
A Unique Perspective

Innovation is essential for achieving competitive advantage in today's high-pressure business environment. Yet it is often too easy to become internally focused, losing sight of key sources for inspiration, customer needs, and changing marketplaces, thus stifling creativity and long-term growth.

The MIT Media Lab is a unique resource to help companies address these issues. Its more than \$60-million annual operating budget and world-renowned faculty support 26 research groups and over 400 projects, ranging from smart prostheses for amputees, to creative computation for kids, to designing cities of the future. Broad research foci include synthetic neurobiology, digital currencies, extended intelligence, wellbeing, affective computing, innovative interfaces, and sociable robots.

At first glance, much of the Media Lab's research may seem costly or tangential to current business realities, but for more than 30 years, the Lab has demonstrated that seemingly "far out" research can find its way into the most conventional—and useful—applications. Over the years, examples have ranged from a sensing system developed for magicians Penn and Teller that became the basis for a life-saving, baby-seat sensing device for automobiles; to electronic ink enabling e-readers; to a new generation of digital interfaces; to successful commercial ventures such as The Echo Nest, Bluefin Labs, and Formlabs.

Benefits for Members

The Media Lab works closely with its member companies to provide a springboard for innovative products and thinking. By pursuing a range of research that no single company could match, the Lab provides an abundance of ideas, technologies, and paradigms for the future. Member companies can engage with the Media Lab for:

Knowledge Transfer. One of the Lab's most important benefits, this includes the transfer of creative ideas for the use of a single new technology, or the convergence of several technologies.

Interactive Demonstrations. Coming to the Lab to see research projects firsthand—and to engage in impromptu discussions about the demos—gives members valuable insights into new approaches that can be applied to their own research agendas. The Lab hosts regular member events, and other visits are possible. Lab researchers may also visit member sites and events.

Student Recruitment. One of the Media Lab's greatest strengths is the quality of its students. Members can recruit these students to join them as interns during term breaks or as full-time employees after graduation.

Neutral Meeting Place for Cross-Company Collaboration. Members recognize the value of meeting other members, opening the possibility for collaboration.

Business Connections. Many members use the Media Lab to build business connections and specifically to collaborate with downstream partners, which can enable them to come to market with a more complete product. Plus, connections with Media Lab start-ups provide a rich source of ongoing technology and product development.

Intellectual Property. The Media Lab has spawned dozens of new products by our members, and over 150 start-up companies. Members at the consortium lab level and above have non-exclusive, royalty-free license rights, in perpetuity, to patents registered during their period of membership.

To learn more about becoming a member of the Media Lab, contact memberrelations@media.mit.edu.

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