what is a

Hackathon()

A catalyst for creativity, innovation and co-creation

Hackathon (noun): an event, typically lasting several days, in which a large number of people meet to engage in collaborative solutioning.

Who can attend?

- People who want to contribute to the overall success of the project
- Different perspectives (product owners, business analysts, PMs, etc)
- Non-technical people welcome!

What is it good for?

- Safe environment for new ideas
- Learn new technologies
- Internal/external networking
- Innovate and collaborate!
- Recruit new talent
- PoCs, MVPs, process improvements, ideas and concepts

Where are they?

College hackathons

Corporate hackathons

Civic hackathons

College

Student-run mega hackathons where students potentially from all over the world come together to learn about and create with new technologies

Corporate

Internal company hackathons or external sponsored hackathons used to recruit new talent and ideas

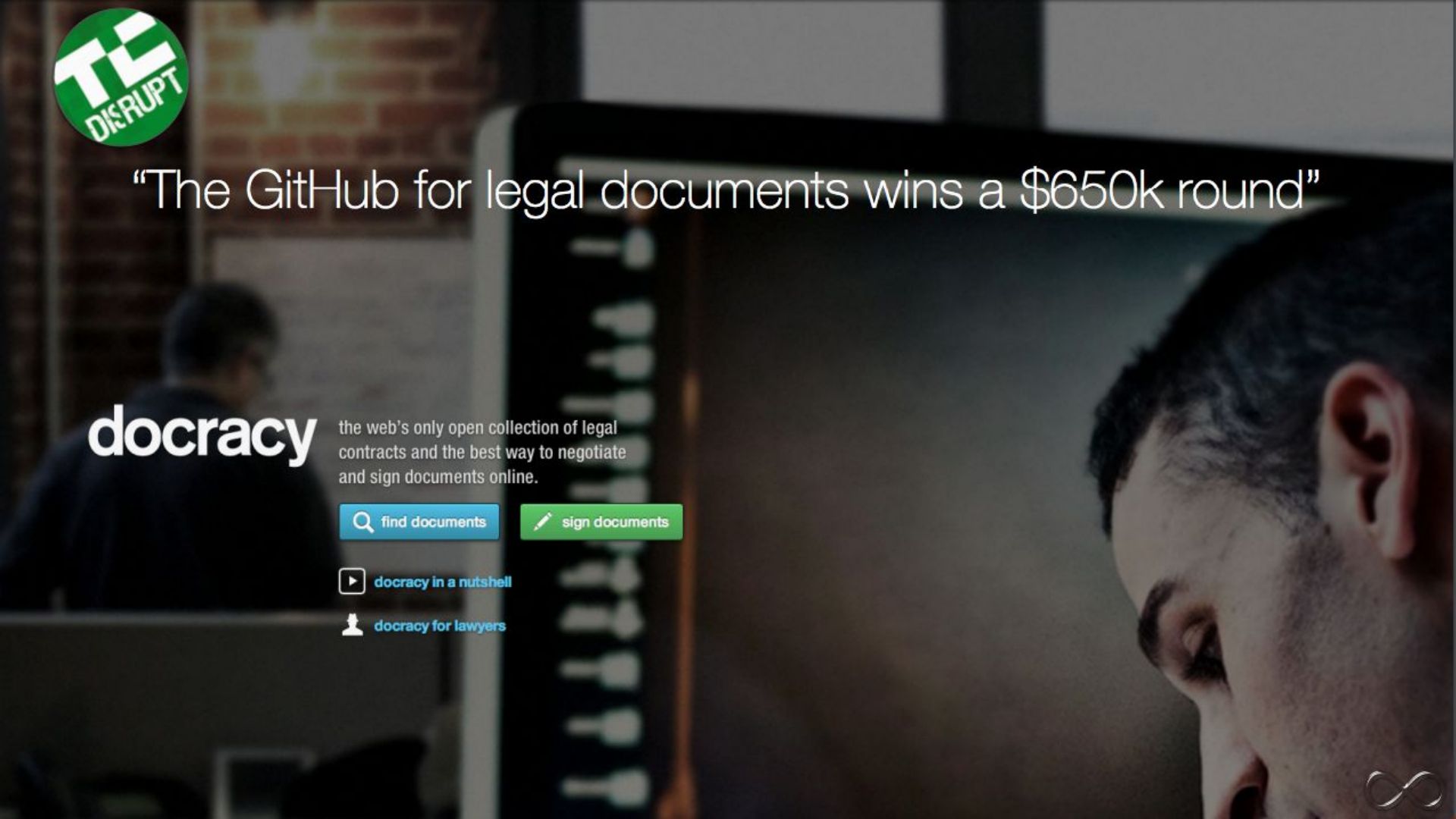
Civic

Civic Hackathons are focused on finding solutions to solve local civic challenges. Developing smart cities, open data, and social cohesion

Ideas

that were born in hackathons

Like and **Chat** came out of an internal hackathon


TC DISRUPT
"The GitHub for legal documents wins a $650k round"
docracy
the web's only open collection of legal contracts and the best way to negotiate and sign documents online.
find documents
sign documents
docracy in a nutshell
docracy for lawyers

groupme

Chat with your groups online: Log in

The best way to chat
with everyone you kn

Get the App

"Life
GIZM

skype™

Free group messaging

It's like a private chat room for your small group. Have as many as you want, and it's always free. Now, you can coordinate with coworkers, organize a game night, and keep in touch with family all in the same place.

Some Guidelines

Determine a Goal

- Do you have a project in mind?
- Do you have a theme in mind?
- Will the deliverables be a fully baked PoC or prototype mvp
- Will you develop a process, product or idea?

Determine length

- Most hackathons are on weekends
- Will it be enough time for a mvp or PoC?
- Measure of time will determine output value

Determine Participants

- Is it an internal or external hackathon?
- Is it a company hackathon with external guests?
