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Roborugby challenge stimulates interest in Engineering

UCD Engineering students' intellectual and technical skills were recently put to the test, as robotic rugby players specially designed by the students, battled it out for the Siemens Roborugby championship title.

The Siemens Roborugby competition was started to increase the appeal of engineering and computer science by making it interesting and fun, while also developing the students' lateral thinking and ingenuity skills.

While debate continues about the lack of interest in engineering, first-year Engineering and Computer Science students devoted thousands of hours to designing, building and programming miniature robots to compete in the Siemens 'RoboRugby' final.

Playing to a packed auditorium with an electric atmosphere, the Sir Winalot robot created by first year students Con Murphy, Shane Power and John Kirby powered its way to victory, to secure the winning title.

In Siemens RoboRugby, each team starts with a standard set of parts, which means the winning design is entirely the result of the creativity, ingenuity and problem-solving skills of the team. The robots have to score points by moving balls into scoring areas on a 2.4m playing table, while also trying to prevent the opposing team from scoring.

This robotics design project is an elective module for students across most of the Engineering degree programmes in UCD.

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According to Brian Mulkeen, UCD School of Electrical, Electronic & Mechanical Engineering, “Design and problem-solving are an important part of an Engineering education. The best way to develop these skills is by solving problems and designing things! The RoboRugby project provides an interesting and enjoyable challenge, yet there is plenty of scope for innovation and creative thinking. The competition and prizes provide an extra incentive, so we are really grateful to Siemens Limited for their generous sponsorship.”

Commenting on the sponsorship, Dr. Werner Kruckow, CEO, Siemens Ireland, said “The Siemens RoboRugby competition is an interesting and enjoyable event to be a part of and with growing concern over the shortage of Engineering graduates, Siemens is delighted to support a project that promotes an interest in engineering. As a company that represents innovation, Siemens is also pleased to help provide a platform for students to practise and expand their skills.”

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