Engineering Professor honoured twice in four weeks

Posted on Tuesday 19th July 2011

Bob Stone, Professor of Interactive Multimedia Systems within the School of Electronic, Electrical & Computer Engineering has been the recipient of two prestigious awards during the months of April and May.

The first was the UK Ergonomics Society's Sir Frederic Bartlett Medal – the highest award given by the Society to an individual, in this case in recognition of Professor Stone's human factors research and application achievements during a period spanning at least 25 years. The medal was presented at the Society's Annual Conference at Nottingham University on 18 April by the President, Professor Roger Haslam.

The second award was the Diploma of Honorable Professor of the South Russian State Technical University on 11 May, presented at the University in **Novocherkassk (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novocherkassk)** (the former capital city of the Don Cossacks in the **Rostov Oblast (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rostov_Oblast)** region of South Russia). The Diploma – the first to be presented to an academic from the UK – was presented at a formal meeting of the University Senate, chaired by the Institution's Rector (Vice Chancellor), Professor Leonid Lunin and President, Professor Valentin Shukshunov. It is with Professor Shukshunov that contact has been maintained since the early 1990s when Professor Stone's UK Virtual Reality team, then based in Salford, helped the Moscow-based Advanced Simulation Research & Development Centre to construct a VR model of the Mir Space Station. As a result of this, relationships have been developing with Russian research institutions ever since and, at the 40th anniversary of the Yu. A. Gagarin Russian Cosmonaut Training Centre (CTC) at Star City (21 March, 2000), General Pyotr Ilyich Klimuk (Head of the CTC) publicly accredited Professor Stone with having "introduced VR into the Cosmonaut Training Programme".

After the ceremony, Professor Stone was invited to address the Senate, present a short lecture on his current work and take part in two televised interviews. He was also presented with the University's academic cap and gown.

In both cases, the awards come as 'hat trick' achievements. In the case of the Ergonomics Society, Professor Stone's medal is the third award from that organisation, the earlier two being given in 1985 and 1993, in recognition of his research in the field of underwater robotics and Virtual Reality. This is the first time in the Society's history that three awards have been given to any one individual. As far as the Russian situation is concerned, again this is the third award over time – Professor Stone was made an Academician of the Higher Education Academy of Sciences in 1996 and an Honorary Cossack the year he joined the University (2003).

© University of Birmingham 2014