

The background is a dark, swirling blue and black gradient. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized, colorful illustration of a building with blue and yellow geometric patterns. Various colorful shapes are scattered throughout: a green star with a yellow center in the top left, a pink star with motion lines in the top center, a green star in the middle right, a pink gear in the middle right, a green gear in the bottom center, and a green star in the bottom left.


Hackathon Pitching 101

Getting the most out of demos this weekend

Hello!

I am Jacklyn.


I've judged 40+ hackathons, won 14 prize categories, and will be judging at Hack the North this weekend.

 @JackBiggin




Agenda

1. What are demos, judging and pitching?
2. The anatomy of a good pitch
3. Targeting your audience
4. But wait, I didn't finish my project!
5. Let's practice!



**What are demos,
judging and pitching?**



Demos

**Take place on Sunday - a chance to show off
your projects to judges.**



Judging

You demo to judges! They evaluate the project you built this weekend.



Pitching

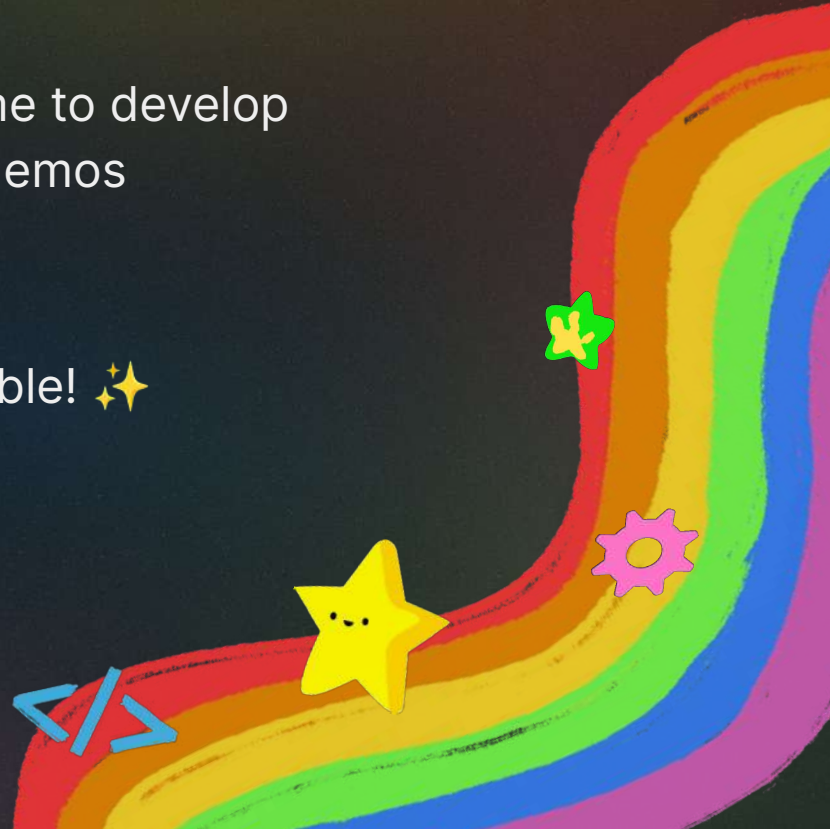
During your time with judges, you'll pitch your project to them!



Important things to remember

- Judges want you to succeed
- Pitching is a skill that everyone takes time to develop
- It's totally normal to feel anxious about demos

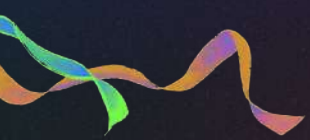
Most importantly: you're going to be incredible! ✨



50%




of hackers at hackathons are first time hackers!



The anatomy of a good pitch



What do you think?



