bitcamp

April 10-12, 2015

Post-Event Report
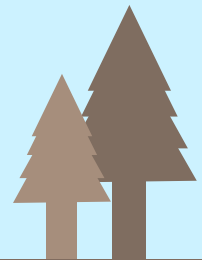
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Executive Summary

Bitcamp 2015 was a 36-hour student hackathon held April 10-12, 2015, in Cole Field House at the University of Maryland. The theme of our hackathon encouraged 1,100 participants ("Bitcampers") from universities across the country to "imagine tomorrow" and build what they envision the future will hold.

Teams of programmers, designers and engineers collaborated on original hardware or software "hacks." The weekend's expo showcased more than 160 projects, which included a personal safety app for Pebble, facial recognition with Twitter data aggregation, a stock prediction platform and a language immersion system built using Google Cardboard, among others. The full list of hacks created at Bitcamp can be found at http://bitcamp15.challengepost.com/submissions.

Bitcamp launched in 2014, following the first-place finish of the University of Maryland's Terrapin Hackers team during the Fall 2013 Major League Hacking Season. Our founders aimed to shift the focus of collegiate hackathons away from competition and place a greater emphasis on discovery and exploration.

This year, we introduced Bitcamp Trails, which were optional themed paths for hackers to travel. These fully immersive experiences included hands-on workshops, objectives and access to mentors.

We also brought back Colorwar, a design competition. Before the hackathon, students submitted designs for consideration on Twitter, and the top five participants earned a spot in a final speed-drawing challenge.

We look forward to improving the Bitcamp experience with the lessons we learned from our first two years of organizing Bitcamp. We plan to maintain our size at about 1,000 participants and to continue improving the quality of the Bitcamp experience for both students and sponsors.

Quick Statistics

1,100
Bitcampers

21
Bitcamp organizers

100
Student Volunteers

46%
Percentage of first-time hackers

161
Hacks submitted to ChallengePost

$197,899
Dollars raised

Organizers

Director
Jose Zamora
Jeremy Griffith

Logistics
Zack Siegel
Colin King
Chase Brignac

Sponsorship
Tochi Eni-Kalu
Geena Gao

Event Planning
Kunal Sharma

Marketing
Alex Jerome
Anthony Valle

Design
Gira Patel

Developer
Anthony Castrio

Press
Jenny Hottle

IT
Jonny Davis

Hardware
Sean Bae

Travel
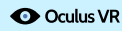Zach Jiroun
Yoonshik Hong

Dining
Max Burns

Volunteering
Shyam Patel

Advisors
Mackenzie Burnett
Jeff Hilnbrand

2015 Sponsors

Bloomberg

A. JAMES CLARK
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Oculus VR

COLLEGE OF
COMPUTER, MATHEMATICAL,
& NATURAL SCIENCES

Capital One

Booz | Allen | Hamilton

CREDIBLE
Behavioral Health Software

Deloitte.

DRAKONTAS
CONSULTING

IBM Design

TATA

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

leidos

The Washington Post

ACADEMY FOR
INNOVATION &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

COMPUTER SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

ROBERT H. SMITH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DINGMAN CENTER FOR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DIVISION OF
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY

UMIACS
University of Maryland
Institute for Advanced
Computer Studies

MLH
MAJOR LEAGUE HACKING

SGA

umd.io

startup shell

accenture

at&t

BookHolders

BRAVE UX

CIPHER TECH SOLUTIONS

CISCO

DEALERON

EasyDynamics

facebook

FINRA

FN FiscalNote

Goldman
Sachs

IBM Bluemix

LOCKHEED MARTIN

Microsoft

MAX
MID-ATLANTIC CROSSROADS

MetaMind

namecheap

OPIS
OIL PRICE INFORMATION SERVICE

pebble

redhat

STRAP

twilio
CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS

UBER

APPCOW

ChallengePost

CrabShell

Cyber
Skyline

DELTA

FOOD
RECOVERY
NETWORK

HackerRank

HackWare

JAVAZEN
COFFEE BLEND

KIVVIK

LIMIDAX VR

LOCASTRO DESIGN
LLC

Neelbauer
Law LLC

Readybox

THALMIC LABS

4

vb

Venture Storm

Marketing + Branding

When we started Bitcamp in 2014, we knew we were competing for attention against popular, well-established hackathons such as MHacks and PennApps. We set out to brand Bitcamp as a welcoming space for first-time hackers and seasoned hackers alike.

