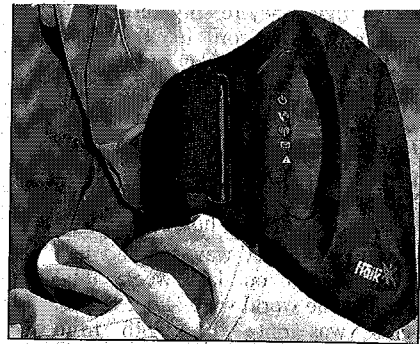


Flaik skis itself to a design award

Source: The Courier-Mail
Date: May 2008



Winner: The Flaik

Flaik skis its way to a design award

Vincent Blake
Innovation

IT looks like a bright orange MP3 player strapped to a ski jacket but the judges of the Australian International Design Award picked it from the 61 finalists as the overall winner of the competition's 50th year.

The product, Flaik, is a performance tracking device for skiing and snowboarding enthusiasts.

Flaik combines global positioning satellite (GPS) smarts with GSM/GPRS mobile phone technology.

The GPS part charts a user's location, speed, distance, altitude and airtime (for jumps).

The mobile phone part of the system sends this data to a receiver on the snowfield and on to the Flaik web portal, www.flaik.com, where users can view their data, compare statistics with other users, and build a profile.

It will be attractive to competitive people who want to bore their friends' silly boasting about how fast they are.

This bragging can be in the form of a personal apres-ski ear-bashing or made using the Flaik web portal.

Australian entrepreneur Steve Kenny developed the concept and took a rough working model to CMD Product Design and Innovation, a Brisbane consultancy.

A team of three designers at CMD, led by Mark Gilroy, took six months to streamline the unit and create a waterproof housing for it that could withstand temperatures of up to minus 20C.

The team spent another four months in testing before they came up with the final product, says CMD director Craig Mounsey, who was in Sydney yesterday before the product was named Australian International Design Award of the Year.

The 50th design awards were the first that were open to entries from overseas.

Of the 159 submissions to this year's awards, 50 (31.5 per cent) were international designs, and 109 (68.5 per cent) were local designs.

The Gold 2008 Australian Design Award-Dyson Student Award went to Michael Ng from the University of South Australia for his Compact Crutch walking aid, which tackled the simple problem of walking crutches being uncomfortable.

Ng's walking aide was developed to improve comfort and delay the onset of health effects associated with the long-term use of elbow crutches, including wrist tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome caused by repetitive jarring.