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21 Sep 10 - 12 Nov 10

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21
2009 2010 2011 Help



Search

Just this Section

Whole site

Search

- BT Group
- Investors
- News & media
- Responsible business
- Innovation
- Careers

[Home](#) > [Innovation](#) > [Innovation Insights](#) > It's not just about working with world-class academics...

It's not just about working with world-class academics...

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- Innovation Insights**
- Apprenticeship innovation breeds next generation of leaders
 - It's not just about working with world-class academics...**
 - Advertising on mobile phones
 - Facebook phones
 - Living with a Netbook
 - Mobile user interfaces

By *Jeff Patmore, head of Strategic University Research, BT*

Jeff Patmore, head of Strategic University Research, B

Through our University programme we are able to work with the best people in their field. This means real world leading thinkers who are breaking new ground and have teams of excellent people doing fantastic work which provide us with great insight, knowledge and information.

However this is not the only place where we can derive great value - we also work with outstanding students.

Our key partners, the University of Cambridge, MIT and Tsinghua University attract the best young minds in Europe, the US, China and beyond. Students apply to these institutions because they are the best and the institutions only choose the best of the applicants, therefore if we can arrange to find the 'best of the best' to work with, then they will be truly exceptional young people.

During the summer of this year we had our first MIT undergraduate spend the summer with us, she had been selected for the Gordon Engineering Leadership programme at MIT and was at the end of her third year. The GEL programme currently selects only 16 students from the 1000 undergraduates in Engineering at MIT (the best of the best). She was truly exceptional and in eight weeks she was able to change our thinking in the new area of 'SocialTV'.

At Cambridge we have been working with a young researcher since the start of her PhD studies. She was brought to our attention by colleagues at our 'home college' (Pembroke), who understand our objectives. They thought we might be interested in a student who studied for her first degree at MIT, her masters at Stanford and her PhD at Cambridge, researching process modelling and customer centric design. Having now completed her PhD studies and as a young Cambridge researcher, she is helping us to find the 'holes' in our internal business processes so that any new services we develop really focus on the end customer.

Best in China

Tsinghua University selects only the very best students in China. Working closely with key academics to select the 'best of the best' could have been a major challenge, in this new relationship but for the insight and relationships of the leader of our China Research Centre, Jie Zhang.

Jie graduated from Tsinghua with a bachelor degree in 1993 and masters in 1996, many of her classmates have now moved into academic positions in Beijing. Using these key relationships Jie has been able to find the best students and to arrange for them to work on our projects. BT Retail has already reaped the benefits of this, gaining a unique insight into the markets in China.

It has been asked: 'why do we work with these 'old' universities'? 'Why not work with some of the younger up-and-coming institutions?'

The answer is simple we are always open to examining new institutions and new research, but our key partners not only attract the best academics in the world they also attract the best young minds, people who will be the next leaders, the next radical innovators, the next trend setters.

If we carefully plan how we work with these people there will be twin benefits, they will do great things for us now and they will learn that BT is a great partner to work with, value for us now and in the future.



BT and London 2012

BT is the Official Communications Services Partner and a Sustainability Partner for the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games.



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