



HOW TO RUN YOUR OWN APPS FOR DEMOCRACY INNOVATION CONTEST

This document will give you a step-by-step explanation of how to create your own Apps for Democracy-style innovation contest. This method can apply to local, state, and federal government, as well as non-profits and for-profit entities.

PREPARED BY

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Acknowledgements

I would be remiss if I didn't thank some of the hundreds of people who have been a part of Apps for Democracy. Many thanks are due to:

Vivek Kundra - for his vision and inspirational approach to technology innovation, and for taking a risk in saying yes to this experimental model you're about to read through.

Dmitry Kachaev - for being one of the hardest working govies I know, who besides me, has worked as much on this project as anyone.

Chris Willey - for envisioning a new way to power 311 and putting an open method to the test with us.

Asha Aravindakshan & Ayanna Smith - for working hard and help us bring Apps for Democracy to life.

Scott McCaughey - for designing and developing the website in 6 days on a moments notice.

Tim O'Reilly, Gina Blaber, Laurel Ruma, Jen Pahlka, Craig Newmark - for being our best advocates, helping to get the word out far and wide about this work.

Lastly, the bulk of the credit for the success of this program is due to the 50+ technology developers who've participated in Apps for Democracy, and in the process, inspired the world with their creations.

Their individual contributions can be found at appsfordemocracy.org.



The Backstory of Apps for Democracy

*"Apps for Democracy produced more savings for the D.C. government than any other initiative."
-Vivek Kundra, Former CTO of Washington, DC.*

For a full overview of Apps for Democracy, a video is available here: <http://bit.ly/appsoverview>

In September 2008, Vivek Kundra (then CTO of Washington, DC; now current Federal CIO) asked [iStrategyLabs](#) how we could make DC.gov's revolutionary Data Catalog useful for the citizens, visitors, businesses, and government agencies of Washington, DC. The Data Catalog (<http://data.octo.dc.gov>) contains all manners of open public data featuring real-time crime feeds, school test scores, and poverty indicators, and is the most comprehensive data catalog of its kind in the world.

Our answer was to hold an innovation contest where we put the data in the hands of our talented citizens and gave them cash prizes and recognition for their efforts in developing technology for their neighbors and city government. As a result, we created Apps for Democracy – a contest that cost Washington, DC \$50,000 and returned 47 iPhone, Facebook, and Web applications with an estimated value in excess of \$2,300,000 to the city. This figure was provided by DC's Office of Chief Technology Officer as a sum of the individual costs to develop the apps, plus the internal human resources that it would have cost the city to procure and manage the project. Apps for Democracy significantly reduced the time it would take to create new technology for the DC government, from an estimated two-year period to 30 days. We brought the entire contest framework to life and launched it to the world in six days using Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, Ning, and Eventbrite as our core social technology tools - none of which required any license fees or heavy technology/design customization.

Apps for Democracy has gone on to inspire the Apps for America contests for federal data, Apps for Democracy Belgium (INCA 09), Apps for Democracy Finland, Apps for Democracy New South Wales, Apps for Innovation, Apps for the Army (iStrategyLabs is a contracted advisor to the Army), SF Data Challenge, and NYC Big Apps.

We encourage you to visit <http://www.appsfordemocracy.org> before you dig too deeply into this guide - to see for yourself how citizen talent, combined with open government data, can produce innovation unlike any other method. You will see that a new round just concluded – Apps for Democracy “Community Edition.” This edition of Apps for Democracy was focused on technology development that put to use the world's first municipal Open 311 API - a web service that allows anyone to query and submit service requests to the city. More on Open 311 can be found at <http://www.open311.org>.

The DC government also wanted to hear citizens' ideas about problems that could be solved through technology, as well as their ideas about the perfect system to receive feedback and service requests. iStrategyLabs engaged the populace of Washington, DC using AppsforDemocracy.org blog posts, e-mail surveys, video testimonials, voice call-in captures, Twitter update submissions, in-person town halls, physical meetings with community groups, and more. In just three weeks, 230 ideas were submitted and 5500+ votes were cast - you can see those at <http://insights.appsfordemocracy.org>.

We then created teams of tech community ambassadors and gave them the tools to capture insights from their neighbors. These teams competed to capture the deepest and broadest insights possible. The best team was rewarded with a \$1,000 “Social Citizen Award” and public recognition incentives for their participation. The results of our community outreach were provided as research insights to technology developers in the form of a comprehensive multimedia guide covering the “Citizen Driven Technology Requirements,” that informed their work in the technology development contest portion of the campaign.

