USU Computer Science Students Hack Homelessness
College of Engineering

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Dec. 8, 2017 — Computer science and engineering students from across Utah met on the USU campus recently for the third-annual HackUSU event.

About 250 students took part in the 36-hour hackathon Nov. 17-18. The event gave participants an opportunity to develop a unique app or technology designed to solve a problem encountered in technology or programming.

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A team of USU computer science students took first place for their app designed to combat Utah’s growing homelessness problem. Team ‘Homeless QRypto’ designed an app that allows users to donate Bitcoin currency to panhandlers. The app eliminates the transfer of physical currency and lets the donor designate which type of goods or services the recipient can spend the currency on.

Throughout the hackathon, participants heard from experts on Utah’s homelessness problem. Drew Mingl, Utah’s open data coordinator, provided access to the state’s open data portal. Users accessed millions of lines of data related to poverty and income, housing, public health and other social services.

HackUSU student director Haley Manning said 39 teams submitted a hack for judging – the highest participation in the event’s three-year history.

This year’s event included participants from:

• — Utah State University
• — Bridgerland Technical College
• — Weber State University
• — Brigham Young University
• — The University of Utah
• — Aalto University
• — Abington Senior High School
• — Utah Valley University

HackUSU 2017 Photo Gallery

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