GREAT CANADIAN GCA⁴ APPATHON

HUMBER COLLEGE
CASE STUDY

THE GREAT CANADIAN APPATHON

The Great Canadian Appathon (GCA) is a 48-hour national competition open to Canadian college and university students from coast-to-coast. Aspiring game developers and designers race against the clock to design the next hit mobile game.

XMG, one of the largest indie mobile game studios in Canada, partners with university/colleges across Canada to set up HUBs on their campuses.

Students sign up their teams to compete from these HUBs or virtual HUBs hosted on the GCA website. The theme is announced minutes before the GCA begins and then: ready, set, develop! 48-hours of hardcore coding!

- **WHEN:** January 17–19th, 2014
- **HUBS:** 40 (20 physical, 20 virtual)
- **PROVINCES:** All provinces + 1 territory
- **STUDENTS:** 600+ students in 300+ teams
- **GAMES SUBMITTED:** 125+
- **BUZZ:** Targeting media coverage in every province across Canada, and live television of Grand Finale. As well as coverage from every school (HUB) newspaper. Building experiential brand experiences at top 10 HUBs.

GCA GOALS

- **Give aspiring game developers** the skills and experience required to design and develop a mobile game.
- **Provide students** with an opportunity to gain valuable insights into the mobile app development industry.
- **Give students direct access** to professionals working in the video game industry including support from skilled XMG developers
- **"We expect nothing less** than the students to emerge from GCA3 with learning more about commercial software development than any other experience in their student careers," says Bill Marshall, Founder of the Toronto International Film Festival, and a member of the GCA3 judging panel.
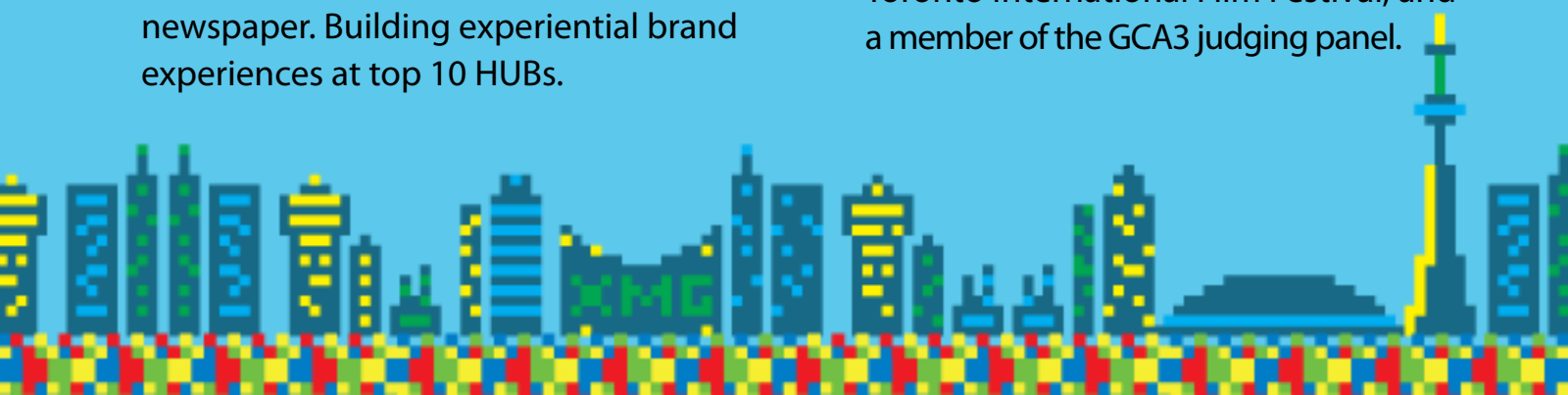
STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Great Canadian Appathon is a competition of technical skill, design and creativity and challenges the student's abilities to work as a team from the inception of a game idea to the finished product.

Students gain valuable teamwork lessons and strengthen their interpersonal skills from working with people from different skill backgrounds under time constraints to achieve a common goal.

Students will strengthen their time management and self motivation skills and gain a confidence boost from accomplishing what they may have initially thought beyond their capabilities.

An opportunity for students to enjoy a fun weekend networking wit game enthusiasts and industry professionals

Students are given the opportunity to utilize rich resources, tools and references provided by the GCA team to create a working, playable mobile game.

"The teamwork experience these bright and talented young minds will gain will certainly be invaluable to them in the future." — Nelly Khouzam, Chair of the Department of Computer Science at Bishop's University

"You can take courses and develop your programming knowledge, but in a competition you have to think on your feet and troubleshoot quickly — those are very valuable skills." — Chính Hoàng, professor of Physics and Computer Science at Laurier University

HUMBER CASE STUDY
HOW TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE GREAT CANADIAN APPATHON

- **The faculty at Humber used gamification** to integrate the GCA into their curriculum by rewarding points to students for participation. This point rewards system effectively increased engagement and participation in the GCA amongst Humber students

- **The Humber faculty also promoted the event** heavily in their classes which increased student participation.

- **Humber was very supportive of the GCA**, they made sure classrooms and the proper facilities were open, parking spots were available for the weekend, and provided security, IT, and hospitality personnel.

- **Humber faculty members stayed during the weekend** to keep everything running smoothly. They made sure food arrived on time and the wireless networks were beefed up for the weekend, which resulted in Humber having one of the best and most engaged HUBs at the GCA3.

- **By competing in the GCA, students earned curriculum points**, formed new friendships, and the game development program as a whole was buzzing for weeks after the GCA.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM HUMBER

- Gamify participation by incorporating the GCA into your curriculum

- Promote the GCA to your students in your classroom

- Getting your educational institution's full support

- School champions being present at the HUB making sure everything runs smoothly

GCA RESULTS

Last years GCA3 took place in **10 provinces**, with **39 Canadian Universities and Colleges** participating. A total of **521 students** participated and created an amazing **124 mobile games**. GCA3 had a combined media reach of **7,699,371** and was covered by Electronic Playground, CBC news, The Globe and Mail, CTV, National Post and the Financial Post.