Through the course of Apps for Democracy “Community Edition,” a dozen 311 applications were created, \$25,000 in prizes were awarded, and Washington, DC gained iPhone, Facebook, and Web applications which enable the city to receive and publish insight about service requests received. Check out <http://www.fixmycitydc.com> as one example.

There are over 450 blog posts, radio interviews, and videos about this project, many of which you can find here <http://delicious.com/corbett3000/bundle:Apps4Democracy> if you'd like more info.



The Approach

There are many moving parts and pieces to running an Apps for Democracy contest. We've broken most of this down into 9 core components.

Table 1 - Project Components	
1	Contest Framework (data, prizes, judges, timeline)
2	Website Creation
3	Marketing to Developers
4	Judge Recruitment
5	Initial Screening
6	Apps Posted Publicly
7	Public Voting for "People's Choice"
8	Awards Ceremony & Final Judging
9	Results of Contest Marketing

Component 1 - Contest Framework Definition

Your contest framework is a set of deliverables that serve as the meat of an Apps for Democracy. I cannot stress enough that the process of defining these should be kept as simple as possible. If your organization is nimble, you can do this in a few days or a week. If you're a part of a big bureaucracy, it will take months.

Table 2 - Contest Framework Check List	
1	Define Data Sources
2	Define Rules
3	Define Prizes
4	Define the Registration and Submission Process
5	Define Judging Format and Judges
6	Define Timeline



Item 1 - Define Data Sources

You *could* have an Apps for Democracy without publishing your own data, but using your organizations raw data will ensure that what is developed puts to use the wealth of information that isn't currently being leveraged by civic hackers for application development.

The DC government has been the pioneer in this space, and a number of other governments have subsequently published open government data for consumption and repurposing by citizens. Here are some to take a look at that may inform your data source definition process:

Geography	Data Site	Contest Site
Washington DC	http://data.octo.dc.gov	http://www.appsfordemocracy.org
US Federal	http://data.gov	http://www.bit.ly/apps4amer
San Francisco	http://datasf.org	http://spot.us/pitches/272
New York City	http://nyc.gov/data	http://www.nycbigapps.com
Toronto	http://toronto.ca/open	N/A
Nanaimo	http://nanaimo.ca/datafeeds	N/A
Vancouver	http://data.vancouver.ca	N/A
Finland	http://mindtrek.org/2009/democracy_finland/datacatalog	http://mindtrek.org/2009/democracy_finland
Belgium	http://inca-award.be	http://inca-award.be
London	http://data.gov.uk/	N/A

Item 2 - Define Rules

Rules are the enemy of creativity and innovation. Avoid rules at all costs. With Apps for Democracy our only rule was to use at least one data source from <http://data.octo.dc.gov> to build an application of some kind.




Item 3 - Define Prizes

The psychology of prizing is fascinating, and something we think about a lot at iStrategyLabs. The first Apps for Democracy contest featured 60 prizes, with a total of \$20,000 up for grabs. Here is the prize breakdown from the initial contest:

Some interesting things to note here:

- Most people don't think they'll win a contest so they're less likely to participate. We mitigated this risk by having lots of prizes - 60 in all. Developers got the sense that they had a great chance of winning at least something.
- We segmented prizes by Indie (independent developers) and those who worked at Agencies (web/ad agencies) so that the indie developers didn't feel like they were 'going up against the big guys', while the agencies could feel like they were showing the market place they had better skills than other agencies.
- The people's choice awards were crucial to driving significant viral distribution of the contest to a broader audience of people than we could have reached without it. As developers submitted their applications in the final week of the contest, they also promoted their entry to their email lists and social networks encouraging people to vote for them to win these prizes. New entrants discovered the contest through this method and submitted apps themselves.



Apps for Democracy
An Innovation Contest

Got what it takes to mash-up DC's data to win some cash and tons of street cred?

