Press Releases

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HKUST Teams up with ThinkQuest

The Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching (CELT) of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) has formed a partnership with ThinkQuest Inc. , a non-profit corporation which organizes the world's largest Internet student education program--ThinkQuest Internet Challenge.

The annual ThinkQuest Internet Challenge invites teams of students aged 12 to 19 to work together to create an interactive, well-researched Web site on an educational topic of their interest. The program will help students develop creativity, critical thinking, global outlook and cultural awareness.

The Center recently joined ThinkQuest as a National Partner, together with 60 other National Partners, 38 US State Partners and three Program Partners.

"To maximize the benefits of information technology on education, there is a need for a paradigm shift from the traditional one-way transmission of knowledge to a more interactive and learner-centered approach," said Dr Grace Au, CELT's Director.

"As ThinkQuest's Hong Kong Partner, CELT will not only promote the ThinkQuest Internet Challenge competition, but will also develop a local program for Hong Kong. The program will include training for students and teachers in Internet project-based learning and facilitation skills, plus a local ThinkQuest competition to further promote lifelong learning and all-round education--key elements as highlighted in the latest Education Reform Proposal," she said.

Students from Hong Kong are making good performance in ThinkQuest Internet Challenge 2000. This year, 166 students from 25 schools in Hong Kong participated in the competition. Stephanie Lau, from Diocesan Girls' School worked with students from the US and Germany in developing a Web site called "Butterflies--On Wings of Freedom". Selected from an international pool of more than 6,800 students, Stephanie and her teammates will receive full sponsorship for a trip to Europe in March 2001 when they will be competing with other participants for a maximum of US$25,000 scholarships at the Final Awards Event.

Another student, Nicola Mahncke from German Swiss International School in Hong Kong, won the Digital Diplomacy Award, the first educational award ever created by the US State Department for the public. Nicola teamed up with two students from the US and the UK to develop an educational Web site that focuses on the plight of world hunger--"An End to World Hunger". Their Web site, selected from 725 entries submitted by students from 85 countries, also won an Honorable Mention Award. Each team member will receive a US$2,000 scholarship, and will be sponsored by the US State Department for a trip to Washington, DC in January 2001.

About ThinkQuest Internet Challenge

The ThinkQuest Internet Challenge is the largest Internet education program for young students around the world. To date, more than 50,000 students have completed the ThinkQuest journey since its inception in 1996. The number is expected to grow substantially to 1,000,000 participants worldwide over the next five years.

A panel of experts from the Internet Society conducts judging for the ThinkQuest Web site entries, looking for compelling and accurate educational content, technical excellence, interactivity, and imaginative use of graphics. In

addition, teams are assessed on how members collaborate by sharing their individual knowledge skills and efforts.

The completed student-created entries become a permanent part of the ThinkQuest Library, made freely available to teachers, students and Internet users across the globe. To date, students have collectively created 4,000 web sites on topics ranging from diplomacy to space exploration to growing up with epilepsy.

ThinkQuest 2001 is scheduled to begin on January 4, 2001.

About CELT

CELT is an academic support unit dedicated to the advancement of quality education by fostering a continuous improvement culture on learning and teaching quality among students, faculty and teaching staff at HKUST. CELT supports the University's mission of advancing learning and knowledge through teaching and research by providing a dynamic and supportive environment for all to continually improve their learning and teaching. To serve the community, CELT offers training workshops for schoolteachers on the use of IT in teaching.