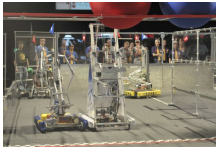


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By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor



Seattle area high school students competing in the Microsoft Seattle Regional 2008 FIRST Robotics Competition  
Microsoft

## **Microsoft Plays "Sports of the Mind" with Robots**

*Via FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology)*

Robotics is one of the areas in which Microsoft's resources are focused via the company's Robotics Group, aiming to build next-generation technology that will define the future. At the same time, the Redmond giant is also pouring a consistent amount of efforts into driving innovation through education. In this context, FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is an initiative designed to combine both robotics and education. Set up to inspire the students' passion for technology, the FIRST regional robotics event featured no less than 30 teams from British Columbia, Alaska, Montana, Washington and Oregon, all competing against each other at the Tacoma Convention Center. Tandy Trower, General Manager of the Microsoft Robotics Group, opined that FIRST is the embodiment of the exciting aspects of robotics, as well as the medium for their delivery. "And that is its ability motivate students' interest, regardless of gender, in science, mathematics and the fundamental aspects of the engineering process. Our sponsorship of Seattle Regional FIRST Competition reflects not only Microsoft's interest in robotics, but also our investment in applying technology to improve the educational experience," Trower added. The FIRST Robotics Competition program debuted back in 1992. Until 2008, the initiative has grown to bring together in excess of 1,500 teams and some 37,000 students from around the world. In April this year, the FIRST World Championships will take place in Atlanta. "There's an emotional connection to this, a connection in the heart as well as the head. The concept of a machine with a life of its own goes back to ancient times, and today we're using robots as a context to stimulate, educate and bring out the innate enthusiasm that a lot of kids have for technology," added Microsoft's Stewart Tansley, senior program manager for Microsoft External Research Robotics Group.