



hack_state

2017 Participant Guide

Hosted by



hack_state

Welcome!

Welcome to the first annual Major League Hacking (MLH) hackathon in Mississippi! The HackState Leadership Team and Mississippi State University are so excited that you're hacking with us.

A hackathon is a sprint-like coding competition. Over the course of 24 hours, you and your team will design and build a new computer-oriented project, such as a web application, mobile application, or a hardware innovation. Near the end of the event, you will show your progress to judges and possibly win some neat prizes.

If you're a beginner, this is the perfect opportunity to learn something new! There will be workshops for beginners and mentors to help you throughout the event. If you're more seasoned, this is an opportunity to share your knowledge and mentor others, or maybe try something that's new for you too.

Remember that hackathons are like marathons. Some people go to compete but most people take part to better themselves and have fun. Whatever the reason you're participating in HackState, make sure you're upholding the hacker spirit by collaborating with other teams, helping beginners, and having fun. Don't worry about coming up with the next big idea or building the next Facebook. You'll have plenty of time for that outside the hackathon. Just focus on learning, having fun, and making new friends. At the end of the day, the skills you learn and the friends you make might lead to the next big thing—but you don't have to do that to win a hackathon.

Be sure to read through the entire participant guide for some really important information. You can visit us at the registration/information table or reach us by email at contact@hackstate.org. Please reach out if you have any questions!

Happy hacking!
The HackState Leadership Team



[Sponsors]

Maroon Tier (Co-Hosts)



White Tier



Gray Tier



Local Pride Tier and Product Sponsorship



Partners



[Schedule]

All events are held in the Ballroom (S&U) unless otherwise noted

Saturday

10:30 AM	Hacker Check-in and Networking Begins
12:00 PM	Opening Ceremony
1:00 PM	Hacking Begins
1:00 PM	Lunch and Teamforming Event <small>Sponsored by the Mississippi State University James Worth Bagley College of Engineering</small>
2:00 PM	Web Development 101 <small>Ballroom (M)</small>
3:00 PM	Android App Development 101 <small>Ballroom (M)</small>
5:00 PM	OSINT - Babel Street <small>Ballroom (M)</small>
6:00 PM	Dinner
8:00 PM	Cup Stacking (Stack Overflow)
11:30 PM	Late Night Snack