There's \$20,000 in cash prizes up for grabs

Prizes	Count	Indie	Agencies	Total
Gold	2	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Silver	6	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$6,000
Bronze	10	\$500	\$500	\$5,000
Honorable Mention	40	\$100	\$100	\$4,000
Peoples Choice	2	-	-	2 x \$500
Total	60			\$20,000

The contest - Apps for Democracy "Community Edition" had a different prize structure:

- Community Edition focused on using just DC's [Open 311 API](#) - and we were looking for the best possible application to run the city's web and mobile interfaces for the system. Because of this laser focus, we needed to make sure our participants iterated on their applications over time as we provided them with feedback. In order to enable this, we broke the contest up in to 3 rounds of prizing - evaluating apps in each round and providing feedback so they got better as the final round approached.
- We knew that by placing a really big rule (entrants must use an experimental Open 311 API) that there would be less participation, and therefore prizes needed to be bigger.

Awards	Count	Prize
Social Citizen Award	1	\$1,000
Round 1 First Place	1	\$3,000
Round 1 Second Place	1	\$2,000
Round 2 First Place	1	\$3,000
Round 2 Second Place	1	\$2,000
Final Round	1	\$10,000
Community Grant Option*	1	\$14,000
Total	6	\$35,000



Item 4 - Define the Registration and Submission Process

This should not be complex. Our registration and submission process relied on using [EventBrite](#) as a submission system that collected data from entrants, and allowed us to easily communicate with them via email in a seamless manner. Here's a look at what we collected during registration and submission:

Information to collect

Contact Information	<input type="checkbox"/> include <input type="checkbox"/> required	
Prefix (Mr., Mrs., etc.):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Name:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Last Name:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Suffix:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email Address:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Home Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cell Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address Information		
Home Address:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shipping Address:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work Information		
Job Title:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company / Organization:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work Address:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Blog:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Information		
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth Date:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Questions	<input type="checkbox"/> include <input type="checkbox"/> required	
<input type="checkbox"/> Application Name?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> delete
<input type="checkbox"/> Application URL?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> delete
<input type="checkbox"/> Description and/or what should we know about your approach?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> delete
<input type="checkbox"/> Got any feedback for us on the contest or API?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> delete
<input type="checkbox"/> Other team members names for attribution purposes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> delete
Add another question		

Item 4 - Define Judging Format and Judges

Your mission with this item is three fold - make judging easy on the judges, pick judges that understand technology, and pick judges that can help spread the word about the contest. We use a simple judging guide (see Appendix A), and are able to judge about 50 apps in a half day judging session if everyone is in the room together.



Item 5 - Define the Timeline

While it only took us 6 days to build and launch Apps for Democracy - there's a more 'sane' way to go about this. Below is what an ideal timeline would look like for launching and running an Apps for Democracy.

The color coding below is meant to show distinctions in effort over the course of the program. Lighter colors indicate 'build' periods, lighter resource requirements, and planning phases. Darker colors indicate the completion of components and/or heavier resource allocations during those weeks. The letters included in specific weeks will be addressed in "Item 6 - Bring the Message to the Developer" section below.

	Year	1																
		Month	1				2				3				4			
			Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
Website Creation																		
Design																		
Copywriting																		
Development																		
Project Management & Strategy																		
Marketing to Developers (Outreach)																		
Key Marketing Events		A			B			C					D					E
Competition Open for Submission																		
Judge Recruitment																		
Initial Screening																		
Apps Posted Publicly																		
Public Voting For "People's Choice"																		
Awards Ceremony (Event Management)																		
Results of Contest Marketing																		
Facebook Social Ads																		
Facebook Social Ads (Ad Design)																		



Component 2 - Website Creation

iStrategyLabs takes a systematic approach to web design and development. Our process for creating an Apps for Democracy-like website is as follows:

Table 2 - Website Creation	
1	Define overarching site goals
2	Define technology requirements to meet these goals
3	Match technology requirements with hosting environment
4	Receive approval of technical requirements
5	Develop information architecture and wireframes
6	Develop logo and full color design
7	Develop clickable alpha site for client review and input
8	Refine alpha and populate all content
9	Develop beta site for review
10	Refine beta, perform final Quality Assurance Testing
11	Receive approval for site launch

Item 1 - Define Overarching Site Goals

The goal is simple - to enable the marketing and promotion of the contest, as well as serve as a focal point for linking to published open data and associated apps developed for the contest. The following Figures, titled, "Anatomy of a Contest Site," are included in order to give you a sense for how a contest site can be structured:

