Challenge and Theme

For Ellehacks 2026, we invite hackers to explore how technology can create a more inclusive, equitable, and socially conscious world.

This year's challenge focuses on four pillars that shape meaningful impact: Accessibility, Sustainability, Empowerment, and Security.

Hackers are responsible for selecting one of the four pillars and designing a solution that addresses a **real-world** issue within that space.

> ‼️ There should be no overlap between the four pillars. Hackers should select **ONE** of the four pillars to base their project on.

Here are some suggested prompts:

> ‼️ **Hackers are also encouraged to solve a problem outside of the listed examples!**

Challenge 1: Accessibility 💭 📕

As technology rapidly evolves, many people are still excluded from digital spaces that are not designed with diverse abilities, languages, or learning needs in mind. We are calling on hackers to create solutions or raise awareness about accessibility challenges that prevent people from fully participating in everyday life.

Example problem spaces (provided for inspiration – hackers are not limited to choosing from this list!):

- Mental Health → Students in remote or underserved regions cannot access mental-health professionals, leading to long wait times and unaddressed symptoms.

- Compatibility → Many public service websites are not fully accessible, making it difficult for people with disabilities to access essential information

- Comprehension → Newcomers or ESL learners struggle to understand government forms, job applications, and school documents due to complex reading levels/ Children in low-income communities lack access to personalized reading support, causing widening literacy gaps

- Usability → Seniors experience difficulty using modern, complex digital interfaces

Challenge 2: Sustainability🌱💭

As climate change accelerates, vulnerable communities face growing environmental and safety challenges. We want hackers to explore solutions or raise awareness about sustainability issues that impact the health, safety, and future resilience of our communities.

Example problem spaces (provided for inspiration – hackers are not limited to choosing from this list!):

- Awareness → Community members lack easy access to information on local sustainable resources (recycling, food-sharing)

- Preparedness → Emergency alerts during extreme weather events are unclear or inaccessible for seniors, newcomers, or students living alone

- Resources → People in food deserts cannot find nearby affordable healthy food options

Challenge 3: Empowerment 💼⚖️

Access to education, opportunity, and growth remains unequal across communities. We are asking hackers to design solutions or raise awareness about barriers that prevent individuals from unlocking their full potential in school, careers, and daily life.

Example problem spaces (provided for inspiration – hackers are not limited to choosing from this list!):

- Guidance → First-generation students struggle to find clear information on scholarships or academic pathways

- Mentorship → People from low-income or rural areas lack access to career mentors and networking opportunities

- Skill-building: People in underserved areas don't have accessible tools to learn basic digital skills (coding, resume creation, budgeting tools)

Challenge 4: Security 🛡️ ⚙️

In a world increasingly shaped by AI and digital connections, many individuals face online risks that limit their ability to participate safely. We are calling on hackers to discover solutions or raise awareness about digital safety challenges that threaten trust, equity, and community well-being.

Example problem spaces (provided for inspiration – hackers are not limited to choosing from this list!):

- Misinformation → Youth and newcomers frequently fall victim to scams, fake news, or phishing attempts.

- Harassment → Reporting cyberbullying or discrimination is confusing, unsafe, or inaccessible

- Protection → Marginalized groups experience targeted online abuse without adequate protection tools

- Transparency → Users struggle to understand how apps collect, store, or use their personal data

Prizes:

1. **1st Place:** *(Provided by Porter Airlines):* Round-trip flights to a destination serviced by Porter Airlines

2. **2nd Place:** Philips Espresso / Coffee Machine

3. **3rd Place:** AULA Mechanical Keyboard

Sponsor Challenges

Wealthsimple: Best Financial Literacy Hack for Kids

Challenge:

Create an innovative solution that makes learning about money fun and engaging for young audiences. Your project should help teach financial literacy concepts in creative, accessible ways.

Requirements:

- Focus on making financial education engaging for kids/teens
- Include elements that help users understand saving, spending, or money management
- Ensure age-appropriate content and user experience
- Consider privacy and safety for younger users

What We're Looking For:

- Creative approaches to financial education
- Interactive and engaging user experiences
- Solutions that could realistically help kids learn about money
- Innovative use of technology to teach complex concepts

Prizes:

1st Prize : 200 dollars each

- Wealthsimple Recruiter Coffee Chat, Wealthsimple Office Tour
- An office tour

2nd prize : 50 dollar each +

- Wealthsimple Office Tour
- An office tour

3rd prize :

- WS office tour

MLH Challenges

Best Use of DigitalOcean:

Prize: Retro Wireless Mouse

Best Use of Presage:

Prize: SenseCAP Watcher & Presage Perks

Best Use of Solana:

Prize: Ledger Nano S Plus

Best Use of ElevenLabs:

Prize: Wireless Earbuds

Best Use of MongoDB Atlas:

Prize: M5GO IoT Starter Kit

Additional Giveaways and Prizes:

Interview Cake: Workshop Attendance Raffle Giveaway

Prize: 50 Full - course Licenses for 7 days

You'll get immediate full access to their carefully-tailored interview questions. Access to full questions is the only feature that's paywalled, though occasionally we'll ask upgraded users for help testing new beta features.

