

Press Release

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Hackathon: Knorr-Bremse Challenge awarded third place at TechFest 2018

In a hackathon at the TechFest in Munich in mid-June, Knorr-Bremse challenged talented young people to demonstrate their ability to innovate, based on data from a joint project with DB Cargo. Of the 80 or so teams that took part, the winner of the Knorr-Bremse challenge was ranked third.

The TechFest is a hackathon for tech enthusiasts and creatives, where innovations are developed in a very short space of time. Some 400 students and professionals from a variety of disciplines gathered on the Technical University of Munich's UnternehmerTUM campus in Garching (from June 15 to 17). The TechFest's rules are simple: Eleven companies each set a challenge specific to their industry which the teams of young people try to meet by developing potential solutions and prototypes. They have only a limited amount of time to do so – less than 72 hours from the Friday morning until the moment when they present their results on the Sunday afternoon.

With support from DB Cargo, Knorr-Bremse RailServices set a challenge titled "Shape energy-efficient rail transportation". The goal of the challenge was to further enhance the energy savings that Knorr-Bremse's driver assistance system already provides for freight trains, delivering a tangible, quantifiable improvement for customers and the environment.

The Knorr-Bremse jury ultimately chose the 'eCopilot' entry as the winner of its challenge. The six-person 'eCopilot' team developed an attractive analytics application with an optimized user interface for the vehicle display, incorporating gamification techniques. In addition, they presented an AI-based optimization concept to make this a learning system. Their work was also recognized by the independent TechFest jury which selects the event's overall winners. The winner of the Knorr-Bremse challenge was ranked third in a field of around 80 participating teams. Criteria included not only the level of creativity and innovation of the solution but also the sophistication of the prototype and its potential.

"We were delighted with the weekend – we encountered some ideas with potential which we intend to pursue, and we also met with some outstanding talents," agreed Dr. Marco Nock, Vice President Engineering RailServices, and Eva Lohmeier, Technical Sales and Project Management Driver Advisory Systems Knorr-Bremse. "eCopilot coming third was obviously the high point and was very well deserved – congratulations to the team. For their part, DB Cargo can also see potential in the concepts presented by the teams and together we are already looking at how we can take forward their ideas for improving the system."

Caption: What happens when creative young developers hook up with international high-tech companies? The eCopilot concept from the Knorr-Bremse Challenge took third place overall. | © TUM

Knorr-Bremse is the leading manufacturer of braking systems and supplier of additional sub-systems for rail and commercial vehicles, with sales totaling over EUR 6 billion in 2017. In 30 countries, some 28,000 employees develop, manufacture, and service braking, entrance, control, and energy supply systems, HVAC and driver assistance systems, as well as steering systems, and powertrain and transmission control solutions. As a technology leader, through its products the company has been making a decisive contribution to greater safety by road and rail since 1905.

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