What / Why

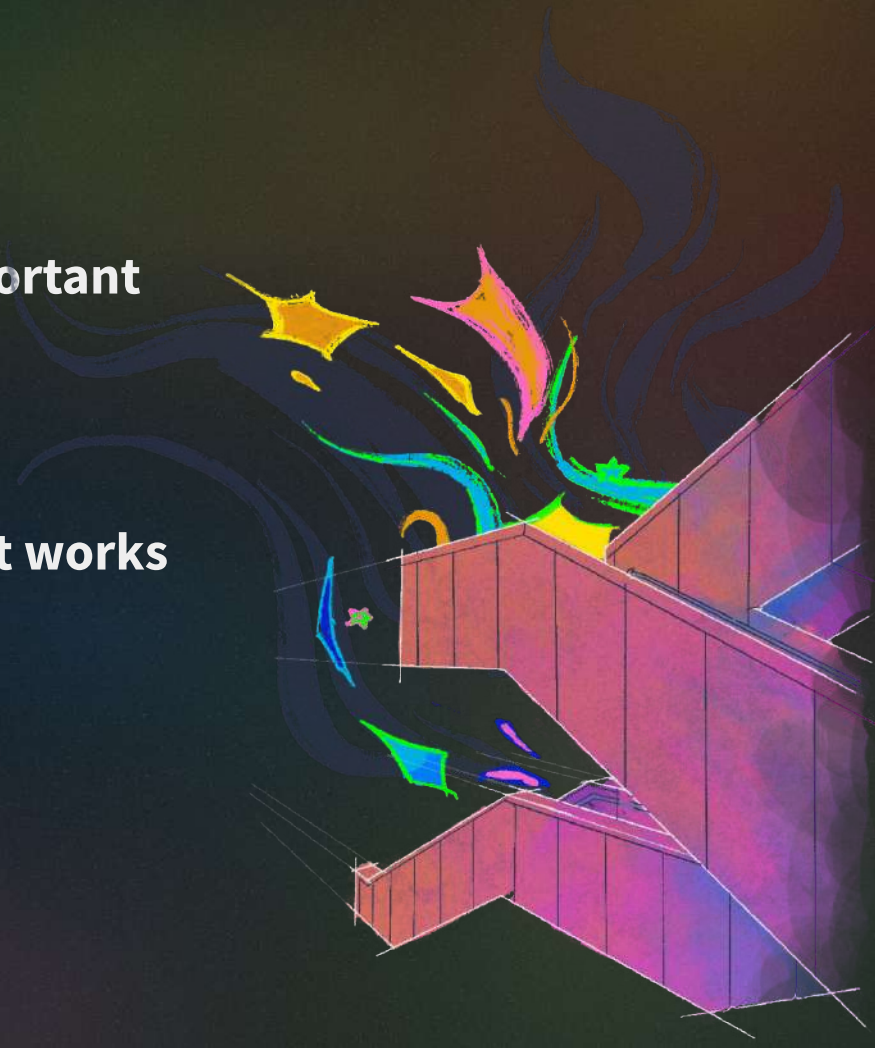
What your project is and why it is important

