CIRS: A TYPICAL DAY

The ground floor is humming with activity. A group of community planners is in the Group Decision Environment, using interactive and immersive visualization tools to explore future development paths for the region. Researchers are observing them as they interact with each other and with the technology in order to gain insight into how people think and communicate about sustainability issues. Nearby, in the Policy Lab, a group of stakeholders discuss resource management issues in the BC coastal fishery. After lunch they will present their management plan to a community organization specializing in marine ecosystem stewardship, via teleconference equipment.

Also on the ground floor, a fair trade coffee shop is busy with students who just left the CIRS Auditorium after an engaging sustainability lecture.

View from lobby looking towards the cafe

Upstairs in the meeting room on the east wing of CIRS, a visiting government official discusses energy plans for UBC with experts from the field and BC Hydro staff – both of whom have offices in the building.

Building industry researchers and professionals are conducting experiments on innovative building materials and processes in the Building Monitoring and Assessment Lab, and throughout the CIRS building itself. Data is being collected on recent energy and water use, air quality, temperature and occupant behaviour, which will be fed back into the building controls and made available for researchers. A team of architects and engineers from Toronto is touring the building, seeing first-hand the practical demonstration and real-work testing of advanced building technologies.

Nearby, a group of local school children are touring the CIRS building to learn about bio-filtration and water conservation through rainwater collection.

As the day draws to a close, someone in Beijing discovers the CIRS website and emails a friend, who emails a co-worker, and the suddenly the goal of creating new and innovative channels of communication about sustainability issues becomes a reality.