SINGAPORE: A 19-year-old undergraduate has emerged as Singapore's first iWHIZ.

Olivia Chiu, from the Singapore Management University (SMU), beat 11 other contestants and overcame 10 challenges in the country's first infocomm reality game show.

The show was held at Orchard's The Heeren, and each of the three finalists had to choose a floor within the mall and create a portal for wireless web users.

They had to not only design and set up the portal themselves, but also seek the shop owners' permission to display their products and promotions on the portal.

Olivia, an SMU information systems management undergraduate, won an all-expenses paid, one-week trip to visit Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, USA.

She said she found the programme a learning experience.

"From iWhiz, I actually learnt that there are many many aspects of IT. It's not just about computing or about information systems. It's so much more....I learnt a lot more about people skills, for example. This competition is not pure IT. It's about how you manage people as well and making friends and keeping friends is very important," said Olivia.

It was also this people factor that helped Olivia bag the top prize.

Lee Kwok Cheong, Chairman of Infocomm Manpower Council, said: "She's the most all-rounded person. She's not the most technically-gifted, but she's able to leverage on the resources available to her. And I think that's what we really need for an IT winner. Not just IT skills but people skills, project management skills and the ability to work with people."

iWHIZ was an initiative by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) in collaboration with the institutes of higher learning, the Singapore Computer Society and the Singapore Science Centre.

iWHIZ is aimed at showing to the public that a career in infocomm can be interesting and challenging. - CNA/ir