How

How, on a technical level, your project works

Live Demo

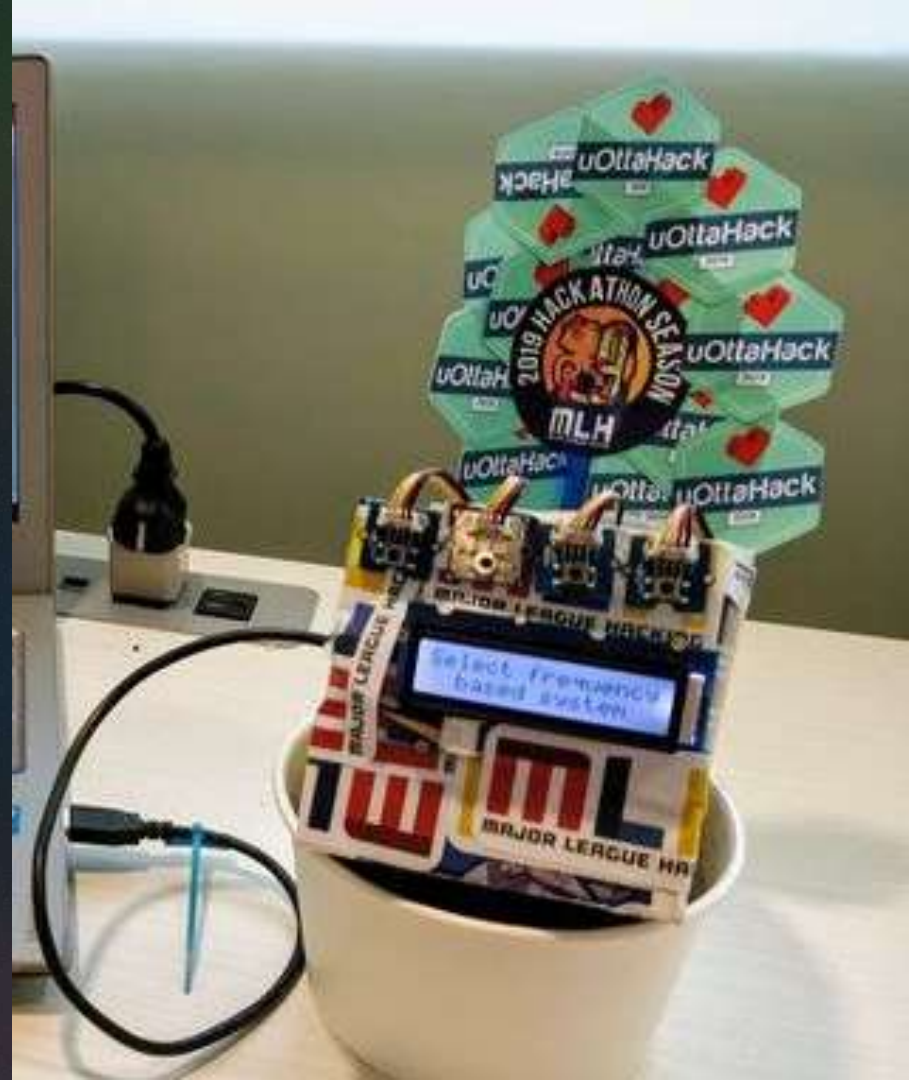
Show off your project in action



What / Why

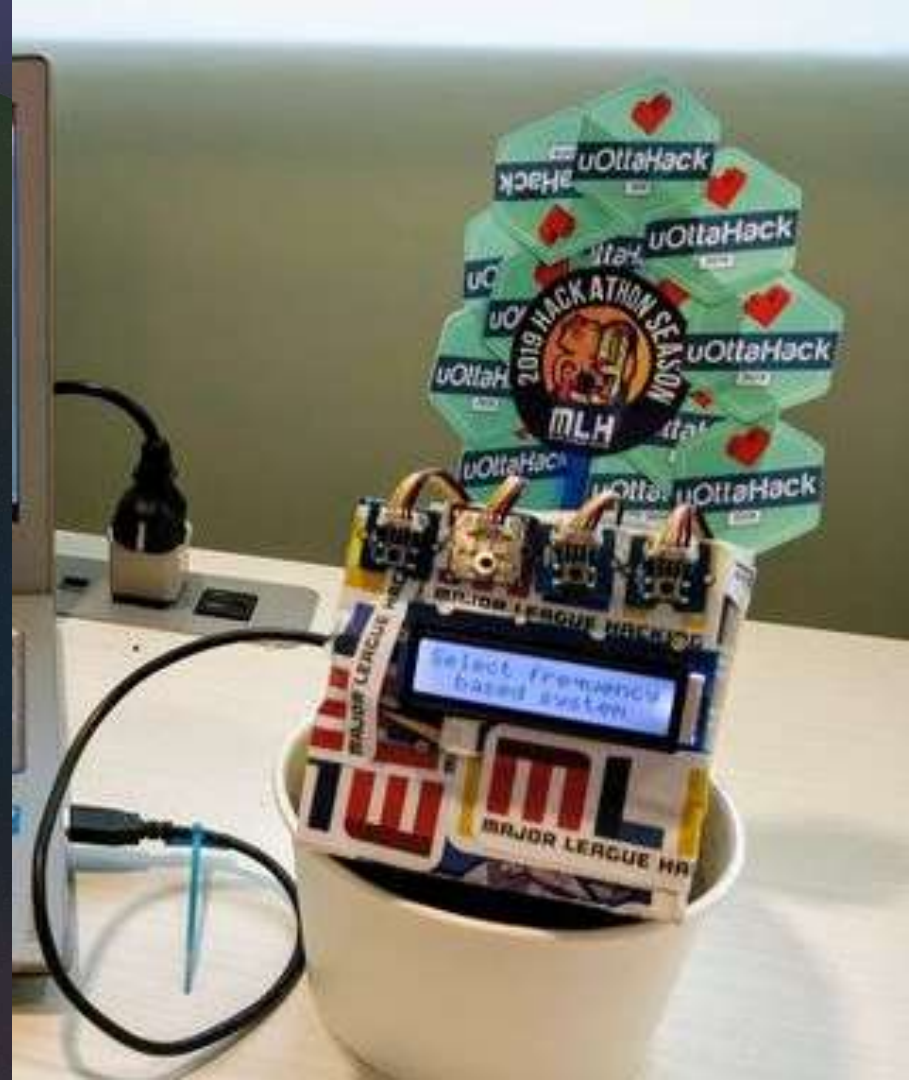
Explaining what your project is

- “We built _____, a _____ that _____”.
- Your aim is to hook your audience
- You **don't** need to dive too deep into things at this point
- Keep this brief
 - Prioritize showing over telling



The Hook

“We built PowerPlant, an Arduino-based planet health monitor that is designed to work in less-developed countries”



Hackermøn

- Multiplayer Pokemon style turn-based game powered by Twilio SMS
- Developed in Node.js - runs on a Express server
- Frontend is a HTML/CSS website, no framework used
- We tried to use Facebook's game API but it didn't work



The Hook

“We built Hackermun, a
_____ that
_____”



Olavasaur



Penguinator



> name of the Hackermun you want to play as to +1 6



The Hook

“We built Hackermøn, a turn-based game that is played via SMS”



The Hook

“We built Hackermun, a proof of concept that showcases how SMS could be used for large-audience games”



Your turn!