- Will all different perspectives be invited (BAs, PMs, Non-technicals, etc)
- Can you provide for that many participants

Determine Logistics

- Put together an organized schedule of activities, an accessible agenda
- Will there be enough meals/drinks/snacks? (Dinner time should be included in the schedule)
- Document a “Tech toolkit” (Software tools, maybe hardware tools, sample data sets, etc)
- Do you have enough space? (Includes space for working, recreational activities/break room, dinner, maybe even sleeping room)

Determine Location

- Consider parking and building access
- Whiteboards and wifi (general dev set up)
- Enough power strips/electrical outlets
- Collaborative setting and friendly environment

Spread the word!

- Internal :: advertise, email
- External :: social media, Eventbrite, meetup.com
- General word of mouth in the tech community

Some Specifics

Present the Goal

- On the opening hackathon day, it is usual to present the big idea/theme and all the details associated
- Give an understanding of expectations
- Describe schedule/agenda, resources (mentors, tech toolkit, break rooms, etc)

Common Practices

- It is common to have a big Slack channel dedicated to the event, with specific channels used for #mentors, #announcements, #networking, etc.
- It is also common to list out rules and regulations for the event (MLH has a great code of conduct, more on that later)

More common practices

- Opening presentations usually show (or hint) the prizes to be awarded to the best hacks
- Mentors and event volunteers usually have an event shirt, distinguishing them from participants
- Brainstorming/Team formations begin after the opening presentation

Volunteers, Mentors, Sponsors

- Mentors are people that are highly skilled in a particularly skillset
- Volunteers and Mentors must also have their own clear agenda/schedule
- Make sure to separate shifts fairly
- Balance the types of shifts given (food service balanced with a recreational activity lead)

Recreational activities

- Remember that this is an event that demands some creativity
- Allow for creative breaks between code/work
- Have dedicated space and time in the schedule for these activities (attendance is not mandatory)
- These activities can also include prizes
- Remember sitting is the new smoking

