

Hello participants!

I'm very happy that you've decided to participate in this event, and truly hope, beyond any cash, that you get valuable experience out of your work. There will be programmers looking for graphic designers, and graphic designers looking for programmers. Designing a good UI uses both sides of the brain, and often requires teamwork between artists and software engineers. I encourage you to network and work in teams to create better work than one could alone. Also bring any friends that you believe would add value to your team, or others.

You'll be designing the best mobile app, for both Android and iOS, as well as the best browser-based interface for TXT TAG. The purpose of TXT TAG is to connect people when all that is known is a license plate number. This service is perfect for blocked cars, expired parking meters, and we hope towing companies notifying the owners of towed cars, and an alternative to ticketing for solving parking issues with the UFPD.

Your solutions are useful because they will enable the service to be used easily, frequently, quickly and, most importantly, conveniently. If you haven't already, I encourage you to find sites and services that you think look good, and brainstorm what you want to include in your design. The Jasmine YouTube app for iOS is fast, clever, and beautiful, for example. You will be assigned 0-10 values on eleven variables. I'll go through them with a little elaboration on the goal. This is the exact information I gave to the judges.

- Design Completion (Visual)
 - You are required to create visual UI-Walkthroughs prior to beginning the programming portion. From this, I expect somewhat of a storyboard that a user would go through when interacting with the app.
 - Points should be assigned based on how much of the walkthrough made it to the final design.
- Design Completion (Functional)
 - Being young, TXT TAG is very basic in its functionality, though it does have the ability to claim tags, send messages, view stored messages and provide feedback, as well as some necessary static information.
 - Points should be assigned based on how much of TXT TAG's existing functionality makes it to the final design.
- UI Creativity
 - Users can put black text on a white background and use square buttons to change pages, or get colorful and be interactive. The winning team should have found a unique way to collect and deliver the information to engage the user.
 - Points should be assigned based on how much the design differs from the current, very plain implementation.

- UI Intuition
 - On the main view, one should be able to immediately send a message, and know how to register a tag and view messages. Unnecessary or excessive menus or required taps hurt your grade here.
 - Points should be assigned based on how quickly a user can figure out and use all features of the app.
- Compatibility
 - All computers have different size screens, and thus excessively large webpages are not visible on some smaller screens. This same effect occurs on the multitude of Android screen resolutions. iOS is OK.
 - Points should be assigned based on how well the app handles different devices, browsers and resolutions.
- Ad Placement
 - We'll be collecting revenue via ads in the app and on the site. I'm leaving it up to you to choose a size of ad and placement for it within their designs. The current site does not have ads, and I only expect banner or square images.
 - Points should be assigned based on how unobtrusive, yet visible the ad space is.
- Design of Email Message
 - TXT TAG currently delivers messages via email, and not actually text message. Just like the site, the email is pretty plain. I'm optionally letting you tackle this as well, and suggesting 5/10 points if you simply leave it untouched.
 - Points should be assigned based on its attractiveness and how well the Email matches the interface's design.
- Speed
 - Beyond having a beautiful, intuitive interface, the main reason a user would stop using a service is because it's slow.
 - Points should be assigned based on how zippy the app is, in everything that it does.
- Filesize
 - The entire site, including all images and functionality, is currently 830 kb, meaning I could fit it more than 1000 times on a 1GB USB stick. Heavier submissions aren't necessarily negative, but less is more which is related to speed.
 - Points should be assigned based on the value you've added, relative to your submission's weight vs the average.
- Attractiveness
 - This is related to UI Creativity. A design can be both creative, and ugly. The app should be sexy, clean and polished.
 - Points will be assigned based on how much the design appeals to the judges. Personal taste, of course.

- Fun Level
 - This is related to UI Creativity; TXT TAG doesn't have to be a bore to use. You can include witty messages, fun ways to present the data, and anything else to make the app an enjoyable experience.
 - Points should be assigned based on whether the app made the judges smile at all while using it.

I know you'll be hungry, there will be plenty of pizza at the start of the event, and donuts with coffee on Sunday morning. We'll gauge how many people stick around, and potentially order more food throughout. You're free to leave at absolutely any time to grab food or work elsewhere. We're planning on having Red Bull and sodas available throughout.

I'm going to give a quick rundown of the six points on the hackathon agreement. For everybody, it's best that we have one; don't hate.

1. You must delete all copies of the code that we give you, and not share it, or use it for anything besides the hackathon.
2. If you're selected, and take \$500, we own the code. We will not keep your code either, but may recreate elements of your design.
3. Don't steal our idea, or help somebody else do so, based on what I've given you.
4. One team member gets the cash, you handle the rest, including taxes. We may choose no winner, or any entry we'd like.
5. Anything is subject to change, look out for updates.
6. Just covering our butts if anything funny happens. Don't sue us, please.

I'll go over the code on the day of the event, but I'll say it should be fully integrated into your design. To be absolutely clear, your design should not be conceptual, it should be a fully-functional implementation. The basic structure of each page is a standard header and footer file, with execution in between. PHP drives the site, and data is stored in SQL tables. Feel free to reply with any specific questions, and I'll be around to explain anything during the event.

Thanks for reading my long-winded email. **You must do a dry run of your demo setup any time before midnight on Saturday. The demos start at 10a on Sunday (Feb. 17) morning, so we'd like you to arrive at least around 9 or so.** We'll have coffee and donuts available to you. If you've never been to the Hackerspace, you enter from the parking lot at the sun center, adjacent to the gym. You'll see stairs leading you to the basement under a green awning which says 'Wise Guys.'

Cheers,
Eric L. Pheterson
GOOD CEO