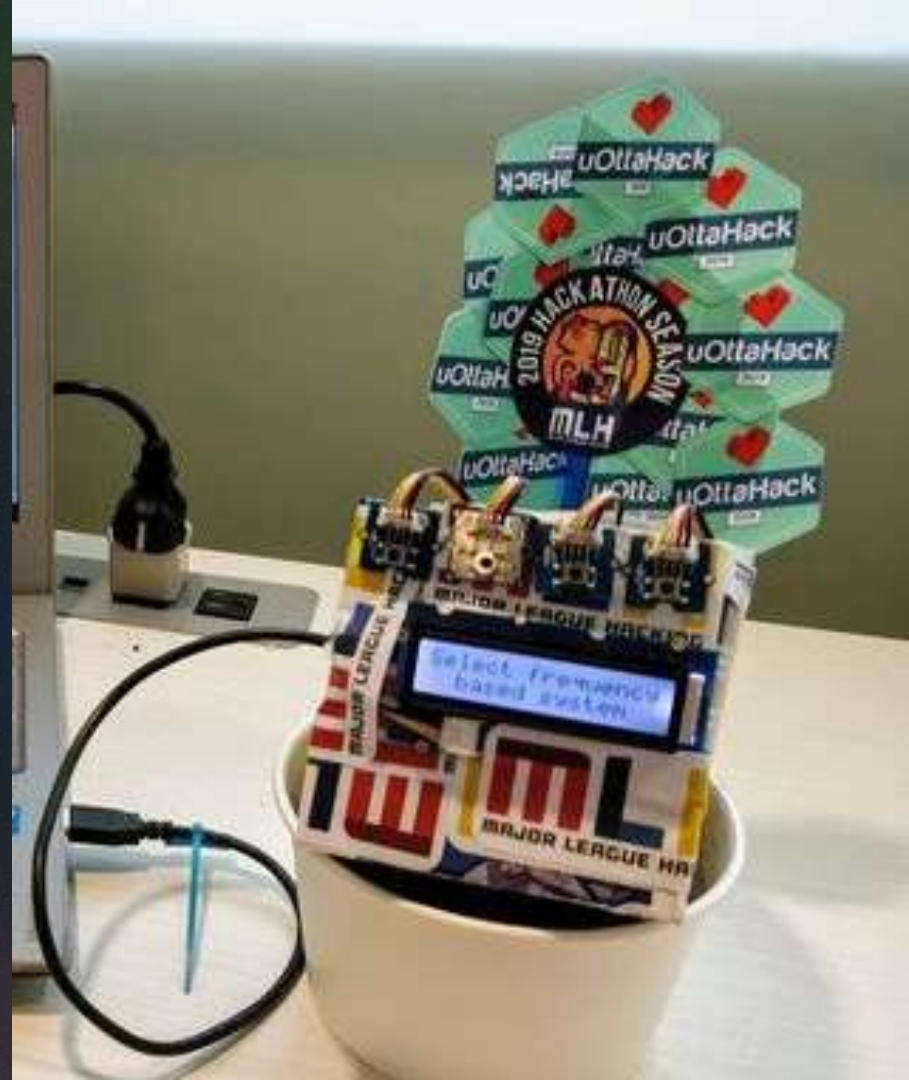


“We built _____, a _____ that _____”

What / Why

Expanding on what your project is

- “It does this by _____ to _____”
- “It can also _____”

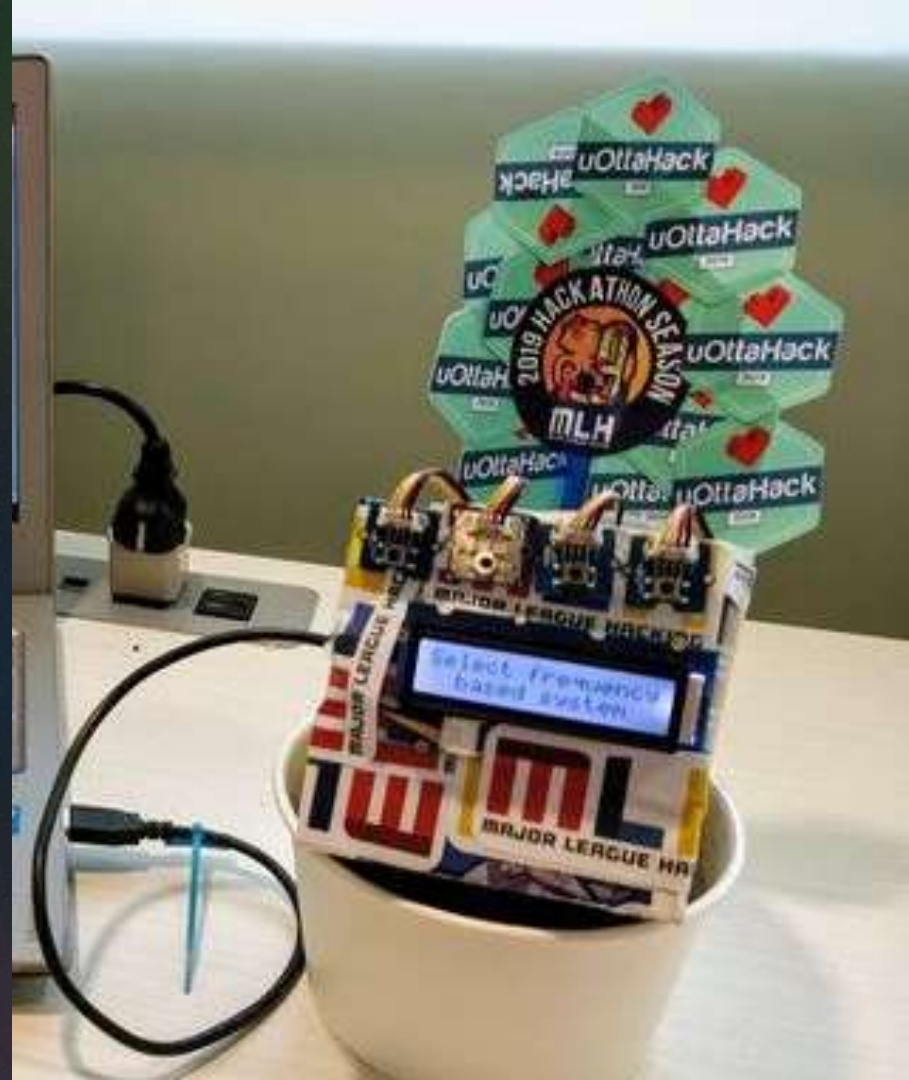


What / Why

Showcasing your project's impact

- “**ProjectName** has the potential to _____ as it _____”
- “This area of focus is important because _____”
- “There aren’t currently any existing solutions to _____, which is why we built **ProjectName**”

Use your research and stats as appropriate.



