

Computer contest hopes to inspire young animators

Computer scientists from The University of Manchester have launched an animation competition to inspire the next generation of computer experts.

Staff at the School of Computer Science came up with the idea for the **UK Schools Computer Animation Competition** in 2008, to mark the 60th anniversary of the world's first stored program computer, designed and built in Manchester in 1948.

And now in 2010 the competition – **Animation10** – enters its third year, with its goal to encourage a greater interest in computing amongst young people.

Youngsters aged between seven and 19 are being challenged to create an animated film, of one minute or less, using any of the Alice, Scratch Adobe Flash, Greenfoot or Serif software packages.

Over 800 schools across the country registered to take part in the 2009 competition, and even bigger numbers are expected this year.

Competition winners stand to scoop prizes including laptops, digital cameras and MP3 players – and will have their films showcased at a high profile animation festival in July at The Lowry in Salford.

Organisers hope that that the competition will give young people a chance to explore computer animation for the first time.

Dr Toby Howard from the School of Computer Science, said: "The animations might tell a story, or explain or demonstrate a topic or idea. All we ask is that the animations must be inspired in some way by the National Curriculum - but the only limits are students' imaginations.

"Since the launch of the first stored program computer at the University of Manchester over 60 years ago, computing has progressed at an incredible speed.

"That progress is continuing to accelerate and it is certain computing will change the world even further over the next sixty years.

"We need to encourage the brightest and the best of the young generation to engage in the challenges facing computing – not just to use computers, but to invent the next generation of hardware and software.

"And we hope this competition will go some way to raising the profile of computer science amongst children in a fun and exciting way."

Entries, which must be received by Thursday 1 April 2010, can be submitted by individuals or teams in four age categories: aged 7-11, 11-14, 14-16 and 16-19.

They will each be reviewed by a panel of judges. And the winners will be announced on Monday 3 May 2010.

Animation10 is supported by Google and Electronic Arts, and is being run in association with BBC 21st Century Classroom.

For full details visit www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/Animation10

Notes to editors

Full details of the competition, and movies and images from last year's Animation09 prize winners, visit www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/Animation10.

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