

# SPARKS

The Agency newsletter

issue 1  
fall 2018



**ACCESSIBLE MEDIA**  
BETTER COMMUNICATION  
FOR EVERYONE

**CREATIVE  
PROBLEM SOLVING**  
FROM A SOFTWARE  
DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE



The  
Agency

 **mohawk**  
COLLEGE

# APPLIED CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING



Joseph Duda  
Manager,  
The Agency



## WELCOME

to the inaugural issue of Sparks, The Agency's quarterly newsletter. We aim to celebrate the creative problem solving of our students through interviews, articles, and informational pieces.

Guest articles will highlight how creative problem solving relates to a specific program involved in The Agency.

Each issue will showcase work produced in The Agency from a variety of marketing and communications programs. We hope you find our newsletter engaging, educational and entertaining.

Creativity comes in many forms and applications. It's equal parts inspiration and perspiration but the end product can be as diverse as the problem to be solved.

Give us your thoughts, we'll share them in the next issue of Sparks. Send your responses to: [theagency@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:theagency@mohawkcollege.ca)



# ABOUT THE AGENCY

The Agency is an innovative experiential learning initiative operating within the McKeil School of Business at Mohawk College.

Under supervision, students from media, design, and marketing and communications programs work collaboratively on projects from the community. The Agency partners with not-for-profit organizations, entrepreneurial start-ups and corporations throughout the GTHA. Selected projects are integrated into the curriculum.

## PROGRAMS INVOLVED

- Advertising and Marketing Communications Mgmt
- Animation 3D
- Business Analysis
- Business - Marketing
- Broadcasting - Television and Communications Media
- Creative Photography - Still and Motion
- Computer Systems Technology - Software Development
- Graphic Design
- Journalism
- Public Relations

# CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

## FROM A SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

**C**reative problem solving is a fundamental part of software development. Recently, there has been an explosion of new and exciting software development technologies including Node.js, AngularJS and ReactJS to go along with more established technologies such as Java, .NET and PHP. There has also been an explosion of platforms to develop software for including phones, tablets, wearables, VR headsets and cloud to go along with web and desktops.

With so many development technologies and platforms available to us, there are always multiple ways to complete a software development project. Creative problem solving is used by developers to build a design that leverages the most appropriate combination of development technologies and platforms to complete a particular project. It is also required throughout the development process as developers often encounter problems that need to be addressed in a creative way in order to complete a project.

In recent years, our students have worked on numerous cutting edge applied research projects in partnership with The Agency and

industry partners including Twitter, Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), City of Hamilton and the Canadian Sepsis Foundation. These projects have leveraged and further developed students' creative problem solving skills. Some notable past projects include:

- Twitter Scope App – to overlay twitter tweets with “real-time” site information to the “binoculars” provided at tourist locations
- Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) Ministry App – gamified app to train HHS personnel on how to work with hazardous chemicals
- Hamilton Health Sciences Neonatal App – for parents to track the status of their sick children at HHS’s NICU units
- Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Bus App - to help residents plan their HSR bus trips in the city

Industry projects are an excellent showcase of the creative problem solving capabilities of our students and help us to stay connected with our local community.

**Joseph Varrasso**  
*Professor, Computer Science  
Computer Systems Technology  
Software Development Program*



# ACCESSIBLE MEDIA

## BETTER COMMUNICATION FOR EVERYONE

The Canadian Government is committed to improving accessibility for all Canadians, so on June 21, 2018 the Government of Canada proposed the Accessible Canada Act. Following in the footsteps of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, the Accessible Canada Act would add to the existing rights and protections for people with disabilities. Here in Ontario we are moving forward with the AODA's goal to be a fully accessible province by 2025.

Will your organization meet this goal? Is your online content and media accessible? Did you know that if your media and online content is not accessible then you are excluding approximately 15% of the global population – that is 1 in 7, or more than 1 billion people!

