

# Interac® U-Innovate Challenge



Imagine the future  
of payments with  
Agentic Commerce

\$16,000  
IN PRIZES!



## U-Innovate Challenge Student Information Webinar

Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 11:00AM EST



# Introduction To The Team



# Agenda for today



## 01 Introduction

## 02 Interac Corp 101

Introduction  
About Interac

## 03 U-Innovate Challenge

Challenge Statement  
Key Dates  
Judging  
Eligibility  
Prizes

## 04 Agentic AI

Trends & Agentic AI 101  
How it applies to Payments

## 05 Q&A and Closing

Thank you



# Introduction

## About Interac Corp.

Our vision is to lead Canadians to digital prosperity.

For over 40 years, Interac has been at the forefront of payment innovation in Canada.

This challenge invites Canadian university students to explore how **agentic AI** could reshape the future of payments, making them smarter, more seamless, and more supportive of everyday life.

It's about creative problem-solving, emerging technology, and imagining what payments could become.



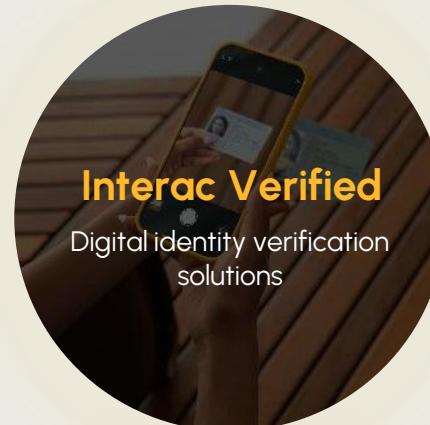
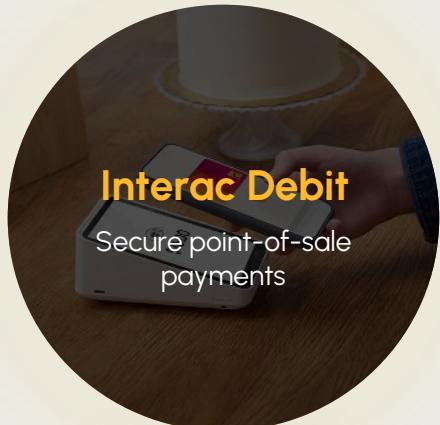
As the leading national technology industry association, TECHNATION proudly represents the Canadian technology companies that are furthering our nation and the world into the future through innovation, creativity and ingenuity. Our mission is to set Canadian businesses apart in a global market while connecting prospective workers, industry leaders and government officials from coast to coast.

TECHNATION's Career Ready Program is a national wage-subsidy initiative funded by the Government of Canada's Student Work Placement Program.



# About Interac®

Interac empowers Canadians to transact digitally with confidence by providing payment and value exchange services rooted in security, reliability, and efficiency. We play an important role in the Canadian payment's ecosystem, connecting our participants to their customers across Canada.



**Hint:**  
We want to see that YOU know about our products and services. Make sure you've done your homework and checked out [interac.ca](http://interac.ca) and [konek.ca](http://konek.ca)

# Canada's **trusted** payment partner

Providing secure, reliable payment and value exchange services, with security is at the heart of everything we do.

We offer safe and secure payment choices to Canadian consumers when transacting.



## Financial institutions

Partnering to modernize payments and deliver secure, innovative solutions.



## Businesses

Helping businesses boost efficiency, cut costs, and reduce fraud.



## Government

Enabling digital services through secure payments and verification.



## Consumers

Empowering Canadians to spend, send, and receive money with confidence.



# What is the challenge statement?



**How might we design a future where  
Agentic AI enables payments that feel  
effortless, trustworthy, and empowering?**

## Optional Prompts:

- What new forms of commerce could emerge if Agentic AI could autonomously negotiate, budget, and transact on our behalf?
- In what way might Agentic AI change the way we experience group payments (like splitting bills, subscriptions, or shared expenses)?
- What new experiences could emerge if Agentic AI personalized payments based on our values, goals, and lifestyle choices?

# What are the key dates?



# How does it work?

## PHASE 1: Registration and Online Submission

November 28, 2025 – January 18, 2026

Teams of 2 - 4 post-secondary students will build and develop their concept.

