



Head of School of Computing Prof. Young Ju Choi, with Prof. Thomas Furness and Wanda Gregory, both from the University of Washington.

Picture: PHILLIP BIGGS

New media laboratory tipped to be world leader

By MICHAEL LOWE

A LABORATORY taking shape at the University of Tasmania's Launceston campus is tipped to become a world leader in new media technology.

Called a human interface technology laboratory, it will be part of the school of computing and offer courses this year.

Two visiting US academics spoke about the millions of dollars of sales originating from their American laboratory and university courses and said Launceston could be part of that success.

Professor Thomas Furness, from the Human Interface Technology Laboratory at the University of Washington in Seattle, gave a forum along with university games lecturer Wanda Gregory.

Ms Gregory, who has worked on major games such as X Box and World Of Warcraft, said the game and entertainment market was huge — a multi-billion-dollar indus-

try each year — and Launceston could be a part of that.

She said neither huge amounts of money nor lots of staff were needed, the vital ingredient for success in designing successful Internet-based games or games consoles was "a few very smart people".

She will return to teach a two-week course in December on fundamentals of interactive entertainment. Prof. Furness will teach a two-week course in January on virtual reality and advanced media technology.

Head of the computing school Young Ju Choi said the summer courses would be followed next year by longer courses in each semester, plus hiring staff and building the laboratory and starting research.

Prof. Choi said a \$600,000 "vision space studio" was being built at the Launceston school and he was negotiating for the \$1.5-\$2.5 million a year needed to expand this studio into a full-blown virtual reality laboratory.