

IBM Master the Mainframe Contest Winners Announced for United Kingdom and Ireland

Inaugural contest in Ireland helps drive 50 percent jump in regional participation
Participants develop essential skills to transform enterprises in a digital era

London, U.K. - 03 May 2016: IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced the UK and Ireland regional winners of the [Master the Mainframe](#) global skills contest. This contest has allowed local participants to engage and gain experience in one of the most important technologies driving the digital transformation of the global economy.

Open to college and university-level students in UK and Ireland, the 2015 Master the Mainframe contest was hosted in the Linux for z environment as part of the [IBM z Systems Academic Initiative](#). The contest gives students an opportunity to tackle a real-world challenge. Students need no previous mainframe experience, as the contest serves as an introduction to programming and application development. Facing increasing levels of difficulty as the contest progresses through three challenges, the students gain unrivalled experience of the computing environment that runs most of the world's enterprise data, including 92 of the top 100 banks, the top 10 largest insurers, and 23 of the 25 largest retailers.^[1] The competition has been a springboard for some into a career where they are helping to transform the future of business in a digital era.

In 2015 the contest expanded to include students from Ireland, drawing entrants from Letterkenny Institute of Technology. Now in its eleventh year of partnering with private companies like IBM, Letterkenny Institute of Technology has been providing mainframe education throughout Ireland. To date, the program has educated approximately 200 students in mainframe skills, working to build awareness of the local and global demand for new mainframe talent. The program uses technologies like Java and open source tools to demonstrate the versatility of the mainframe.

This, coupled with a more active social and grassroots engagement by the local Master the Mainframe team, has seen local student participation increase by 50% in UK and Ireland. Ireland was one of 18 countries to host the contest for the first time this year, bringing the total number of participating countries to 47, engaging more than 10,000 individual competitors.

This year's UK and Ireland regional winners are:

- Edward Devlin, Letterkenny Institute of Technology – While completing the Department of Business Studies Certificate in Mainframe Technologies, Edward was able to apply the skills he acquired in the Master the Mainframe contest in a work-placement module with a major global automotive company, which has since offered him a permanent position.
- Daragh Matthews, Letterkenny Institute of Technology – Daragh found that participating in the Master the Mainframe contest went beyond his studies in the Department of Business Studies Mainframe Technologies programme, helping him to understand and help solve real world problems.
- Teodor Gherasim Nistor, University of Southampton – Originally from Romania, Teodor is a first-year student studying Software Engineering. He reported that participating in the contest was “a novel and enjoyable experience.”
- Laura Sinkunaite, University of Glasgow – Laura first heard about Master the Mainframe program when she met IBM representatives at an "IT's not just for the boys!" event. Laura said her favourite task in the contest was a test on Assembler programming language, because it gave her a better sense of what actually happens within the system.

“The Master the Mainframe contest is a great example of how the IBM mainframe, over half a century since its first release, continues to be a platform for innovation across the UK and Ireland. The students representing these countries demonstrate what is possible when bright minds apply advanced systems skills, unleashing creative solutions to global business challenges,” said David Stokes, Chief Executive, IBM UK & Ireland. “The increase in participation this year is a very positive indication that we can continue to identify key talent to address the ongoing and future technical needs of our clients and our digital economy.”

Prizes for the 2015 Master the Mainframe UK and Ireland contest include iPads, t-shirts, computer accessories. The four finalists received an invitation to spend a day at the IBM Hursley Lab, meeting a number of mainframe graduates and senior technical staff as well as visiting a number of areas to witness innovation in progress.

For more information on the Master the Mainframe contest or to participate, please visit:

<http://www-03.ibm.com/systems/z/education/academic/masterthemainframe/contest/mea.html>

[1] Based on IBM market insights and rankings of top companies in respective industry.
