TELSTRA UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE 2015: CONNECTED WORLD

Make your mark in Australia’s history of innovation

From the notepad to the Next G® ecosystem, Australia and Telstra both have a proud history of creativity and innovation. Now, the annual Telstra University Challenge invites today’s university students to lead the next generation of Australian innovators.

TAKE UP THE TELSTRA UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

This 14 week competition encourages multi-disciplinary teams to create innovative and commercially viable ideas that show how the latest technology can be transformed to benefit Australian consumers or businesses in the following categories:

• Wearable devices
• Smart Cities, including Emergency Services
• Transport & Logistics
• Industrial e.g. mining, agriculture
• Retail e.g. small business

WHO CAN ENTER?

The competition is open to undergraduate students across all faculties and year levels, with eligible participants often being considered for the Telstra Graduate Program.

Applications Open: Monday 16th February 2015
Applications Close: Friday 17th April 2015
Challenge Commences: Monday 20th April 2015

Your idea could lead to much bigger things

Finalists will pitch their innovation to an expert judging panel, and be in the running to win:

A substantial financial grant for their University
A fast track to the top 50 interviews for entry into the muru-D boot camp program
Consultancy services
A 4G mobile device for each team member

For more details, including applicable terms and conditions, visit telstra.com/universitychallenge
LEARN FROM THE CHALLENGERS OF 2014

The 2014 Telstra University Challenge focused on Machine-to-Machine (M2M) solutions – one of the fastest growing areas of telecommunications. This field covers the technologies that allow almost any ‘thing’ to communicate meaningful information such as location, measurements and events to a monitoring system.

The winners were a Monash University team, with an innovation called OnTrack – an app that uses location and weight sensing devices to let commuters view up-to-date information about their train service, including the location of the next train and how full each carriage is.

Following the announcement of their success, we met with the team to gain some insights into their success.

What criteria did you consider when choosing a solution to pursue?
First, we brainstormed our own personal issues, challenges and ideas. Then we posed questions such as “Would it be ‘sellable’?”, “Is there a market for this?”, etc. By doing this, we reduced our pool of ideas down to just three.

What research did you conduct before settling on your final direction?
We had informal chats with our friends and families, then we surveyed university students and commuters. We also spoke with academics in relevant fields of expertise. Finally we met with Metro, who became our client.

What are some of the ideas you considered but rejected?
We considered and rejected quite a number of other potential solution areas, including:
- A ‘black box’ for cars, but a similar solution was a finalist in the 2013 challenge.
- A traffic management solution, but Vic Roads had an existing solution in plan.
- Structural failure management, looking at ways to measure the structural integrity of beams.
- A diagnostic machine, as a medical solution.

What challenges did you have to overcome when building your solution?
The main challenges we faced were technical issues. We had to learn concepts that were not yet taught at university. Other key challenges were defining the team and our respective roles within it, and conducting research for our product and solution.

What benefits have you and the university gained from your participation?
The key benefits were obtaining an understanding of how projects like this are conducted, and the development of working relationships. Other benefits included working with other faculties, in particular the Design Faculty; working in a team to deliver a tangible product; and learning how to manage expectations.

What is next for OnTrack?
Will you try and take the product to market?
Meeting with muru-D is a very exciting opportunity, which we’re looking forward to. We are also interested in broadening our customer base to interstate clients and other countries.