Fall 2022 Sustainability Scholars Program Internship Opportunity

The UBC Sustainability Hub is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on funded sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the mentorship of a partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region.

- Visit the Sustainability Scholars Program website to learn how the program works and to apply.
- Be sure to review the application guide to confirm your eligibility before applying.

Applications close at midnight on Sunday September 18, 2022.

Project Title: Research to understand the impact of electronic shelf label technology on the carbon footprint of retailers in Canada

Project Background & Overview
Business owners and retailers have begun to respond to the climate crisis by selling eco-friendly items and transitioning to more environmentally sustainable operations, such as by replacing paper shelf labels with electronic shelf labels.

In recent years, electronic shelf labels have gained a reputation for being environmentally beneficial for decreasing the carbon footprint of retail operations while also improving efficiency and offering long-term savings.

While electronic shelf labels are still relatively new to the North American market, they are already being widely used in Europe and Asia. A few major retailer chains in Canada have taken the first step to be early adopters of electronic shelf labels, these stores are creating a standard for in-store experiences that is evolving consumer expectations in Canada and already impacting Canadian retailers.

A Smart Label Solutions Inc. (Canadian Corporation) is a subsidiary of Printers Plus Inc., which was incorporated in 1990 and has been in the label business for more than 32 years. The company supplies over 100 million labels annually to meet the printing and labelling demands of the Western Canadian business community. We want to understand the emissions and waste reduction potential of electronic shelf labels compared to printed shelf labels.

Project Description
Waste management and environmental protection are increasing social and economic concerns. We are aware of the harmful causes of plastic and paper for our planet, and retailers are one of the biggest contributors to such waste. It should come as no surprise that they require inventive and effective approaches to address this situation.

The purpose of this project is to assess the waste and GHG emissions reduction potential of replacing paper shelf labels with electronic shelf label in the retail sector. This research will help Canadian retailers identify and justify the benefits of switching to electronic shelf labels. The results will be relevant to retailers and government ministries who might potentially utilize this research as a planning resource for the future.

Project scope

- Conduct research (through expert interviews and surveys) to identify the environmental impacts and commercial benefits of shifting to electronic shelf label technology. This will include collecting data to help quantify the emissions and waste savings potential of paper vs electronic shelf labels
- Identify and research 5 to 10 key Canadian retailers that have implemented electronic shelf label technology to learn more about the benefits and consequences of converting to electronic shelf labels a well as to collect data to add to the analysis.
- Time permitting: Reach out to 2 or 3 retailers who have not adopted electronic shelf label technology to collect data in order to develop a profile/case study to demonstrate the waste and emissions savings potential of switching (the mentor will help the Scholar identify and make connections with potential retailers)

This project is envisioned to address the following:

- Annual paper production and waste from retail labelling across Canada.
- Annual wood usage for retail paper label production across Canada.
- Annual carbon footprint for retail paper labelling across Canada.
- The environmental impact of paper labelling on global warming.
- Research on digital shelf labels to understand the GHG emissions reduction potential, harms and benefits of this technology over its life span

Deliverables:

- A final report containing a summary of the work completed
- A presentation to key stakeholders
- A final report for the online public-facing Scholars Project Library.

Time Commitment

- This project will take **250** hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between October 17, 2022 and March 15, 2023.
- The Scholar is to complete hours between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday, approximately 10-12 hours per week.

Required/preferred Skills and Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Statistical analysis
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Deadline oriented
- Knowledge of retail industry an asset
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Familiarity preparing feasibility studies, an asset
- Experience with financial modelling and analysis, an asset
- Experience with life-cycle cost analysis, an asset
- Familiarity with quantifying and comparing GHG emissions an asset

Applications close **midnight Sunday September 18, 2022**
Apply here: Click here to apply
Contact Karen Taylor at sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca if you have questions

Useful Resources

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae

https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success

https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services