Satellite Smartphone App Contest

Surrey experts in space technology have today launched a Facebook competition challenging the British public to develop innovative applications that will run on its smartphone-powered satellite due for launch into space next year.

The STRaND-1 (Surrey Training, Research and Nanosatellite Demonstrator) satellite weighs just 4kg and is a collaborative effort between engineers at Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) and University of Surrey researchers. It is being built in their free time to test innovative ideas for lower cost space missions.

In the spirit of the mission, the four most creative, novel and fun 'App' ideas will be selected to fly on the Android phone inside STRaND-1. Winners will be invited to STRaND's Mission Control to observe their app on the nanosatellite as it orbits Earth.

STRaND-1 System Engineer Shaun Kenyon commented: "We're looking for innovative entries that stand out from the crowd. There's plenty to play with on a modern Smartphone, from a digital compass to a powerful processor that lets you do things like image recognition and Artificial Intelligence (AI)."

Dr Chris Bridges, based at the Surrey Space Centre (SSC) at the University of Surrey, added: "Today's mobile phones are incredibly powerful and hold huge potential for low cost research missions. We want to encourage the UK's budding scientists and programmers to come up with exciting new ideas to harness this exciting technology in space."

Contestants can employ built-in features such as a high performance processor, compass, 3-axis accelerometer, not to mention a high-resolution 5 megapixel camera that has a window pointing out to space. GPS position and velocity is available but not from the phone itself. USB and Wi-Fi provide interfaces with the satellite subsystems that, for example, allow it to communicate with Earth.

The Space App competition is open to any UK citizen who thinks they can write a working Android mobile phone App in a few months. The App must be not-for-profit and would preferably have an aim to get students and pupils interested in science and technology, although innovative applications that are just plain fun will also be taken into consideration.

Contestants have until 9am GMT on the 2nd September 2011 to submit their App concepts via the Surrey Nanosatellites Facebook page and the top four entries will be selected to fly on STRaND-1 within two weeks of the competition closure and the App software must be submitted by 31 December 2011.

https://www.gim-international.com/content/news/satellite-smartphone-app-contest