

Code and the title of the course

Confidential

LEARNING DIARY

At the beginning

My personal goal and interest towards the topic

Originally, I had no idea what Hackathon was and had very little goals. In the local competition my goal was simply to get the free pizza from Nokia. Later my goals expanded to having fun, earning study credits and winning the finals. I thought Hackathon would be a CTF competition and I'm always interested in those.

My personal background and previous knowledge

I'm a computer nerd and have knowledge of computers, programming and cybersecurity. I know what capture-the-flag competitions are like and assumed Hackathon would be one of those.

My own challenge / project work

When I discovered that Hackathon is about innovation and not about programming I was somewhat disappointed. I'm not good at inventing anything new and perhaps my personal challenge then was and is becoming more creative and practising my imagination skills.

Local competition in Jyväskylä 1.11.2022

I showed up just on time and headed to the auditorium at 9:00. My team was already there except one joined 1 minute after. We listened to the Nokia guys' speech and instructions. We had 4 hours of time to invent a solution to one of 3 difficult problems:

- **Prevent future food crisis** by helping farmers in developing countries
- **Equal opportunity**: take care of elderly people in their homes with technology
- **Equal opportunity**: secure medical devices

We headed to Turbiini (building) and occupied a nice room with a whiteboard and a big table. We spent about half of the time brainstorming ideas. We were given guidelines that describe what an idea should include. It must be a kind of product that can be marketed and sold.

The food crisis is about politics and not about technology so to solve it we would need to invent a properly functioning corruption-resistant version of communism (and use technology to automate a revolution in each country) and still make profit while at it. The two other topics are a lot more realistic and tractable. Almost all teams chose the "Equal opportunity" theme because of that.

We came up with a smart bracelet (called Bracecare) that we can sell to old people. The bracelet gives them reminders and tracks their location and stuff. Funnily enough there was another team that had the same bracelet idea. We made a super cool slideshow using Canva. Nokia brought us pizza and coke and we had a quick lunch. After finishing our slideshow, we practised the presentation a little and headed to the stage.

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There were maybe around 10 teams. We had our best English-speaking member do the presentation and it was really good. The presentation had to be 5 minutes long.

The jury thought about their decision for 1-2 hours. I had to go take an exam, but my team reported that we had won.

Hackathon finals 18.11.2022

I woke at 5:15 and took the earliest train at 6:17 to Helsinki because it was the cheapest. I took the local train to Nokia headquarters and strolled around the area for 3 hours while waiting for the Hackathon to begin.

Students began arriving. Unfortunately, our best speaker could not attend the event. The 3 guys in my team arrived by car and 1 arrived by train a bit later. We were each handed a visitor badge.

We had a salad lunch, and the Nokia people held an introductory speech. A bus took the students to Metro Arena. Me and my team used the car instead.

At Metro Arena we passed through an expo area containing many stands and gaming computers since the Elisa Esports 2022 event was also held in the same place at the same time. There was a big stage, plenty of audience, two 5-man teams competing for \$200k, an announcer and a huge screen. It was like a televised football match but with a video game instead.

Our Nokia corner was at the end of the hallway. We had maybe 10x10 meter area crammed full of tables and chairs. We enjoyed the esports expo for almost 1 hour before the Hackathon officially began. This time we had 20 hours to work with.

The competition was similar as before and we had to come up with an idea for one of these topics:

- **Drones:** what more can they do besides carry items and capturing video?
- **Delivery of packages:** make it smarter and better
- **Soteuudistus:** Improve healthcare for people 200km away from doctors

We were also handed some source code that we could have developed a demo app from. But our presentation was limited to mere 5 minutes and we didn't want to risk spending time writing code because we couldn't be sure we would have anything ready after only 20h.

The topics were much better than before, and they were all sensible. We had great difficulty choosing which topic to address. We argued for many hours with no solution in sight. The esports competition on stage was very loud and distracted us with machine gun sounds. Our Nokia corner was very loud because of so many people talking. We couldn't focus inside so we went outside the Metro Arena to take short walks in the silent, windy and freezing darkness.

Nokia provided us with chicken lunch, coke, energy drinks, candy, coffee, tea and gifts. We got a cup, a thermos bottle, a notebook and some little things.

Exhausted of brainstorming I decided to slack off a little and just enjoy the expo. I watched the esports for a bit, got some T-shirts and keychains from the various stands and played games.

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Finally, we concluded that time was running out and we had to do something. In the local competition we saw a really good idea which somewhat touched on our current topics. They wanted to solve the issue that medical databases are not portable and different hospitals and countries aren't compatible with each other.

We started by copying the same idea and later we built more on it and refined it. We came up with a blockchain-based solution for storing medical data. NFT's would be used for authenticating users. There would be a mobile app.

Everywhere was still too noisy so we embraced the noise and took our laptops to the esports audience seats and started working on a Canva presentation amid the machine gun fire, cheering people and announcer.

Having our sights set on something and work started I was happy to go to sleep. I spent 5 hours in my sleeping bag but only slept maybe 3 hours due to the hard floor hurting my hips and shoulders. Two of my team members had taken short naps as well and two had decided to power on without any sleep.

Nokia provided coffee, yoghurt, muesli and bread for breakfast. They had set up a TV with a countdown to the beginning of presentations. We put on our JAMK T-shirts.

We only had a few hours left so we worked hard on finishing our presentation. Our idea and slideshow were still a little fuzzy, incoherent and undecided. We kept removing slides and streamlining our idea until the very last second. We decided that 3 of us including me would do the talking. We practised the speech 2 times.

The show finally began. There were many more teams than before. One from every university of Finland. We were all nervous. My hands were shaking from the nervousness and overdose of caffeine. Our turn came. We headed to the stage and started the slideshow. I opened the presentation by introducing our idea. My team continued but the third guy was cut short when our time ran out.

We then re-joined the audience and watched rest of the speeches. They were *so* good! We enjoyed the esports for a few hours and finally the winner was announced. As expected, we didn't win.

It started raining snow. There was a lot of it, even more than in Jyväskylä a few days prior. People went outside and there was a snowball fight. I also joined them. We had fun.

My team took the car back home. Me and one teammate took the train. I got home at 00:50 on Sunday, crashed to bed, slept like a brick and woke at 13:30.

Final comments

The main thing I learned from the whole ordeal was teamwork. We both failed and succeeded in it. In the local competition all the work was done by 2 people. In the finals we all worked together but wasted most of the 20h doing nothing productive.

I didn't really think of any goals at any point. I hoped to win the competition but lost hope soon after seeing how the other teams were working and performing. My initial goal of getting a free pizza was more than achieved since we unexpectedly won the local competition and got 5-6 free meals at the Hackathon.

I give myself a passing grade (out of pass or fail). I invested a total of 4 days and 1,5 nights on the Hackathon with minimal sleep and did my best. The Hackathon course

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has almost zero useful instructions or material. The template for this diary seems to be geared towards something completely different than what I experienced. There was no any project, no lessons and no planning ahead. Just a local competition and then the finals. We didn't know what we would be doing until the moment Nokia held the introductory speech and announced the topics to innovate on.