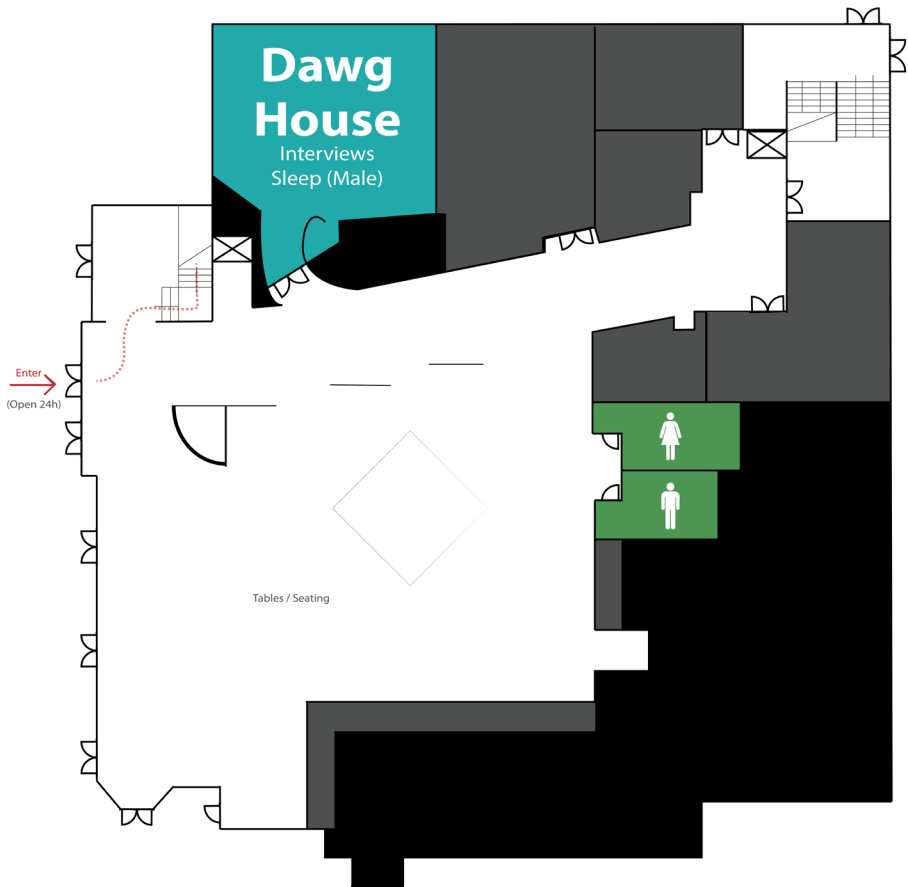
Sunday

8:30 AM	Breakfast
1:00 PM	Hacking Ends - Submit to DevPost
1:00 PM	Lunch <small>Sponsored by HORNE Cyber</small>
1:45 PM	Demo Presentations Begin
3:45 PM	Closing Ceremony



[1st Floor]

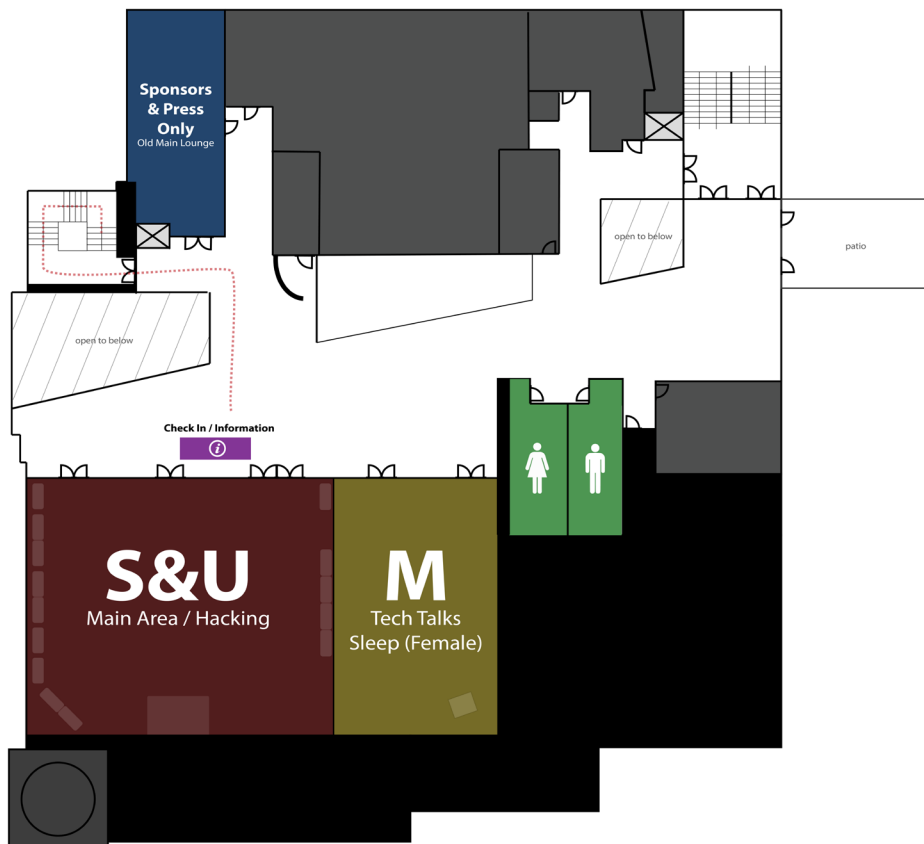
Mississippi State University Colvard Student Union



0011

[2nd Floor]

Mississippi State University Colvard Student Union



0100

[Things to Know]



Photo ID

You must bring a government-issued photo ID (sorry, no school-issued IDs) with you to check in, and the name on the ID must match the name entered during registration.