Following the success of the inaugural Bitcamp, which attracted about 750 students, we expected similar interest in 2015. We reached about 1,000 registrations in about 24 hours and hit 2,500 in total.

Visual Identity

We maintained our visual identity and branding from last year. Bitcamp has a warm, comfortable brand that isn't aggressive, intimidating or too "tech-y." Our primary ideogram consists of two crossing logs with a fire above, resembling a campfire. The fire is coarsely pixelated to represent the technology aspect of a hackathon.

We created a style guide this year to build upon our branding and to maintain consistency.

Website

Our website was designed by Jeff Hilnbrand and implemented by Hilbrand, Anthony Castrio, Jackson Geller and Alex Jerome. Notable features included a strong, changeable call-to-action at the top, a grid-based sponsor section and schedule of events. Modular pages had the same base layout, making it easy to expand the website as needed.

Website 1.0
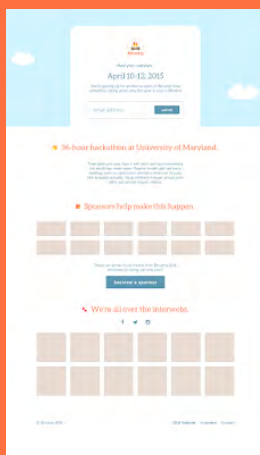
Website 2.0
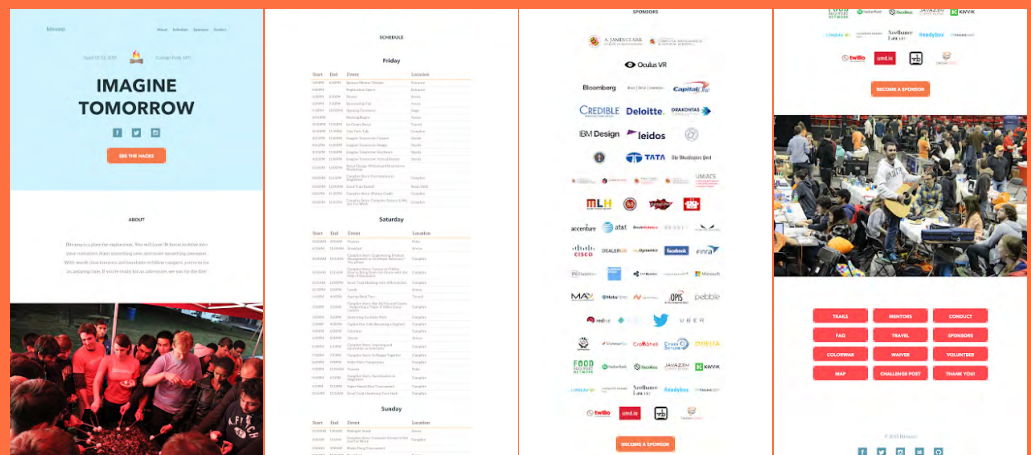
Social Media

Our social media has seen significant increases over the past year. Our Facebook likes more than doubled, going from 713 to 1433 by the end of Bitcamp 2015, and Twitter had similar results.

We also implemented a puzzle similar to HackMIT `14's Puzzle. We released the link on Facebook and Twitter in the form of a riddle on Pi Day at 3/14/15 1:59:27. A Twitter bot gave participants a clue when they tweeted the right hashtag. The puzzle ended up being seemingly more difficult for participants than we had anticipated; in total, only two people completed it. We gave both of them a 3D-printed Bitcamp fire made by Brent Potter.

You can see the solutions to our puzzle here.

Registration

We used Typeform for registration, which was aesthetically pleasing and had great accessibility options. We used our color palette, sticking to a white background and Bitcamp Orange text.

We also had a registration release video. The video, on Facebook, had more than 4,300 views. It also had a strong Facebook call to action that said "sign up" at the end of the video and directed viewers to our registration page. We also had a Facebook event page that served as a good social forum along with our "Bitcampers" Facebook Group.

Swag

We went with the same style shirts and bags as last year but switched to a dark aqua and sky blue color scheme. This year's sticker was a transparent version of our Bitcamp logo.

