Designing Engaging Workshops for Beginners

Making technical education approachable and engaging.

Arielle Vaniderstine
they/them

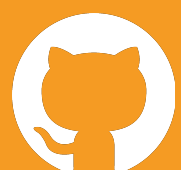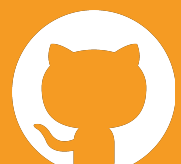# What do you think when you walk into a workshop room?
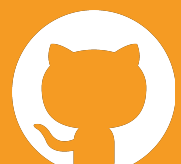
First Thoughts

- Who is this?

- Am I qualified for this? Is this valuable for me?

- What do I do if I have questions?

- What are they going to talk about?

- I wonder what's for dinner...
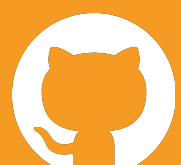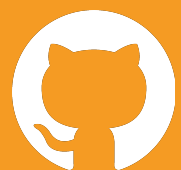
Make the environment welcoming

Hi, I'm Arielle.

This workshop is for future workshop facilitators, organisers, or attendees.

This is *(not)* an interactive workshop.

If you see a coloured slide, follow the instructions.

Raise your right hand
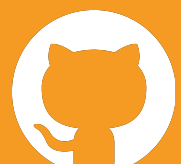
What makes a hackathon workshop different?
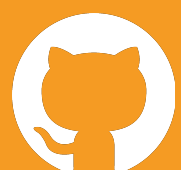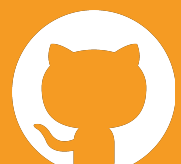
Workshops at Hackathons

- 30-60 minutes

- Motivation to "complete" a project

- 24-48 hour timeline

- Abundance of mentorship

- Learning and experimenting mindset

Hackathon Tips

- Attendees should walk away with something that works

- Make yourself available after the workshop

- Provide inspiration for projects
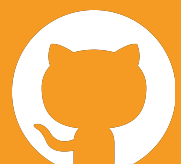
- Give some possible "Next steps"

Teaching Guidelines

- Present with all learning types in mind (visual, auditory, learn by doing)

- Have real-time mentorship available

- Offer pauses

Workshops for Beginners

Roadbumps for Beginners

- "This is way over my head"

- Development environment setup

- Small technical errors

- Uninspiring content

Roadbumps for Beginners

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Scoping Your Workshop

"Front End Web Development"

"iOS"

"Make a static personal website with Github Pages"
"Get your listening data with the Spotify API"
"Read realtime data from Twitter in Python"

Minimum Viable Workshop Topic

- Limited prior knowledge

- Attendees can walk away with something that works

- Room for further exploration

Start non-technical

https://pokeapi.co/

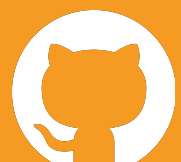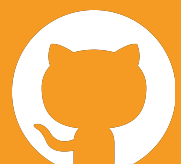# Try getting data for another Pokemon!

"This is way over my head"

Roadbumps for Beginners

- "This is way over my head"

- **Development environment setup**

- Small technical errors

- Uninspiring content

(Using TextEdit) "Why isn't my code coloured like yours?"

"How do I open Terminal?"

"It says `npm: command not found`"

"How do I do that on Windows?"

Keep it environment-agnostic

Example environments

- Glitch (front end or Node)

- Cloud9 (full ubuntu environment)