Rest & Sleep

From 9:30 pm Saturday to 9:30 am Sunday, the Dawg House (for the guys) on the first floor and Ballroom Section M (for the ladies) will be reserved for resting and sleeping. Please be respectful of those in the sleeping areas during this time and keep noise to a minimum (no hacking in these areas). You can choose to hack through the night in Ballroom Section S&U if you want. Local residents are encouraged to sleep at home if they so desire.



Badges

Your HackState badge gives you access to the reserved HackState areas and food. In addition, you must have your badge if you need to re-enter the Colvard Student Union for any reason after 10:00 pm Saturday until 7:00 am Sunday (see the map for the proper door).



Mentors

Mentors are available to help any team! These individuals have experience in a variety of fields and can be a valuable resource. Don't hesitate to ask someone with a mentor badge to help. If you can't spot a mentor, stop by the information table.



Your Stuff

Please don't bring valuables inside the Colvard Student Union. The HackState Leadership Team, Mississippi State University, and all other affiliated/sponsoring organisations are not responsible for lost or stolen items.





Attending Solo

No team yet? No problem! While individuals can hack in a team of one, you are encouraged to take advantage of the teamforming event at 1:00 pm Saturday during lunch to form a team with other hackers.



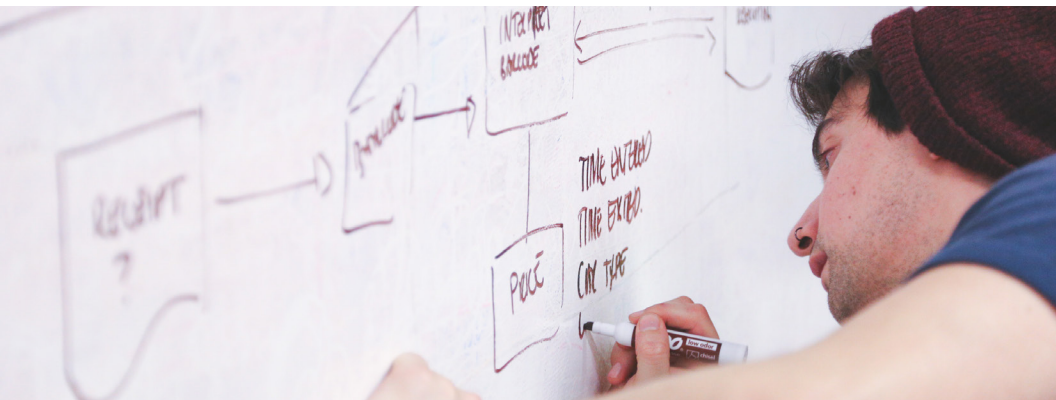
Internet/WiFi

- **msu1x** - This WiFi network is for MSU students, faculty, and staff. An MSU "NetID" and password are required to join.
- **eduroam** - This WiFi network is for students with an account at a different college/university. Try connecting with your school email and password.
- **msuguest** - This WiFi network is for anyone who cannot connect to either of the other two networks. When you open your web browser and attempt to visit any website, you will be prompted to enter the "password of the day." You may have to enter a new password on Sunday. This password will be provided at the opening ceremony or can be found at the info table outside the ballroom.



Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

If you indicated specific food allergies or dietary restrictions during registration, please inform the food attendant near the serving line at each mealtime. While all meals will be free of many allergens, we have prepared specific meals in separate packaging for the individuals who we know cannot eat the general meal.



[Tools & Resources]

DEVPOST

DevPost is a popular, purpose-built hackathon organization tool. By 1:00 pm Sunday, each team should submit their project to hackstate.org/devpost. Only on-time submissions will be entered into the first round of in-person judging. Fill in all the project information and provide relevant images, videos, and links to allow your fellow hackers and the world to see your team's amazing work.



