Students use smartphone technology to make driverless car more of reality (w/ Video)

July 10 2013

Griffith University students are using smartphone technology to make the driverless car of the future more of a reality. A team of Information and Communications Technology students from the Gold Coast campus has won an award for designing a Smartphone Driven Automated Vehicle at the 2013 Queensland iAwards in Brisbane.

The iAwards is Australia's premier technology awards program, aimed at recognising the contribution of information and communications technology.

It also acknowledges the impact which the development and application of innovative technologies have here in Australia and globally.

The team received the Undergraduate tertiary student prize for their projects, which they have been developing at Griffith's Robotics Lab under the supervision of Dr Jun Jo.

The winning team included Tommi Sullivan from the Bachelor of Information Tech (Honours), Michael Lennon from the Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering and Yukito Tsunoda from the Bachelor of Information Technology (Advanced Honours) in Computing and Intelligent Systems.

Tommi Sullivan was excited at the news that they had won the Queensland iAward and grateful for the support of the Queensland Government which is providing financial assistance to winning teams to

go on to the National iAwards.

Tommi believed that the project's uniqueness was the key to their winning.

"We think they chose our project for the unique idea of utilising Smartphone technology to guide and steer the car," said Tommi.

"A normal unmanned vehicle would usually use a camera or a different sensor or a Ladar on the top, but the uniqueness in this car is that most of the sensors are used from the mobile phone."

Michael Lennon, said the team created a small prototype model of the autonomous car and designed some of its components using a 3D printer technology. He also admitted they already had plans for the prize money.

"Winning the iAward is great as a reward for the time we have given to this project and some of the money will go towards future improvements, like buying some new sensors." said Michael.

Yukito Tsunoda says the goal for now is simply getting their car on the road.

"Our ultimate goal is to implement our program and drive the car in the public environment," said Yukito.

"And we hope to one day see people using their Smartphone to drive their cars in a real life situation."

Success at the local level in the iAwards program can provide a pathway for ICT student, professionals and organisations to achieve international recognition.

Project supervisor Dr Jun Jo was proud of the team's achievements and was already looking forward to the next incarnation of the car.

"We expect to have the test model on the road in time to show it off at the Griffith University Open Day on August 11," said Dr Jo.

"So come along and see it in action."

Provided by Griffith University