**Farnell element14 award top prize to University of West London academic in University IoT Challenge**

*Noisy workplaces promise to become safer spaces thanks to an award winning invention*

**Leeds, United Kingdom, 4 September 2018:** [Farnell element14](http://uk.farnell.com), the Development Distributor, has awarded the top prize in its University IoT Challenge to University of West London (UWL) academic. Dr Ying Zhang, senior lecturer in Computer Science at the University’s School of Computing and Engineering, devised ear defenders which can dampen background noise, while amplifying important sounds such as speech and alarms or sirens. Powered by the Internet of Things (IoT), the technology promises to protect workers’ hearing without compromising on safety.

Members of the element14 community, which has half a million engineer and maker members, voted on three finalists selected by Farnell element14 from all entries. Dr Zhang’s invention, with its twin benefits: amplifying significant sounds while simultaneously dampening noise which causes hearing loss, was chosen as winner through the online poll. The prize of £5,000 worth of parts and components to build the design, and a test and measurement bundle from Rhode and Schwarz for UWL to use in Internet of Things projects was awarded to Dr Zhang by Alison Knapp, CEM Account Manager for Farnell element14 and Phillip McCluskey, Sales Engineer, University Business Development for Rohde & Schwarz on Wednesday 22nd August 2018. .

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On winning the contest, **Dr Zhang said:** “I was very happy to be shortlisted for the final, so to win the competition is fantastic. I hope this IoT enabled headset will be prototyped and ultimately help millions of workers who are work in noisy, industrial environments. Thank you to the University of West London for empowering me to do this research.”

**Professor Amir Alani, Head of the School of Computing and Engineering at the University of West London, added**: ‘We believe this is a good achievement which is going to lead to more development and we believe Dr Zhang’s product can make a positive impact in the field. Receiving so many votes from the element14 community, which is made up of engineering professionals, demonstrates the strength of Dr Zhang’s project. At UWL, we value innovative research with practical applications and this design is a great example.’

**Mathew Thorpe, Regional Sales Director for the UK and Ireland said**: “We are committed to helping develop the next generation of engineers, and competitions like this enable us to work closely to support educators and academic staff involved in research as they develop their innovative ideas. Our element14 community provides considerable resources for students, educators and engineers - from educational support in our STEM academy, to training, courses and webinars to help members stay up the date with the latest technology and skills. This competition has already highlighted a great idea and we are excited to see the design come to life!”

As Dr Zhang develops the project he will update on his progress on the element14 community. To follow his journey please visit <https://www.element14.com/iot-enabled-hearing-protection-device>

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**Notes to editors**

You can find more details and supporting imagery related to this press release on our newsroom: [www.element14.com/news](http://www.element14.com/news)

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