Slack is a communication platform for organizations that groups topics into "channels." All participants will receive an email invitation to join the HackSate Slack (hackstate.org/slack) before the event. Use this resource to receive official announcements, ask questions on a topic, or coordinate with other hackers.

MLH | Hardware Lab

Teams can borrow some cool hardware from the Major League Hacking (MLH) table for incorporation into a project. To reserve some hardware, visit hackstate.org/hardware once the event starts. You'll need to create an account then select the item you want to check out. Finally, visit the MLH table to pick up the item. You'll probably need to leave your government-issued ID with the MLH representative until you return the hardware.



[Emergency Information]

Report an emergency: Dial 9-1-1

Mississippi State University Police Department: (622)-325-2121

MLH Incident Reporting: (409)-202-6060 or incidents@mlh.io

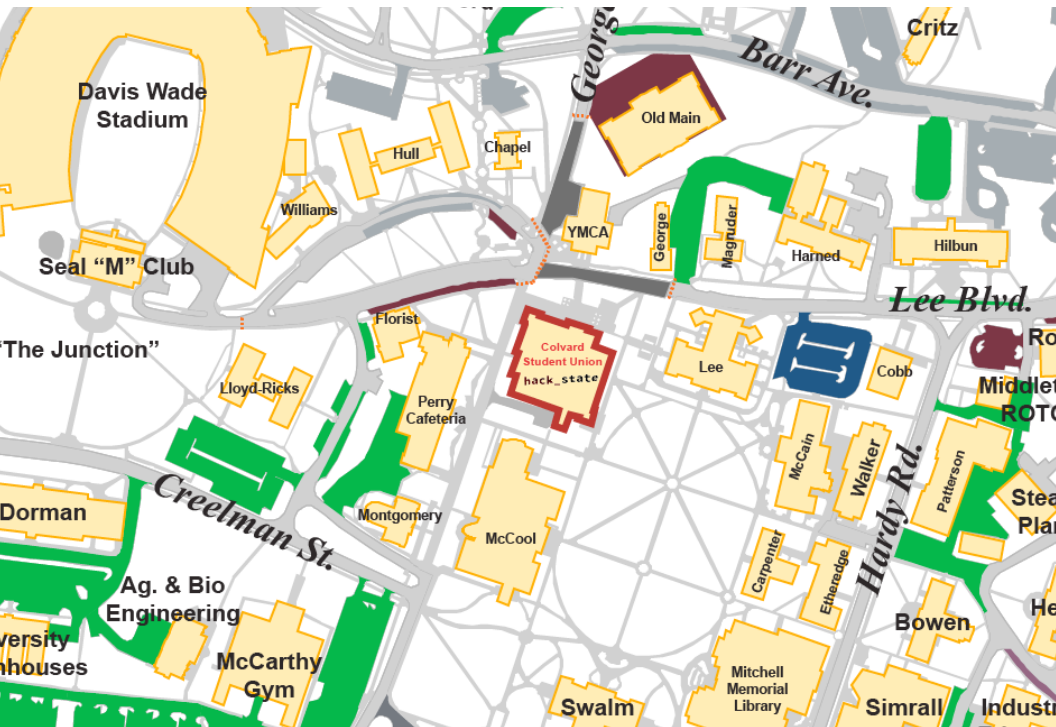
Emergency situation status & updates: emergency.msstate.edu

[Parking]

Participants and volunteers can park in any of the green areas shown below or simply navigate to the parking lot south of the Lloyd-Ricks-Watson Building ([33.454169, -88.792418](#)) and walk to the Colvard Student Union.

Sponsors, mentors, and press can park in the blue area shown below, which is the lot east of Lee Hall ([262 Lee Blvd, Starkville, MS 39759](#)).

