

Media Release

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Local Student Embarks on a Global Career



Ben Barclay and Ben Thomas-Bridgen at Blink Mobile Interactive, Kariong

Six years ago, Ben Barclay, was a high school student at Central Coast Grammar School. Today he is building his IT career with Blink Mobile Interactive, thanks in part to a growing scholarship program embedded in the Bachelor of IT degree at the University of Newcastle. While in his third year at the Ourimbah Campus, Ben took the *Contemporary Issues in Information Technology* class which covered a range of topics including trends, careers, professional associations and internships

“Through this course, I discovered that many IT companies were providing financial scholarships for outstanding students”, Ben said. “I applied for and was awarded a work-based scholarship with First Data International in the Asia Pacific Product Development Team.” Ben spent 6 months at First Data’s North Sydney office gaining a wide variety of experiences including product support bug fixes, teamwork and implementation of fraud prevention measures. “The real world experience and contacts that I gained were instrumental in securing my next role at ‘Blink Mobile’ at Kariong”.

Blink Mobile Interactive is a local, up and coming, *Platform as a Service* company which converts data for use across all mobile devices. Ben Thomas-Bridgen, also a former IT student at the University of Newcastle, is the Founding Director of ‘Blink’. “Blink is a new way of approaching mobile development in a rapidly expanding field” he said. “We are delighted to have Ben Barclay work for us. He has strong prototyping, programming and customer service skills. ‘Blink’s’ growth means we are always looking for more local IT graduates who have demonstrated quality and initiative in their studies.”

The ACS Foundation is partnering with the University of Newcastle and other local companies to boost internship and graduate career options on the Central Coast. Dr Bill Chivers, coordinator of



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the university's *Contemporary Issues in Information Technology* course, said that "the partnership with the ACS Foundation has resulted in many exciting internship opportunities for our students. We look forward to expanding these opportunities in the future, especially in the rapidly expanding IT industry on the Central Coast". Jeremy Crooks, the Scholarship Representative for the ACS Foundation says, "Ben is the sixth scholarship winner from the University of Newcastle, Ourimbah Campus. Our goal is to create more local and vibrant jobs on the Coast, so people don't have to commute away from their local communities."

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About the ACS Foundation: An initiative of the Australian Computer Society (ACS) the ACS Foundation was established in August 2001 to encourage private and public sponsorship of IT scholarships, higher education and research. The ACS Foundation receives funding from more than 350 company sponsors – including IT companies, industry associations, Government bodies, individuals and the Australian Computer Society itself. Since the ACS Foundation's inception, it has raised over \$17 million in cash and in-kind sponsorship. The ACS Foundation has awarded more than 3,200 internships to high achievers and people who are disadvantaged in some way.

About Blink Mobile Interactive: Blink Mobile Interactive is a young Gosford based IT company. Its clients include Wyong Shire Council, Tweed Heads Council and many others. Blink's product range is fresh and cutting edge. In yet another endorsement of the innovative nature of the Blink Mobility Platform, BlinkMobile has won the Tools and Infrastructure category of the NSW iAwards. This honour adds to the various awards won in 2010 and to the listing once again in the Anthill Smart 100 Australian Companies 2011, and qualifies BlinkMobile to go on to compete in the 2011 National iAwards.

About the University of Newcastle: With student enrolments reaching a record 35,500, the University of Newcastle are striving to make the students' experience the best it can be through a program of innovative initiatives including the expansion of its work integrated learning program.