

element14 Kicks off “The Great Global Hackerspace Challenge”

Dedicated to supporting the ongoing collaboration and exchange of knowledge driving today’s design innovation, element14 today announced “The Great Hackerspace Challenge,” a competition inviting 30 hackerspace teams to conceptualize and build a project to help advance technology in education. Hackerspaces, community-operated physical locations where people with common technology-related interests meet to share resources and knowledge, number more than 500 across the globe and are oftentimes the origin for technology breakthroughs that have had a profound impact on today’s society.

“Individuals who comprise hackerspaces are some of the most creative and influential members of the engineering community,” said Alisha Mowbray, senior vice president of marketing, element14. “element14’s sponsorship and organization of this competition provides a platform for these like-minded individuals to inspire one another and achieve even greater, awe-inspiring technological breakthroughs, which hopefully will encourage more people to get involved in similar projects.”

The hackerspaces participating in element14’s challenge were selected through an open, global invitation by Mitch Altman, one of the key driving forces behind the hackerspace movement and host of the event. Invitations were sent to the Americas, Europe and Asia and the 30 selected teams earned their spot in the challenge by demonstrating passion, skill and an engagement with the cause through their conceptual submissions. Each team has \$900 and two months to design, prototype and build a project that serves as a useful tool in a classroom setting. The only requirement in the build is that each team must utilize two special components – a microcontroller and a portable power source.

In an effort to support collaboration throughout the competition, each hackerspace team will have a dedicated element14 community profile at www.element14.com/hackerspace, providing team background information, its philosophy, and ongoing updates on the status of the project relating to the competition. Fellow peers and electronics enthusiasts are encouraged to follow the progress of each team and discuss the projects on the community.

Three semi-finalists will be chosen to advance to the final stage of the competition culminating at Maker Faire Bay Area in May by a team of electronics industry heavyweights, including industry expert Altman, modder extraordinaire Ben Heck, and other authorities. In the “everyone wins” spirit of the competition, all 30 participating teams will walk away with prizes aimed at helping each hackerspace continue educating and inspiring people in their communities to get involved in electronics, including a collection of soldering station kits and products, courtesy of Agilent, ATG, Fluke, OKI, Techspray, and Tektronix. The winning team will receive an oscilloscope from Tektronix worth \$5,600 for their hackerspace.

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

“The world sorely needs us to help with teaching and sharing and learning so everyone has the opportunity to learn what they want to learn and live the life they want to live,” said Altman, famed hacker and inventor. “And that's what we're doing here, in creating this friendly competition, so we can all support each other in creating something cool to help with education.”

Source URL (retrieved on 04/02/2015 - 12:31am):

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