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Texas A&M to host national hackathon competition Friday

By Gracie Mock On October 22, 2014 [g+1](#) [Tweet](#) [Like](#)

Rudder Tower will be filled with students from Texas, California, New York, Canada and Mexico for the first official Texas A&M Hackathon.

Five hundred participants will occupy Rudder Tower for 48 hours starting Friday to create novel products ranging from "hardware hacks" to new apps. The event has garnered support across the tech industry, as students from around the nation converge on what TAMUhack's founders hope is the first of many premier hack events.

"It's going to be unlike anything you've seen before," said Christopher Findeisen, computer science sophomore and TAMUhack member. "Hackathons started popping up here because we all have a desire to create something."

Devan Huapaya, computer engineering senior and TAMUhack member, said hackathons typically fall into one of two categories.

"In the first category of hackathons, companies host a competition because they want to make things around their product," Huapaya said. "In the second category, students at a university will put together an event because they want to see what awesome ideas people will come up with. TAMUHack, naturally, is in the second category."

TAMUhack is not a coding contest. Instead of offering contestants a challenge to complete, TAMUhack will give participants the freedom to create whatever they wish.

"A coding contest [has] often one right answer, so there's a correct way to code the problem and you're trying to approach and find that exact answer to that problem, whereas a hackathon really encourages a lot more creativity and design to code an innovative solution to the question," said Tracy Hammond, associate professor of computer science and TAMUhack faculty advisor.

Eleni Mijalis, biology junior and TAMUhack organizer, said hackathons are able to pull out skill sets not shown in the classroom.

"Hackathons really allow you to break out of that [classroom skill set] and kind of teach you the skill set that you don't learn in the classroom," Mijalis said. "I think that's a really important thing in terms of being able to work in the real world of computer science."

There is no theme for the contest this year. Participants are instead asked to create whatever comes to mind as long as it follows MHL guidelines.

"Oftentimes we just refer to the MHL rules in one line: 'Don't be a jerk,'" said Christopher Nolan, computer engineering sophomore and TAMUhack organizer.

TAMUhack's team has worked since last spring to hammer out the event's details. The group learned from other hackathons they attended in the past.

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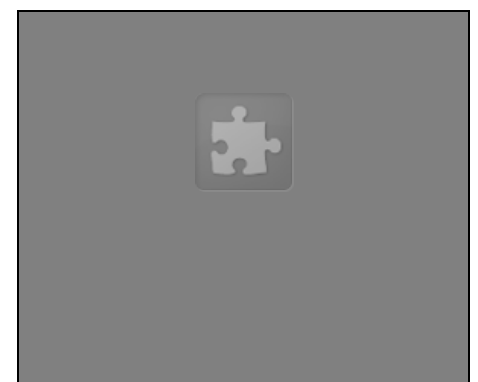
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"We decided to plan this event because we have traveled around the country attending other hackathons and noticed A&M didn't have one of its own," Nolan said. "Since spring we have gained the nickname, 'The Lonestar Hackathon,' [and] gained many corporate sponsors."

Mechanical engineering sophomore Richard Padilla said he plans on participating at TAMUHack, which will be his first hackathon.

"I hope to take away insight into computer science after college," Padilla said. "I am looking forward to the companies and the amazing technology they will be bringing to the event the most."

Tags: [tamuhack](#), [hackathon](#), [stem](#)

By **Staff Writer**

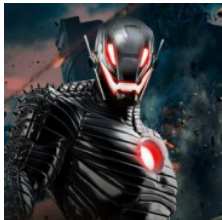
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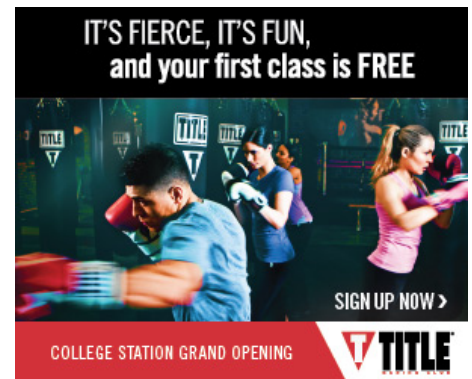
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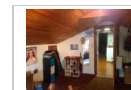
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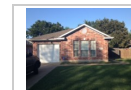
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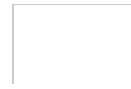
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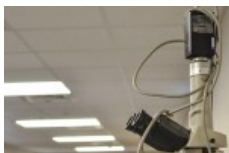
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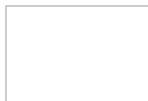
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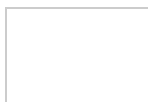
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