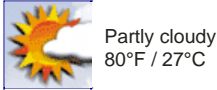


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### Engineering a new kind of toy story

Students in UB workshop roll out what they've learned

By JOSEPH POPIOLKOWSKI  
 News Staff Reporter  
 7/22/2006



Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News  
 Keith Ambrose, left, of West Seneca East, and Brett Kostrzewski of Canisius High had the speediest robot at Friday's competition.

As the robotic toy approached the maze's wall, you could almost hear the thoughts of its three engineers. "Turn right! Turn right!"

The toy - named KARED, a combination of their initials - was programmed to turn 90-degrees left. If its infrared sensor detected another wall, it would do an about-face. But the nearest obstacle was too far to be sensed, so the toy continued on its wayward path.

Suppressed laughs with a hint of some groans escaped from the machine's teenage creators - Ed DiRosa, Keller Smith and Eric Retzlaff - who joined nine other area high school students in a two-week engineering workshop at the University at Buffalo's North Campus.

The workshop's five teams labored over their creations for six hours each day and proudly displayed them Friday in front of engineers from Fisher-Price and staff from UB's New York State Center for Engineering Design and Industrial Innovation.

DiRosa, a senior at Eden High School, said he received his first set of screwdrivers at age 4 and has been dissecting his toys ever since.

"We learned a lot of cool stuff here, met a lot of cool people, made contacts with companies like Fisher-Price. It's definitely been an asset, whether it's learning new stuff or learning more in-depth," said DiRosa, who is interning at Eastman Machine Co. and plans to study mechanical or structural engineering in college.


Each team received a box of the same parts and used three-dimensional modeling software to design its toy. It's all part of the relatively new, constantly evolving field of cyber engineering, which is where engineering meets information technology and digital modeling.

Team Pink - Shannon Deibel of Orchard Park High School and Hillary Payne from Sweet Home High School - mounted a ladybug on top of its tiny vehicle. They, too, had some bugs

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to work out, but were happy with the toy's performance.

"I'm sure we could have got it working better if we had more time. But it worked well, for the time we had," Deibel said.

Awards for mechanical might were given to Deibel and Payne for aesthetic appeal, Brett Kostrzewski and Keith Ambrose for speediest finish of the maze and Dan Snitzer and Brandan Kennelly for best overall product.

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