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Vic student scores silver in international computer science awards

Victoria University student Alex Potanin looks set for a strong research career in computer science after his outstanding showing in a major international computer science awards competition.

Mr Potanin has just returned from the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) award ceremony held in San Diego, California, where he was presented with second prize in the undergraduate category of the ACM Student Research Competition, sponsored by Microsoft Research. Mr Potanin was the only person from the Asia-Pacific region to feature in the awards.

The annual ACM ceremony is one of the computer science world's most prestigious events. Awards are presented ranging from the Turing Award (often dubbed the "Nobel Prize of Computer Science") to student awards for the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest and for the ACM Student Research Competition.

Mr Potanin's second place in the undergraduate category was awarded based on the results of the Student Research Competition grand finals held among the winners of four research competitions held at major international computer science conferences.

To be eligible to enter the grand finals, Alex won a second place in the graduate category – competing against graduate students while still an undergraduate – at the research competition held at the Object-Oriented Programming, Systems, Languages, and Applications Conference held in Seattle in November 2002.

Microsoft Research paid for Mr Potanin's attendance of the award ceremony, as part of the award, while Microsoft New Zealand kindly agreed to sponsor his attendance at the Federated Computing Research Conferences. These conferences included presentations and workshops on topics relevant to his ongoing research.

Mr Potanin's competition entry was based on his research performed as part of his Honours degree in Computer Science at Victoria. The project was to build a software tool to investigate the run-time structures in object-oriented software, and to analyse the structure shown by a corpus of software.

His outstanding work earned him first-class honours, and this year he was awarded a prestigious Victoria University Postgraduate Scholarship and has begun work on a PhD in Computer Science.

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