- Codepen

- JSFiddle

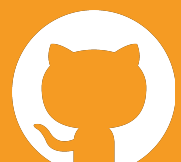- GitHub (if your audience already has accounts & knows Git)
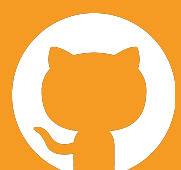
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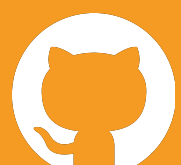
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Provide a working foundation

```html
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
  <head>
    <title>OMG IT WORKS</title>
    <link rel="stylesheet" href="style.css"/>
  </head>
  <body>
    <h1 id="maintitle">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit. Veniam recusandae ipsam optio voluptatem aliquam doloribus!</h
    <p class="super-epic">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit. Eligendi cupiditate dicta, adipisci. <b>Recusandae perferer
     expedita obcaecati, officia architecto non ex ullam delectus, possimus aperiam atque rem dolorem. Dolor vero cumque sapiente consequuntur
     rerum beatae dolore ab ipsam sunt fuga, ratione sit laudantium magni velit, labore!</p>
    <div
      <h4 style="color:■darkmagenta;font-size:70px">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit. Eligendi cupiditate dicta, adip
      perferendis eaque quis, expedita obcaecati, officia architecto non ex ullam delectus, possimus aperiam atque rem dolorem. Dolor vero cumc
      consequuntur quos voluptas amet rerum beatae dolore ab ipsam sunt fuga, ratione sit laudantium magni velit, labore!</h4>
      <p class="super-epic"><a href="http://developer.spotify.com">Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet</a>, consectetur adipisicing elit. Eligendi cupid
      adipisci. Recusandae perferendis eaque quis, expedita obcaecati, officia architecto non ex ullam delectus, possimus aperiam atque rem do
      style="color:■yellow">Dolor vero cumque sapiente consequuntur quos voluptas amet rerum beatae dolore ab ipsam sunt fuga, ratione sit lat
      labore!</span></p>
    </div>
    <a href="http://ariari.io"><img src="http://lorempixel.com/400/400"/></a>
    <ol>
      <li>First thing</li>
      <li>oh wait this too</li>
      <!--<li>next thing</li>
      <li>last thing</li>-->
    </ol>
  </body>
</html>
```
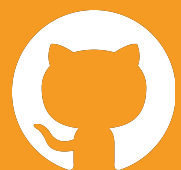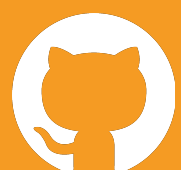
Good Templates

- Offer inspiration (ie. a README with things to try)

- Documented (comments, links to resources, highlights important parts)