Not sure of your why?

- Ask other hackers
- Research online to back up claims
- Above all else, don't worry!



Your turn!

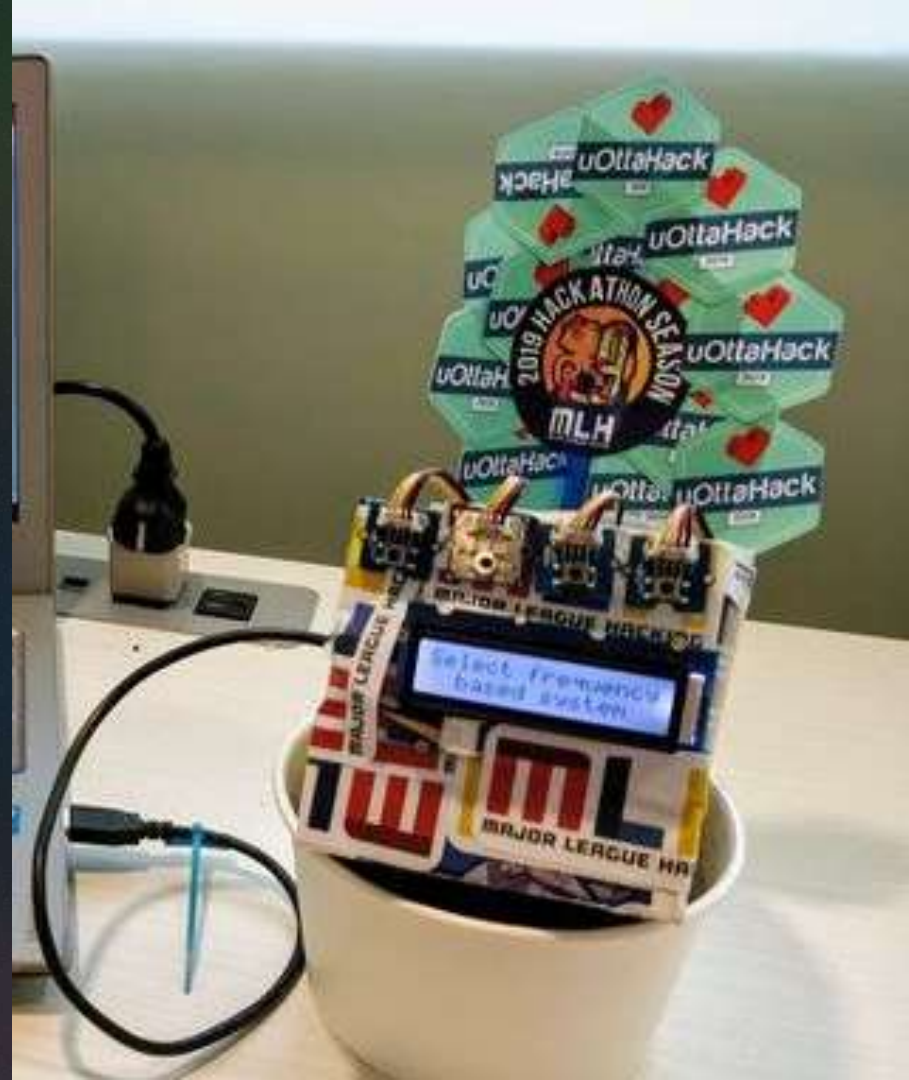


Why is your project important?

How

Showcase your technical skills

- “We used _____ to _____”
- “We integrated _____ with _____ to _____”
- “Our project is hosted on _____, because _____”
- “We trained a machine learning model to _____. It does this with __% accuracy.”



Your turn!



How does your project work?

