

Success Story



About

Located in the heart of Ottawa's Kanata North Technology Park, BlackBerry QNX builds 'foundational' software for autonomous vehicles, medical applications, and robotics and industrial automation.



SOFTWARE



500+ OTTAWA EMPLOYEES

Standing in the centre of the company's Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Centre – affectionately known as The Garage – Grant Courville, BlackBerry QNX's VP of Product Strategy, explains that while AV is a key focus for the company, it's not the only thing it's got going.

"The vehicles get all the hype, no matter what form they take going forward," he says. "But everything we do from a safety, security, reliability perspective applies well beyond automotive and that's what's so exciting for us at BlackBerry QNX. We're at the heart of so many devices. If you swipe a credit card, guess what? We're at the heart of the network that builds out and that authorizes those transactions. Nuclear reactor monitoring, wind turbines, gas turbines, medical devices. MRI machines, CT scanners, factory controls. It just expands everywhere."

But The Garage is where all of the AV action occurs.

Why Ottawa?

Invest Ottawa is the lead economic development agency for knowledge-based industries in Canada's Capital, facilitating economic growth and job creation in the City of Ottawa. Guided by a vision to help realize Ottawa's full potential as a globally-recognized, innovative and future-ready city, and the best place to learn, work, live, and play, Invest Ottawa delivers global expansion programs and services that catalyze growth for the city of Ottawa.

It's no surprise that Ottawa and Canada's National Capital Region has attracted a wealth of start-ups, scaling companies and multinationals that are driving innovation in emerging and disruptive fields from AI, to Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) and Robotics. For decades, Canada's capital has been a leader in R&D. Ottawa's high concentration of technology talent, competitive business costs, and quality of life attracts companies from diverse sectors all over the world, resulting in:

- The highest tech talent concentration in North America (CBRE 2020)
- The least expensive Canadian city in which to live and work (Mercer 2019),
- The third-highest quality of life in Canada (Mercer).

Since 2012, Invest Ottawa's foreign business and investment attraction, local business retention and expansion in targeted sectors, commercialization; and marketing Ottawa's diversified economy and high quality of life, has helped firms to attract more than \$565 million in capital, contributed to the creation of more than 7,670 jobs and attracted more than \$446 million in domestic and Foreign Direct Investment.



“So, this is where we essentially connect the software to the hardware and obviously eventually take it out on the roads and everywhere else for real world testing,” says Grant Courville. “So the software that we build out that our customers use to put together safety systems and cars and communication systems in cars—the core of that development is right here in this building.”

Courville notes that the City of Ottawa recently opened Area X.O, a world-class facility that offers a safe and secure environment to create, test and demonstrate future connected technologies.



QNX and Ottawa

Grant Courville credits Invest Ottawa for playing a lead role in the development of the Area X.O facility.

Founded in Ottawa in 1980, QNX was acquired by Blackberry in 2010.

“Ottawa is a great city for talent,” says Grant Courville. “You’ve got companies like Ford for instance that have recently moved to Ottawa. So, you’re starting to see that, I’ll call it a snowball effect. Where you’re getting more and more talent and or more companies coming to Ottawa and there’s good reason to that.”



When when we started off, we thought this was going to take quite a while to get going. Literally in the space of two years, less than two years, this all spun up funded by the province of Ontario’s Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network.”

Grant Courville
VP Product Strategy,
Blackberry QNX

