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Franklin High School Adopting Student-Built App that Improves Communication Between Students, Teachers and School Administrators

App helps students track assignments, announcements and school events

PORTLAND, Ore. — A team of enterprising students has been working hard to bring their new app to Franklin High School and this semester, that goal is becoming a reality.

Teachers, school administrators, club leaders and sports teams have signed on to use the FHS App to post important information about class assignments, school events and important notices.

"The app is a fantastic way for teachers to maximize their teaching time in class, because they don't have to listen to the announcements." explains Rob Jamieson, Mathematics teacher at Franklin High School. "It provides additional ways for students to take control of their own educational experience."

The team has been training teachers to use the app and spreading excitement among the student body. The app is currently available in the iTunes App Store, on Google Play and on the web at http://www.fhsapp.com/client/.

"We created it to revolutionize the announcements, it's a different way to get information," said FHS Senior Griffin Drake.

The students began working on the project in the summer of 2012. First order of business was figuring out what problem they wanted to solve. They chose to tackle reinventing the school announcements which were difficult to hear over the school's loudspeaker system. They started with conversations and whiteboard sketches and eventually moved into UI design, development, testing, promotion and product release. The app grew in scope to include announcements about class assignments, link to school resources, show a school calendar and gather feedback from users.

As part of their product release strategy, the team is coordinating a series of school events throughout November that they are dubbing "FHS App Month" to raise awareness about the app. Events will include coding challenges, a contest for suggesting new app features, rewards for app-related social media posts, extra credit available only through the app and free food.

The project is supported by the Technology Association of Oregon and has ties to the school's year-old technology incubator, Innovation Academy. Gage Choat, owner and web developer at Harmonic Northwest, serves as mentor for the project, meeting with the team once a week to guide the coding process. The codebase is open-source and was used as the framework for a similar app developed by

students at Wilson High School and used by local residents and the police department to communicate announcements related to community safety.

For more information about the Franklin High School app, visit http://fhsapp.com/admin/help.php.