Imagine Cup Overview

**What Is Imagine Cup?**

Founded in 2003, Microsoft Imagine Cup is the company’s premier student technology program and competition, and a cornerstone of the Microsoft YouthSpark initiative. It provides an opportunity for student technologists, developers and aspiring entrepreneurs from all academic backgrounds to collaborate, develop a technology application, create a business plan and gain a keen understanding of what is needed to bring a concept to market. In Imagine Cup, the brightest young minds join together to exemplify the power of student innovation.

**How Does Imagine Cup Work?**

Students compete in teams of up to four people in the Games, Innovation or World Citizenship competitions to create an original technology project from start to finish – create an idea, make a plan, build the project and compete.

Students advance through various rounds of the competition either online or through in-person National Final events organized by Microsoft subsidiaries in countries across the globe. The three categorical first place teams from each participating country are entered into the World Semifinals online, and it is here where the World Finalists teams are determined. Winners are awarded travel to the Imagine Cup World Finals, where they compete for cash prizes, once in a lifetime experiences and partnership awards totaling more than $1 million. The Imagine Cup World Finals are in Seattle, Washington, USA, July 29-August 2, 2014.

Students also compete in themed challenges throughout the year for other prizes and awards that do not include traveling to, or competing in the Imagine Cup World Finals.

**Fast Facts**

* Student projects addressed a number of trends including accessibility, social media, physical therapy gamification and much more. Here are a few standout trends:
* Over 80% of World Citizenship teams created innovative ways to use technology in the medical field for such areas as accessibility, remote physical therapy, disease diagnosis, and other applications.
* Over 50% of all projects and 100% of the Games category were created to inspire fun – with examples including an app that enriches tourism by allowing users to scan photos or other documents to search for more information, and a fitness app that encourages users to stay active with a virtual pet.
* Social was a prominent theme in the Innovation category – accounting for 27% of projects. The projects included apps that allow users to share messages, photos and videos with others in a specified location, and an easy way to track a friend/user’s distance from a meeting location with his/her estimated arrival time.
* This is the 12th year of Imagine Cup — it started in 2003 with just 2,000 students from 25 countries.
* To date, over 1.75 million students from more than 190 countries have engaged with the Imagine Cup program.
* At the 2014 Imagine Cup World Finals, there are 125 students, 34 teams representing 34 countries – three of those teams are all-female.
* Imagine Cup’s motto is “Dream it. Build it. Live it.”
* The 34 countries represented are:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Australia | Bahrain | Bosnia | Brazil | Canada |
| China | Cyprus | Egypt | France | Germany |
| Greece | Hungary | India | Ireland | Italy |
| Jamaica | Japan | New Zealand | Nigeria | Pakistan |
| Philippines | Poland | Portugal | Qatar | Romania |
| Russia | Serbia | South Korea | Taiwan | Uganda |
| United Kingdom | United States | Uruguay | Venezuela |  |

* Locations of Imagine Cup World Finals:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2003**: Barcelona, Spain | **2006:** Delhi, India | **2009:** Cairo, Egypt | **2012:** Sydney, Australia |
| **2004**: Sao Paulo, Brazil | **2007:** Seoul, South Korea | **2010:** Warsaw, Poland | **2013:** St. Petersburg, Russia |
| **2005:** Yokohama, Japan | **2008:** Paris, France | **2011:** New York, NY, USA | **2014:** Seattle, WA, USA |

**2014 Additions**

Imagine Cup centers around three competitions: Games, Innovation, and World Citizenship. To inspire more students to participate in Imagine Cup, learn new skills and bring their ideas to life, Microsoft continues to evolve the program in numerous ways:

* One of the most notable changes to the program this year is the addition of the World Semifinals round. Countries that hold a National Finals event now enter three teams – one per category – into the World Semifinals to be judged by a global panel. The creation of the World Semifinals round opens up more opportunities for students to engage with the program and gain exposure in front of high-caliber judges from all over the world.
* In addition to the $50,000 cash prize that one team in each category will win at the World Finals, the first place winners will also receive unparalleled hands-on experience, guidance and mentorship from industry luminaries, through a once-in-a-lifetime boot camp. Imagine Cup partnered with PAX, Microsoft Ventures and Microsoft YouthSpark to provide a tailored boot camp for the Games, Innovation and World Citizenship winning teams.
* The Imagine Cup has evolved into a yearlong experience for students with various opportunities to compete and innovate. Students have the opportunity to participate in challenges that map to the Software Development Lifecycle. These challenges are designed to teach students how to develop a well-rounded project by competing in the Pitch Video Challenge, Project Blueprint Challenge and User Experience Challenge providing students with more opportunities for engagement and direct feedback from judges.