**5-minute video presentation** demonstrating:

- The solution,
- Technology behind it,
- Market it is serving.



*All submissions (English or French) should be uploaded to the platform by 11:59 PM (ET) on January 18, 2026.*

## PHASE 2: The Final Pitch (In-person)

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 from 11:30am – 4:00pm  
Design Exchange in Toronto, Ontario

**Finalist Teams** refine their solution and prepare:

- **10-minute Live Presentation.**
- **5-minute Question Period from the Judging Panel.**



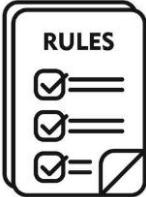
*All finalist team members must be available to present at the Final Pitch event.*

# How will the judges score me?

Submissions will be judged in both Round 1 and 2 of the Challenge by a panel of judges ("Judging Panel") based on the following criteria:

Judging Criteria	Description	Weight (%)	Rating Scale
<b>Problem Framing &amp; Narrative</b>	Clarity and relevance of the problem definition; storytelling and context provided.	15	1-10
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	How well the solution aligns with Interac's vision, mission and/or challenge goals and priorities.	10	1-10
<b>Technical Understanding &amp; Execution</b>	Practicality and technical soundness of the solution; clear understanding and realistic execution.	15	1-10
<b>Implementation &amp; Financial Analysis</b>	Depth of implementation plan steps and accuracy of financial planning, budgeting, and cost-benefit analysis	10	1-10
<b>Innovation &amp; Creativity</b>	Originality and inventiveness of the idea; does it challenge norms or offer a fresh perspective?	15	1-10
<b>Impact &amp; Value</b>	Potential for short-term and long-term impact; value to stakeholders or society.	15	1-10
<b>Presentation, Group Participation &amp; Clarity</b>	Effectiveness of communication from all group members, visuals, and overall presentation delivery.	10	1-10
<b>Quality of Research</b>	Competitive analysis, use of credible sources, data, and evidence to support the solution and problem framing.	10	1-10

The Judging Panel's decisions are final and binding without right of appeal.



# What are the rules?

- Must be a current post-secondary student enrolled at a Canadian post-secondary institution (undergraduate, graduate or Ph.D.) and have reached the legal age of majority in their province or territory of residence.
- Teams must be 2-4 people.
- All team members must be currently enrolled in a post-secondary school.
- Individuals should be able to physically work in Canada if offered an internship opportunity.
- Teams must present an original idea not used in previous pitch events, school projects, grant proposals.

Note: documentation of all the above is required to process any prize (including ID and bank information for direct deposit).



# What are the Prizes & Opportunities?

## Cash prizes



### Prize Amounts

- **1st Place:** \$2,000 per person
- **2nd Place:** \$1,250 per person
- **3rd Place:** \$750 per person

## Internship Interviews



### Previous Internship Teams:

- Innovation
- Human Resources
- Technology
- Marketing
- Strategy

## Networking



### Meeting with:

- Interac Executives and Employees
- TECHNATION Executives



# What is Agentic AI?

AI systems that act autonomously with decision-making capabilities aligned to user goals and values.

Difference from traditional AI: Agentic represents a group of Domain Specialized and Goal-Driven AI Agents working together moving beyond reactive systems to proactive

## Autonomous Decision-Making



Acts independently to achieve user-defined goals without constant human input.

## Goal-Oriented Behavior



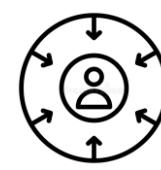
Proactively plans & executes actions aligned with user objectives.

## Context Awareness



Understands environment, adapts to changing conditions, and decides based on real-time data.

## Personalization



Tailors actions to individual values, lifestyle, and priorities

## Negotiation & Collaboration



Interact with other AI agents or systems to negotiate deals and optimize outcomes.

## Why is this relevant for payments?

- Payments are becoming increasingly digital and integrated into everyday life.
- Agentic AI can transform payments from a transactional process into a seamless, personalized experience.

# 💪 Superpower of Agentic Commerce

Agentic AI is about specialized agents that can discover options, match them to preferences, and act —> which means any process where humans search, compare, and decide is a place to invent.



