

Hackathons Cheatsheet

Terminology: *Demystified*

Term	Definition
API	<i>Application Programming Interface</i> – a set of functions that allow a programmer to access a service. For example, Venmo provides an API that lets programmers write apps that accept payments via Venmo. If your car had an API, it would let you “honk”, “turn on the windshield wipers”, “return the number of gallons of gas in the car”, etc.
Backend	The part of the application that the user doesn’t directly see or interact with. This is usually made up of a server and/or database.
CSS	<i>Cascading Style Sheets</i> – a simple programming language used to style websites. Lets you change text size, color, format images and layout, etc.
Database	A database is any software that lets you save and retrieve data. Parse is an example of a free web-based database that provides an easy-to-use API.
DevPost	A website that lets hackathon participants show off their completed hacks. Also sometimes used for submissions during the event.
Frontend	The part of the application that user interacts with. For example, the frontend of a website is made up of the HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.
Git	Git is a tool that lets you maintain a history of the code in your hack, and synchronize your codebase across your teammates’ computers.
GitHub	If you use Git, you can use GitHub to host your code online for free and easily share it with the other members of your team, and (if you want) the whole world!
Hardware Hack	A hack that involves the use of hardware other than a laptop. Generally these involve knowledge of electronics, such as motors, sensors, lights, and wires.
HTML	<i>Hyper Text Markup Language</i> – used to build the layout of websites
JavaScript (JS)	Programming language used to make websites interactive (frontend)
Terminal	A terminal is an application already installed on most computers that lets the user execute commands and run programs, such as Git

more on the back!

Tips & Tricks

- Within the first couple minutes, focus on finding a good table with outlets for your team... the tables go fast! Drop your stuff off in a safe place and go get swag from sponsors.
- Stay away from oily foods (get the salad instead of the pizza!), and don't overdose on caffeine. Many hackathons actually have healthy, good-quality food these days!
- Take "micronaps" to sustain productivity. Take turns sleeping! Nothing is better than waking up and seeing your teammates accomplish a major task or fixing a huge bug.
- Creation an actionable list of tasks and a reasonable time estimate, re-evaluate often!

Resources

Finding Hackathons

mlh.io/events
hackalist.org

Stay in the Loop

mlh.io/events
facebook.com/TheMellonHeads
mellonheads.org/list
mellonheads.org

Everything Else

post in the MellonHeads Facebook group!
GOOGLE IS YOUR FRIEND