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Bill Martin of Zeroshift with the overall Bright Sparc Award

Bright Sparcs innovators keep techno flame burning

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MILTON Keynes' reputation as a centre for innovation has been reinforced as four experts have won regional technology awards.

Four of the six Bright Sparc Awards, run by the Sparc Technology Network, have been presented to innovators from the city.

The awards attracted more than 60 entries from technology-led businesses and entrepreneurs across the region.

They were presented at a ceremony on May 14 at Cranfield Management Research Institute, part of Cranfield School of Management.

From the six category winners, Zeroshift Ltd, based in Knowlhill, was chosen by a panel of judges as the recipient of the overall Bright Sparc Award.

Zeroshift has developed two global benchmark technologies.

The first is the world's most efficient and lowest-cost automotive automatic transmission, which is now being refined in paid development programmes with global manufacturers.

Secondly, the company's Intelligent Tool Control is a global military and civil benchmark for the prevention of foreign object damage in aircraft manufacture and maintenance.

Bill Martin, founder of Zeroshift and inventor of the transmission system, also won the award for Technology Entrepreneur of the Year.

Chris Dunkley, Sparc network director

said: "The judges agreed that this highly innovative company demonstrated a brilliant idea, a world class product and had undertaken robust target market research, which is a key combination for successful entrepreneurialism."

James Hawker of Bluecube Technology Solutions, Newport Pagnell, was announced as the awards' Young Technology Entrepreneur of the Year; Olney-based Traka plc received the Technology Led Business of the Year award; and William Pope, who mentors early-stage businesses through the Milton Keynes Enterprise Hub, won the award for Business Innovation Support Person of the Year.

A special recognition award was also presented to Peter Woodland, managing director of Alps Electric (UK) Ltd, for his significant impact on innovation and business development in Milton Keynes.

Grant Seeley, director of inward investment for Invest Milton Keynes said: "The fact that four of the six winners are based in Milton Keynes underlines the strength of the city and its sub-regions in attracting a host of innovative companies willing to take advantage of its excellent geographic location, bespoke commercial space, support services and open business culture."

"All of the winners are working at the cutting edge of technology and have truly excelled in their specialist fields."

"The Bright Sparc Awards has provided an excellent opportunity to celebrate the achievements of some of the city's most innovative entrepreneurs and technology-led businesses."

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