Innovative idea shines its way to victory

Psychology grad and team’s artificial intelligence programme is about being a ‘friend’ to the depressed

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The desire to bring light to a subject considered “taboo” brought Jason Yim and his team victory in the Sunway Innovation Labs’ Sunway Labs Start-It Challenge second edition. The recent graduate of Sunway University’s Psychology degree programme amazed the panel of judges with his artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot for psychological help.

“Most people who are depressed do not seek help because of the stigma and fear of being classified insane,” he said.

“Unity Therapy is an AI chatbot that ‘talks’ to people who are facing mental problems so that it is like texting a friend,” the 24-year-old said.

Yim, who worked with a partner based in Singapore, hoped it would make mental care awareness more accessible.

The runner-up title went to team Hermes Helmet Projector by Sunway College students Ashman Razuruddin and Aiman Zulqadri Mohd Zuber, both 19. They came up with a motorcycle helmet visor projector which could be inserted into any existing helmet to project maps.

Third placing was shared by teams Suka Go—a platform to match volunteers to non-governmental organisations—which was represented by Muhammad Zaifir Shamil Jamil and Nurul Janah Najman and Power Waver (a self-charging power bank) by Muhammad Razlan Rhamz Hamdan.

The winners were awarded RM9,000 in cash prizes and will be accepted into the Sunway iLabs accelerator programme, which would begin in January 2018, to further develop their ideas.

The teams were among 10 teams which pitched their ideas to the judges. The event was graced by Raja Muda Selangor Tengku Amir Shah Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah.

The panel of judges included Sunway Education Group senior executive director Dr Elizabeth Lee, Nexsea Angels principal advisor Alan Lim, Pitchin chief executive officer and co-founder Kashminder Singh and DiGi Transformation head Kenny Lee.

Sponsor companies such as Sunway, DiGi, CIMB, Axiata Digital, Lazada, Impiro and Grab also announced the names of the candidates who tackled their challenge and would be invited for an interview for a potential internship or employment.