

NEWS RELEASE, 10 JANUARY 2014

London Met wins 'Partner of the Year' Award for project to help blind children

Computing students and staff at London Metropolitan University's Gamelab facility have won a major award for their work to help blind children.

Gamelab, London Met's in-house digital media company, was named 'Partner of the Year' at the Guide Dog Association Awards 2013, a prize they shared with computer giant Microsoft. The accolade was awarded after Gamelab developed software for an interactive game that helps blind and partially sighted children stay active.

Professor Martin Wright, Director of Gamelab, said: "We were approached by the Guide Dogs Association around whether we could develop a movement training application for blind children. The children's usual exercise routine can be monotonous, so the challenge was to develop a game which incorporated these exercises but was fun and stimulating."

Gamelab utilised its Kinect system, which uses sensors to recognise body movement, to develop the game. The Kinect technology was combined with a novel 3D audio environment to give the blind children a fully immersive experience. Gamelab had used this audio technology previously when it developed an audio game for the BBC.

"We worked with pupils at the Joseph Clarke School, a school for blind children, in Walthamstow, and came up with the 'Nepalese Necklace' game, which presents the children with a challenging adventure to complete," Professor Wright said.

Gamelab, part of the Faculty of Life Sciences and Computing at London Met, creates digital content such as animations and computer games. Many members of the team are London Met graduates, including alumni who studied BSc Multimedia Solutions, BSc Computer Games and the MSc in Interactive Media and Games Technologies in the Faculty's School of Computing. Its continuing success reflects the skills and knowledge that London Met students graduate with.

The team were invited to a special ceremony to collect their prize, which was presented by Former Home Secretary the Rt Hon David Blunkett MP and TV personality Adrian Chiles. Professor Wright added: "It was good to meet David Blunkett again - he launched our Blind Maths game back in 2007. He thanked us for what we are doing for blind children."

The latest award is one of many won by Gamelab, including eight BAFTA nominations since 2006 and a recent prize from the Independent Games Association.

The Guide Dogs Association said: “Gamelab have worked with [us] on software which encourages children with sight loss to practice exercises to improve their skills in getting around, and the feedback from children is extremely positive.

“Gamelab truly went the extra mile and teachers praised them for their dedication, expertise and professionalism.”

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

Gamelab

Gamelab is a 360 digital media company* producing original and engaging TV programmes for broadcasters from drama to 2D and 3D animation. Now in the tenth year of operation Gamelab has been nominated SEVEN times in the last four years – this is among many other awards and nominations.

Gamelab’s team also mentors graduates and undergraduates through successful internship schemes including a work based learning MSc that allows students to work alongside the professionals on high profile, large-scale commercial projects.

London Metropolitan University

London Metropolitan University has a rich history with strong educational roots dating back to 1848. The University as it is today was created in 2002 with the merging of London Guildhall University and the University of North London, the first merger between two universities in the UK. Its roots however, lie firmly in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Metropolitan Evening Classes for Young Men, in 1848.

At London Metropolitan University we believe that everyone has the right to an accessible quality education. Our students enjoy the highest levels of support and our courses recently received top marks from the UK’s Quality Assurance Agency. We are proud of the diversity & achievements of our students, alumni and staff.

Here at London Met we put our students at the centre of all we do. London Met is a great place to study, located in the heart of one of the world’s most exciting cities. We stand out because we offer courses of quality, in a vibrant, socially diverse environment, which will help launch your career.

We are committed to helping our students build rewarding careers. Courses are designed and updated to be directly relevant to the current employment market. London Met is as dynamic and multicultural as the city in which it is situated.

Here you will meet and work with people from around the world, who will enrich your development and learning. Since our students come from a range of backgrounds, we have always made sure that the education we offer is accessible and flexible.

For more information:

Luke Foddy
PR and Internal Communications Officer
London Metropolitan University
020 7133 2466

l.foddy@londonmet.ac.uk

www.londonmet.ac.uk