



You Hacked and Now What? Exploring Outcomes of a Corporate Hackathon

Alexander Nolte, Ei Pa Pa Pe-Than, Anna Filippova, Christian Bird, Steve Scallen, James D. Herbsleb

Hackathons are...

“... **time-bounded** events, typically of 2-5 days, during which people gather together and form **teams**, each of which attempts to complete a **project** of interest to them. The teams are usually **collocated**, and often composed of people with diverse backgrounds, experience, and expertise”

Pe-Than, et al. "Designing Corporate Hackathons With a Purpose." IEEE Software (2018).

- RQ1:** How do activities before, during, and after a hackathon contribute to project continuation?
- RQ2:** What impacts do participants believe the event had on them?



Studies on civic and collegiate hackathons promise that...

- Innovative ideas or software products (e.g. Briscoe, 2014; Cobham et al., 2017)
- Informal and collaborative learning (e.g. Fowler, 2016; Lara and Lockwood, 2016)
- Networking (e.g. Busby et al., 2016, Cobham et al., 2017)
- Career advancements (e.g. Briscoe, 2014)
- Expanding or creating communities (e.g. Farzan et al. 2016; Möller et al., 2014)
- Civic innovation (e.g. Almirall et al., 2014)
- Tackling social and environmental issues (e.g. Porter at al., 2017; Lamela et al., 2013)

RQ1: How do activities before, during, and after a hackathon contribute to project continuation?

RQ2: What impacts do participants believe the event had on them?

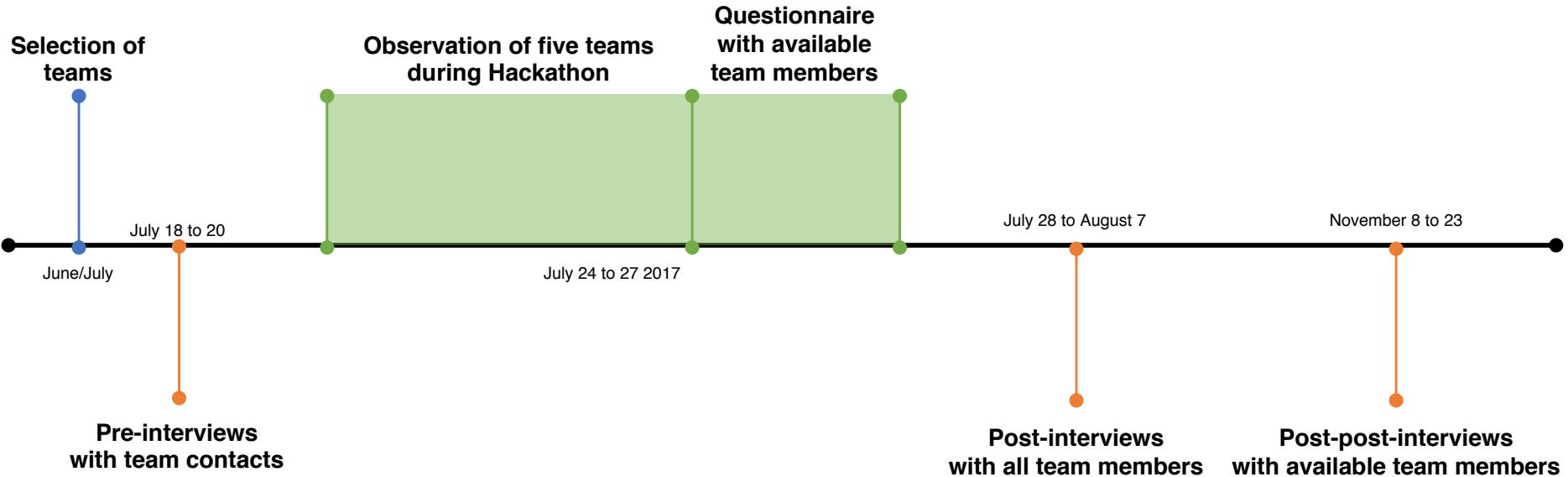
We studied **5 teams**
that participated in
Microsoft's OneWeek
Hackathon





IT WAS EPIC.

One Week Hackathon 2017





IT WAS EPIC.