Hackcon

Several organizers attended Hackcon in February. Hackcon is a conference for hackathon organizers, hosted by Major League Hacking. Hilnbrand and Jerome gave a talk on marketing, and Shariq Hashme, a Bitcamp founder and veteran hacker, gave a talk that turned into an interview.

Hackcon was a great opportunity to network with hackathon organizers from across the country and share ideas about improving our events. Several of our organizers are traveling to San Francisco in July 2015 to attend Hackcon III.

Travel + Student Outreach

We ran into several cases where people thought that signing up for updates was the same as actually registering for the hackathon. Next year, we need to make sure that we're clear about what's happening at every step of the registration process.

Handling reimbursement requests was a little hectic because we didn't have a strong system in place. Bitcampers were emailing our travel account with pictures or screenshots of their itineraries. For next year, we will have a form where people can attach these documents.

Our biggest takeaway for Bitcamp 2016 is to ensure clear communication with hackers at all times.
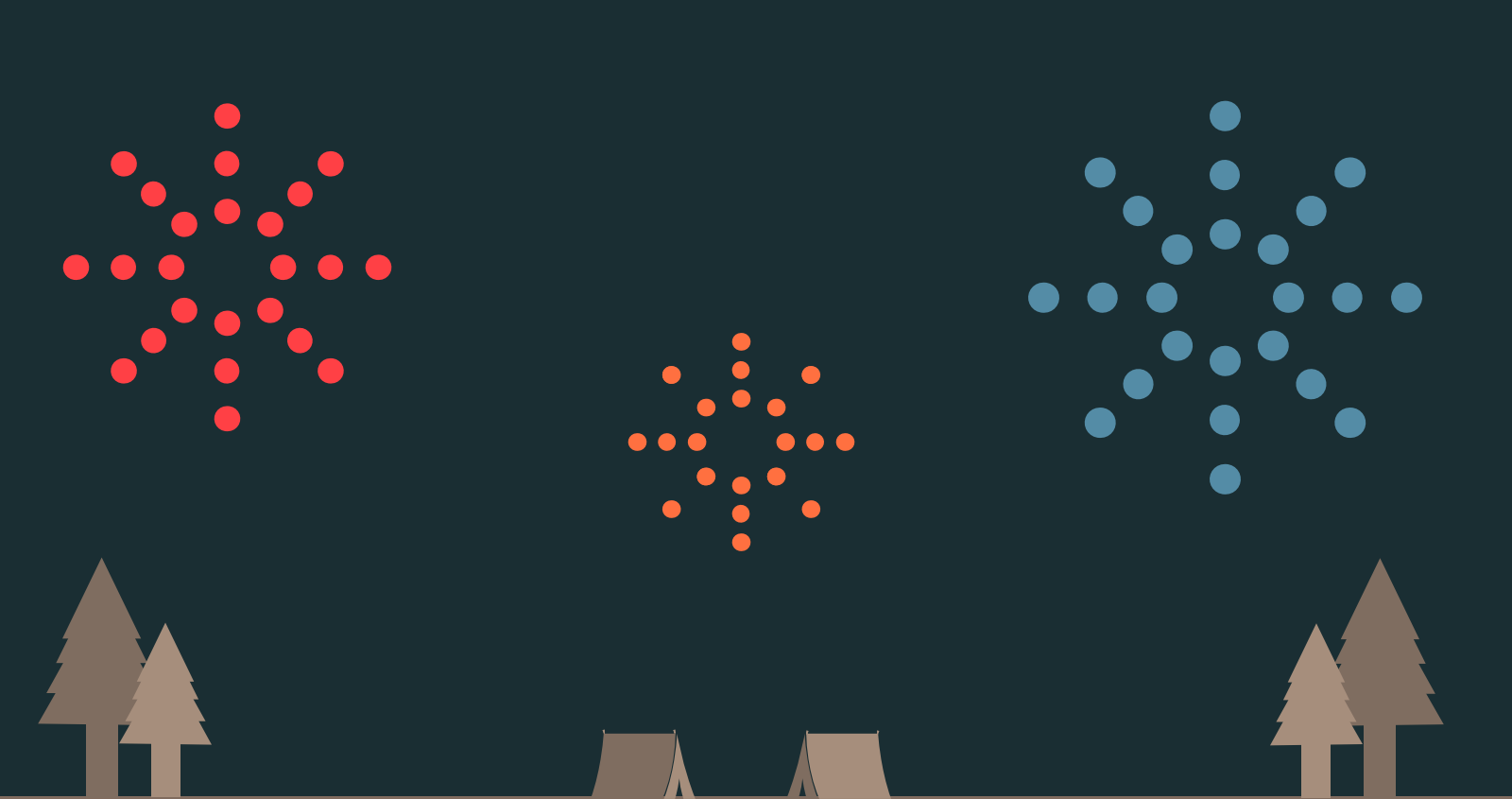
Audio/Visual + Power

