Microsoft research grants go to Ivy League, Carnegie Mellon...and Clackamas Community College

Microsoft awarded grants Wednesday to academics at four of the nation’s best-known research universities – and also to Clackamas Community College.

Clackamas, working with a team from Intel, won one of five, $100,000 grants to develop applications for Microsoft’s forthcoming HoloLens augmented reality technology.
Clackamas hopes to use HoloLens to create a distance learning program to teach vocational skills in automotive, engineering, nursing and similar fields.

Augmented reality superimposes computer-generated images onto the real world, blending the tactile and digital. Microsoft created a sensation when it unveiled its HoloLens augmented reality goggles last spring, demonstrating how the technology could be used in gaming, industrial design, architecture and other fields.

"You're seeing a blending of game elements and film elements and tech elements," said filmmaker Andy Mingo, Clackamas' director of digital media communications. In addition to Intel, the school is also working with Oregon Story Board, a state-sponsored effort to connect Oregon's technology and artistic communities.

Wednesday's other grant winners are Carnegie Mellon, Dartmouth, Virginia Tech and the University of California at Berkeley.
Microsoft's award includes HoloLens devices and early access to the company's development kit, along with training at Microsoft's headquarters campus in Redmond, Washington. Intel is providing $100,000 in computer hardware, Mingo said.

Beginning in January, Clackamas will offer a three-credit course in augmented reality to begin developing applications for HoloLens.

It's rewarding to have Clackamas included among prestigious national universities, Mingo said, because it makes advanced technology available to students for whom it would otherwise be inaccessible.

"We're offering this type of thing at community college prices," he said.

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