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## Six Imagine Cup finalists take the next step to becoming Entrepreneurs

### Microsoft, BT to co-sponsor second annual Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator in January 2007.

Six 2006 Imagine Cup World Festival finalists will soon be one step closer to turning their technology solutions into business realities. Six teams have been awarded in-depth business training as part of the Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator program, to be held in January 2007 by Microsoft Corp. and BT.

The six teams chosen to participate in the Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator are:

- Italy. Event Director: Giorgio Sardo, Massimo Paternoster, Silvia Perrone and Andrea...
- Brazil. Team Trivial: Carlos Eduardo Monteiro Rodrigues, Ivan Cordeiro (Menezes Costa)
- Norway. Team NTNU: Jan-Kristian Markiewicz, Gøran Hansen, Hans Olav Follesø
- China: Frontfree Studio-MISG: Zhang Zheng, Wu Ge, Chen Chen, Cui Can
- Germany: Trailblazers - A Pathfinding Community: Mark Thomé, Martin Steir, Piotr Wendt
- Croatia: EKG.Net: Miroslav Novak, Marko Oreškovic, Zlatko Stacic, Marko Vel...

"The Imagine Cup is inspiring a new generation of technology leaders to apply their knowledge and skills to make a difference in the world," said Sanjay Parthasarathy, corporate vice president of the Developer & Platform Evangelism Group at Microsoft. "The Innovation Accelerator will make this happen in a very tangible way by providing students with the business training and mentorship to take the first step into entrepreneurship."

"These students have demonstrated an amazing combination of creativity and technical skills to solve real-world problems," said Dr Sinclair Stockman, President of Security, BT Global Services. "Worldwide competitions like the Imagine Cup allow students to explore through technology boundaries, and the Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator provides them with the opportunity to go even further with their software solutions."

The student teams received this honor earlier today as part of the 2006 Imagine Cup closing ceremonies. After a week of competition against a total of 42 finalist teams from a pool of more than 65,000 students from over 100 countries, the six team winners will join the Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator. The six team winners will spend two weeks in January further developing their ideas, working closely with some of the best minds from Microsoft and BT. The software solutions created by the teams will be showcased at the Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator. The software solutions captured the Imagine Cup competition theme: "Imagine a world where technology makes life healthier lives."

The Imagine Cup, now in its fourth year, is a competition designed to provide a platform for students to explore technological and artistic interests outside the classroom. It challenges students to create a better world enabled by their own genius, creativity and energy, and provide solutions that help define the future of technology, software and computing. Teams develop software solutions that offer practical applicability and present real-world solutions to real-world problems.

The Imagine Cup Innovation Accelerator, now in its second year, is designed to provide intensive business and technical training for students to help them turn winning business concepts into reality. Over an intensive two-week period, students will further develop their Imagine Cup designs into potential must-have technology solutions of the future. Using agile development in a "hothouse" development environment, the teams will refine their software solutions and leverage the platform and network assets of BT and Microsoft. In addition, business expert mentors will help the students build a solid business proposition and plan to bring their ideas to market.

One of the teams in the 2005 Innovation Accelerator program whose members have become entrepreneurs is Russia's Team Inspiration, the winners of the 2005 Imagine Cup. They have incorporated Musigy, Inc. "During the Innovation Accelerator, we worked with business experts who helped us work out the business model of our future company," said Vionog, one of Musigy's founders. "Our participation in this program has brought us the business expertise that we would not have had otherwise." Musigy ([www.musigy.com](http://www.musigy.com)) is a company that helps musicians to plug their instrument into a computer and be connected to other musicians around the world, perform live in a distributed environment, and share the real-time performance with other musicians. The team has formed an international advisory board...

industry and business and technology leaders to chart the company's course for future success. Musigy has filed two patents in both the United States and Russia and are in talks with several venture capital firms to secure additional investment to ensure Musigy's continued growth.

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