

Taking the pulse of new life-saving Smartphone application

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Globalink student Vicky Liu develops an app that tracks and displays vital signs on a mobile device



From Angry Birds to Google Maps, there seems to be an endless number of mobile phone applications for Smartphones. But how many apps can help save a life? Mitacs Globalink student Vicky Liu is working with Professor Victor C.M. Leung from the University of British Columbia's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering to make an app that can do just that.

Vicky comes to Canada from the Beijing Institute of Technology in China, where she is working towards a Bachelor's degree in Computing Science. She chose to apply to the Globalink program over others because it engages students from different countries, which has allowed her to network globally during her exchange: "You can really feel the collision of cultures here through Globalink – I think that is really unique."

Her research project – *Vital Sign Visualization on Smartphones for Public Mobile Health* – will see her developing a Smartphone application that displays a user's vital signs onscreen after assessing the user's health via wireless Bluetooth sensors strategically placed on the body. She is experimenting with innovative, sustainable devices supporting the Bluetooth Low Energy standard, where "a battery the size of a quarter can power the sensors for an entire year", she explains. The project aligns well with Vicky's area of study, which she finds inspiring because she can conduct research that is really useful for society and people's health while exploring a field she is passionate about.

"Globalink provides a platform to do work, conduct research and experience a different research atmosphere in a new country." Vicky feels that her Globalink internship is preparing her for future career through hands-on research experience where she has the freedom to turn her ideas into meaningful results.

After graduation, Vicky was planning to complete her graduate studies in the US or Hong Kong. However, after her recent experiences with Globalink, she is considering a return to UBC. "I like the whole environment here – not just academic, but social and natural too." When Vicky returns to China to finish her program, she hopes to keep in contact with all of her new Canadian friends, as well as the other Globalink students she has met during her internship.

Vicky thanks Mitacs Globalink and UBC for this opportunity to network with professors and students from around the world while gaining valuable work experience through developing a technology she believes will make a real difference. "Globalink has inspired me and helped me prepare for my future career and academic goals. This has been a very precious opportunity for me and I greatly encourage other international students to consider doing internships with Mitacs Globalink."