## Super Agentic Bot



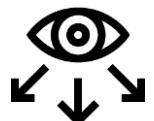
### Living Pattern Intelligence

Understands habits, context, patterns



### Reasons and Acts

Understand data, reasons, take decisions and acts



### Market Vision

Sees the entire market at once



### Economic Orchestration

Pays automatically on your behalf, but only inside rules you control

## Example of some daily habits...

### Parking

**Finding:** I look for parking, but I don't know which lots is cheaper, available, or appropriate for how long I'll stay.

**Paying:** When parked, I pull out my phone, open an app, and pay for parking even though my phone already knows my location, my habits, and that I just parked.

### Eating

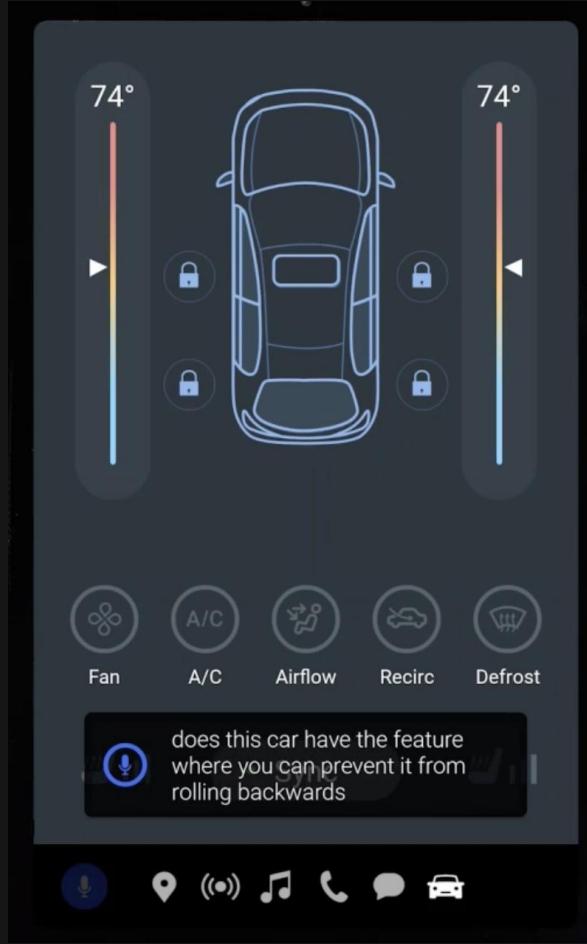
**Picking up:** I queue, scan, and pay for food or coffee every day even though my routine and budget rarely change.

**Food delivery:** I open multiple apps, compare prices and fees, or default to delivery — even though my phone knows the time, my habits, my budget, and potentially what food I already have.

