



**Wound healing service**

HELP for people with chronic wounds is now available thanks to a new community-based service which has opened at QUT's Kelvin Grove campus. Run from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, the Wound Healing Community Outreach Service operates every Tuesday and aims to improve healing rates and quality of life for sufferers of chronic wounds. An initial one-hour consultation costs \$20 for adults and \$15 for pensioners. No referral is needed. To book phone 07 3138 6109 or email [woundhealing@qut.edu.au](mailto:woundhealing@qut.edu.au)



**bluebox**

**Bio2008 fellowships**

QUT early career researchers in the fields of life sciences and biotechnology have the chance to secure one of three fellowships to attend the world's largest biotechnology conference, Bio2008. The all-expenses-paid fellowships are being offered by QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation and bluebox. They include registration, travel and accommodation costs to attend the conference in San Diego in June. Applications close March 20, with the winners announced on April 7. For details visit [www.qutbluebox.com.au/news/upcomingevent/fellowships.jsp](http://www.qutbluebox.com.au/news/upcomingevent/fellowships.jsp)

**Video addiction**

A DEVICE for parents concerned about their children becoming addicted to video games has been designed by QUT industrial design student Toni Do. The device, known as the Echelon, allows parents to control when and how long their children play computer



games. Ms Do said younger people were getting more addicted to computer games because technology was improving, getting faster and more sophisticated, thus making it more attractive to game-players.

**Honorary Doctorates**

THREE people who have made significant contributions to scholarship, QUT or the community received honorary doctorates at last month's graduations. The trio included entrepreneurial pharmacist and past-president of Zonta International, Mary Magee, pictured. Keith



Hilless was recognised for his contribution to the development and expansion of Queensland's electricity supply industry. Dale Gilbert was also recognised for his built environment research and advocacy of energy efficiency and the use of alternative energy generation buildings.

# Signing your (online) life away

**Creative industries**

HOW many times have you clicked "I Accept" to the terms and conditions on a website without reading the contractual small print?

QUT internet communities expert Dr Sal Humphreys warns you could be allowing online companies to install spyware on your computer or use your personal photographs for commercial purposes.

Dr Humphreys said many people may unknowingly sign away their privacy and intellectual property (IP) rights.

"By blindly accepting the terms and conditions, which are legal contracts, people may be agreeing to things they would normally consider unacceptable," she said.

"People tend to ignore the contracts they have 'accepted' until something goes awry, and then they discover there are very few avenues for appeal."

Dr Humphreys organised the *Computer Games, Law, Regulation and Policy Symposium* which was hosted by the Australian Research Council

Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation at QUT last month.

The symposium dissected a wide range of issues relating to the virtual realm, including users' and developers' rights.

"We are changing from a society functioning in the public sphere, regulated by governments, to a society interacting in private spheres, which are controlled by corporations that run for a profit," she said.

Dr Humphreys said an example was the Massively Multi-player Online Game (MMOG) *World of Warcraft* (WoW), which was played by millions of people around the world.

"The WoW contract states that the developer can access the user's computer and is allowed to install spyware onto the hard drive to track what they do," she said.

"The developer claims the spyware, which must be installed for the game to work, helps to detect cheating and black-market selling of in-game currency, but there are privacy breaches that the players may have unknowingly agreed to that are a cause

for concern."

Dr Humphreys said many online publishers encouraged players to create their own content, but their contracts stated that anything created in the game or posted on a company's website became the property of the publishers.

"The current terms and conditions for Facebook state that all user content posted on the site could be used by the company for purposes including advertising, and may be retained in archives, even after the user has deleted it from their profile," she said.

Dr Humphreys said online corporations were often not accountable for their treatment of users.

"The *Second Life* contract states users own the IP rights to their in-world creations, but they could still be kicked out of the game for no reason, and if they own a lot of virtual property that is worth a lot of real-life money, they could lose it all with very few mechanisms for appeal," she said.

- Rachael Wilson

# Researcher eyes off a biometric future



**Engineering**

IT is not science fiction to think that our eyes could very soon be the key to unlocking our homes, accessing our bank accounts and logging on to our computers, according to QUT researcher Sammy Phang.

Ms Phang, from QUT's Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering, is helping to remove one of the final obstacles to the everyday application of iris scanning technology.

Ms Phang, pictured above, said the pattern of an iris was like a fingerprint.

"Every individual iris is unique and even the iris pattern of the left eye is different from the right," she said.

"By using iris recognition it is possible to confirm the identity of a person based on who the person is rather than what the person possesses, such as an ID card or password.

"It is already being used around the world and it is possible that within the next 10 to 20 years it will be part of our everyday lives."

Ms Phang said although iris recognition systems were being used in a number of civilian applications, the system was not perfect.

"Changes in lighting conditions change a person's pupil size and distort the iris pattern," she said.

"If the pupil size is very different, the distortion of the iris pattern can be significant, and makes it hard

for the iris recognition system to work properly."

To overcome this flaw, Ms Phang has developed the technology to estimate the effect of the change in the iris pattern as a result of changes in surrounding lighting conditions.

Ms Phang said by using a high-speed camera it was possible to track the iris surface's movements to study how it changed depending on the variation of pupil sizes caused by the light.

She said results of tests conducted using iris images showed it was possible to estimate the change on the iris surface and account for the way the iris features changed due to different lighting conditions.

- Sandra Hutchinson

# Don't dial and drive

**Psychology**

A QUT researcher is urging drivers to turn their mobile phones off before getting into their car, with a study revealing 40 per cent of Aussies use their phone at least once a day while driving.

The study by Shari Walsh, from QUT's School of Psychology and Counselling, found that despite drivers knowing the dangers of using their mobiles at the wheel, they continued to talk on their phone.

"The most frequently reported behaviour was answering the phone, with 46 per cent confessing to doing this," she said.

Ms Walsh, whose research looked at the personal and social factors motivating people to use their mobile while driving, said despite legislation

banning the use of hand-held mobile phones in cars many Australians flouted the road rules.

She said the one saving grace was that drivers were more likely to pick up their phone while stopped at lights or stuck in traffic, compared to driving in complex situations like changing lanes or driving through a school zone.

"Drivers are more likely to use their mobile phone when they are stationary rather than when they are driving at 100km/h."

Ms Walsh said drivers had enough to contend with on the roads, highlighting the need for people to put their phones out of sight and out of mind.

Ms Walsh said the study also found the risk of being fined for using a hand-held mobile while driving was not a deterrent.