chinatown, which offers a diverse selection of Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese food.

On campus, most cafeterias and coffee shops are open year round, even when classes aren't in session. These include a variety of options, of varying levels of quality (see <http://ueat.utoronto.ca/meal-plans/where-to-eat/>).

Sponsorship possibilities

Industry (both local and non)

Cultural funding organizations

Media sponsors

Institutional (university, libraries, etc.)