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LSU CCT iOS Training for Growing Mobile Application Market Spurs Student Company

As smartphone functionality continues to develop, it's safe to say that the demand for qualified app programmers will create the newest, hottest job market for college graduates.

The LSU Center for Computation & Technology (CCT), in an effort to introduce students to this exciting new IT profession, hosted a two-week summer camp to train LSU students in iOS application development, entrepreneurial tips, and hands-on mobile computing knowledge. Fifty-eight students representing 28 different LSU degree majors attended the camp.

A first of its kind at LSU, the bootcamp targeted the transition from portable, medium-scale computing to mobile computing, a change that is inevitable with new technology development. Instruction for the camp was engineered by both GeniusPort, an App training company, and CCT personnel.

"Students need awareness and education in the mobile computing arena so they can be prepared for this transformation," said Ravi Paruchuri, organizer of the camp and LSU CCT assistant director of research and advanced computing.

Participants of the camp were very enthusiastic and by the end of the camp produced some great projects. A few students built on the knowledge gained at the bootcamp to form their own company.

"iOS Boot Camp was great because it provided us with a practical working knowledge of the concepts that we went on to use for No App.ologies, LLC," said Rebecca Pearson. "Our company was especially inspired by the effectiveness of small teams in enhancing creativity and developing apps."

No App.ologies, LLC, created by Timmy Meighan (CEO) and Rebecca Pearson (COO), both students in the LSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences, was designed to create original iPhone apps that will allow students central accessibility to the knowledge and resources they want, whether it be through a textbook or hands-on instruction. Other members of the company are James Ramsey IV, LSU student in the College of Engineering, and Derrick Hoenig, a graduate of the University of Central Florida, who will provide an artistic vision with experience in graphic design.

No App.ologies is currently developing two apps. One is for a local high school's National Honor Society to help in the development of a tourism app. For the second app, they are teaming up with an LSU organization to create a positive economic impact on the lives of those living on and around campus. They aim to have these completed by December, with a third one underway.

To continue with the excitement of the camp's instruction, CCT has created the Mobile App | Art | Action Group, or MAG, led by Jesse Allison, camp co-organizer and LSU assistant professor of experimental music and digital media in the School of Music and Center for Computation & Technology. This group is not limited by mobile platform, application area, or area of interest. Participants of MAG come together to share their progress, receive feedback and help, connect with others, and get inspired to try innovative things with mobile computing.

"Attending the iOS Bootcamp served as the first source of formal training for our primary team members," said Pearson. "We look forward to maintaining our relationship with the iOS Boot Camp organizers, and continuing our education by attending the Mobile Apps Group Meetings at LSU."

"Development for this computing platform engages business people; graphic, interaction, and game designers; musicians; engineers; social media practitioners; marketing and advertising specialists; and even a few programmers," said Allison. "I'm excited about the future of this endeavor—exploring new modes of engagement in mobile programming and mobile environments, as the platform reaches an incredible variety of students, potential fields of application, and relevance in a changing digital landscape."

The MAG encourages participation from students, faculty, and professionals, as well as industry representatives. More information about MAG can be received by joining the mag-announce and mag-discuss mailing lists; just email anything to mag-announce-join@cct.lsu.edu and mag-discuss-join@cct.lsu.edu. mag-announce is used to distribute information on upcoming meetings and relevant campus and community events while mag-discuss is a more informal place for the community to ask questions, post interesting developments, and find collaborators.

"CCT faculty, staff, and student research assistants have developed novel applications of mobile computing—and even new mobile computing hardware platforms—for a number of years within research labs and LSU classrooms," said Brygg Ullmer, associate professor of the LSU Department of Computer Science and Center for Computation & Technology, and also a camp co-organizer. "Many of these efforts have been under the umbrella of LSU's Arts, Visualization, Advanced Technologies, and Research program, or AVATAR / digital media efforts, with support from both state and federal research grants."

With MAG, CCT intends to empower students, staff, and faculty to become part of this technology shift. MAG focuses on all the available platforms to deliver mobile computing and also is exploring ways of introducing its participants to multiple platforms and providing training in how to use them.

The iOS applications bootcamp is one way CCT is engaging broader audiences, cultivating enthusiasm, engagement, and economic and workforce development across the full landscape of academic and professional disciplines.

"App development has a huge growth potential," said Joel E. Tohline, director of the LSU CCT. "Imagine how courses across the University might be transformed and the entrepreneurial spirit of students enhanced if every LSU freshman arrived on campus with the ability to develop their own iOS app."

Ubiquitous computing is here, and now is an exciting time for exploring and creating new ways to use mobile applications.

More information on No App.ologies can be viewed at: noapp-ologies.com.

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