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3DIcon extends agreement with OU

by Ginger Shepherd
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TULSA – The University of Oklahoma and 3DIcon have extended research agreements to develop a three-dimensional display system.

3DIcon is a communication technology development company working to design and produce new communication technology, mainly displays that are three-dimensional and full-color.

Company founder and President Martin Keating said 3DIcon approached the university in 2004. OU professor James Sluss said the second agreement for research to develop the technology was signed in 2005.

Unlike traditional flat-screen images, the image may be seen from different angles, said Monte Tull, an OU professor and researcher on the project. The image is considered a volumetric display since it would have depth.

Keating decided to extend the research agreement because of the success of the program, pointing to different patent applications filed since 2005.

Tull said the university is working on developing a piece of equipment that will create the illusion of a 3-D image. They plan to have the prototype developed in the next few weeks.

They are also looking into using lasers and materials suspended in aero gel to create a volumetric 3-D display, Sluss said. The research has yielded three provisional patents and one full utility patent application.

Keating said he expects many more advances and patents to come from the research. His company is expanding the research agreement, which was originally for computer and electrical engineering, to include chemical, biological and materials engineering.

"We are looking at even wider vistas with OU for 3-D applications for the future," Keating said.

Earlier this month, 3DIcon secured about $13.5 million in funding to fund the marketing of any products that may develop.

The results may change the way video teleconferences are done, they way people play video games and change general entertainment, Sluss said.

The research is more than just developing a new tool for the future. Tull said through the private-public partnership, the research may help grow the state's economy much like the private-public partnerships in Silicon Valley and the research triangle in North Carolina.

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