Ideas for Recreation

- Coloring pages, board games, stress relieving spaces (aroma therapy rooms/sound therapy rooms)
- Presentation Karaoke
- Riddles, Brain teasers, puzzles
- Actual karaoke
- Drawing competition

Workshops

- Many hackathons have workshops
- Mentors/sponsors can hold TED talks about a particular technology (api, cloud service, framework, etc)
- “Fireside chats”
- Demos on how to use certain technologies
- Continuing the conversation about the main theme/idea/goal

Judges

- There is usually a dedicated group to judging the final projects
- People usually submit to Devpost for the project deadline (As required by the hackathon)
- Certain judges judge for certain categories (of which they decide who gets the winning prize for, ex: best productivity hack -> a mavic pro drone)
- Judges should be experts at their field, and should create or be given a judging criteria

Presentation and Demos

- There is usually dedicated time to presentations for the participants projects (where the judges walk around and judge whoever submitted for judging)
- Demos are also encouraged during presentation, to show a working product
- There is usually time allowed before the presentation for participants to have a break

Meals and snacks

- Remember to be conscientious of all cultures, religions and lifestyles
- Snacks could include caffeinated chocolate (Awake chocolate and insomnia cookies are typically offered)
- MLH usually has snacks to accommodate every personality (energy drinks, or fruit, chobani yogurt)
- Would be nice if meals comply with FDA nutrition guidelines

Code of Conduct

- Of course with every event, there is a need to establish some rules and guidelines
- Behavioral expectations
- Supporting a friendly community environment
- If the events building access is limited, participants should respect those rules

