



**Media Release
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NICTA-developed programming course for secondary students wins iAward, plus Merit award for NICTA femtocell modem

An online programming course for high school students, developed by NICTA and the University of Sydney, has won the e-learning category of the prestigious Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) iAwards. In addition to the win, NICTA's Canberra Research Laboratory's InterfereX team won a Merit award in the Research and Development category of the iAwards.

Dr John Judge, NICTA Senior Research Engineer, accepted the e-learning iAward at a ceremony held at the Crown Palladium in Melbourne last night. "I am really excited to accept this award on behalf of NICTA and the University of Sydney," he said. "We developed the embedded programming course to encourage students to develop software that can make an impact in the real world. It is a great way for them to learn important programming skills and have fun at the same time."

By inspiring students to learn about ICT in an exciting way, this award-winning programming course is helping solve a difficult and important problem in information and communications technology – the supply of skilled IT professionals for the digital economy.

The five-week course is one of three programming streams offered in the annual National Computer Science School (NCSS) Challenge. It is supported by industry cluster Embedded Systems Australia (ESA) and sponsored by Altium (Gold sponsor), the NSW Department of Industry and Investment and Cargowise.

The InterfereX team received a Merit award in the Research and Development category of the iAwards for their wireless femtocell modem demonstrator.

Femtocells are indoor wireless access points for cellular wireless that connect to the telephone network via a home or office broadband connection. Radio interference from other 3G connections is recognised as one of the top issues in femtocell networks. This technology, developed for the WCDMA standard, addresses such interference.

NICTA InterfereX Project Leader Dr Mark Reed accepted the award. "I am thrilled to win this Merit award," said Dr Reed. "Years of research went into developing the modem and I am confident that the technology will find a prominent place in the emerging femtocell market." InterfereX has sought to pre-empt one of the key emerging technical issues with femtocell deployment, namely interference. "Australia's NBN promises to massively increase backhaul bandwidth from desktops, but we now live very much in a mobile world so connecting from your 3G and 4G wireless devices to the NBN remains a critical missing link," said Dr Reed.

The iAwards is the AIIA's innovation awards program. The AIIA hosts the iAwards as the Australian member of the Asia-Pacific ICT Alliance Awards (APICTA).

About NICTA

National ICT Australia Ltd (NICTA), Australia's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Research Centre of Excellence, is developing technologies which will meet the current and future needs of the community in fields which will lead to large economic, social and environmental benefits for Australia. NICTA has five laboratories around the country. Since NICTA was founded in 2002, it has created four new companies, developed a substantial technology portfolio of patent applications and continues to supply new talent to the ICT industry through the NICTA-enhanced PhD program.

NICTA is funded by the Australian Government as represented by the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and the Australian Research Council through the ICT Centre of Excellence program. In addition to federal funding NICTA is also funded and supported by the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland and Victorian Governments, The Australian National University, Griffith University, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology and The University of Sydney.

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