



Hack Day Logistics

The Technovation Hack Day is a “hacking party” where students, mentors and teachers come together to learn App Inventor—the programming language they will use to create their mobile apps for the challenge.

When is Hack Day?

Hack Day typically takes place on a Saturday sometime in late November or December, for 6-8 hours. We suggest holding Hack Day from 10-4 and perhaps allowing time at the end if students want to stay late. Every group will be different, so allowing extra time is never a bad idea.

Where is Hack Day?

Hack Day is typically held on a university campus, because this makes it easier for computer science students (graduate students and undergraduates) to attend. If you are located in a remote area without a university campus or other schools participating near you, you may want to organize a smaller Hack Day at your school campus or a local business.

Who should attend Hack Day?

Teachers, students, and mentors all attend the Hack Day, and everyone learns App Inventor together.

Who runs the Hack Day?

Technovation provides the curriculum and guidelines for the Hack Day, but they can be organized by anyone in any region. You’ll need an instructor for the day, running through the PPT, and explaining the concepts behind each lesson. This instructor could be a graduate student, teacher, professor, or anyone else who has been through the curriculum and tutorials and understands the concepts presented. We recommend that graduate students and undergraduate students in the Computer Science department also come to the Hack Day and float around to help students, mentors and teachers troubleshoot as they learn App Inventor.

Sample agenda for the day:

- 10:00-10:15** Welcome, introduction to Technovation. Get to know your mentor and teammates.
- 10:15-11:00** CrystalBall—everyone creates this app together, step-by-step, following along with instructor. Once students have mastered the basic version of the app, they can modify it by changing the options, designing it with new colors and fonts, adding sound, etc.
- 11:00-12:00** PaintPot. Instructor introduces the lesson and everyone works on it in pairs. When everyone has finished, instructor explains concepts covered in the lesson.
- 12:00-1:00** MoleMash. Instructor introduces the lesson and everyone works on it in pairs. This is one of the more difficult lessons, so we recommend that the instructor be familiar with it.
- 1:00-1:30** Lunch Break
- 1:30-2:00** Finish MoleMash. Instructor can guide everyone through difficult points as a group if students are having trouble with it.
- 2:00-3:00** Create your own app. Everyone creates their own app (either in pairs or individually). This is just for fun, not for the final competition. Students simply practice the concepts they learned so far and create any kind of app they want.
- 3:00-4:00** No Text While Driving. Instructor introduces the lesson and everyone works on it in pairs. When everyone has finished, instructor explains concepts covered in the lesson.

NOTE: Some schools choose to hack through tutorials by hosting several shorter sessions. Have a format that worked well for your community? Let us know!

How to Plan a Hack Day

1. **Contact a local university or host** and find a sponsoring professor or group you and provide you space. Ensure that the room has WiFi (you will need a lot of bandwidth), A/V set-up with speakers and projector, and plenty of tables and chairs for everyone. You may need to print out guest accounts for each student (or pair of students) to access the internet. Groups to try: SWE (Society of Women Engineers), AWE (Association of Women Engineers), or any service groups within the engineering department. It also helps to have the support of a professor or lead who can help connect you to the right resources. Most academic departments have websites with contact information for all of their professors, by department, so try looking up some female professors or graduate students within the department. If you can't find a university to host Hack Day, try a local technology company, a library, a local YMCA, Boys and Girls Club or even a high school. Just be sure that your site will have adequate bandwidth (that can sometimes be a problem in smaller spaces).

2. **Find someone to teach the Hack Day.** The instructor for Hack Day can be any adult who has gone through the curriculum and completed each tutorial beforehand. We recommend that they have an understanding of the basic computer science concepts covered in the Hack Day curriculum. S/he could be a professor (which would help in terms of getting space on campus), a graduate student, a teacher, or anyone else who has reviewed the curriculum and tutorials.

3. Ask a computer science department to help you **recruit undergraduate and graduate students to volunteer** for the day and help teach App Inventor. Students don't need to be familiar with App Inventor, but we recommend that they run through a few tutorials in advance of the Hack Day to prepare for it.

4. **Advertise Hack Day** to teachers, students, and mentors once the details have been finalized. You may want to send information about parking and transportation along with the invite.

5. Make sure that ALL ATTENDEES (including university students, teachers, mentors, students, etc.) have **downloaded App Inventor and** installed everything necessary on their laptops. You can find instructions for downloading App Inventor here: beta.appinventor.mit.edu/learn/setup/

6. **Arrange for lunch** to be delivered halfway through the Hack Day, or ask students to bring a bag lunch and water bottle. OPTION: Ask the CS department or a corporate sponsor to provide funding for the lunches. Alternatively, students can pack and bring lunches.

7. Remind attendees to bring:

- tutorial instructions (PRINT one copy per student)—available through the Technovation course
- tutorial questions (PRINT one copy per student)— available through the Technovation course
- laptops with App Inventor installed
- Android phones (if available)
- USB cables for phones (if available)
- notebook and pencil for taking notes
- lunch and water bottle (unless lunch will be provided)

8. **Take photos** at the event and send them to Jenna@iridescentlearning.org or post them on our Facebook page. Ask students to share about their experiences on the Technovation forum.

9. **Follow up** with a thank you note to the sponsoring university and/or company who helped coordinate the event.

10. **Post questions** on the Hack Day Forums or reach out to schools near you if you have any questions about organizing a Hack Day