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Innovate

or

Disintegrate

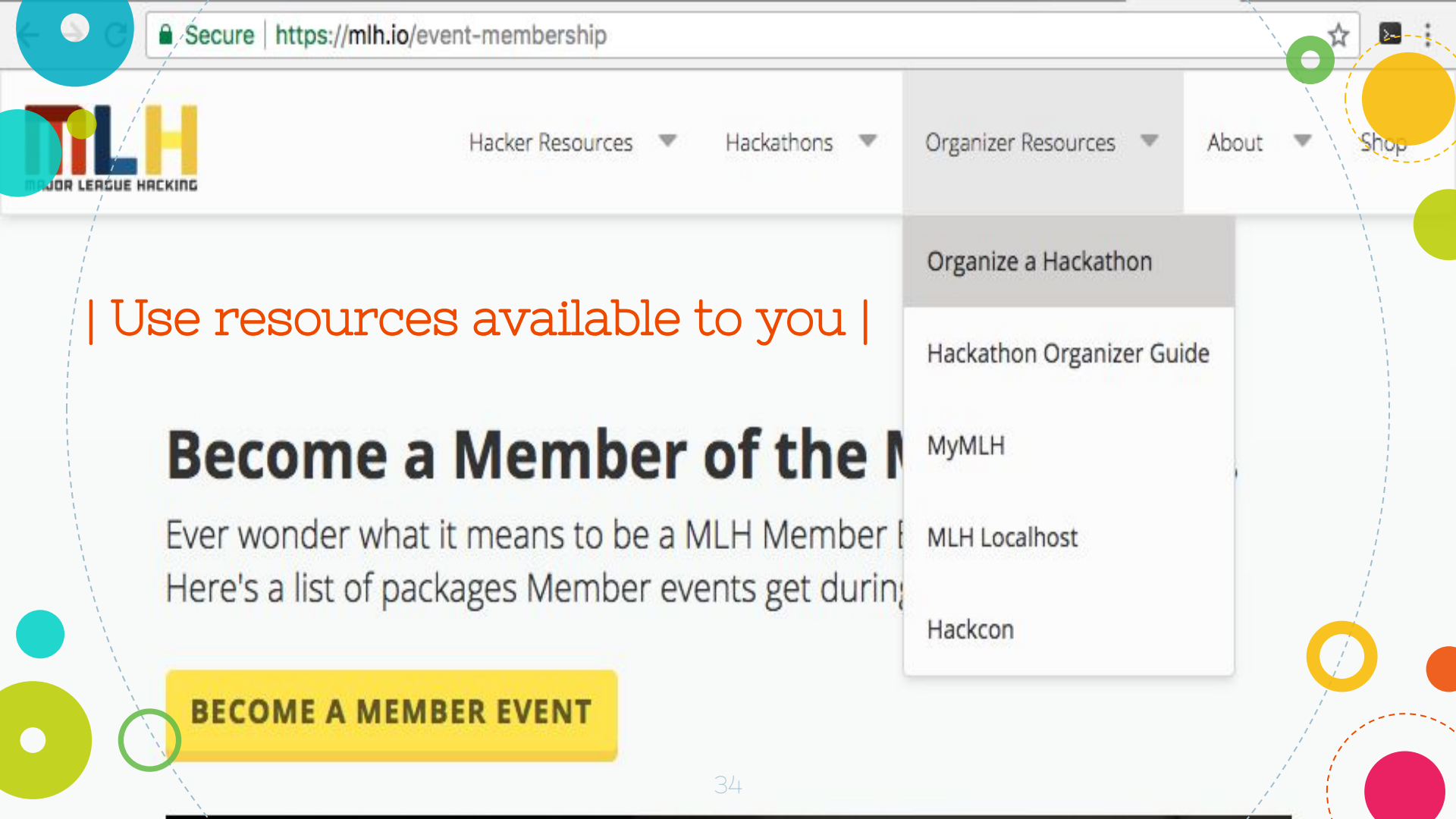
Read more on 3M Corporations

Innovation Mindset

Why reinvent the wheel?

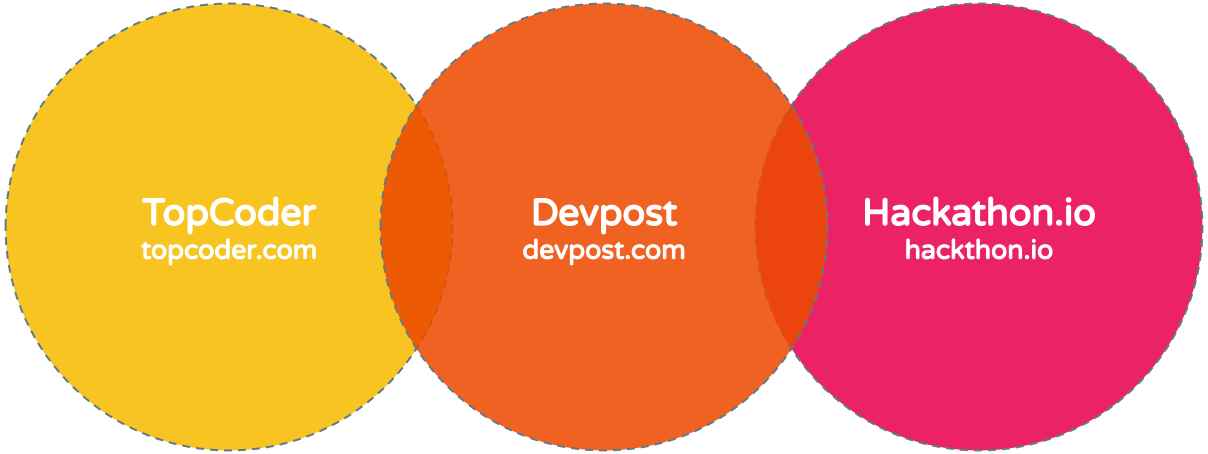
Let's learn from example

HTTP://MLH.IO



| Use resources available to you |

There are a few big resources that would help you organize a hackathon



MLH Resources

- This is the code of conduct used in most college and company sponsored hackathons
- This is their community values
- These are their hackathon rules
- Member guidelines

Sponsorship Resources

- Andrew Raynesio, a software developer has a list compiled for all credible sponsors that usually sponsor hackathons
- As a company, it would be good to consider sponsoring other hackathons, and it would create the same external recruiting effect without the legwork