One Week Hackathon 2017

Team B:

7 individuals of which 3 had worked together created a software that is not related to their work

Team C:

4 individuals of which 2 had worked together created a game that is not related to their work

Team A:

7 individuals who had not worked together created a software that was not related to their work

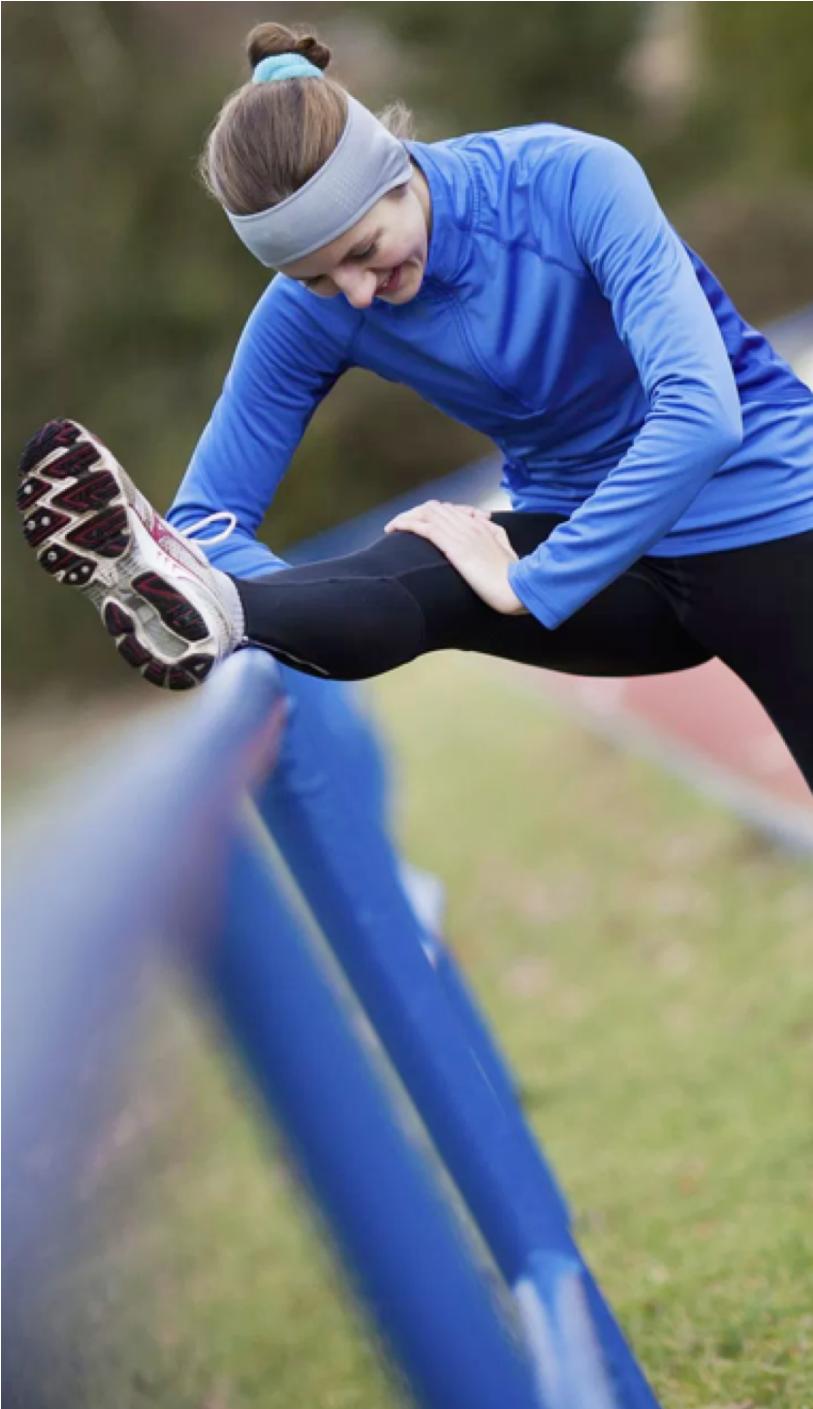
Team E:

3 individuals all of which had worked together created a software that was inspired by their work

Team D:

4 individuals all of which had worked together created a software that could support their work

RQ1: Before the hackathon...



Teams A and E:

- Career driven leader
- Participants motivated by project and expertise focused learning
- Met with the team before the hackathon
- Evolved the initial idea
- Asked for feedback
- Prepared individually

Teams B, C and D:

- Led by individuals interested in networking and learning
- Met with the team before the hackathon
- Leader developed initial plan

RQ1:

...during the hackathon...



