

# Students test their skills at Avnet Tech Games

By Peter Corbett, The Republic | [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com) 12:52 p.m. MST April 14, 2014



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Desktop Domination, Java Blitz and a Solar Scrimmage.

Just what was going on with nearly 200 Arizona college students Saturday at the University of Advancing Technology in Tempe?

This was not the revenge of the nerds. It was the ninth annual Avnet Tech Games, testing the technological prowess and problem-solving skills of some of the state's brightest and most tech-savvy young people. Each winner is awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

The competition included racing to build and troubleshoot a computer, and assembling and programming a robot to maneuver through an obstacle course.

In the Solar Scrimmage, students worked to create and test the best solar-powered water pump.

Java Blitz challenged the competitors to develop an application using Java 7 Standard Edition, a common software-development language.

Desktop Domination was a new game this year involving troubleshooting issues in the Windows 7 operating system, said Joal Redmond, vice president of communications for Phoenix-based Avnet Inc.

"We make it as real-life of an experience as possible," Redmond said. "They need to solve the (technical) problem but just as importantly demonstrate good customer service."

Communication skills are vital in the industry, and the Tech Games give students a chance to "speed network" with tech-industry executives, including Avnet CEO Rick Hamada, to prepare them for job interviews, she said.

T.J. Wey, a 2010 Tech Games winner, learned those lessons during four years of competing in the daylong events and in her curriculum at Arizona State University.

"In my major, we were taught in one of my classes that we need to bridge the gap between people and the technology," she said.

Wey, 23, graduated last May from ASU's W.P. Carey School of Business with an information-systems degree.

There was a big emphasis at ASU on group projects and learning to work with variety of people at different skill and interest levels, she said.

"Teamwork is a reality in the workplace, unless you're an entrepreneur," Wey added.

And it's a big part of her current job. Wey started an internship at Avnet in August 2012 and is now a project manager in the company's IT program management.

She is also a consultant for the Avnet Tech Games.

At times, Wey said she was the only female member of her Tech Games teams but she felt welcome and supported by her teammates.

This year, the Tech Games had their first all-female team from the University of Advancing Technology competing in the HP Build the Fastest Computer contest.

A team from Southern Methodist University won the JDA Supply Chain Challenge, a virtual contest that was judged earlier.

Avnet, a leading distributor of electronic components and Arizona's largest employer, has awarded \$260,000 in scholarships and honorariums to students and teachers participating in the competition.

Reach the reporter at [peter.corbett@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:peter.corbett@arizonarepublic.com). Follow him on Twitter @PeterCorbett1.

A full list of winners from Saturday's competition follows:

### **Android App Challenge**

Brian Geesey from ITT Technical Institute

### **Green Video Competition**

Dustin Allen from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Kendra Charnick from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Joel Parker from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Brian Weeks from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Faculty coach: Eli Chmouni from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

### **Desktop Domination**

William Hartman from University of Advancing Technology

Kelly Stahlberg from University of Advancing Technology

### **Cisco Networking Expert Battle**

Huy Mai from South Mountain Community College

Justin Woys from South Mountain Community College

Faculty Coach: Tom Polliard from South Mountain Community College

### **Digital Design Dilemma**

Michelle Smekal from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Niccolo Horvath from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Neel Mistry from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Faculty Coach: Bassam Matar from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

### **EMC Green Data Center Challenge**

Haylee Hilgers from Arizona State University

Jason Hyacinthe from Arizona State University

### **Java Blitz**

Larry Standage from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Samuel Slater from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Zachary Peshke from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

Faculty Coach: Rameen Kaliqu from Chandler-Gilbert Community College

### **Robot Race Obstacle Course**

Federico Ortega from Mesa Community College

Richard Dale from Mesa Community College

Spencer Hall from Mesa Community College

Faculty Coach: Bruce Carlton from Mesa Community College

### **Solar Scrimmage**

Drew Carlson from Mesa Community College

Jennifer Hooker from Mesa Community College

Justin Arispe from Mesa Community College

Faculty Coach: Bruce Carlton from Mesa Community College

### **HP Build the Fastest Computer**

Jeremy Morgan from Chandler – Gilbert Community College

Blake Knoll from Chandler – Gilbert Community College

Troy Gerloff from Chandler – Gilbert Community College

Faculty Coach: Eli Chmouni from Chandler – Gilbert Community College

### **The JDA Supply Chain Challenge**

*Note: Virtual Game*

Matt Mulholland from Southern Methodist University

Tushar Solanki from Southern Methodist University

Aaron Barnard from Southern Methodist University

Meredith Titus from Southern Methodist University

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