

iRing Inc. Receives Northern Ontario Business Awards – 2014 Innovation Award

September 25, 2014

North Bay, ON, Canada – iRing Inc. is excited to announce that they are the recipient of the 2014 Northern Ontario Business Awards – Innovation Award for their new underground drilling and blasting application called Aegis.

Incorporated in 2005, iRing Inc. is a North Bay-based software company. It is the company's mission to provide leading edge technologies and solutions for blast optimization for the mining sector. With the release of Aegis, iRing Inc. has now positioned itself as the premier product provider in this market.

The company's first blast design product was a software application called iRing, and it was software that was written to work on top of a computer-aided drafting (CAD) system. While the software was a success, sales were limited by the need to run the software on this proprietary CAD system. In 2010, iRing Inc.'s management team decided to grow sales by developing an enhanced and re-engineered underground blasting package that could run independently. Project Manager, Chris Preston, P.Eng conceptualized the project and software goals, and together with Troy Williams, P.Eng, Software Engineer, they assembled team to create this new product. Key to success would be the development of a method for allowing a mine to improve their fragmentation with each successive blast. Chris and his team put a three-year plan into place to develop new state-of-the-art software that would take the industry to an entirely new level of sophistication.

This plan included funding in excess of \$1.5 million dollars over the three-year project. The Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) was a crucial partner that helped fund a significant portion of the project. iRing Inc. hired two mathematicians, Rob Alkins and Jonathan Zimmerling, both possessed Master's degrees in Mathematics from Nipissing University. These resources were added to the current talent pool at iRing Inc. to create a highly effective team. Troy Williams, Senior Developer was pleasantly surprised with the skills the recent Nipissing graduates brought to the table. He stated "the mathematicians not only needed to learn about underground mining operations, but they also had to take these concepts and create something brand new with them".

On December 11, 2013, the iRing team were excited to announce the official release of its new underground mining software solution, *Aegis Designer*. Aegis Designer is a powerful, standalone application that offers intelligent automatic ring generation, intuitive editing, effective pattern optimization and advanced forecasting in underground mines.

Aegis Designer allows for the fast creation and editing of every aspect of ring design, including drilling, loading, priming, timing, slot design and more. Aegis Designer offers a flexible and effective reporting system, as well as direct communication with drills using the IREDES format. Aegis Designer helps mine planners go from design to production faster than ever before—five times faster.

“Aegis Designer represents a complete paradigm shift in underground blast design. This is exciting new technology that strongly compliments Datamine's Underground Planning Solutions,” said Dylan Webb, Director of Marketing and Strategy at Datamine Software. Datamine is a global partner and distributor of iRing Inc.

“The mining industry is constantly evolving, and we believe that Aegis Designer is the next evolutionary step in blasting software. We’ve produced a software product that lets mining operations to get closer to turning underground blasting operations into a precision manufacturing process. We provide the ability to quickly design multiple scenarios and immediately compare forecasts as a total game changer,” said Mark Sherry, co-owner of iRing Inc.

On April 15, 2014 the second module of Aegis called *Analyzer* was released into the marketplace. “Aegis Analyzer builds upon the paradigm-breaking Aegis Designer, combining never before seen advanced analysis and forecasting tools with an intuitive and powerful interface” states Chris Preston.

Aegis Analyzer adds to the already robust forecasting features of Aegis Designer by providing blast recovery revenue forecasts, with an emphasis on dilution and constantly changing marketplace parameters. The unique combination of features allows blast planners to work in concert with transportation and milling departments towards optimization of the entire mine-to-mill process.

Analyzer extends industry accepted blasting models, providing cavity prediction algorithms that leverage the power of 3D graphics computing in a way that has not previously been possible. Analyzer provides an unobtrusive, content-rich interface that integrates seamlessly with Aegis Designer, allowing planners to immediately see the consequences of design decisions. This combination of novel analysis tools and rapid design features of Aegis Designer allows planners to design and thoroughly evaluate several approaches to a problem in less time than was previously required to obtain a single design. Workflows are geared towards rapidly evaluating multiple designs and, ultimately, the arrival at a process-optimal plan.

Mark Sherry, co-owner of iRing Inc. states, “I think Chris had wanted to do this for twenty years but the technology has only come into place in the past few years to allow this to happen. We are truly on the leading edge of blast design technology, and we have leapfrogged all our competitors.”

“I think Chris and Troy and their team hit it out of the park in terms of designing an easy to use interface that takes into account these complex ideas.”

Receiving the NOBA Innovation Award confirms that the iRing Inc. team is on the right path to success, and reinforces that the hard work and endeavour to revolutionize the realm of mining design and planning is being realized in a positive way.

iRing Inc. wishes to congratulate all the other winners of this year’s Northern Ontario Business Awards for their achievements.



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