

Shared battery technology may up demand for electric cars

The McGill Daily reports that Hydro-Québec, a Montreal-based, government-owned public utility that is responsible for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity across Quebec, and Technifin, a subsidiary of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), have agreed to share the intellectual property (IP) rights to their respective lithium-based technologies.



The agreement was reached, *The McGill Daily* reports, in an effort to encourage the commercialisation of their lithium titanate spinel oxide (LTO) technologies, which are of particular interest to rechargeable lithium-ion battery manufacturers for use in the emerging electric automotive industry.

It is not unusual for research entities such as Hydro-Québec and Technifin to enter into these types of IP rights sharing agreements, says Hydro-Québec spokesperson Patrice Lavoie, since a single device - especially in industries such as computer or telecom - can typically encompass thousands of patents. The Technifin patents cover the basic use in lithium-ion cells of the LTO technology invented in 1994 by Michael Thackeray while at CSIR. The Hydro-Québec patents cover the potential of LTO that was recognised in 1995 by Karim Zaghib at a Hydro-Québec research institute.

Pike Research, a Colorado-based clean technology market research firm, forecasts that the market for lithium-ion batteries for transportation will grow from US\$2 billion* annually in 2011 to more than US\$14.6 billion by 2017. According to Pike Research director John Gartner, LTO technology "is one of the technologies that will allow us to move forward. It's at the forefront because of the safety and life cycle. Is it a game changer? I don't know, [t]here are other technologies available," he said.

For more:

- [Hydro-Québec shares lithium licensing](#)

*Exchange rate at time of posting: US\$1=R8.04