Pro-tip: Include your “how” section in your live demo

**You have very limited time! Make the most of
it.**



Live Demo

The most important part of your pitch is your live demo

- Your what and why sections provide judges with context
- Your how section, and your live demo showcase your accomplishments

You should move onto your live demo within the first minute of your pitch



Live Demo

Follow the flow of what a user would do:

- Show off features that work
- Explain how they work

Pro-tip: briefly show complex backends to your judges



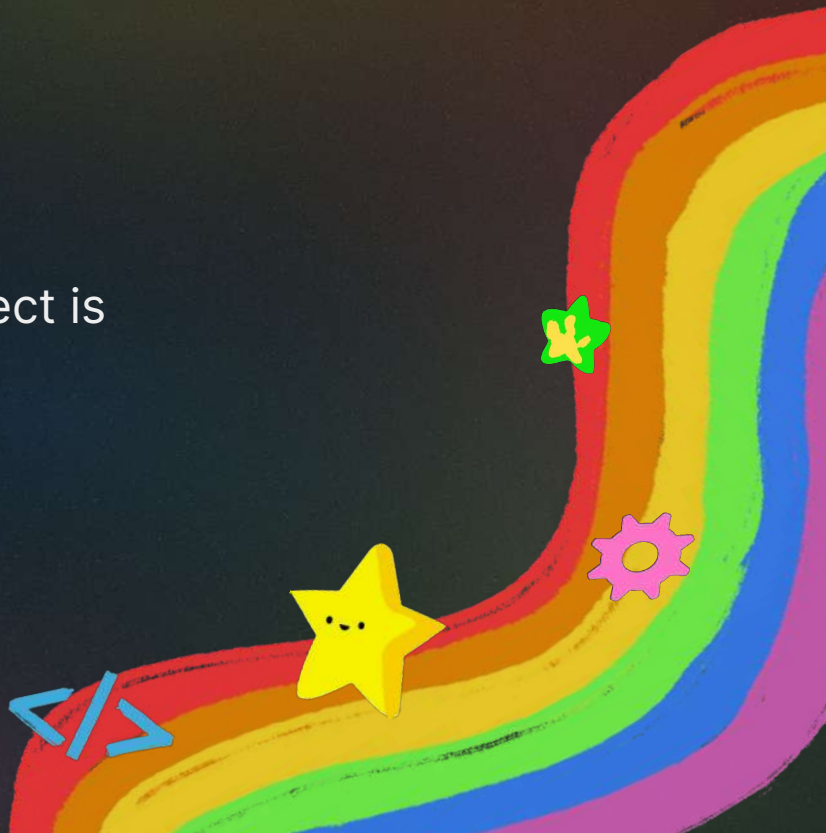
Live Demo

Google



What doesn't go in your pitch?

- Really long intro slides
- A ton of backstory about your project
- A 2 minute explanation of how your project is definitely going to change the world
- Anything that isn't true





Targeting your Audience





Overall Judges



Sponsor/Partner Judges

Overall Judges

- Judge based off Hack the North's rubric
- Focused on determining Hack the North's finalists

JUDGING CRITERIA

Wow factor

Does the project stand out?

Technical Difficulty

How technically complex is the project?

Originality

Is the project new or unique?

Design

Is the project easy to use and polished?



Sponsor/Partner Judges

- Are promoting a tool or technology
 - Want to see how you made use of it
- Might be using a different rubric

Pro-tip: ask them what they're looking for in a project!



Tailoring your pitch

Overall Judges

- Interested in how much your project stands out overall
- Judge based off Hack the North's rubric, which you can find on Devpost
- Vast majority have a technical or product-focused background


Sponsor/Partner Judges

- Interested in how well you used their technology
- Judge based off their own rubric or no rubric - if you can, talk to them before judging
- May or may not be technical, some sponsor judges are recruiters


Tailoring your pitch

- When demoing to a sponsor, focus on their technology
 - What did you use it for?
 - Which features of their technology did you use?
 - Why did you use it? (*"I wanted to win your prize" isn't a good answer*)
 - What challenges did you run into?
 - How did you overcome these challenges?
- Work out how technical the judge is, and modify your demo accordingly
- If a judge asks questions mid-demo, guide your pitch accordingly

Don't just use the same pitch for every judge.



**“But wait, I didn’t
finish my project!”**



It's okay to not finish.

Many teams this weekend won't finish their project. You can still show off your achievements to the judges!



Show off what you have

Got an awesome frontend? A cool API?

Mention challenges

Why didn't you finish everything?

Explain next steps

If you had more time, what would you have done?



Your turn!



What do you already have working?



Let's practice!



Thank you!

Any questions?

