

Press Pack

Super Sea Dragons - *Winners of the 2014 Microsoft Imagine Cup SA National Finals*

Quick 30 second summary:

We're a group of 4 students from the University of Pretoria who created a game called [Orbit](#). We recently won the SA National Finals of the [Microsoft Imagine Cup](#). If we make it through the World Semifinals, we win a trip Microsoft in Seattle to compete in the World Finals where we stand a chance to win \$50 000 and meet with Bill Gates.

Elevator Pitch:

Orbit is a 2D action-adventure circular platformer set in space. You play as Atlas, an astronaut who navigates and explores systems of tiny planets, fighting aliens to save humanity.

Facts and General Info:

- The Microsoft Imagine Cup is the world's premier student technology competition.
- Students from more than 190 countries take part in the challenge to win \$50 000.
- The competition has 3 categories: Games, Innovation, World Citizenship
- Microsoft Imagine Cup SA Finals 2014 took place on Wednesday 30 April 2014 at the CSIR in Pretoria
- 56 teams entered the competition in South Africa
- There were 12 Teams in the SA final (4 Games, 4 Innovation, 4 World Citizenship)
- 20 min team presentations were judged by a panel of 5 judges
- 1st Place: the Super Sea Dragons from the University of Pretoria, *Orbit*
 - o Each won R5 000, Nokia Lumia 1520
 - o Eleanor Harding (21)
 - o Daniel Esterhuizen (22)
 - o Emile Hay (21)
 - o Gerhard Janse van Rensburg (21)
 - o A 2D action-adventure circular platform game set in space. You play as Atlas, an astronaut who navigates and explores systems of tiny planets, fighting aliens to save humanity.
- 2nd Place: Fo(u)r Slaves from the University of Cape Town, *me@OpenBox*
 - o Each won R3 500, Nokia Lumia 1320
 - o A solution that incorporates a unified communications platform to allow employees to communicate and collaborate with one another using a virtual 'bulletin board' that is secured as well as tailored to each employee, ensuring the privacy of messaging.
- 3rd Place: EM Squared from the University of Pretoria, *Tilt*
 - o Each won R2 500, Nokia Lumia 625

- Mitch Dart
- Marinda Huisamen
- This title makes use of advanced mobile device features such as the gyroscope and accelerometer to capitalise on an easy-to-use and entertaining game mechanism – that of motion-based mobile gaming.
- All participants received a 500GB external harddrive, flashdrive, t-shirt, bag & watch
- Top 3 represent South Africa at the next round, the Worldwide Semifinals
 - Online round
 - We have already submitted our entry
 - We are waiting to hear the results
- The World Finals will be held in Seattle (29 July – 2 August 2014)
- Seattle is Microsoft's home town
- One team will meet privately with Bill Gates to share their dreams and excitement for a brighter future
- The team that wills the World Finals will receive \$50 000

The Imagine Cup SA Finals:

If you put enough brilliant minds into one room, the atmosphere becomes electric - this was our experience at this year's Imagine Cup SA Finals.

We started our morning excited to show our ideas to the world, hungry for knowledge and feedback. This feeling was fuelled throughout the rest of the day as we networked and gleaned wisdom from the guest speakers. We spoke to other participants, heard their ideas and shared our own. It's a great feeling when everyone around you shares your passion for conceptual innovation and excellence.

Our presentation went wonderfully. We shared exactly what we wanted to with the awe-inspiring panel of judges. We communicated our concept and business plan and through doing so - we connected intellectually.

The prize-giving was a surreal experience. During the judges feedback we heard how teams could improve through concepts and phrases that we had used verbatim in our presentation. The recognition was exhilarating. When the announcement was made that we won, we experienced overwhelming joy and endless gratitude.

It's an absolute honour to have won and we can't wait to make South Africa proud.

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Article:

Tuks on top in Microsoft Imagine Cup SA Finals OR Tuks students win Microsoft's Imagine Cup game competition OR Student team from the University of Pretoria wins the Microsoft Imagine Cup

On Wednesday 30 April, after a day packed full of presentations and judging, the winning teams in the 2014 Imagine Cup SA finals were announced. The winners were named in the closing ceremony at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria where Nokia smartphones, hard drives and cash prizes were dished out to the students.

The Microsoft Imagine Cup is the world's premier student technology competition. Teams participate in one of three categories: Games, Innovation or World Citizenship. Out of 56 entries, 12 teams made it to the SA National Finals where each team had 20 minutes with a panel of 5 judges to present their concepts.

The overall winner of the competition was The Super Sea Dragons, a team of four BIS Multimedia Students from the University of Pretoria. The group developed a game called *Orbit*, a 2D circular platformer game set in space. You play as Atlas, an astronaut who navigates and explores systems of tiny planets - fighting aliens to save humanity.