# Agentic Commerce

## SoundHound AI

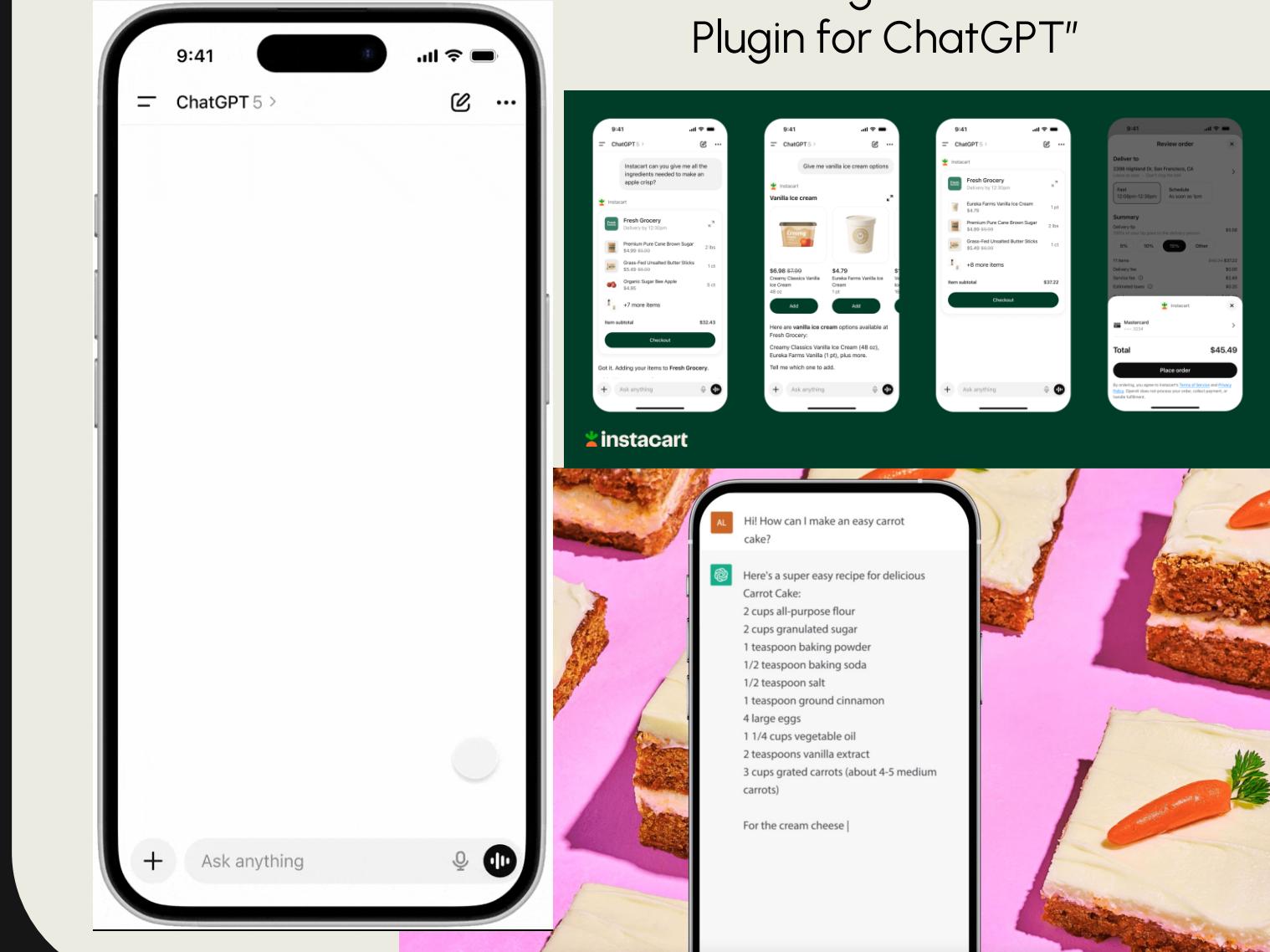
"Unveils Agentic Voice Commerce for Vehicles and TVs"



# in the World

## Instacart

"Introducing the Instacart Plugin for ChatGPT"