Some Examples

U of Buffalo Hacking

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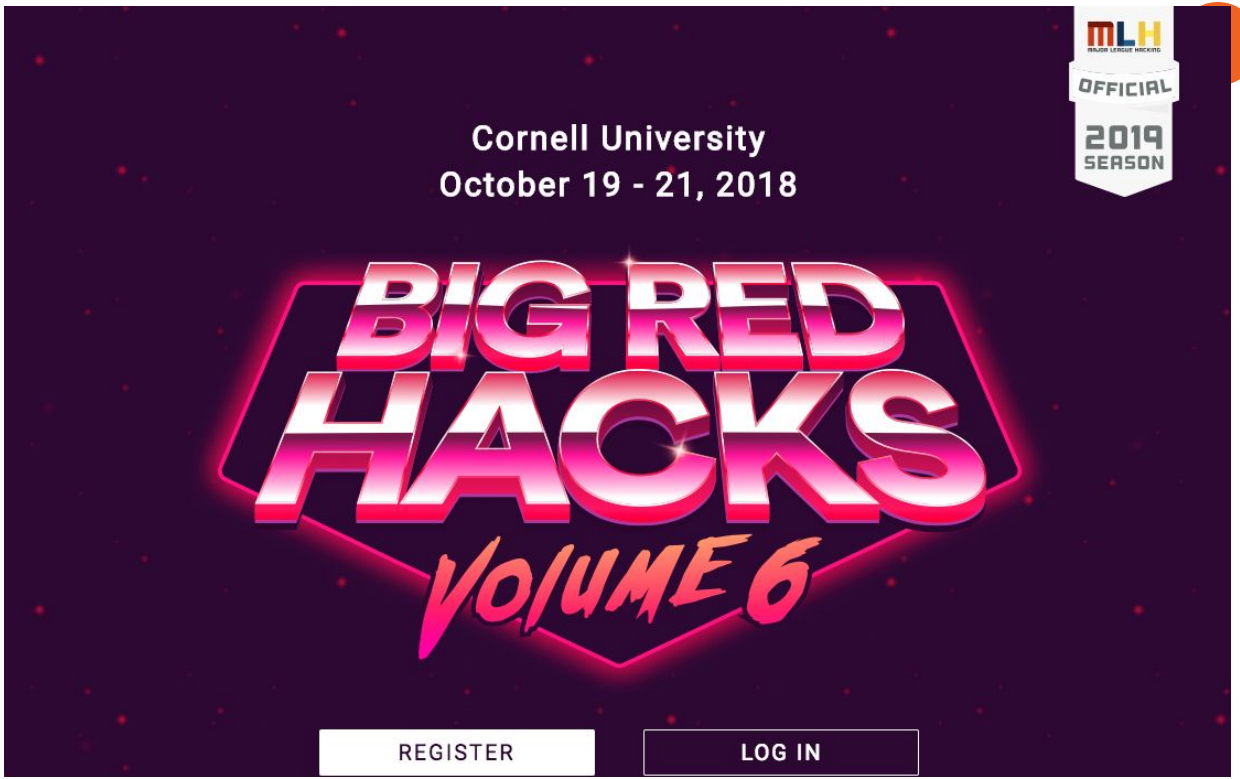
www.ubhacking.com