Figure 1: Top of the Home Page

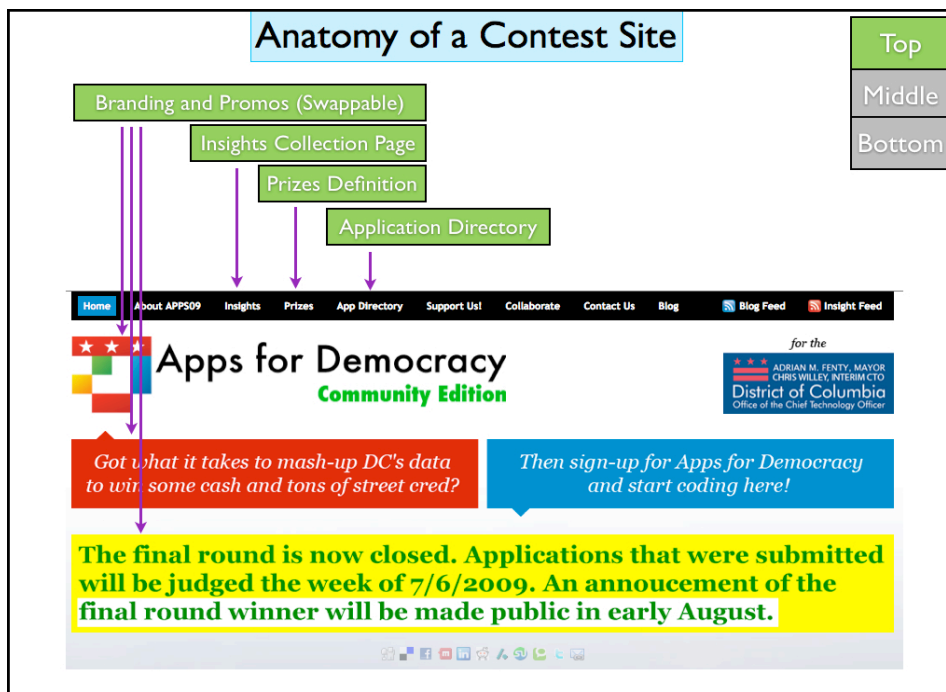


Figure 2: Middle of the Page

Anatomy of a Contest Site

Top
Middle
Bottom

Social Bookmarks

What: The first edition of Apps for Democracy yielded 47 web, iPhone and Facebook apps in 30 days - a \$2,300,000 value to the city at a cost of \$50,000 ([all apps created are here](#)). Our mission with "Community Edition" is two fold: to engage the populace of Washington, DC to ask for their input into the problems and ideas they have that can be addressed with technology and then to build the best community platform for submitting 311 service requests to the city. [Submit your ideas and problems here!](#)

Armed with insights from all corners of DC, we'll hold an innovation contest with **\$34,000 in potential prizes!** [Sign up to Build Apps for Democracy!](#)

Copy and Call to Action

Full Video About APPS09:

Ways to Engage:

1. [Add Your Neighborhood's Insights & Vote](#)
2. [Signup to Build Apps for Democracy](#)
3. [Tweet this!](#)
4. [Share!](#)

Additional Calls to Action

Contest Walkthrough Video

"Apps for Democracy produced more savings for the D.C. government than any other initiative." - Vivek Kundra, Fmr CTO of DC.

Final Round Winner to Be Announced Week of July 13th

4 Comments | 2009 July 3rd

Search

Tag your posts, pics, tweets & vids with #APPS09

Aug 2nd

2:31pm No #apps09 announcement tomorrow (<http://dc.gov/mayor/schedule.asp>) This is getting ridiculous? Does DC really c. <http://bit.ly/aRpJlg>

Site Search

Recent Blog Posts

Streaming Twitter Content



Figure 3: Bottom of the Page

Anatomy of a Contest Site

Top
Middle
Bottom

Tag Cloud Navigation

Recent Blog Posts

Latest Contest News

About the Sponsors

Our Sponsors

ADRIAN M. FENTY, MAYOR
CHRIS WILLEY, INTERIM CTO
District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Technology Officer

istrylabs

istrylabs is a digital agency focused on providing clients with *interactive strategy, experiential marketing and content creation services*. We've created Apps for Democracy to fulfill the DC Government's Office of the Chief Technology Officer's need for visualizing their Data Catalog for the benefit of citizens, visitors and businesses of DC. We hope this model for technology innovation can be adopted by other municipalities in order to strengthen their own technology communities by developing open source solutions for the good of all. Please contact [Peter Corbett, CEO, IStrategyLabs](#) with any questions regarding this contest, or to run one in your city.

