

# Interview with the Mentors behind the Best Team in Asia & Malaysia

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## 'Go n Gone' – 1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up of the ATOS Global IT Challenge 2016

**Q: How was the team selected? What is the biggest strength in the team?**

Vinesh: Last year, I met these students – who were among the crème group of Level 1 students. Not long after, Atos announced about the competition, and I recognised them immediately when they were selected. Based on the area of expertise and research, we decided that Ms Hema was the most suitable candidate to mentor the team.



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A lot of time has been spent, despite the students' academic commitments; Ms Hema really worked hard to keep them on track and motivated them to perform their best. It was not an easy process, as 3 out of 4 of them were away from home. Besides, the ATOS mentor was also instrumental to getting them to where they are.

From the faculty's point of view, they have reached the pinnacle. Although they did not win the competition, being on stage for the global level, being the only team from Malaysia and Asia to be in the finals, was already an extraordinary achievement.

As students from APU, I would say they really made use of the fundamental technical skills that they learnt in APU. The knowledge gained from their lecturers played a very big role in their success; when this knowledge was combined with the students' creativity, they managed to excel in the competition as well.

Hemalata: Firstly, I would like to thank the faculty for selecting as the mentor of the team. I was their subject lecturer when I came across this competition. When I received the information about the ATOS IT Challenge, I passed the information to my class of students, which consisted of about 80 to 90 students. Three groups were selected, however they were the only ones really who stood up and embraced the challenge. Along the way, the other groups had difficulties juggling between studies and the competition; however this group managed to overcome all obstacles that lied in front of them from the beginning till the end.

To me, what was impressive was the idea of the application. The team leader who came up with the idea of anti-cyberbullying has addressed a worldwide issue that has been affecting Europe, America and Asia. Out of 53 teams, they were selected as one of the top 50 teams for the idea that they proposed. Eventually, among the 50 teams, they were selected as one of the top 3 global finalists who had a chance to travel to Paris for the Grand Finale.

It was not an easy process for them, as they had to work on the functional app, technical documentation, presentation slides and video over the 9 months. They demonstrated very good time management, dedication and effort along the way. I am very proud of them and what I admired most was the team spirit they had. There were ups and downs, of course, such as some issues in work distribution, they were matured enough to handle those issues themselves. I only played the advisory role whenever necessary and I am glad that we clicked along.

**Q: Along the way, what was the most unforgettable advice to them?**

Vinesh: As a mentor to many competing teams before, what I shared most was the experience from other competition as well as my experience in judging those competitions. I taught them a few words along the way – for a system to excel; it has to be “Niche”, “New” and contains “Sentiments”. I am glad that they followed these advices, and now they have reached the furthest they can.

The faculty and APU are really proud of them. Amazing achievement! Now that they have an internship opportunity at ATOS, I would advise them to work hard to make sure everything falls in place for them. Who knows, this internship opportunity may lead to more opportunities – such as working abroad at ATOS globally.

**Q: Based on the experience gained in this competition, what are the aspects that will be focused more for teams who participate in external competitions in the future?**

Hemalata: Inevitably, the experience that we gained, such as the method of competition, the judging criteria etc. will help us in better preparation for the upcoming teams. This time, the team struggled a bit due to lack of technical knowledge & skills, as they were all only Year 2 students. In future, we will focus more on enhancing students’ knowledge in programming languages, such as mobile & web development. These skills are very important as the application developed has to function properly.

**Q: Do you have any messages to the team?**

Hemalata: I’m proud of my boys – four boys. My advice to them is, one should always be humble all the time and should always respect the elderly. They now have this quality, as they are keeping their victory low profile and did not show off with excessive pride. In the future, I hope they can maintain their

excellent team spirit that they have established so far. In their career life, they should also maintain the good connection that was established with ATOS London, ATOS Paris etc at the global finals.

Boys, never stop developing the app. It is an excellent idea and you should continue working on it to make it marketable, so that it can solve the problems of cyberbullying nowadays.

Since their career path is already planned ahead (to undergo internship at ATOS and to be exposed to career opportunities at ATOS), they now have to ensure they plan and make use of these opportunities to excel in life.

Vinesh: The recipe to their success was when the time came to focus, they focused; and now, it has proven that the benefits of being able to focus were an extraordinary experience, a complimentary trip to Paris and loads of unforgettable memories. Therefore, in future, always stay focused. It will bring you success.

Next, they should also try to perform their best while undergoing their internship at ATOS. Having secured an internship and job opportunity in ATOS, an international company, is a big opportunity lying ahead in front of them. As they complete their internship, it would be good if they could come back with something that they have learnt at ATOS for Final Year Project.

Lastly, never stop trying. Do not stop at ATOS IT Challenge. If possible, give future competitions a shot. It will enhance their CV and give them more exposure to the world of possibilities.