What topics are covered?

All the core data structures (arrays, linked lists, queues, stacks, hash maps), some advanced data structures (tries), common algorithm types (greedy, brute force, dynamic programming), and some pesky bits of math and trivia that can really throw you off (probability, shuffling, combinatorics, common arithmetic series').

Intern Insider: Workshop Attendance Raffle Giveaway

Prize: 20 free 3-month Intern Insider acess

You'll get free 3-months access to Intern Insider's internship search platform.

Vue School: 2 Monthly Vue-school Subscription

Instructions:

To participate in the giveaway, attendees will need to create a free Vue School account and complete this short form to confirm their entry:

- Form Link

After the event, we'll select two lucky winners from the list of participants. Once confirmed, we'll activate the licenses directly on the winners' Vue School accounts using the email addresses provided.

Vue School is the premier destination for learning Vue.js. We offer courses on fundamental concepts, best practices, and real-world applications, ensuring you have a solid foundation and practical skills to build robust Vue.js applications. Get exposure to technologies such as:

- Vite for fast development
- Vitest for testing
- Pinia for state management
- Nuxt
- Tailwind CSS for styling
- TypeScript
- Astro for building static sites
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.xyz Domains: 100 Free First-Year Domains Givaway

.xyz is a bold, fresh choice for users who crave creativity and versatility in a domain name. it'd short and memorable without the limitations of a label or language barrier - so you can focus on connection with your audience anywhere in the world.

NordVPN, NordPass, Incogni, Saily, NordProtect, nexos.ai: Winning Team Prize

- 1 year subscription of Nord VPN, NordPass, NordProtecte and Incogni (up to 6 people)
- 1 GB of free data for Saily (up to 6 people)
- 3 month access and €200 credit for nexos-ai (up to 6 people)

Hey there, tech enthusiasts and hackathon champions! We've got an amazing treat lined up just for you.

As a token of our appreciation for your passion and dedication, we're thrilled to offer you exclusive deals to help you stay protected online.

- Get NordVPN PLUS and also enjoy NordPass @nordvpn @NordPass
- Keep your identity safe with features like 24/7 dark web monitoring and real-time security alerts #NordProtect
- Delete your personal data from the internet with Incogni @incogni_com
- Stay connected on your next trip with @sailyworld
- Centralize your AI operations with a single platform - access models, manage AI workloads, enforce policies, and maintain control over your AI ecosystem with @nexos_ai

Code Crafters: Winning Team Prizes

1. First Prize – 2-year VIP CodeCrafters membership
2. Second Prize – 1-year VIP CodeCrafters membership
3. Third Prize – 6-month VIP CodeCrafters membership

Each VIP membership (normally $360/year) unlocks access to all of our challenges, where your winners can sharpen their skills by building their own Git, Redis, SQLite, and more. If your event is team-based, every member of each winning team gets the membership.

🗂️ Judging

There will be 2 rounds of judging that will take place at ACE. Please check out the schedule to see the rooms used for judging.

Judging Rubric:

Criteria	1 point	2 points
Originality Does the solution do something entirely novel, or take a fresh approach to an old problem?	The solution shows minimal creative effort. The project has no evidence of research (statistics, facts)	The solution may or may not have creative elements. The project has little evidence of research (statistics, facts)
Design Did the team put thought into the user experience? How easy was it to navigate the solution? How inclusive is the project?	It is difficult to navigate the solution. The team did not put enough thought into the user experience. No user interface is presented.	There are some features that help the user meet their primary goals. There may be 3+ pain points for the user. The user interface may or may not be presented.
Relevancy Does the solution address one of the four subtopics provided? *(childhood, adolescents, adulthood, old age)* Is the solution exclusively based	The solution does not address one of the four subtopics and is not relevant to the challenge topic.	The solution somewhat addresses one of the four subtopics. The solution is somewhat relevant to the chosen challenge(s).