



T-Mobile recognizes winners of this year's "SME Innovation Prize"

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- First place goes to itSofD - IT Solutions for Deaf for its mobile communications solution for the deaf
- Two public transport solutions tied for second place
- Festive awards ceremony at the SME Innovation Forum of BVMW (Federation Association of SME)

Whether their solutions are mobile phone service-assisted communications to translate sign language or with bus passenger safety and information, the winners of the "SME Innovation Prize" impressively applied this year's motto for the competition of "visions in motion." Today, T-Mobile awards prizes to the first- and second-place winners as part of the SME Innovation Forum that is traditionally held at T-Mobile's headquarters in Bonn. The host of the event is the highly respected Federation Association of SME (BVMW). The top three winners of the innovation award will receive cash prizes of €7,500 and €5,000. T-Mobile began awarding the SME Innovation Prize in 2006, and is now presenting the prize for the third time. The prize seeks to promote pioneering projects in the field of mobile data communications.

Groundbreaking ideas

First prize went to itSofD - IT Solutions for the Deaf based in Weiterstadt for a solution geared to communicating with the deaf. The innovation is based on the personal mobile language translator (PMLT), which is a compact mobile communications device with additional components like a mini-camera and video glasses, or mini-displays with a headset. Using the PMLT and the mobile communications network, hearing and non-hearing individuals are connected to an interpreting center for simultaneous translation of speech and sign language. The device utilizes video-streaming to transmit the signing of the deaf person to the center. The center then translates the signing into spoken words and transmits the message to the hearing person's headset via audio-streaming.

Conversely, the PMLT can also send the hearing person's message via audio-streaming to the center where an interpreter translates it into sign language. This translation is then transmitted simultaneously via mobile live-stream to the deaf person's video glasses, for example. The PMLT's functionality can also be used to communicate with the blind, and can be integrated as a service in current and future UMTS mobile phones. There was no doubt among the jurors that the solution will substantially improve the quality of life of the deaf.

Recipients of the second-place prizes were Hamburger Hochbahn AG (HHA) for a mobile monitoring solution used in bus transportation and the Redlof Medienagentur based in Ansbach for its "Fahrgast TV" project designed for public transportation passengers. HHA uses T-Mobile's EDGE network to transmit footage from monitoring cameras installed in several hundred buses to the operations center. In the event of unusual circumstances, employees there are then better able to provide bus drivers with any required information and support – and that translates into greater safety for passengers and drivers. With "Fahrgast TV," Redlof gives transportation companies a way to continuously broadcast updated content on televisions installed in public transit buses. Passengers are thus able to watch the latest news on a special, advertising-financed TV program. And the transport companies can also promptly inform passengers about delays, additional runs, or route changes. The updated program content is broadcast with the help of UMTS mobile communications technology.

Prestigious competition

As in years past, 2008 saw many entries competing for T-Mobile's Innovation Prize. Of the 50 submissions, T-Mobile selected 10 finalists to which it will lend special support in the project phase. Composed of impartial industry representatives, the jury placed particular value on the effectiveness and practicality of the solutions in selecting the prize recipients. The three winners and their projects impressively demonstrate the diverse uses of innovative solutions that are based on mobile broadband technologies, such as UMTS and EDGE.