

Victoria team defend title with speedy robot

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A team from Victoria's School of Engineering and Computer Science, led by Robby Lopez, beat 15 other teams from Australian and New Zealand universities to take top honours in the 2013 competition with its autonomous mining robot, Michelangelo.

This year they're back with a few new team members and, says Robby, the group won't be resting on its laurels.

"This year the challenge is quite different. With our entry Bolt!, we're really going for top speed and have made major redesigns to the chassis.

We've also changed our software."

Robby and team members Michael Pearson, Alex Campbell, Mayur Panchal, Henry Williams, Ryan Wolstenholme been working on their robot for several months. They have had to achieve five milestones during the year, which tested different aspects of the robot's capability.

Robby says while having the experience from last year has certainly helped, the team has had a couple of major challenges along the way.

"We wanted to have a really fast robot so we chose very high power motors but they proved to be more difficult to control electronically than we had anticipated. Solving the problems created by the more complex design was a nightmare but after seeing the test results we're happy that we went the extra mile."

Their hard work has served them well—the team finished all major work on Bolt! with weeks to spare before the final, giving them time to fine tune.

"We're really happy about this as last year we were still working on the [robot](#) in the hotel room on the eve of the [competition](#)."

Based on Bolt!'s performance and after checking out their competition on You Tube, the team is cautiously optimistic about its chances of bringing home the NI ARC title again this year.

"We feel like we're in a good position and it would be great to win a second time but from past years' events it's impossible to judge what will happen on the day."

The theme for this year's competition is agriculture with the robots competing in farming inspired challenges including collecting seeds and

depositing them in the planting area and navigating through faming obstacles.

The competition final will be held on Thursday 25 September at Macquarie University.

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