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Bell Labs announces results of inquiry into research misconduct

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Independent committee concludes that one scientist published falsified and fabricated data; all other co-authors cleared of misconduct

MURRAY HILL, N.J. - Bell Labs announced today the findings of an independent committee it formed to investigate the validity of certain research reported by teams of Bell Labs and other scientists. In its report, the committee concludes that one member of these teams had engaged in scientific misconduct by falsifying and fabricating experimental data between 1998 and 2001. This scientist's employment with Lucent Technologies has been terminated. The committee cleared all the other researchers who had contributed to the experiments, and who were co-authors on several published papers, of any scientific misconduct.

Bell Labs proactively formed the committee in May after questions arose regarding the validity of data in several published papers authored by a total of 20 researchers from Bell Labs and other institutions. It named Malcolm Beasley, the Theodore and Sydney Rosenberg Professor of Applied Physics and former Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University, as chair and four other eminent scientists and engineers as members, and gave the group full freedom and authority to conduct an objective review of the challenged research, to determine the scope of the inquiry, to interview any Lucent employees, and to review lab records, reports of previous internal investigations and other documents.

Bell Labs asked the committee to follow standard federal guidelines for handling research integrity investigations, the same guidelines used by academic and government research organizations to deal with similar issues.

The experiments in question were in the areas of superconductivity, molecular crystals and molecular electronics, and were not related to any of Lucent's current commercial products.

"The evidence that manipulation and misrepresentation of data occurred is compelling," the committee wrote, linking all misconduct to one researcher, who committed falsification or fabrication of data on at least 16 occasions, some interrelated. According to the committee's report, the researcher "did this intentionally or recklessly and without the knowledge of any of his co-authors."

Bill O'Shea, president of Bell Labs, said, "We are deeply disappointed that a case of scientific misconduct has

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occurred at Bell Labs - the first in our 77-year history. Since Bell Labs' founding in 1925, tens of thousands of Bell Labs scientists and engineers have faithfully abided by the scientific honor code. That's an enviable track record, but we take this one exception very seriously.

"Last spring, when questions about the validity of this data arose, Bell Labs moved swiftly, voluntarily and decisively," added O'Shea. "In addition to requesting the committee's review, we immediately brought the matter to the attention of the scientific journals in which the work had originally been published."

Jeff Jaffe, president of research at Bell Labs, said, "We are grateful to Dr. Beasley and all of the members of his committee for their thorough and comprehensive review of this issue, and to all of the scientists who came forward with questions about these papers.

"An experience such as this heightens everyone's awareness of the importance of ensuring scientific research integrity. Integrity is at the foundation of scientific research and is one of Lucent's core values. We are reinforcing our policies and procedures for the publication of experimental results and encouraging more rigorous internal peer reviews. At the same time," added Jaffe, "we remain committed to maintaining the scientific freedom essential for discovery and innovation to flourish."

"We're determined that Bell Labs will emerge from this experience stronger and more resilient," said O'Shea. "The people of Bell Labs, some of today's best and brightest scientists and engineers, continue to do world-class, breakthrough work that builds on our proud heritage of innovation. And Lucent's commitment to basic research remains strong."

The committee's full report, including an executive summary, is available on the web at http://www.lucent.com/news_events/researchreview.html.

With over 10,000 employees in 16 countries, Bell Labs is the leading source of new communications technologies. Bell Labs has generated more than 28,000 patents since 1925 and has played a pivotal role in inventing or perfecting key communications technologies, including transistors, digital networking and signal processing, lasers and fiber-optic communications systems, communications satellites, cellular telephony, electronic switching of calls, touch-tone dialing, and modems. Bell Labs scientists have received six Nobel Prizes in Physics, nine U.S. Medals of Science and eight U.S. Medals of Technology. For more information about Bell Labs, visit its Web site at <http://www.bell-labs.com>.

Lucent Technologies, headquartered in Murray Hill, N.J., USA, designs and delivers networks for the world's largest communications service providers. Backed by Bell Labs research and development, Lucent relies on its strengths in mobility, optical, data and voice networking technologies as well as software and services to develop next-generation networks. The company's systems, services and software are designed to help customers quickly deploy and better manage their networks and create new, revenue-generating services that help

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