RCI Systems in Beltsville, Maryland, provided the audio/visual services. RCI provided labor for setup and teardown, as well as on-call support. For the most part, AV remained unchanged between Bitcamp 2014 and Bitcamp 2015, except this year we used a larger main event screen and a higher lumen projector. These enhancements provided much clearer graphics for a heavily used screen.

To highlight the general setup, we used a professional Shure wireless microphone setup, which included handheld and lavalier microphones, a horizontal loudspeaker array system and a full event display system.

In an effort to increase power capacity this year, we rented a higher capacity generator and general power distribution from Aggreko. Unfortunately, we experienced some issues with power access and had to purchase of 150+ power strips. The incoming leadership team will be tasked with forming a dedicated facilities team that will focus on reaching out to more vendors for power services.

Our choice of venue makes providing power for Bitcamp very difficult. A hackathon is a unique kind of event that commands a great number of needed electrical receptacles. As a result, vendors have had a difficult time fulfilling our electrical needs. An expanded facilities team will enable Bitcamp to finally achieve a flawless power plan.

Venue Layout

bitcamp

April 10-12, 2015

Hardware lab
S'mores and snacks
Outhouses
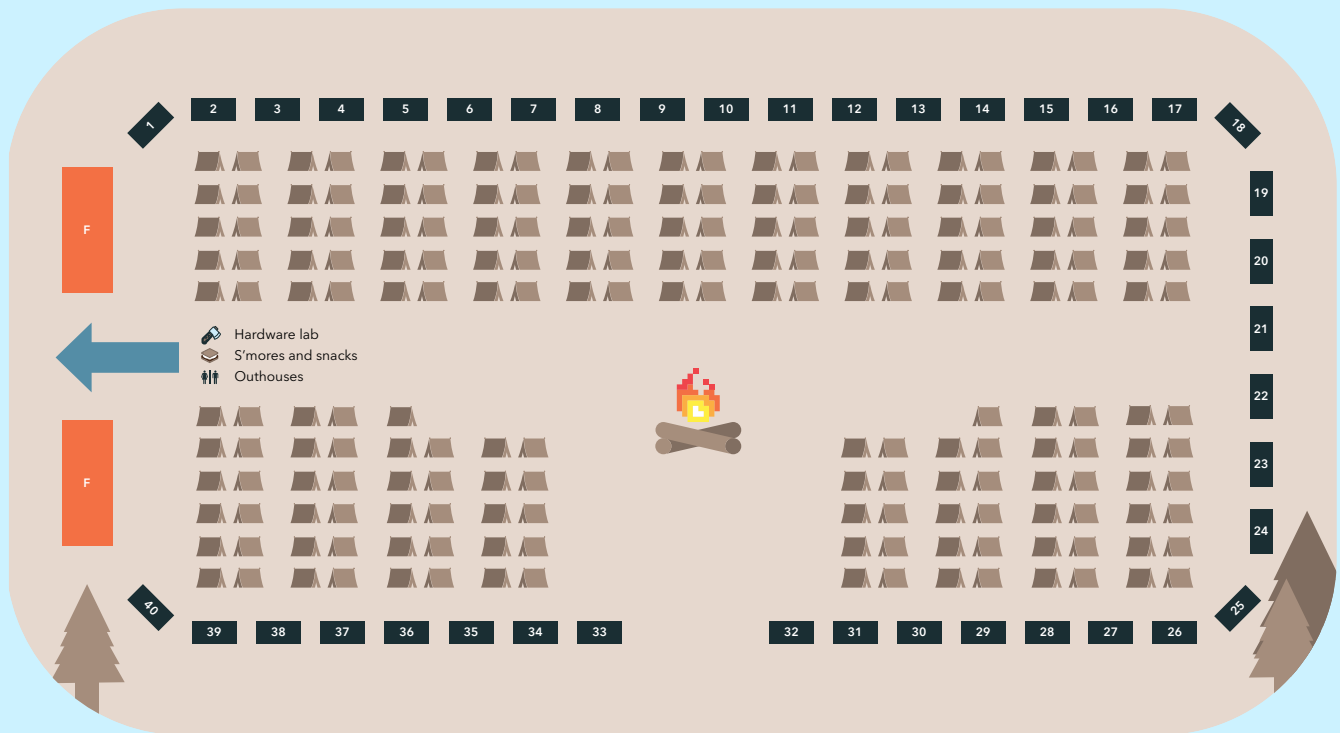
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Event Activities

