

IMPERIAL COLLEGE GEARS UP FOR A SECOND PDD DESIGN CHALLENGE

- Sponsorship opportunity presented for fast moving business –

- Design and innovation consultancy, PDD, and Imperial College London nurture the designers of the future –

PDD Press Release

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Mechanical engineering students at London University's Imperial College of Science and Engineering are to be given a taste of real world design and innovation and the chance to win a cash prize. Third & fourth year mechanical engineering undergraduates at Imperial will have the opportunity to develop creative design projects with London-based design and innovation consultancy, PDD. For the second year running the consultancy will mount an 11-week competition, which will run as part of the Design, Art and Creativity course programme, led by Annick Collins, Design, Art and Creativity Course Leader, at Imperial College. PDD will develop and manage the competition for Imperial and are seeking a supporting sponsor for the programme.

PDD, a worldwide provider of integrated design and innovation skills, has worked on projects with many prestigious clients including AT&T, BEKO, Bristol Myers Squibb, Electrolux and LG and first set 'The PDD Challenge' for Mechanical Engineering students in January 2008.

The first competition set a brief to create conceptual sketches of an intelligent clothing product that would encourage children to get involved in physical activity and participate with their peer group. In Autumn 2008 Imperial's second PDD Challenge will begin following on from the success of the previous competition with a new programme based upon a sponsor's choice of brief. January 2008's winning team, made up of Phil Richardson, Susan Golton and Faraby Farid, created 'SnapTag' – an electronic version of the playground game 'Tag': where players must put a 'snap' bracelet mechanism onto another child's arm before the timer is up, or they are out.

The team identified their market to be 8-10 year olds and started the project by conducting research in a local London primary school. The results of the survey led the group to develop the concept for SnapTag.

Collins explains, "As part of their design the students also included a Light Emitting Diode on the strap. It was felt that this could lead to many possibilities, such as the technology being developed further for additional purposes such as a safety armband to increase visibility when walking home in the dark."

Halfway through the programme the student teams were mentored by PDD's designers to see how the groups were progressing. Collins explains, "There were eight groups who all worked to the same brief. The students were able to share their ideas and progress with an experienced designer."

As the entries were considered to be of such a high standard last year, a highly commended second place was awarded to Elizabeth Hyde, Nasir Ilyas, Virgil Scott and Mehdi Yasaee. These four students formed a group to develop a product called 'Splash Suit'. Their design encouraged children to play outdoors with their peers. Splash Suit's design is based around the traditional water fight and the group added a new fun element to the game, as when water touches the suit the colour of the fabric changes. The technology behind the design was inspired by existing products in the market such as Aquadraw.

At the end of the course, the students presented their finished ideas to four judges, including Graham Lacy from PDD in a 'Dragon's Den' style judging panel. All the work was then exhibited at the Imperial College Mechanical Engineering Building in London. Virgil Scott, a member of the Splash Suit team comments, "The whole PDD competition was a great experience and during the presentation, it was a privilege to have such an esteemed audience."

The PDD Challenge will begin again in October 2008 and PDD are currently on the lookout for sponsors to support this Innovation Challenge. Collins says, "The competition is a great way for the students to learn new skills and presents PDD with the opportunity to support future design and engineering talent."

Collins concludes, "For the Fall 2008 Competition we hope to attract a sponsor who is interested in building relationships with Imperial, our students and PDD. This challenge poses the perfect opportunity for them to suggest a brief for us to work to. The combination of PDD's expertise and bright young engineers could produce some extraordinary results!"

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About PDD Group

Founded in 1980, and based in Hammersmith, West London, PDD provides integrated design and innovation skills and works with organisations worldwide to develop novel products, services and business processes that drive revenues and create competitive advantage.

PDD supports markets that are undergoing rapid change, for example, those affected by the shift from mature to emerging markets, rapid technological change, climate & environmental issues and demographic changes.

PDD is an award winning consultancy collecting eight awards in the last 12 months, and is certified to BSI 13485 medical quality assurance certification and quality assured to ISO 9001.

PDD has worked with over 200 clients in the last three to four years and today has approximately 30 active projects. Top customers in 24 countries include Orange, Reckitt Benkiser, LG, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Nestle, Gillette, Belron, Ford, Vocollect, Samsung and Merck Serono.

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