**Imagine Camps**

In addition, Imagine Cup is committed to giving students even more opportunities to grow their skills through hands-on, in-person engagement as exemplified through the creation of Imagine Camps. This year’s Imagine Camps mapped to one of the Imagine Cup online challenges - to help students learn to develop across the Windows platform, with the opportunity to submit their project for consideration in the challenge. These free two-day events, offered in various countries around the world, are for all student developers – not just Imagine Cup participants – who want to learn about developing and publishing Windows and Windows Phone apps.

**Competitions**

The three 2014 competition categories are designed to inspire students to use their imagination and passion to create technology solutions on the Microsoft platform.

* **Games:** Today, great games come from anywhere and people play them everywhere. On their phones, on their computers, on their tablets, in their browser, with their friends, with anyone, with everyone. *Prizes: First Place, $50,000 and PAX boot camp; Second Place, $10,000; Third Place, $5,000.*
* **Innovation:** Incredible, world-changing software innovations often come from students. Social networks, music services, digital photography apps, gadgets and robotics – the list goes on. Imagine Cup is looking for the next big thing in this category. *Prizes: First Place, $50,000 and Microsoft Ventures boot camp; Second Place, $10,000; Third Place, $5,000.*
* **World Citizenship:** Students are encouraged to find a problem in the world, even in their own life or community, that affects many people, and then work to solve it.By creating impressive new technology projects in fields such as health, education, and the environment these students have shown the world new ways to think and to change lives.*Prizes: First Place, $50,000 and Microsoft YouthSpark boot camp; Second Place, $10,000; Third Place, $5,000.*

In addition to these prizes, the 19 judges, including Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella, Code.org co-founder, Hadi Pavarti, and Reddit.com general manager, Erik Martin will help select the team who will win a private meeting with Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.

**Software Development Lifecycle Challenges**

Throughout this year’s program, students had the opportunity to participate in Challenges that align with the Software Development Lifecycle in the hopes to expand experience and coaching opportunities from judges for teams, allowing students to think beyond the competition to where and how they could one day bring their idea to market. These three challenges were set up for students to evolve their projects leading up to the Imagine Cup World Finals.

* **Pitch Video Challenge:** In this challenge, students were asked to create a five minute video pitch of their project idea. No prototypes or examples yet, this focused solely on the craft of developing and selling their idea.
* **Project Blueprint Challenge:** In this challenge, students delivered a project proposal articulating the users, requirements, scenarios and business model for the team’s project.
* **User Experience Challenge:** In this final challenge, students were asked to demonstrate the user experience, sharing user flow, wireframes and a visual target for how the software will display on screen.

**Imagine Cup Partner Awards**

In addition to the Competitions and Challenges, students competed for the following special awards from Imagine Cup partners.

* **Apps for Office Challenge:** After working with the Microsoft Office team to develop their selected proposals for a cloud-hosted web apps that works inside Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint, Project, and SharePoint, two World Finalist teams will be selected (first place, $5,000 and second place, $3,000).
* **AppCampus Award:** Funded by Microsoft and Aalto University, the AppCampus program has been set up to foster the creation of innovative mobile applications for the Windows and Windows Phone ecosystem. AppCampus will honor the best in mobile app development by awarding two World Finalist teams with €20,000 each.
* **Facebook Creativity Award:** Students are called to integrate Facebook's [Parse Core](https://parse.com/products/core) - Social with Facebook Login and Data APIs in their project and enable users to bring the identity they've cultivated on Facebook to your app. All World Finalists who are using Facebook Login are eligible to apply for this award. One team will be selected based on the quality, creativity, and effectiveness of their integration with Facebook and will win $25,000 in Facebook Advertising credits.
* **Windows & Windows Phone Challenge:** Team Pomato Apps from Venezuela received this $5,000 award announced earlier this year on June 5th along with a trip to the World Finals for developing the most compelling Windows & Windows Phone app. Additionally, the winners will get to spend time with the Windows and Windows Phone team on campus to receive expert feedback and guidance on where to take their app next while in Seattle for World Finals.