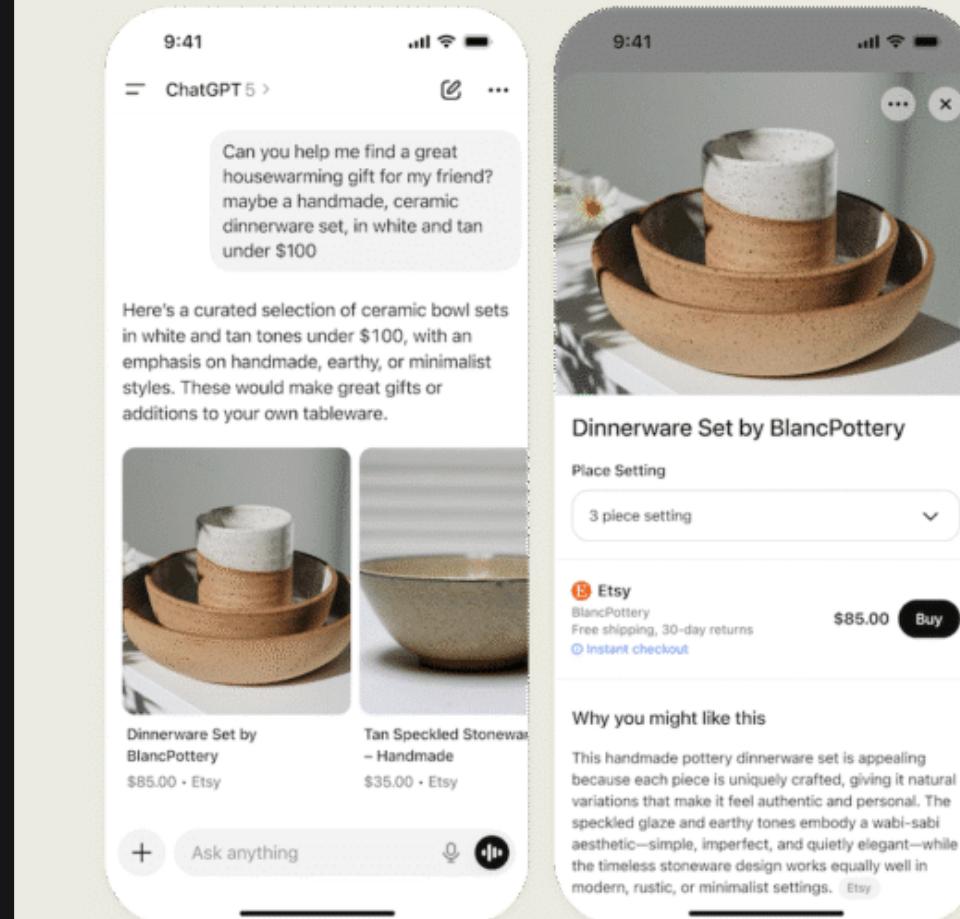


# Agentic Commerce

**"Mastercard unveils Agent Pay, pioneering agentic payments technology to power commerce in the age of AI"**



# in the World



OpenAI

**"Buy it in ChatGPT:**

**Instant Checkout and the Agentic Commerce Protocol"**



# Effortless Payments

Agentic AI can automate routine financial tasks, making payments seamless and invisible. It acts proactively to manage subscriptions, split bills, and handle recurring expenses without user intervention.

## Why It Matters

- Consumers face increasing complexity in managing multiple payment streams (i.e., subscriptions and bills).
- Reducing friction improves user experience and financial well-being.

### Benefits

#### **Reduced cognitive load**



- No need to remember due dates or manually split costs.



#### **Time savings**

- Transactions happen in the background.



#### **Convenience**

- Payments integrated into daily life.

### Risks

#### **Over-reliance on automation**



- Users may lose awareness of spending habits.



#### **Errors in execution**

- Incorrect splitting or subscription cancellations.



#### **Security vulnerabilities**

- Automated systems could be exploited.



# Trustworthy Payments

Agentic AI must build trust by ensuring transparency, security, and ethical decision-making in autonomous financial actions.

## Why It Matters

- Trust is foundational for adoption of AI-driven financial systems.
- Users need confidence that AI acts in their best interest.

### Benefits

#### **Fraud prevention**

 AI can detect anomalies faster than humans.

#### **Transparency**

 Clear explanations of decisions build user confidence.

#### **Reliability**

 Consistent adherence to user-defined rules.

### Risks

#### **Data privacy concerns**

 Sensitive financial data could be misused.

#### **Algorithmic bias**

 AI might favor certain merchants or financial products.

#### **Regulatory compliance**

 Autonomous decisions must meet legal standards.



# Empowering Payments

Agentic AI can personalize payment experiences based on user values, goals, and lifestyle—aligning financial decisions with what matters most to individuals

## Why It Matters

- Financial decisions are deeply personal; personalization enhances relevance and satisfaction.
- Empowerment fosters trust and engagement.

### Benefits

#### **Goal alignment**

 Spending supports sustainability, health, or savings goals.



#### **Financial literacy**

AI provides insights and recommendations.



#### **Control**

Users can set autonomy levels for AI actions.

### Risks

#### **Over-personalization**

 Could lead to reduced choice in spending habits.



#### **Ethical dilemmas**

AI prioritizing certain values over others.



#### **Complexity**

Balancing personalization with simplicity.



# Questions & Answers

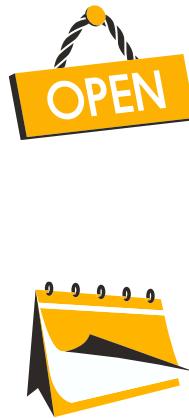


**Time for your questions**

If you have other questions, please use the Q&A tool on the challenge website.



# What is next?



**Form your team and start ideating today.**

**Submit your ideas  
Deadline: Sunday, January 18, 11:59 PM ET**

# Thank You