- Hackable (change something small and see different results)
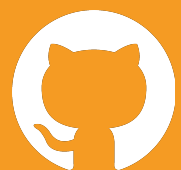
- Open (accessible during and after event, open-source)
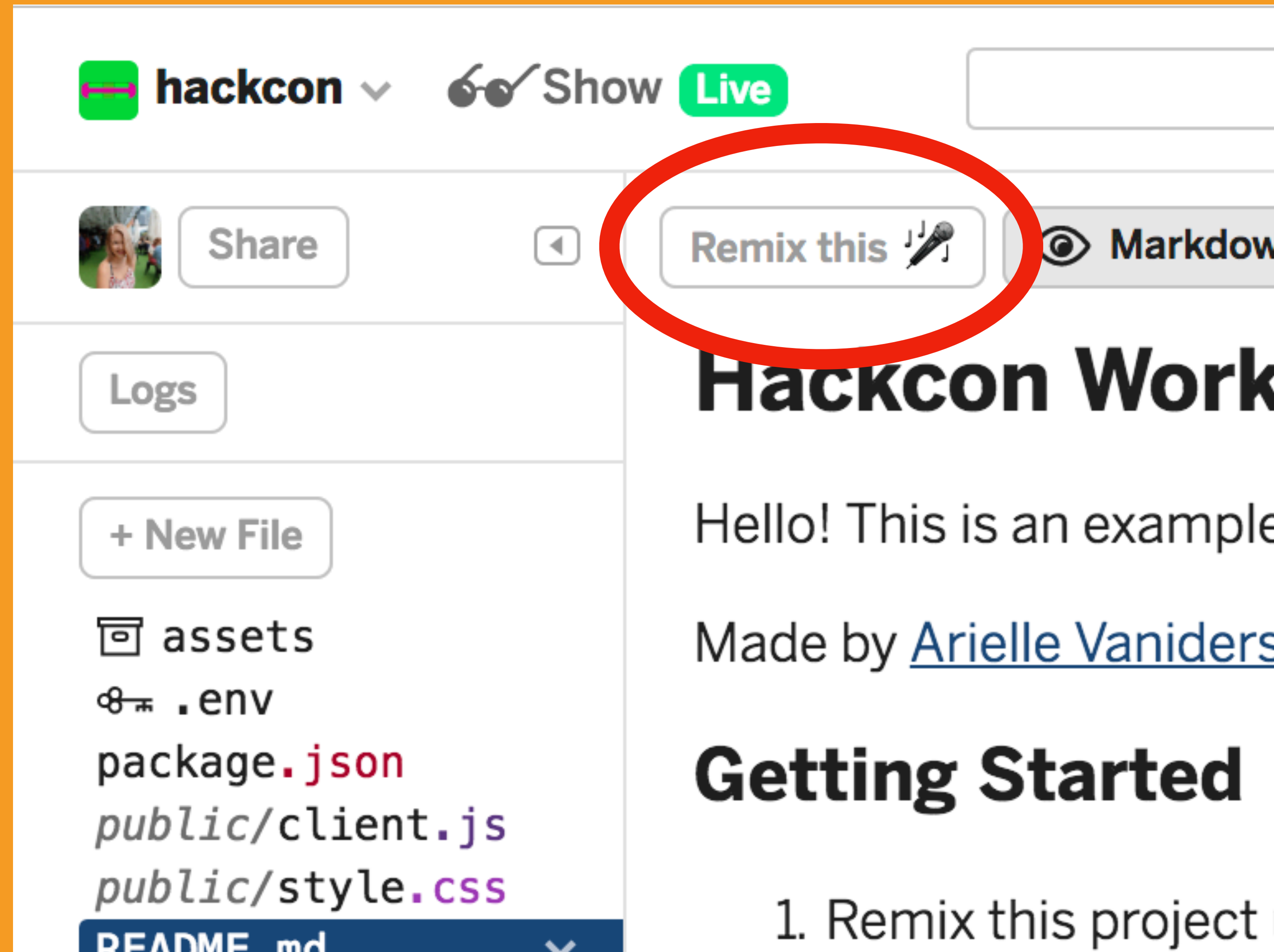
https://hackcon.glitch.me

@imariari   arirawr   Small technical errors

"Remix" the project

Follow the instructions in the README!

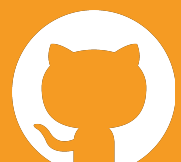Raise your hand if you have questions or get stuck.

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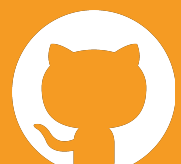
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Make it interactive

Focus on exploring what you can do

Nick Quinlan @YayNickQ · 6 Apr 2014

LOON FACT: Loons have red eyes! #tweetaloon goo.gl/LVqwHZ | Try it: goo.gl/cG8wUX via @arielle_van

💬 2   🔁 1   ❤️ 2   ✉️

Jerry Xie @thejerryxie · 6 Apr 2014

LOON FACT: Loons are clumsy and awkward on land! #tweetaloon goo.gl/3nYgLB | Try it: goo.gl/cG8wUX via @arielle_van

💬   🔁 1   ❤️ 1   ✉️

Zafarali Ahmed @zafarali · 6 Apr 2014

Look at what @arielle_van made! LOON FACT: Loons mate in long-term pairs! #tweetaloon goo.gl/fti8yQ Try it: goo.gl/cG8wUX

💬   🔁 1   ❤️ 1   ✉️
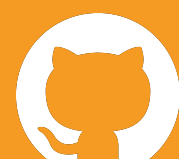
The Workshop Template Pack

@imariari   arirawr

https://github.com/arirawr/workshop-templates

@imariari   arirawr

Tack!