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Performer, Composer, Computer Scientist and Author Jaron Lanier to Speak at LSU Aug. 26

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 20, 2013

BATON ROUGE – In the view of noted scientist, musician and author Jaron Lanier, the digital network technology that promised to bring great wealth and efficiency to the economy instead has whittled away at the middle class over the past decade. Rather than experiencing stronger financial health brought on by digital technology efficiencies, those efficiencies are concentrating wealth in a smaller group of individuals while reducing overall growth.

Lanier – who is credited with coining the term "virtual reality" – will discuss his views on what went wrong when he addresses these and other related topics during a visit to LSU on Monday, Aug. 26. His visit is sponsored by the LSU College of Music & Dramatic Arts and the LSU Center for Computation & Technology, or CCT.

In a free event open to the general public, Lanier will speak as part of the College of Music & Dramatic Arts' Guest Artist Lecture Series. The lecture will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Claude L. Shaver Theatre, located in the Music & Dramatic Arts Building at the corner of Dalrymple Drive and Infirmary Road. Following his presentation, Lanier will sign copies of his latest book, "Who Owns the Future?" in the lobby of the Music & Dramatic Arts Building.

Prior to the lecture event, LSU students, faculty and staff, as well as the media are invited to a question-and-answer session with Lanier from 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in the first-floor auditorium of the Louisiana Digital Media Center. The brand-new facility, which houses LSU CCT and EA Sports, is located at the intersection of East Parker Road and South Stadium Drive.

Background information:

Lanier, a preeminent thinker, computer scientist, composer and artist, presents paths to getting the economy back on track in his latest book. Arguing that the information economy – which he deems is falsely construed – ruins markets, Lanier reminds readers that markets should reward more people, reflecting new wealth and capabilities, as occurred in previous technological revolutions.

Lanier considers the ways network technologies are concentrating wealth while reducing overall growth, threatening the middle class, and therefore democracy. As more industries are transformed by digital technologies, huge waves of fresh yet permanent unemployment are likely to result, a trend already seen in many creative industries.

Without such reward, the middle class, the basis of democracy, is threatened, and with it the future of human dignity lies in the balance, Lanier argues.

In order to avoid the collapse of the middle class, Lanier advocates revolutionary concepts such as monetizing data that is currently shared cost-free by users, an idea he argues just might save the economy.

In "Who Owns the Future?" Lanier shows the deep links between democracy and capitalism, and offers humanity new paths for the future.

A Renaissance man for the 21st century, Lanier also is author of the highly acclaimed book, "You Are Not a Gadget." His writings explore topics ranging from high-tech business and the social impact of technology, to the philosophy of consciousness and information, Internet politics, and the future of humanism. Named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2010, Lanier also was named one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world by Prospect and Foreign Policy magazines, and one of history's 300 greatest inventors in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Other sponsors for Lanier's appearance at LSU include the Janice H. Pellar Creative Arts Entrepreneurship Project at the College of Music & Dramatic Arts, an innovative approach to teaching skills performing arts students how to transfer their creative skills such as multi-tasking, attention to detail and collaboration into the workforce; and the LSU Performing Arts Series, funded by a special student fee to help underwrite the costs of bringing world-class performances to the LSU campus and community.

The LSU Center for Computation & Technology is an interdisciplinary, innovative research center that advances the University's Flagship Agenda and promotes economic development for Louisiana. It uses advanced cyber infrastructure, high-speed networks, high-performance computing, data storage and analysis, as well as hardware and software development to enable research in many different fields. By uniting researchers from diverse disciplines, ideas and expertise are disseminated across LSU departments to foster knowledge and invention. For more information, visit https://www.cct.lsu.edu.

To learn more about Lanier's presentation, as well as other upcoming events at the LSU College of Music & Dramatic Arts, visit http://music.lsu.edu.

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