

IEEE Xtreme—Engaging Student Branches

by J. Patrick Donohoe

Did your IEEE Student Branch (SB) participate in IEEE Xtreme this year? IEEE Xtreme is a global challenge in which teams of IEEE Student Members, advised and proctored by an IEEE Member, compete in a 24-h competition to solve a set of programming problems. This year's event, designated as IEEE Xtreme 11.0, was held on 14 October 2017.

The unique nature of this programming competition makes participation in IEEE Xtreme a great way for your SB to generate additional interest in branch activities and engage members while having fun. All members of the SB are eligible to compete, which includes both Student Members and Graduate Student Members. All IEEE Xtreme participants compete as part of a team, and each SB can have multiple teams, so that any member of the branch interested in participating can do so. Each programming team consists of two or three students, with a maximum of two Graduate Student Members per team.

Expert programmers develop and judge the problems in the IEEE Xtreme competition. Each problem is categorized by complexity and designated as easy, moderate, difficult, advanced, or Xtreme, thus allowing for students of all experience levels to participate. Problems can be answered in any of a long list of supported languages, under specified time and memory constraints. The panel of IEEE Xtreme judges is made up of higher-grade IEEE Members from both academia and industry. Teams submit their solutions using the contest management tool, which is provided prior to the competition.

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Each participating team must have a proctor to supervise the competition locally. Since IEEE Xtreme is a virtual online competition, a venue must be identified for all teams; it could be a Student Branch office, a classroom, a laboratory, or some other campus location that is easily accessible for the students and available throughout the 24-h period of the competition. Each proctor must be an IEEE Member of higher membership grade (not a Student Member or Graduate Student Member). SB counselors, branch mentors, Section members, or department chairs make great proctors. The tasks of the proctor include: 1) monitoring the competition flow, 2) informing the teams of the progression of the competition, 3) ensuring that no external assistance is provided to any team during the competition, and 4) distributing prizes to student teams. Each proctor can support up to eight teams located at a single venue. Each team must have at least one proctor at the venue at all times during the entire competition. Teams often recruit more than one proctor to cover the entire stages during the 24-h period.

Past prizes for the top-ranking teams in the IEEE Xtreme competition have included an all-expenses-paid trip to an IEEE conference anywhere in the world for the top-ranked team and a variety of tech goodies for teams ranking in the top ten. Start planning now for your SB to participate in IEEE Xtreme next year. For more information, visit <http://ieeextreme.org/>.

About the author

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