**Hackathon**

A **hackathon** is a [design sprint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Design_sprint)-like event; often, in which [computer programmers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_programmer) and others involved in [software development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Software_development), including [graphic designers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_designer), [interface designers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_interface_design), [project managers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_manager), domain experts, and others collaborate intensively on [software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Software) projects.

Today, engineering departments, especially those at web-based companies, adopt the practice as a way of introducing [intrapreneurship](https://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/intrapreneurs-intrapreneurship) into the enterprise. Hackathons are sometimes undertaken to achieve a specific goal, but often they are a chance for businesses to pursue employee-driven, out-of-the-box ideas in a low-risk environment. Employees are given the freedom and support to collaborate with colleagues in other departments within a given timeframe and without the pressure of having to produce a viable product.

**Types of hackathons**

Hackathons vary in objectives and themes. Hackathons organized as a platform for creating applications such as [mobile apps](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/mobile-app), operating system variations, web and video game upgrading are branded as niche hackathons. Altruistic hackathons are those where participants work to find solutions for problems such as public transport systems, education and disaster response.

[Corporate](https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/corporation-C-corporation-C-corp) hackathons organized by companies like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft are developed to encourage employees to participate in new product development. Language or programming hackathons are dedicated to creating specific programming language or framework applications such as [C++](https://searchsqlserver.techtarget.com/definition/C) or .NET.

Some hackathons are only open to a specific demographic group such as students or women, while others are offered to developers with specific proficiency levels and experience.

**Famous products and apps born at hackathons**

Hackathons have proven to be an excellent medium to generate ideas for new tech products and services.

For example, many of Facebook's popular features were developed during hackathon projects. The social media company's like button, Facebook Chat, video and even Timeline were all conceived at hackathons.

Another noteworthy example of a hackathon success is GroupMe, a group messaging [app](https://searchmobilecomputing.techtarget.com/definition/app) first conceived at the TechCrunch Disrupt 2010 hackathon. Shortly after its development, GroupMe was acquired by Skype for more than $40 million.