



Irish technology at forefront of Obama's stimulus plans

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THE Obama administration is using internet advances developed by Irish researchers to promote his economic stimulus package across the US.

The advances have been made at NUI Galway's Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI) which is helping to develop the next generation of internet technology.

The Obama team is using some of the Galway work in its new 'recovery.gov' site to bring an unprecedented level of transparency to US government operations. The intention is that

citizens will be able to access data about everything from contracts and schedules to training and infrastructure costs.

Dr John Breslin, lecturer in electronic engineering at NUI Galway, said the possibilities afforded by the new technologies for government transparency were very exciting.

The Galway researchers focus on what's called the Semantic Web and are linking online community sites and internet-based discussions. Dr Breslin said: "Semantic technology allows the linking of government funding data, fed in from spreadsheets or forms, to contributions from the public,

private organisations or the Government themselves.

"This can be done not just within a single site but with external linked data from other public sources. You could imagine using this to discover the effect of how and where tax dollars and euros are being spent on statistics for crime, education or innovation in a set of geographic regions."

Since 2003, DERI has grown to over 120 members.

Its Semantically-Interlinked Online Communities (SIOC) project is already being used by a range of applications including Yahoo! SearchMonkey and Drupal.