© 2009 IStrategyLabs - an IBM Foundation providing clients with *interactive strategy, experiential marketing and content creation services*

Figure 4: Prizes Interior Page

Anatomy of a Contest Site

Prizes

Home About APPS09 Insights Prizes App Directory Support Us! Collaborate Contact Us Blog Blog Feed Insight Feed

for the
ADRIAN M. FENTY, MAYOR
CHRIS WILLEY, INTERIM CTO
District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Apps for Democracy
Community Edition

Prizes

Sign-up Call to Action

Prize Definition

Prize Rules

Search

Tag your posts, pics, tweets & vids with #APPS09

Aug 2nd

2:31pm No #apps09 announcement tomorrow (<http://dc.gov/mayor/schedule.asp>) This is getting ridiculous? Does DC really c.<http://bit.ly/28p4lg>

2:24pm @octolabs Do you know when the DC 311 API will be working? Looks like no Requests are processed. posted note to Group #apps09 #dc311

2:23pm No #apps09 announcement tomorrow (<http://dc.gov/mayor/schedule.asp>) This is getting ridiculous? Does DC really care about open Gov? #gov20

Aug 1st

11:08am First talk was "Apps for Democracy" by @corbett3000 - great talk about how DC funded apps, including iPhone apps to improve the community.

10:45am Listening to @corbett3000 discuss Apps for Democracy at #iphonedcampdc, Vancouver, NY, Minn, Finland have asked him for app info.

Awards	Count	Prize
Social Citizen Award	1	\$1,000
Round 1 First Place	1	\$3,000
Round 1 Second Place	1	\$2,000
Round 2 First Place	1	\$3,000
Round 2 Second Place	1	\$2,000
Final Round	1	\$10,000
Community Grant Option*	1	\$14,000
Total	6	\$35,000

If one individual or team wins first place in round 1, round 2 and the final round they are guaranteed \$16,000.

*OCTO will have the option to award a Community Grant administered by IStrategyLabs for a total of \$14,000 over a 9 month period for further development and support of the winning application.

General Prize Structure:

- Contestants can be an individual or a team of individuals; prize money will be awarded to the team leader for distribution.
- Contestants can enter as many applications as they like and each app is eligible for a prize according to these rules.
- Contestants must submit their applications to the submission portal here.



Figure 5: App Directory Interior Page

Anatomy of a Contest Site App Directory

Home About APP509 Insights Prizes App Directory Support Us! Collaborate Contact Us Blog Blog Feed Insight Feed

Apps for Democracy
Community Edition

for the
ADRIAN M. FENTY, MAYOR
CHRISTOPHER W. BISHOP, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Application Directory

Our hope is that these applications will not only serve as a way for you to flex your muscles, win some cash and get the credit you deserve, but also to become place for people to find interesting ways to mashup data for the betterment of all. Please let our fellow technologists and government tech leaders know this places exists and that the applications are for all to remix, refine and republish.

Sign-up for Apps For Democracy

An **istratagical** Labs Experience

Next Page - Search

Carpool Mashup Matchmaker 4 Comments 2008 November 12th 764

Tag your posts, pics, tweets & vids with #APP509 Aug 2nd

2:31pm No #app509 announcement tomorrow (http://dc.gov/mayor/schedule.asp) This is getting ridiculous? Does DC really c. http://bit.ly/2RpUllg

2:24pm @octolabs Do you know when the DC311 API will be working? Looks like no Requests are processed, posted note to Group #app509 #dc311

2:23pm No #app509 announcement tomorrow (http://dc.gov/mayor/schedule.asp) This is getting ridiculous? Does DC really care about open Gov? #gov20

Public Votes

Live App

App URL: <http://demos3.lackbe.com/mashlets/DCCarpool/>

Welcome to the Carpool Mashup Matchmaker

Search for a partner below and give the Carpool Matchmaker like

Select a Match

Figure 6: Insights Interior Page

Anatomy of a Contest Site Citizen Insights

Go to Apps For Democracy

Apps for Democracy
Community Edition

Log in or Sign up | English

DC Wide Feedback Forum

Do you live in/visit DC and have an idea or problem that can be solved through technology? We want to hear from you!