Cornell Hacking



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www.bigredhacks.com

U Penn Hacking

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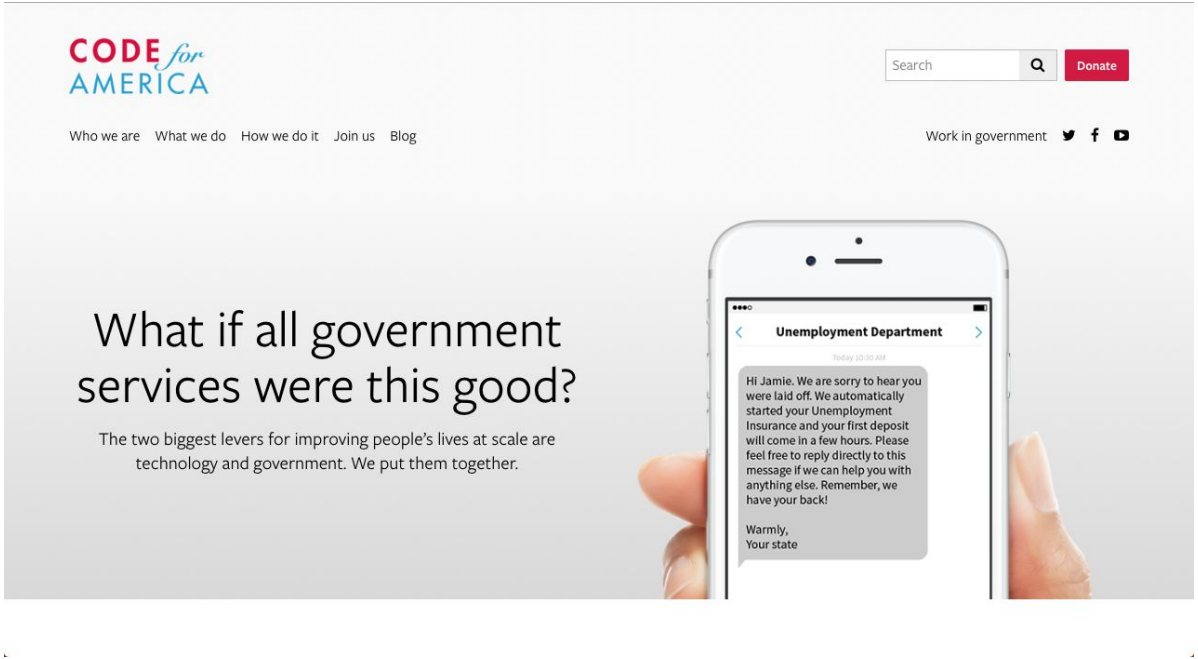
2018f.pennapps.com

