New project sets sights on future of computing

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MIT has teamed up with Quanta Computer Inc. on a five-year, $20 million joint research project designed to change the way people interact with technology.
Project TParty, announced on Friday, April 8, will address the complexity of today's computing landscape. Whereas people currently have to maintain a wide array of "smart" devices - from cell phones to computers to personal digital assistants - on their own, TParty is intended to move such work into the background, making such computing tasks as upgrades and backups more or less invisible to the user.

MIT President Susan Hockfield commented: "I am delighted that MIT and Quanta are collaborating in this ambitious initiative, which has tremendous implications for the future of personal computing. This partnership builds on MIT's long traditions of technological innovation and creative interaction with industry to address issues that are increasingly important to all of us in the digital age."

The work means creating the next generation of platforms for computing and communication. TParty will require reengineering and an extension of the underlying technical infrastructure, the creation of new interfaces and the exploration of new ways of managing and accessing information.

The partnership pairs the huge brain trust of MIT with the practical skills of the world's largest maker of laptop computers. "We strongly believe that the best value for our research partners is achieved when we work together," said Professor Rodney Brooks, Director of the MIT Computer

Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL), the MIT laboratory that will house TParty. "Together Quanta and CSAIL will establish a team and work toward a new world of self-organizing devices that will make our lives more pleasant and productive."

Mr. Barry Lam, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Quanta, said at the signing ceremony in Taipei, Taiwan: "We are very pleased to team up with the renowned research institution, MIT, to embark on a new IT trendsetting endeavor. Combining the exceptional research resources of MIT with the world-leading innovative design and manufacturing engine of Quanta, we are excited about the prospects of bringing brand-new products and services to the world that will improve all of our lives and cultures."

Source: MIT