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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Actua Receives Grant from Google.org to Develop Artificial Intelligence Curriculum for High School Students**

*Ottawa, May 10, 2019/* Today Google.org announced a \$500,000 grant to Actua's Codemakers program. The grant will go towards developing AI curriculum for Canadian high-school students across the country, including communities where access to technology is more limited.

The announcement was made by Sabrina Geremia, Head of Google Canada at Go North Youth - Canada's largest celebration of digital skills with over 1,300 youth from across the GTA. The event was hosted by Actua, its network member Engineering Outreach at the University of Toronto, and Google Canada.

"To seize the vast potential of artificial intelligence, we need to equip Canadian students with the opportunity to learn the basic building blocks of computer science and AI fundamentals", said Sabrina Geremia, Vice President and country manager, Google Canada. "With greats like Geoffrey Hinton, Yoshua Bengio, Doina Precup and Joelle Pineau, Canada has an amazing pedigree when it comes to homegrown AI innovation. It's crucial we provide Canada's next generation of technology builders with the inspiration and the tools to contribute to our AI legacy."

The new program will first involve exploring existing high school AI content and identifying gaps. Actua will then work with a team of AI experts to develop new content that covers basic principles of AI, an understanding of how it works and how it will influence future careers beyond just computer science (from music, to medicine, to farming), and a layer of programming that would address Canada's pedigree and pride when it comes to AI.

In its pilot year (2019-2020), Actua expects the AI programming will reach up to 15,000 students in every province and territory across Canada. It will also engage 500 teachers in AI training.

"We are very pleased to be working with Google on such an important initiative to equip Canadian students with the opportunity to learn the basic building blocks of computer science and AI fundamentals. With this funding, Actua will be integrating AI lessons across multiple subjects and grades, both in classrooms and through outreach activities ensuring students have a strong foundation in AI as they head towards post-secondary paths and careers," said Jennifer Flanagan, CEO, Actua.

In 2015, Google committed to a three-year investment in Actua's Codemakers program, to develop and deliver digital skill-building experiences to youth across Canada. The program was designed to inspire

youth to consider themselves creators of technology rather than consumers. The success of the initial partnership led to a first-ever re-investment by Google.org in the Codemakers program.

The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, was also in attendance at Go North Youth for the announcement. “When we support skills development in areas of STEM, we can build a nation of innovators and a digital economy that works for everyone. Artificial intelligence represents the single largest transformative technology in the world and a unique economic opportunity. That’s why our government is equipping Canadian youth with the digital skills they need for the jobs of the future.”

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### **About Actua**

Actua is Canada’s leading science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 38 university and college based members. Each year 250,000 young Canadians in over 500 communities nationwide are inspired through hands-on educational workshops, camps and community outreach initiatives. Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented youth through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. Actua’s major funders include: Government of Canada, Google Canada, Suncor Energy Foundation, GE Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Finning, Toyota Canada Foundation and Lockheed Martin. For more information about Actua, visit [actua.ca](http://actua.ca).

### **About Google.org**

Google.org connects nonprofit innovators with Google resources to solve complex human challenges, and ensure that everyone can participate in the digital economy.

The same technology that makes our lives easier every day can also help solve some of the world’s largest problems. That’s why we’re applying advanced technology to some of our greatest challenges, like using artificial intelligence to help predict natural disasters. Everyone should be able to participate in the digital economy, so we’re providing digital skills training for job seekers, supporting online safety and media literacy, and investing in computer science education for students — particularly in underrepresented communities. We know that the best answers often come from those closest to the problem. That’s why

we join forces with nonprofit innovators, committing Google volunteers, technology, and over \$200 million in grants every year to help scale their impact.