

IIT Students Win at Missouri-Illinois Regional Idea to Product (I2P) Competition

by Solomon David, Xiao-Xuan Hu, Renen Manuntag

This semester, three teams of undergraduate IIT students were selected by Saint Louis University to compete in the regional level of the 2008 Idea to Product (I2P) competition. I2P is an international competition; each year, hundreds of student teams submit unique product ideas in hopes of winning the global competition's \$25,000 top prize. Six of the top ten entrants in the Fall 2007 IEA Idea Challenge were entered into this year's regional competition. Three teams were picked to compete:

BFF<3, Avelo Roy and Edward Suda

GlucoCheck, Solomon David, Xiao-Xuan Hu, Renen Manutang, Alok Patel

Scramble, Adam Berg

BFF<3 proposed a wireless communication device for “tween” girls. GlucoCheck offered a continuous glucose monitoring system specifically adapted for hospital ICUs. Scramble was a novel photo sharing system that simplified photo sharing for special events. On March 6th, the members of each team traveled to Saint Louis to present their ideas at the John Cook School of Business at Saint Louis University. The teams were accompanied by Dr. David Pistrui, Director of Entrepreneurship and Coleman Foundation Chair in Entrepreneurship, Dr. David Gatchell, Assistant Professor, Biomedical Engineering, and Mr. Zach Hench.

A total of 25 teams, from schools including Saint Louis University, Washington University, and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, competed in the semi-finals. For this round, the 25 teams were submitted into five tracks: Green Tech, Health Care, IT, BioMed, and Digital Media. Each team had to give a ten minute presentation about their idea to a group of several judges. There was then a twenty minute question and answer session with the judges.

The top-ranked team from each track moved on to the finals, which were held very early on Saturday morning. As before, each team had to give a ten minute presentation, followed by twenty minutes of Q&A – this time with a panel of fifteen judges. Although both Scramble and GlucoCheck did very well in their respective tracks, each earning \$250 and plenty of valuable feedback from the judges, only BFF<3 advanced to the final round.

After delivering a spectacular presentation, entertaining and engaging the judges and the audience, BFF<3 won first place in the Missouri-Illinois Regional Idea to Product Competition! For their efforts, Mr. Roy and Mr. Suda earned \$2500 for their team. Their idea has also been submitted for review by the global competition review board. Should their idea be accepted, they will be invited to the I2P Global Competition, which will be held this November in Austin, Texas.

Overall, the experience was valuable for all teams, helping them gain real world exposure to technological innovation, market awareness, and entrepreneurship. GlucoCheck member Renen Manuntag said, “This was a great experience that pushed me out of my Biomedical Engineering comfort zone by testing my knowledge in not only device implementation but also in feasibility and marketability”.

All three teams would like thank Dr. Pistrucci, Dr. Gatchell, and Mr. Hench for their invaluable advice and support!