**2012 Imagine Cup Touts Assistive Technology**

Team quadSquad from Ukraine showcases its wining project, Enable Talk, a software solution that transforms sign language into a form of verbal communication through sensor-equipped gloves and a mobile device. Image provided by Microsoft News Center

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[Microsoft’s Imagine Cup](http://www.imaginecup.com/) ended its five day competition today highlighting some of the world's best technology students. The tenth annual event takes students from all around the globe and offers them the opportunity to solve important technological issues. This year’s theme, asked to more than 350 students from 75 countries, was to address the world’s toughest problems.

Not surprisingly, twenty-three percent of the projects focused on assistive technologies to improve the lives of disabled individuals. Many of these projects were designed to assist those with visual and hearing impairments as well as diseases that limit physical mobility. From sign language to autism and even blood bank shortages, the [2012 Imagine Cup](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/Press/2012/Jul12/07-10ImagineCup12PR.aspx) took on health and technology issues with a worldwide perspective.

The Ukrainian team quadSquad took home the $25,000 winning prize for software design by creating specialized gloves that verbalize sign language for the hearing impaired. These gloves utilize 15 sensors, microcontrollers and accelerometers to translate hand signals into spoken voice. Connected wirelessly via Bluetooth to a Windows Phone , Enable Talk not only was developed for the more than 275 million people who suffer internationally with hearing impairments, but it was also designed to be cost-effective and affordable to all who are in need.

“We were inspired to help our friends who are hearing- and speech-impaired to have the ability to communicate like everyone else,” said Maxim Osika, Team quadSquad.

A $75 price tag is what the team is hoping to be able to accomplish for each pair of Enable Talk gloves. The competition provides guidance and assistance throughout the entire development pipeline. From ideas to prototype, teams are offered the opportunity to create a business plan and even bring their product to market.

Unfortunately, the team from Arizona State University representing the United States in the software design group did not make the top 20. However, the US was well represented with the Drexel Dragons winning first place with their "MathDash” in the phone group with their Windows Phone game that strengthens math skills for elementary school students.

Next year's Imagine Cup will be held July 2013 in St. Petersburg, Russia.