Code of America



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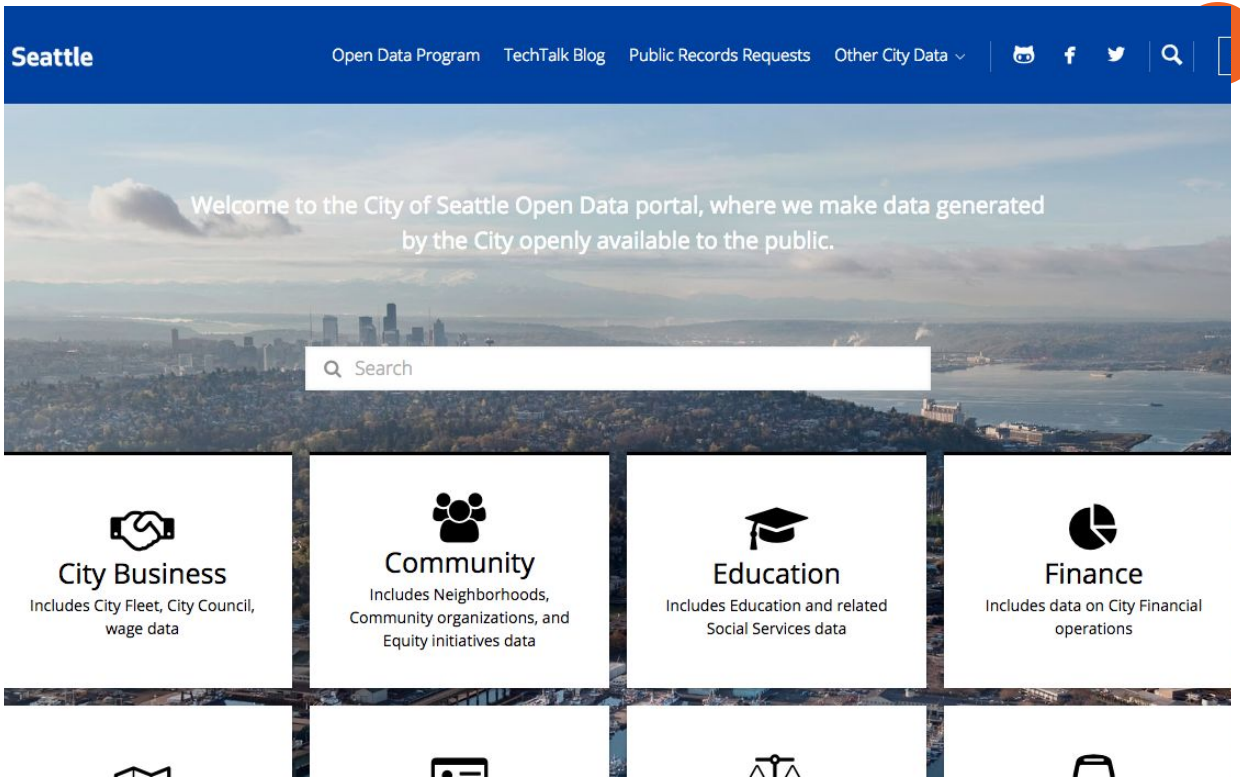
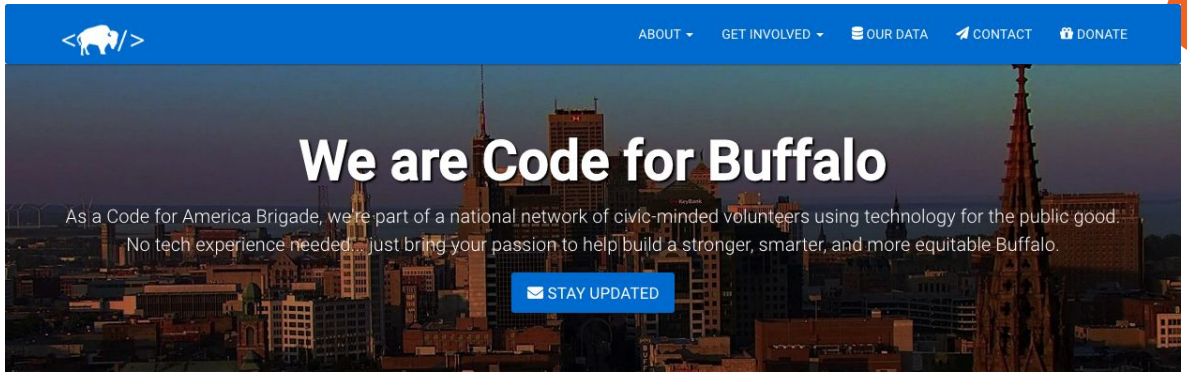
www.codeforamerica.org

