



## ITAC Community Hero Award

June 24, 2009, Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Shown in photo: Salah Sharieh (Comp. Sci. MSc graduate), Dr. Ferworn and presenter, David Rea (VP Client Services, Innovapost).

The Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) has chosen Dr. Alex Ferworn to receive its prestigious Community IT Hero award. Presented by Intel, the IT Hero Awards Program recognizes individuals and organizations that have improved the quality of life for their communities through the application of information technology.

Dr. Ferworn and the Network-Centric Applied Research Team (N-

CART) at Ryerson's Department of Computer Science, in partnership with the canine handlers of the Provincial Emergency Response Team (PERT) of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), have been working to create unique IT-enabled public safety systems that improve how searches are conducted for trapped people in urban disasters.

The award winning project known as "Canine Augmentation Technology" (CAT) creates technologies that assist emergency first responders by placing sensing, networking and computing equipment on trained urban search and rescue (US&R) dogs. This equipment feeds information to emergency managers allowing them to make better decisions about how to plan a rescue. "The CAT project has made us think about what we mean by the term multidisciplinary", said Ferworn. "We have people working on this project who are police officers, fire fighters, Fashion Professors, Engineers and, of course, Computer Scientists. I am proud to receive this award on behalf of the many people who have worked countless hours with few resources for such a worthy goal. If our technology can save a single life, it will be worth the effort", said Dr. Ferworn.