Hacking is the main activity, but we know that it's not easy to stare at a computer screen for 36 hours straight. We held a series of side events and smaller activities to encourage Bitcampers to take a short break from their projects and recharge.

Trails

This year we introduced trails, optional themed event maps that participants could follow throughout the weekend. The full immersive experiences, described in further detail below, included hands-on workshops, objectives and access to trail specific mentors.

Venture Trail

Powered by the University of Maryland's Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship, this trail encouraged Bitcampers to approach their hacks from an entrepreneurial point of view. The trail included a tour of Startup Shell, a perfect pitch workshop, and closed with an awesome pitching contest. Judges for the pitch contest included Adam VanWagner, a community and venture programs coordinator at the Dingman Center, and Thomas Alford, a data-driven entrepreneur.

Survival Trail

This trail tested Bitcampers' resourcefulness across a range of subjects. In partnership with HackerRank, we hosted three coding competitions. Bitcampers could tests their skills in both general and gaming algorithms.

Scout Trail

Scout Trail was the trail for first-time hackers. Whether or not a participant had ever seen or written code before, the tutorials, challenges, and mentoring aimed to help him or her get started hacking so he or she could build and submit a project. We covered the basics of HTML and CSS, setting up the backend of a website with Ruby and Sinatra, and using APIs to connect other services to one's app. About 80 participants joined us for the tutorials, and more followed along with the online versions of the tutorials.

Social Impact Trail

The Social Impact Trail brought problem statements, aimed at creating social good, to Bitcamp for the first time. Project Delta, a UMD startup, hosted the event and partnered with numerous organizations, including the Peace Corps, the National Institute of Health, Techchange and MilkExpress to release real world problems that hackers could solve. Many of the projects that started at Bitcamp were continued afterwards and are on track to be deployed by the end of the year.
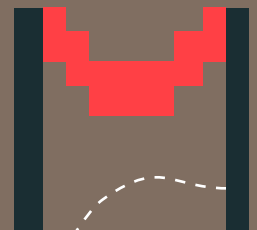
Campfire stories + tech talks

We had two kinds of talk sessions throughout the weekend. Campfire stories were informal talks, about 10-15 minutes long, where mentors and other individuals were encouraged to share an entertaining, funny and/or useful story for hackers. Attendees were encouraged to engage in discussion. Tech talks were longer, more formal presentations given by sponsors.

These talks took place around the campfire and in the center of the hacking space, but we're looking to change this location next year to give hackers and speakers more space for discussion.

#COLORWAR

For the second time, we held #COLORWAR, a design battle between five Bitcampers selected through a Twitter contest held before the event. The contestants were given a series of design challenges and had limited time to complete them. Many Bitcampers crowded around the contestants as the rounds progressed until a panel of judges determined a winner.
http://bitca.mp/colorwar

Ice cream social

A social held at the start of hacking Friday night gave Bitcampers a chance to mingle, form teams and share ideas over ice cream.
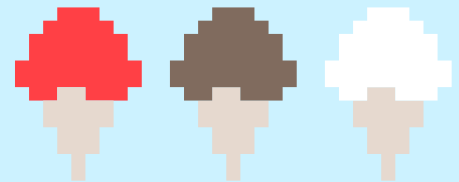
S'mores

What camping experience would be complete without s'mores? Outside Cole Field House, we had a s'mores station where Bitcampers could grill their own s'mores Friday and Saturday nights.
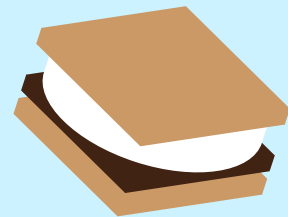
Super smash bros. tournament

Dozens of Bitcampers took a break from hacking to participate in or watch our Saturday night tournament.

