**Media Release August 11 – Doing IT Around the World – www.passionit.info**
**For Distribution: Wednesday 17 September 2008**

From sunrise in Antarctica to sunset in Hawaii – spanning a 44 hour day on 11 August 2008 we followed the lives of 36 women in technology across the globe.

We followed the sun and the women – their lives and love of technology have been captured via photographic imagery, profiles and a "Day in the Life of.." diary. These tools describe what they do and how they contribute to our world and their shared passion for technology.

All continents are covered with albums for Antarctica, Oceania, Asia, Africa, Mediterranean, Europe, Scandinavia, UK & The Republic of Ireland, North America East Coast, Caribbean, Middle America, South America and North America West Coast.

Sample countries include Serbia, Malta, Jamaica, Denmark, Mexico, Peru, Russia.

The role models represent a wide diversity of women in technology industries with ages spanning from early 20's through to near retirement, their areas of technology passions span traditional information technology eg. CTO, software, hardware, support, consulting, sales and marketing services to communications, knowledge management, governance, data mining, open source advocacy, web design, graphic art, instrumentation design, configuration engineering, computational biology, microelectronics, molecular biology, research, geo spatial, educational, medical and legal technologists.

The end result - the "Doing IT Around the World Album Series and the "August 11 – A Day in the Life of…Diary" tells amazing real life stories and deliver an educational tool for school children as well as being a motivational tool for women in the industry to help address the issue of retaining women in the industry, by demonstrating the multiple career paths and geographic locations that women with technology skills can and do take up.

Doing IT:
- Raises profile of the role models
- Raises the profile of the diversity of careers available
- Raises the profile of the diversity of people passionately engaged in technology careers
- Works to attract more girls and women to technology studies and careers.

Some stories include:
1. Antarctica - the role model who manages the communications networks for Mawson Station  (featuring a webcam for visitors to view)
2. Africa – how the visiting USA Role Model is delivering lessons on overcoming poverty using technology
3. Asia – the role model who runs a bio technology start up

4. Hawaii - a young award winning role model working in data management for the US Navy (includes a video of the sun setting on 11 August in Hawaii)
5. England the role model who designs, develops, assembles, installs, tests and maintains all of the neutron detectors and their associated electronics, controls and software for the instruments on a major scientific facility….and many many more…..

**HOW DID WE DO THIS?**

We used web 2.0 tools of our trade!

Role models were located via traditional networking and connecting via social networking sites (linkedin, plaxo and facebook). Linkedin.com proved to be a rich source of searching and securing role models.

We did not engineer the participants diversity it happened naturally as it does in the world of technology.

Role model communication throughout the project was via traditional email, ecampaign tool (constantcontact.com),VOIP (skype) messaging and open source yabb bulletin board.

In summary we used the tools of our trade to make this project happen – and we're proud to say did it without any $ from sponsors!

We have a highly valued (and needed) web host sponsor who is offering inkind services (roarz.com.au) plus a project management sponsor who offered in kind project management (ionmy.com.au) – however no other sponsors and no injection of $.

The project is supported by major women and technology groups across the world – eg: Anita Borg Institute, SETwomen in the UK, British Computer Society, the European Centre for Women and Technology, WIT New Zealand, and AWISE  - Australian Women in IT and Science Entity And why wouldn't it be this is possibly the first global women and technology intervention/outreach project of it's kind and delivers directly on the key goals of global women and technology groups.

**WHY DID WE DO THIS?**

We are in a world where to make a positive impact on the rapidly declining numbers of girls and women taking up technology studies and careers we need both traditional intervention programs and innovative different approaches.

The ultimate aim is to smash through the commonly help (mis)perceptions of women in technology and work towards addressing the skills shortage, by providing real world role models and pathways on technology careers for younger generations and career changers.

A key goal is to grab the attention of a wide variety of the media and general public and passionately demonstrate what women in technology *can and do* achieve, and to show

that this occurs throughout the globe. Publicly profiling role models will raise awareness of careers in technology and the diversity of people who can contribute.

A chief reason to highlight careers in IT is that Technology is not just having a huge impact on the global economy. It is also changing the nature of advocacy, it forces us to deal with privacy and piracy, it allows communities to form with no proximity between members, and it can reshape education and democracy. The women to be profiled are involved in this transformation.

This is an approach that presents technology role models as they really are, including their global diversity in nationalities, careers, ages and interests. Proving that ICT is really about Innovation, Creativity and Transformation.


**WHY AUGUST 11?**

11 August 2008 is nominated, as this is the day that the Hedy Lamarr's Spread Spectrum Patent was approved (in 1942).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedy_Lamarr

Spread Spectrum is the basis of frequency hopping, wireless and mobile communications we use today. While a glamorous Hollywood star, Hedy Lamarr was key to the patent, and using this date draws further attention to the role women in technology have played historically.

**ABOUT THE INNOVATOR**

The innovator is Sonja Bernhardt, arguably the highest profile women in technology in Australia. She stands out from the crowd as a visionary, a leader and a doer. A person who is not afraid to stand proud in the face of controversy to achieve her values and to passionately spread the word about technology.

She is known for her obvious enthusiasm, visionary leadership, intelligent rational thinking and business acumen. She is the business owner and CEO of ThoughtWare Australia Pty Ltd, a Gold Coast based software development company.

In addition to successfully running ThoughtWare (www.thoughtware.com.au), Sonja is the co founder of AWISE – Australian Women in IT and Science Entity (www.awise.org.au), the founder of WIT – Women in Technology in Queensland (www.wit.org.au). Sonja is also the only Australian inducted into the Hall of Fame for Women in Technology International (Silicon Valley – 2005).

Sonja is passionate about her industry and since 1997 has consistently encouraged others to either take up a career in technology or adopt technology in their daily use through a multitude of career, role model, mentoring and board readiness programs

that she has been primarily responsible for designing and managing.

Sonja has spearheaded key non traditional initiatives such as the controversial Screen Goddess IT Calendar (www.itgoddess.info) and IT's Million Dollar Babes (www.itmillion.com). In addition Sonja assisted in providing funds and support for the Tech Girls are Chic, not just Geek initiative (www.techgirlsarechic.org).

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

Sonja Bernhardt:  sonjab@passionit.info  + 61 (0)416 248 236,  + 61 (0)7 5502 8236, skype 'thoughtware'

The web site is www.passionit.info

Media room is www.passionit.info/media.php

FAQ is http://www.passionit.info/faqs/YaBB.pl?board=general