The students (Daniel Esterhuizen, Eleanor Harding, Emile Hay and Gerhard Janse van Rensburg) each won R5000 cash and a Nokia Lumia 1520 smartphone.

Second place in the competition went to Fo(u)r Slaves from the University of Cape Town. Their solution, me@OpenBox, incorporates a secure platform that allow employees to communicate with each other using a virtual bulletin board.

Third place went to another team from the University of Pretoria, EM Squared. Mitch Dart and Marinda Huisamen developed a PC puzzle game called Tilt, where players move a ball around obstacles by tilting a phone as their controller. The game uses advanced mobile features such as the gyroscope and accelerometer - a dive into the future of motion-based mobile gaming.

The top three teams will go on to represent South Africa in the World Semifinals and, if successful, the World Finals. The Imagine cup World Finals will be held between 29 July and 2 August 2014 in Seattle, Microsoft's home town. Here, one team will be chosen to meet with Bill Gates to share their dreams and excitement for a brighter future. The top team in each category (Games, Innovation and World Citizenship) will be awarded \$50 000.

What is Orbit and why is it great?

Orbit is a 2D action-adventure circular platform game set in space. You play as Atlas, an astronaut who navigates and explores systems of tiny planets, fighting aliens to save humanity. Orbit is set apart through its replayability, circular perspective and distinct art style.

Why did we choose to create this project?

Orbit's beginnings stem from a final year game design project. In our early brainstorming sessions we all brought ideas to the table only to find out they were very

similar. We had individually been mulling over the idea of planets and space for years. There's something magic about escaping into outer space. We were inspired by the art style of South African Animator Mike Scott and a youtube video by PJ Ligouri, titled 'PJ, Tiny Planet Explorer'. Game titles we also drew inspiration from include Angry Birds Space, Super Mario Galaxy, Aether and Faster Than Light. We wanted to create the game that we all wanted to play, but couldn't - because it didn't exist yet.

Is Orbit a business?

Our project for the Imagine Cup is a game, but we are treating it like a business. Eleanor enjoys reading books about Startups, which has led to our choice of business model – The Lean Startup (a model developed by Eric Reis). The real world application of the lessons learned has helped us realise the potential and requirements of bringing our product to market. Throughout the timeline of the Imagine Cup we have developed implementation and released new versions of Orbit. At the moment our game is available online as a Demo. This is the first stage in our five stage plan to release. From here we will move on to Alpha, Beta, Pre-release and finally Release. We have chosen to use Steam Greenlight as our Strategic Partner.

Quotes from team members

"I want Orbit to be a stepping stone for my career. I want the world to see that we take making games seriously." – Emile Hay, The Super Sea Dragons

"If you put enough brilliant minds into one room, the atmosphere becomes electric - this was our experience at this year's Imagine Cup SA Finals." – Eleanor Harding, The Super Sea Dragons

"Making games has been a lifelong dream for me, working on Orbit has been living that dream." – Daniel Esterhuizen, The Super Sea Dragons

"It's a great feeling when everyone around you shares your passion for conceptual innovation and excellence." – Eleanor Harding, The Super Sea Dragons

"We hope to bring orbit to the world and we want the world to love it." – Gerhard Janse van Rensburg, The Super Sea Dragons

"We want people from all over the world to play Orbit." – Emile Hay, The Super Sea Dragons

"We created the game that we all wanted to play, but couldn't because it didn't exist yet" – Daniel Esterhuizen, The Super Sea Dragons

“A picture is worth a thousand words and our game outputs 60fps” – Eleanor Harding, The Super Sea Dragons

“One of the key tools we’ve used in development of Orbit is the Build – Measure – Learn feedback loop. Testing has been a vitally important part of our process.” – Eleanor Harding, The Super Sea Dragons

“We need to remember that at the end of the day our customers are living, breathing thinking (and spending) individuals with thoughts, dreams and ideas” – Eleanor Harding, The Super Sea Dragons

“The slogan of Orbit is ‘The weight of the world is on your shoulders’. The weight of the world is on our shoulders – and we know what to do with it” – Eleanor Harding, The Super Sea Dragons

What did we learn from Orbit?

Our game started as a way to promote joy and delight but evolved far from its roots – it became real. The biggest thing we learnt was to take that step into the real world. This is no longer a just game, it’s a business and we are shipping a product. This realisation gave true value to what we learned about professionalism, quality and version control. We learnt is how to effectively work as a team, playing to each member’s strengths to ensure that we ended up with a well-rounded product. Orbit has given us a platform to enter the industry.



High res screenshots and photos **available for reuse** can be found here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5x4lg8d7kbowfzy/AAB8DDkcsfxDeZ3MjapHOaHBa?m=>

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Thank you for your time!