Expo

After hacking ended on Sunday, we opened Cole Field House to the public so friends, family members and other guests could see the 161 projects that Bitcampers created over the weekend.

bitcamp

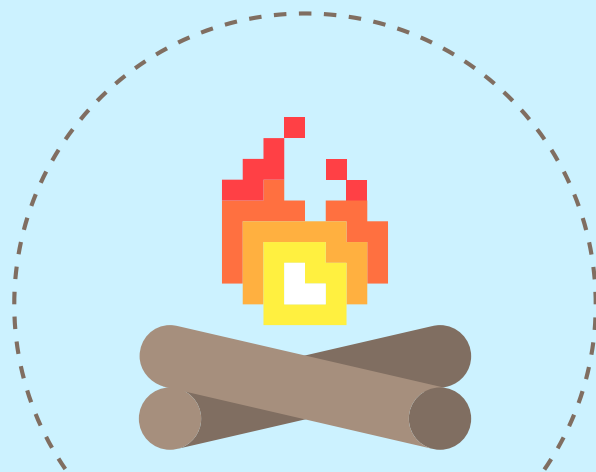April 10-12, 2015   bitca.mp

Schedule

Friday, April 10		
Start	**End**	**Event**
4 p.m.	6 p.m.	Sponsor + Mentor check-in
6 p.m.		Registration opens
6:30 p.m.	8:30 p.m.	Dinner
8 p.m.	9:30 p.m.	Sponsorship Fair
9:30 p.m.	10 p.m.	Opening Ceremony
10 p.m.		Hacking begins
10 p.m.	11 p.m.	Ice cream social
10 p.m.	11:30 p.m.	Tata tech talk
10:15 p.m.	11 p.m.	Imagine Tomorrow Sessions (Finance, Design, Hardware, VR)
11 p.m.	12 a.m.	Social Change Whiteboard Brainstorm Session
11 p.m.	12 a.m.	Scout Trail kickoff
11:30 p.m.	11:45 p.m.	Campfire Story: Computer Science is Not Just For Work

Saturday, April 11

Start	End	Event
12 a.m.	3 a.m.	S'mores
8:30 a.m.	10 a.m.	Breakfast
10 a.m.	10:15 a.m.	Campfire Story: Engineering, Product Management or Developer Advocacy? Yes, please.
11 a.m.	11:15 a.m.	Campfire Story: Casinos vs C0d3rs - How to Bring Down the House with the Help of Simulation
11:15 a.m.	12 p.m.	Scout Trail: Hacking with APIs (umd.io)
12:30 p.m.	2 p.m.	Lunch
2 p.m.	4 p.m.	Startup Shell Tour
2 p.m.	2:15 p.m.	Campfire Story: Not All Fun and Games - Support a Triple-A Video Game Launch
3 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Delivering the Killer Pitch
3:30 p.m.	4 p.m.	Capital One Talk (Becoming a Gopher)
4 p.m.	6 p.m.	Colorwar
6 p.m.	8 p.m.	Dinner
6:30 p.m.	6:45 p.m.	Campfire Story: Learning and Innovation as New Hires
7:30 p.m.	7:45 p.m.	Campfire Story: So Happy Together
8 p.m.	9 p.m.	Killer Pitch Competition
9 p.m.	12 a.m.	S'mores
9 p.m.	9:15 p.m.	Campfire Story: Parrelization in StegDetect
9:15 p.m.	11:15 p.m.	Super Smash Bros Tournament
11:15 p.m.	12:15 a.m.	Scout Trail: Deploying Your Hack

Sunday, April 12

Start	End	Event
12:30 a.m.	1 a.m.	Midnight snack
1 a.m.	1:15 a.m.	Campfire Story: Computer Science is Not Just for Work
3 a.m.	4 a.m.	Water pong tournament
9 a.m.	11 a.m.	Breakfast
10 a.m.		Hacking ends/Submissions due
11 a.m.		Expo begins
12:30 p.m.		Lunch
1:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	Closing Ceremony

Press + Feedback

Read and watch local coverage of Bitcamp 2015:

Second Annual Bitcamp at Cole Field House draws 1,100 hackers — by Joe Zimmermann for *The Diamondback*
http://www.diamondbackonline.com/news/article_d2fce478-e17e-11e4-9848-978ea17eb6dd.html
"It was just a really cool experience to design something from start to finish and then have the product that we need to demo in a certain amount of time" — Alex BenDebba, University of Maryland junior computer science major