Open Data Portal Seattle



data.seattle.gov

Code for Buffalo

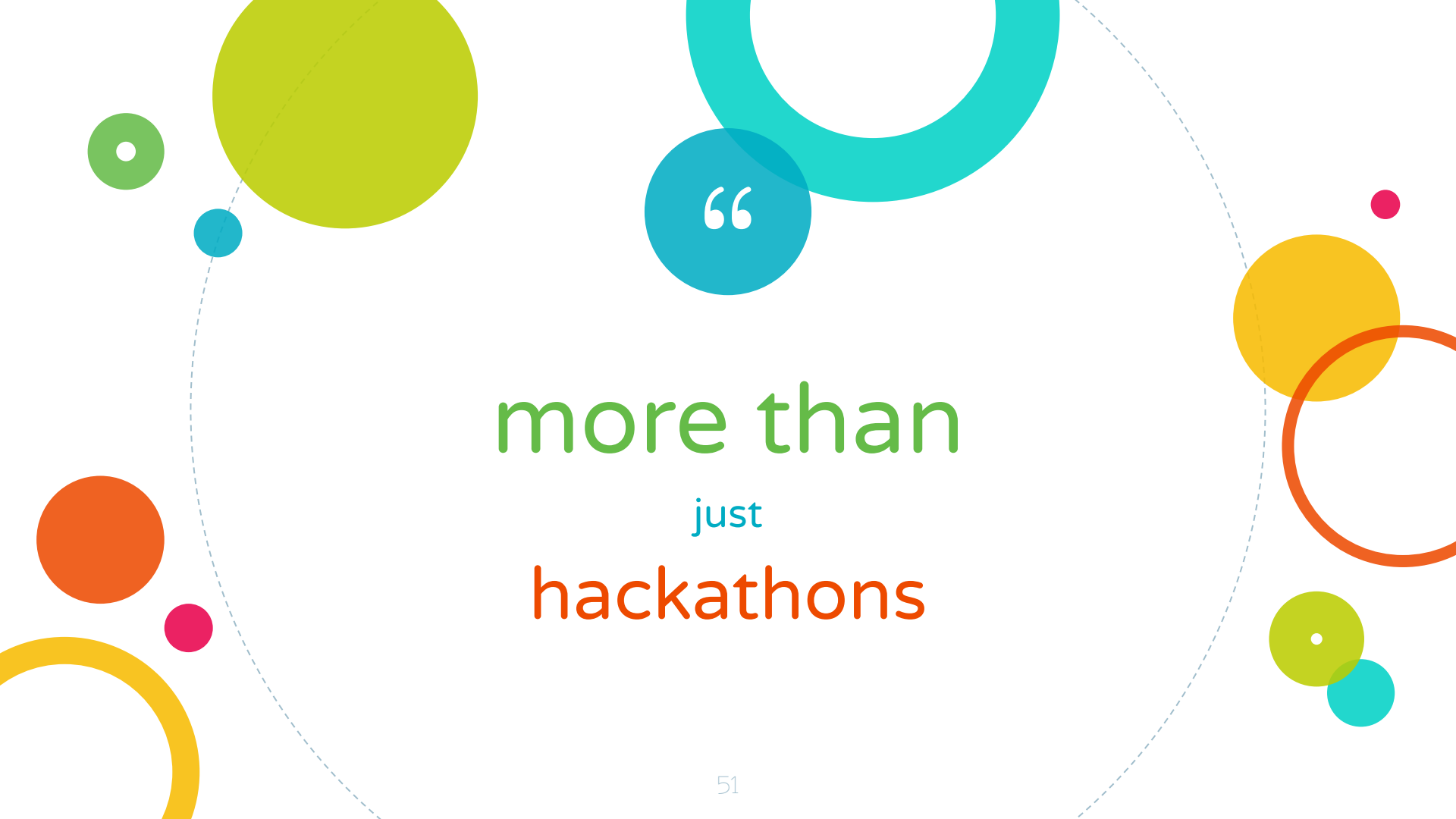


Thur. Sept. 20th @ 6pm: Code & Coffee Hack Night

Ready to Code for Buffalo? This Code & Coffee hack night offers designated time for project teams to meet in-person and get some real work done. There's no formal agenda for these meetups unlike our Civic Innovation Nights.

RSVP NOW

codeforbuffalo.org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more than
just
hackathons

Different outreach methods

resumeReviews()

In general, career development opportunities will greatly generate interest in M&T as a company

codingChallenges()

Your company can make coding challenges or even puzzles for tabling at their recruiting events

onlineCompetitions()

Websites like leetcode has competitions that could be sponsored by companies for recruiting

googleCodeJam()

Google runs a 3 hour coding competition, an opportunity for fun and exploring career options at google

fireSideChats()

Local Buffalo startup ACM hosts “fireside chats” where they talk about a variety of different topics

softwareSocials()

Bloomberg held a social event where they took students from UB to Skyzone, just for some pizza and fun