Teams A and E:

- Distributed tasks based on individual skills
- Executed the project plan (with minor modifications)

Teams B, C and D:

- Distributed tasks based on individual interests
- Planned during the hackathon
- Changed directions

RQ1:

...after the hackathon



Teams A and E:

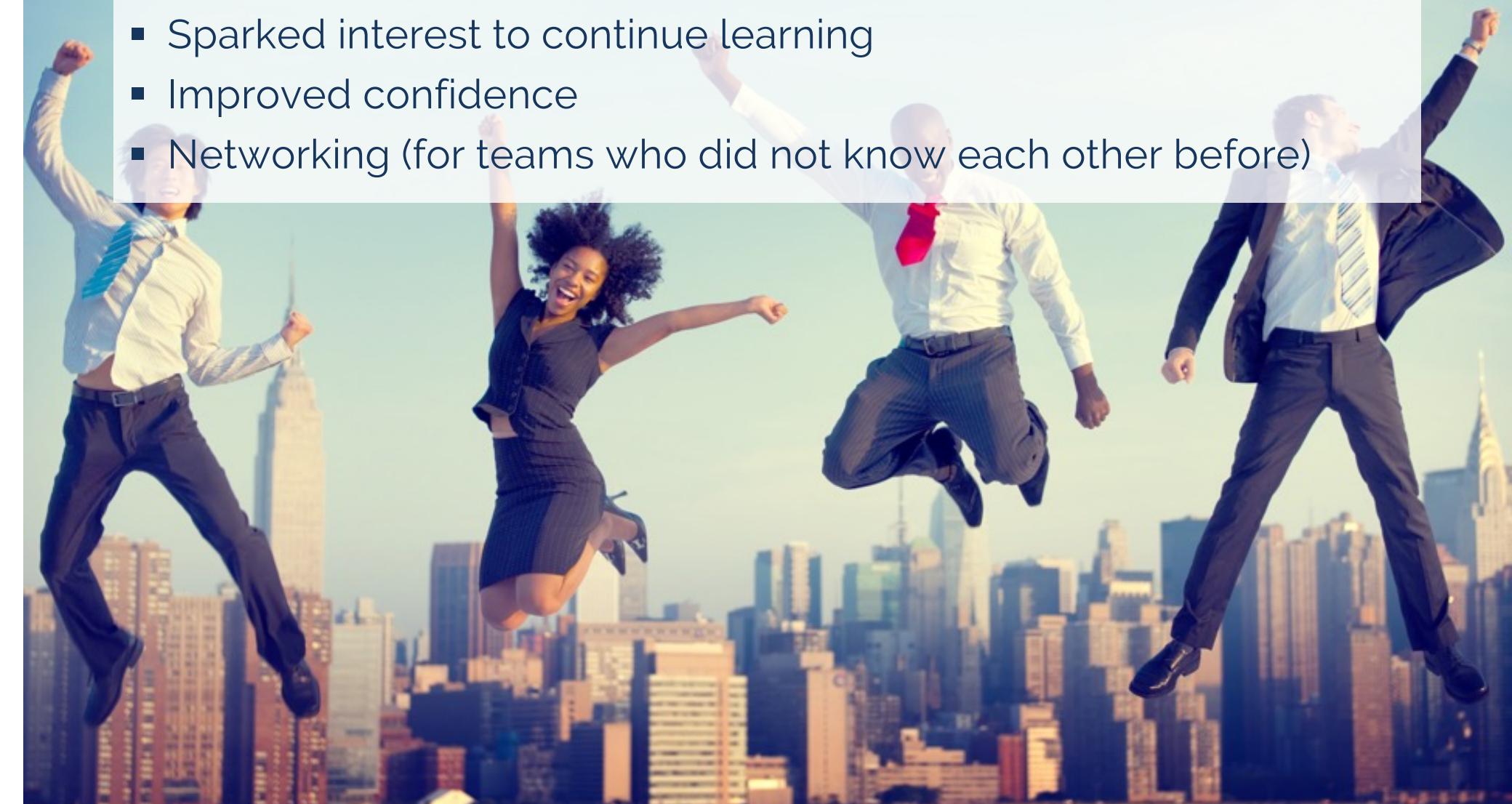
- Presented their project in science fair and group
- Leaders used networks to find a home for their projects

Teams B, C and D:

- Presented their project in science fair (teams B and C) and/or work group (teams C and D)

RQ2: Perception of impacts on individual participants

- Career advancements
- Learning gains related to technologies and project management
- Sparked interest to continue learning
- Improved confidence
- Networking (for teams who did not know each other before)



Outcomes...

Innovative ideas or software products

Evolution rather than revolution / meticulous preparation

Informal and collaborative learning

Trade-off between project continuation and learning

Networking

For teams that did not know each other

Career advancements

Can be a contributing factor



alexander.nolte@ut.ee

www.anolte.com