I participated in my first hackathon ... And I am officially addicted — by Steph Cohen on *Medium*
https://medium.com/@stefcohen/i-participated-in-my-first-hackathon-and-i-am-officially-addicted-aed4be2cc332
"After 4 years of feeling like my creative, artistic side was drained by engineering, I found art in an unlikely place. Or maybe it was the most likely place." — Steph Cohen

UMD Hackathon: Women in STEM majors — by Arielle Amegashie
https://vimeo.com/125406815#t=0s

Bitcamp returns to UMD — by Natalie Koltun for *Unwind*
https://unwindumd.wordpress.com/2015/05/04/bitcamp-returns-to-umd/
"We try to concentrate more on the experience of the hackers. We really value the exploration and learning aspects of Bitcamp instead of solely competition" — Jose Zamora

Bitcamp 2015 Expo — *MLH* video stream
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Api3UESO1c

Feedback Survey

A week after Bitcamp, we sent participants a survey, asking for their feedback on how this year's event went. We received about 100 responses. Comments from Bitcampers included the following:

"The weekend was fantastic. I haven't been that happy getting such little sleep in years."

"It was my very first hackathon and it opened my eyes to a lot of things while also giving me a realistic approach to my dreams. It was definitely something I will never forget."

"My team (lil' bro and I) had a blast!! We went around a talked to all of the companies and mentors, since we arrived with 0 ideas, and we eventually formed a brilliant idea with the help of Bookholders and Metamind, and won!!"

"This was my first hackathon, and it was absolutely something I enjoyed and want to do again. I met so many cool people and had a lot of fun. There's a feeling really genuine and tangible about making something in a short amount of time and then holding it in your hands."

Budget

Sponsorship

Description	Amount
Expenditures	$197,515
Amount received	$197,649

Travel

Description	Amount
Reimbursements	$7,900
Buses	$20,768

Food

Description	Amount	Vendor
Food	$67,150	Dining Services

Security and Facilities

Description	Amount	Vendor
Cole Field House	$11,312	
Security	$6,901	University of Maryland Police Department
Event Insurance	$805	
AV Sound	$4,577	RCI
AV Video	$6,448	RCI
Generator and Power Distributor	12,881	
Networking/Internet	$17,400	
Air Mattresses	$1,237.72	
Radio Communications	$715	MetroTalk
Tables and Chairs	$4,633	UMD Facilities Management
Parking (Sponsors/Staff)	$220	UMD DOTS
Sleeping Bags	$1,238	Walmart

Printing

Description	Amount	Vendor
T-Shirts	$13,986	
Limited-Edition Shirts	$396	Customink
Bags	$2,013	

Hardware

Description	Amount	Vendor
MLH Hardware Lab	Free	
3D Printers	Free	
Estimote Beacons	$215	
Drones	$953.84	

Storage and Movers

Description	Amount	Vendor
Storage Containers	$475	JK Moving and Storage
Storage Keys	$7	Home Depot
Rental Truck	$70	Home Depot
Long Term Storage	$176	

Miscellaneous

Description	Amount	Vendor
Mailchimp	$305	
Domain Name bitca.mp	$232	
Web Hosting	$100	Github
Photographers	Free	
Video Streaming Equip.	$3,182	
Extension Cords	$1,330	
Stickers	$694	Stickermule
Credit Card Fees	$929	
Wire Transfer Fees	$165	
Campfire Rebuild	$300	
Documentary	$4,999	
Police Report	$8	
Bandanas	$311	
Facebook Marketing	$10	

Taxes

Description	Amount	Vendor
Property Return	$309	
Taxact Filing	$77	
Quickbooks	$41	
Book of Checks	$29	

Trails

Description	Amount	Vendor
Trails	$1,708	
Colorwar Prizes	$884	

Emergency Funds

Description	Amount	Vendor
Stolen Networking Equipment	$2,040	
Sponsor Materials Return Equipment	$13	
Day-of Supplies	$654	
Network Capacity Add-On	$3,000	
Stolen Video Streaming Equipment	$600	
Stolen AV Equipment (Plus Additional Labor)	$794	
Stolen Communications Equipment	$260	