■ Recommended General ■ Sponsor / Mentor / Press ■ Restricted / Metered



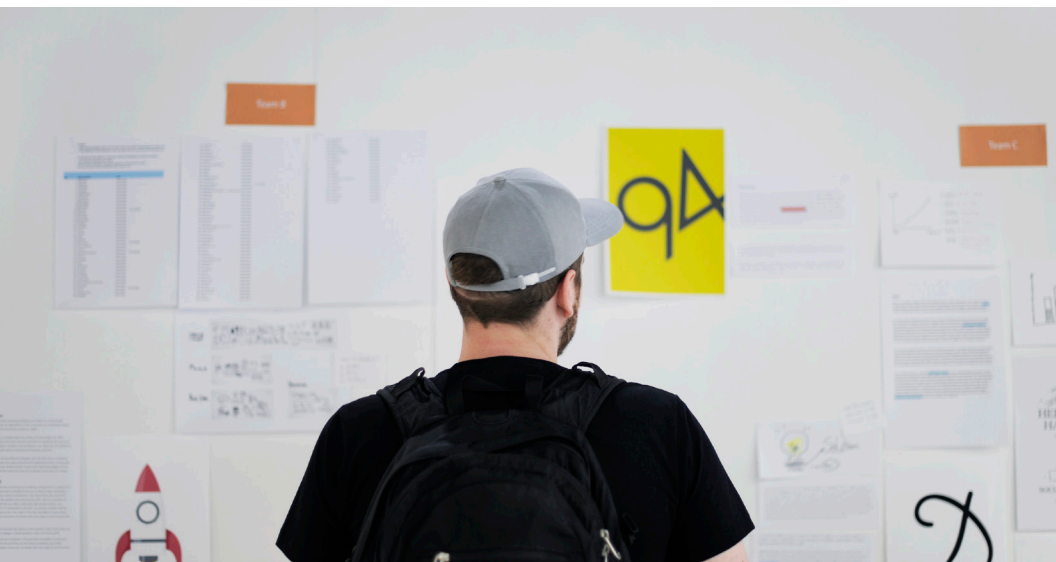
[Demos]

After hacking finishes, teams will show their projects to each other and to the judges.

You are strongly encouraged to present a demo of what you have built. Since you are only judged on what you have done, you'll only hurt yourself by not showing a demo. Even if your hack is broken or your team wasn't able to finish, you are encouraged to present what they have done. It's okay if you didn't finish your hack—that happens all the time!

Also, demoing is not just about the competition. It's a chance to share with others what you learned and what you tried to build—that's what hacking's all about! For being courageous enough to demo, you'll receive a special MLH "I Demoed" sticker, regardless of how good the demo is! If you don't have anything to demo, you can give a presentation about what you tried to do and what you learned. Sharing what you learned can be interesting and inspiring for other attendees.

There will be two rounds of demos. All teams will show their projects to judges and each other in a science-fair style during the "Demo Presentations" beginning at 1:45 pm Sunday. To be entered into this first round of demos, teams only need to submit their project to [DevPost](#) no later than 1:00 pm Sunday. During the second round, five teams will be invited to demo to everyone on stage. The judges will deliberate and the prize winners will be announced at the closing ceremony.



[Judging Criteria]

Teams will be judged on the following five criteria weighted equally. During judging, participants should try to describe what they did in their project for each criterion. These criteria will guide judges in the first round, but, especially in the second round, judges are more free to make decisions based on their gut feeling of which projects are the most impressive and most deserving.

- **Product:** Were the project's features impressive given the time frame of the hackathon? Did the team put thought into the user (end-user or developer) experience and the interface (whether graphical, command-line, physical, motion-controlled, etc.)?
- **Technology:** Were there difficult technical problems the team tackled and solved? Did the technology used and/or the technical complexity involved make you go "wow"? Did the project use a particularly clever technique? Did it integrate several different components?
- **Coolness & Ambition:** Is the project intriguing, ambitious, creative, and/or innovative? Were there interesting additions/features to the project that made it special or unique? Remember, real-world applicability is not scored.
- **Teamwork & Exploration:** Did one or more team members try to learn something new? Was the team stretched outside of their comfort zone? Is it apparent that the team worked together? Did the team members help each other learn?
- **Discretionary:** Did the team effectively convey their work and/or give a remarkable demonstration? Overall, does the project/team deserve an award for their work?