According to the AODA, business and non-profit organizations with more than 50 employees have to have all websites and web content accessible by January 1, 2021 – this includes videos, documents, social media and websites.

The Accessible Media Production graduate certificate program, the first of its kind in

Ontario, focuses on creating and producing accessible content across all media platforms. Some program highlights include: investigating the experiences of people with disabilities and how we are moving from accessibility to usability; receiving intensive training in producing accessible content including captioning, integrated and described video, accessible documents using inclusive writing and communication, accessible social media and websites.

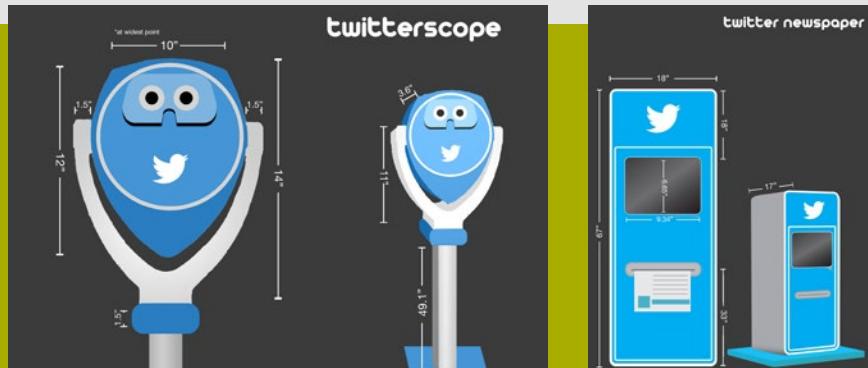
The program is offered through an executive delivery format with students learning theory online during the week and hands-on experiences every Saturday. Graduates of the Accessible Media Production program are very well positioned to meet the AODA and upcoming Accessible Canada Act legislative requirements.

**Jennifer Jahnke**

Professor/Coordinator,  
School of Media & Entertainment  
Accessible Media Production



# WHAT WE'VE DONE



## The client

**Twitter Canada** is a social networking and online news platform with millions of users around the world.

## The ask

Rather than a typical Agency project where a client has a specific need, Advertising students were tasked with developing new applications for Twitter.

## Programs involved

- Advertising and Marketing Communications
- Computer Systems Technology – Software Development

## The solution

Advertising and Marketing Communications students created and proposed two new applications for Twitter. These were presented to the company for approval and further development of the concepts. Computer Systems Technology – Software Development students were subsequently engaged in a cross-disciplinary collaboration to provide the coding required to make the initial ideas viable for further development by Twitter.

We've done a lot, but here are just two samples from our collection of 2017–18 student work.



### The client

Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) is a medical group of seven unique hospitals and a cancer center located in Hamilton, Ontario.

### The ask

HHS approached the Agency with the task of developing an app that could be used by parents of infants who were in the care of McMaster Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The purpose of the app is to provide extra support and information to parents who are commonly feeling stressed, scared and overwhelmed.

### Program involved

- Computer Systems Technology – Software Development

### The solution

This ongoing project has Computer Systems Technology – Software Development students working in collaboration with HHS in developing an app that provides critical information on an infant's diagnosis, treatment, care decisions and progress to parents on a constant and updated basis.



## CALLING APPLICANTS!

The next round of submissions opens October 22, 2018.

If your organization wants to join forces with The Agency, send us an email and we'll put you on the list.

Contact: [theagency@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:theagency@mohawkcollege.ca)

## MARKETING BOOT CAMP

The Agency is hosting their first ever Marketing Communications Boot Camp. Faculty from public relations, advertising, marketing and graphic design programs will offer insights into the best practices for developing effective marketing strategies.

This event is open to non-profit organizations and start-up businesses.

**Enrol by Tuesday October 16, 2018**

To register, email [theagency@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:theagency@mohawkcollege.ca)

Admission is **FREE**

**Date:** Tuesday October 23, 2018 **Time:** 4 – 6 pm

**Location:** The Agency (i205), Mohawk College

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