

Winners of the 2014 BEC Young Professionals Awards

The [BEC Young Professionals](#) event was held in last year, with Marcin Wloch and Neil Moran winning the opportunity to attend an IEC standard-setting meeting in Tokyo. Here, we catch up with them about their experience and what they learned about global standard setting.

In a nutshell, what was it like attending the IEC global standard-setting meeting? For example, was the structure very formal, or did you get to participate, and did you have time beforehand to understand the issues up for debate?

Neil:

Attending the 2014 Young Professional's Workshop in Tokyo was an amazing experience providing a unique insight into the IEC's operations and processes. The Workshop included a combination of presentations, lectures and more hands on interactive sessions where I got to debate some really important issues such as Smart Energy and how participation in the standardization process can be a strategic business advantage for companies. I was kept informed about the content of the Workshop well in advance so I was able to read up on some of the areas that I'm not involved with on a day-to-day basis, enabling me to get the most out of the workshop.

Marcin:

The structure is very formal, we couldn't participate other than see how it works, although we did have time with the UK national committee to discuss the topics beforehand.

A great many issues must have been debated. What were the top two issues that stood out for you, either in terms of personal interest or in their potential impact to the industry?

Neil:

I found many of the topics being debated very interesting but the first that stood out the most for me was the application, distribution and safety of Low Voltage Direct Current, which in the future could really enhance energy efficiency and our use of electricity. The second topic was Micro Grids for developing countries or grids capable of operating in an isolated mode from a larger interconnected grid.

Marcin:

I enjoyed the standard committee discussion about international standards and requirements of high-voltage switchgear and controlgear, as well as the reactions to the switching process in networks and of other components serving as generating, transmission and load equipment, especially technical standards for HV Switchgear with SF6 circuit breakers.

What surprised you the most about your trip?

Neil:



It was surprising and enjoyable to see and meet so many like-minded and passionate electrotechnical young professionals from across the globe, many with similar views, career paths and aspirations as my own.

Marcin:

1. How good the meetings and the YP workshop were organized – I am amazed how precise meeting schedules worked.
2. Japanese culture, respect and hospitality.

Did you leave knowing anything about the IEC that you hadn't known before?

Neil:

The workshop was filled with information about the IEC and its work; I now have a much more comprehensive knowledge around standardization and, in particular, conformity assessment, which is an area I knew less about.

Marcin:

Yes, in terms of the amount of information I learned about the IEC and the standardization process, this Workshop exceeded my expectations by far. The whole Workshop was very professional and full of useful information.

How do you feel now about the standard-setting process?

Neil:

Now I have a better understanding on the development and usage of standards, there simply can't be a more proficient way of developing international standards than having a group of experts from across the globe coming together bringing their technical knowledge and experience to develop a standard for a product or service.

Marcin:

Standardization is necessary for technological advancement and civilizational progress.

Do you think it might be a career path you may consider?

Neil:

I would like to think that both the usage and development of standards will form an important part of my career for many years to come.

Marcin:

Yes, it now seems an obvious career path.

How do you feel it might benefit you now that you're back in the UK and back to work? And how will your attendance benefit your employer?

Neil:



I believe my employer will gain from me being able to build on the professional networks I have already started to foster by participating in the Young Professionals Workshop, with the company having a representative in external standards development organizations either directly contributing or influencing decisions.

Marcin:

I am working in the power electric industry as a design engineer. It is inevitable that I will use the standards in the design process in the future. I feel that, with extensive knowledge in electrical product development, and an understanding of customer needs and conformity assessment, I could take part in developing standards to deliver cheaper, better and safer products for UK customers.

We're running the next event on 30 April 2015, at the Royal Academy of Engineering. What would you say to those going to the event?

Neil:

My advice for up and coming Young Professionals who want to know more about standardization and the IEC with a thirst to get involved in its activities, is to come along to the event at the Royal Academy of Engineering, attend with an open mind and get involved. It's a very worthwhile experience, you will have the chance to network with fellow Young Professionals and meet some of the experts from our profession.

Marcin:

Be positive and proactive.

Three people attending that event will be chosen to visit Minsk for the next IEC global standard-setting meeting. Would you encourage attendees to apply to attend? If so, what, in your opinion, would be the number one reason to attend?

Neil:

Without question I would encourage the attendees to apply for the opportunity to visit Minsk for the 2015 YPP workshop, there is no better gateway for a young professional to become more involved in the IEC and to have the opportunity to play a part in shaping the future of international standardization and conformity assessment.

Marcin:

It offers an excellent training experience and the opportunity to meet other Young Professionals from around the globe.

... And of course, the question on everyone's lips ... did you get to see much of Tokyo?

Neil:

I got to see enough to know that I need to go back to see the sights! Thankfully there was a small amount of time to spare where I visited the gardens of the Imperial Palace, home to the emperor and empress, and Tokyo's oldest temple the Sensoji Buddhist Temple. Both were

amazing places to visit, but of course no trip to Japan would be complete without sampling a traditional sushi bar.

Marcin:

I did see few things like Imperial Palace and Sensoji Temple, unfortunately not more because our focus was on learning.

Thank you to Marcin and Neil for this interview!

There will be another [Young Engineering Professionals workshop](#) this year, held on 30th April at the Royal Academy of Engineering, London