



SD EXPRESS 2026 STUDENT COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Students demonstrate microSD Express as a high-performance architectural component for next-generation Edge AI systems

SAN RAMON, CALIF. — Oct. 15, 2026 — SD Association (SDA) today announced the winners of its 2026 SD Express Student Competition, an international university program designed to inspire new applications for microSD Express technology in emerging computing systems.

First place: Ori Cohen and Kfir Shauly from Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, supervised by Harel Yadid, for “WildGuard Hierarchical Edge-AI Wildfire Detection,” a power-efficient wildfire detection architecture with a lightweight, always-on, tracking system and a larger vision-language model memory mapped into the microSD Express, was awarded the first-place cash prize of \$20,000 USD.

Second place: Law Chi Chung, Li Chun Ting, and Wong Yuk To from The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, supervised by Prof. Tim Woo, for “On-Device Continual Learning for Autonomous Driving Using SD Express,” a device continuously recording operational data, retrieving replay samples, and an adaptive AI model that maintains real-time vehicle operation with the microSD Express playing an integral part of the learning loop, was awarded \$10,000 USD.

Third place (tie):

- Luis Blas from the University of California, Davis, supervised by Prof. Weijian Yang and Prof. Zhi Ding, for “HarvestIQ: A Dual-Pipeline Edge AI Harvest Station Using microSD Express for Portable Agricultural Intelligence,” an offline agricultural grading station performing local fruit analysis while simultaneously recording full-resolution images, sensor data, and operator corrections.

- Omri Smak and Noam Gati from Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, supervised by Oz Shmueli for “Helmet-Based Threat Detection System,” a wearable, multi-camera threat-detection system combining onboard AI vision processing and IMU-based orientation tracking enabled by a real time multi stream recording to the microSD Express.

Both submissions were awarded \$5,000 USD.

Winning projects were selected based on the demonstrated advantages of microSD Express supported by quantitative analysis, incorporation of innovative technologies, functionality, creativity, and clarity of presentation. Visit <https://www.sdcard.org/press/student-competition/> to see a summary of the unique submissions for the competition.

“The students highlight an important evolution in how removable microSD Express storage can be used in Edge AI systems,” said Yosi Pinto, President of the SDA. “microSD Express is more than a place to save content since it delivers PCIe and NVMe performance in a removable form factor, making it an active architectural

component in Edge AI systems. microSD Express easily supports model loading, data capture, replay, continual learning, and other storage-intensive workloads.”

Each student’s submission demonstrated the robust performance and unique advantages of using removable NVMe-based microSD Express memory cards for a project’s success. All submissions used a microSD Express memory card as the main storage device, operating on an Nvidia Jetson Orin Nano Super Development platform.

The SDA Student Competition was launched in 2025 and continued in 2026 as part of the SDA’s effort to encourage academic exploration of future SD Express applications. Winning teams may also be invited to demonstrate their projects at SDA-supported industry events and trade shows.

Students were free to create their own innovative project for submission. The competition attracted student participants from universities around the world, including:

- Columbia University
- The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology
- Politecnico di Milano
- SRM Institute of Science and Technology
- Technion – Israel Institute of Technology
- University of California, Davis

SD Association

The SDA is a global ecosystem of nearly 800 technology companies charged with setting interoperable SD standards. The SDA encourages the development of consumer electronics, AI, wireless communication, digital imaging, industrial and networking products utilizing market-leading SD technology. The SD standard is the number one choice for consumers and businesses, having earned more than 80 percent of the memory card market with its reliable interoperability and easy-to-use format. Today, gaming platforms, smartphones, tablets, drones, IoT devices, televisions, audio players, automotive systems, computers, digital cameras, and a variety of industrial uses feature SD interoperability. For more information about SDA or to join, please visit the Association’s website, <https://www.sdcard.org>.

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