Projects will **NOT** be judged on:

- **Code Appearance:** It doesn't matter if your code is messy, not well commented, or uses inefficient algorithms. Hacking is about playing around, making mistakes, and learning new things. If your code isn't production-ready, that's ok.
- **Real-world Applicability:** You can build something totally useless and as long as you're learning and having fun, that's a good hack! Hackathons are about building and learning. Sometimes a pointless (yet creative and ambitious) project is one of the best hacks!

[Competition Rules]

1. Teams can be up to four people. Hacking alone is allowed, but participants are encouraged to step out of their comfort zone.
2. Teams must be made up exclusively of college students (or those who graduated college within the last year) who are at least 18 years old, and not organizers, volunteers, judges, mentors, or sponsors.
3. Team members must be present and check in to contribute to a project, although temporarily leaving the venue is fine. Only individuals present at closing ceremony are eligible to receive a prize.
4. Teams may seek advice and support from organizers, volunteers, official mentors, sponsor representatives, and other teams.
5. All work on a project must be done at the hackathon event.
6. Teams may work on unoriginal and/or common ideas. It's hard to find something that's fully original and teams might not know if an idea has been done before anyway.
7. Teams may work on an idea that they either had before the event or have worked on before (as long as they do not re-use code).
8. Teams may use libraries, frameworks, or open-source code in their projects. Working on a project before the event and open-sourcing it for the sole purpose of using the code during the event is against the spirit of the rules and is not allowed. Also, teams must be forthcoming and honest about what portions of the project were pre-existing.
9. Adding new features to existing projects is allowed. Judges will only consider new functionality introduced or new features added during the hackathon in determining the winners.
10. Teams must stop hacking once the time is up. However, teams are allowed to debug and make small fixes to their programs after time is up. For example, if you find a bug while demoing your hack that breaks your project and the fix is only a few lines of code, it's okay to fix that. Making large changes or adding new features is not allowed.
11. Teams or individuals can be disqualified from the competition and/or dismissed from the event/venue at the organizers' discretion. Reasons might include, but are not limited to, breaking the Competition Rules, Attendance Rules, MLH Code of Conduct, or other unsporting behaviour.



[Attendance Rules]

Use common sense. Know that a violation of any of the following will almost certainly result in dismissal from HackState, a law enforcement referral, a future attendance ban, and/or other repercussions.

While at HackState or on Mississippi State University (MSU) property, you are subject to applicable law and MSU policy (policies.msstate.edu), which supersede these rules; excerpts are provided for your convenience.

- You are required to comply with the MLH code of conduct. Be sure to read it at hackstate.org/code-of-conduct.
- MSU is a smoke-free campus. Visit smokefree.msstate.edu for more information.
- Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the Colvard Student Union. MSU staff/operating personnel have retained the right to have any person removed who is in violation of this policy or who appears to be intoxicated.
- Unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs is prohibited.
- Possession of any weapon (including firearms) is prohibited on MSU property unless explicitly authorized by MSU. Possession of any type of explosive, fireworks, or the like is also prohibited on MSU property.
- Pets are not permitted in the Colvard Student Union, with the exception of service animals with advance notice to the HackState Leadership Team, who will inform any appropriate personnel.
- You must comply with the MSU policy on the use of technology resources and network. Examples of prohibited uses are:
 - Illegal downloading or sharing of copyrighted materials
 - Harassing or threatening others
 - Downloading or displaying obscene or pornographic material/images
 - Negligently, or intentionally and without authorization, accessing or attempting to access, altering, interfering with the operation of, damaging, or destroying all or part of any IT resource
 - Use or attempted use of electronic accounts, access codes, passwords, or other electronic identification credentials assigned to others or electronically impersonating others

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September 23-24, 2017
Mississippi State University



Organized by the Mississippi State University Student Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). Copyright © 2017.

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For disability accommodation, please contact Charles Boyd at charles@hackstate.org.

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