I suggest you ...
- enter your insights (new programs, fix things, etc) - Search

top ideas hot new accepted completed

731 votes
vote
Where are Washington, DC's social entrepreneurs?
Washington, DC is full of social entrepreneurs. But where are they and how can I find them? What inspiring, game changing, and innovative projects are they working on? Washington, DC needs an internet-based open source platform that can help identify social entrepreneurs so that they can collab... more
47 comments | by legy thomas

601 votes
vote
We need city-wide wireless internet! started
I would be great if the entire city had wireless internet access.
9 comments | by corbett3000

377 votes
vote
GPS for bus system arrivals started
Reduced wait times. Greater reliability. As a result, ridership might increase, leading to more revenue for the system. GPS can even create a means for monitoring driver adherence to schedules—putting an end to the maddening clustering of buses. GPS was tried several years ago in DC with NEXT... more
10 comments | by anonymous | 0 spam duplicate inappropriate

10 votes left!
What happens if I run out?

DC Wide activity feed

Contact Support

Forums
Data Dot Gov (30)
DC Wide (232)
NYC Big Apps Ideas (54)

Question/Call to Action

Top Voted Idea

Comments

Vote Button

Idea Status



Item 2 - Define technology requirements to meet these goals

We believe in creating sites that can be rapidly deployed, easily updated, SEO optimized, and scalable from a features and traffic perspective. There are a few ways to design sites like that. We chose to use Wordpress as a content management system for Apps for Democracy, using its vast open source plug-in system to create a powerful multimedia publishing platform. Wordpress allowed us to avoid license fees, while leveraging social technology to build viral distribution of our site's content with the click of a button.

Item 3 - Match technology requirements with hosting environment recommendation

Our technical approach for appsfordemocracy.org required a simple server configuration featuring Linux, MYSQL, Apache, and PHP (LAMP). A typical LAMP hosting environment will run between \$10 and \$25 per month from any number of providers like www.1and1.com, www.mediatemples.com, etc.

Items 4-11 - These are not explored further in this guide

Component 3 - Marketing to Developers

The following table provides our framework for how best to engage technology developers in a contest:

Table 3 - How to Market to Developers	
1	Be a Geek - Not a Marketer
2	Build Community Through Collaboration and Learning
3	Focus on a Message of Self Actualization
4	Facilitate Public Recognition
5	Listen to Feedback and Act on it
6	Bring the Message to the Developer

Item 1 - Be a Geek - Not a Marketer

Marketing products, services, contests, and events to the developer community is an activity iStrategyLabs is engaged in on a daily basis internationally. We are technology developers ourselves, so we have the ability to 'talk geek-to-geek' in an authentic and relevant way to our target communities. We do not come off as a marketing or PR agency - something that would not resonate well with developers as they are leery of, and not interested in, engaging with marketers in general. Additionally, since we don't own or license our own proprietary technologies (CMSs, contest platforms, event management systems, etc.), developers don't feel that we're trying to promote our own technology - pushing it on them through the course of a campaign.

Item 2 - Build Community Through Collaboration and Learning

In this vein, we approach marketing to developers as a community building effort. We focus on adding value to tech communities by hosting un-conferences (open format 'camps' driven by the participants) that let them dork out together - providing them with other opportunities to learn and collaborate. The guide we created for NPR and PBS's PublicMediaCamp may be useful for your purposes and can be found here: <http://publicmediacamp.org/2009/10/18/the-publicmediacamp-field-guide/>. This guide will show you how to create an un-conference, and include video overviews of what a camp experience is like.



Item 3 - Focus on a Message of Self Actualization

We've learned through the course of running Apps for Democracy that cash prizes are not the primary motivator for participating. The primary motivator is, in fact, self actualization. For example, a developer's family may think "he/she works with computers" and doesn't really understand the skills and important impact a good developer can have on society. We focus much of our approach and messaging around helping developers feel valued and appreciated in the eyes of their city/government/peers and the global technology community around them.

Item 4 - Facilitate Public Recognition

Secondary only to self actualization is a developer's desire for public recognition, which go hand-in-hand. In the technology field, it's typical for only the most elite and well-known technologist to get any kind of substantial public recognition. People like Tim O'Reilly (coined "Web 2.0" and more), Craig Newmark (Craigslist), Evan Williams (Twitter), Marc Andreessen (Netscape, NING), and other tech rockstars are able to grab headlines, but hundreds of thousands of brilliant developers remain in relative obscurity. Our engagement strategy focuses generating both local and national opportunities for recognition among our contest participants. The winners of Apps for Democracy have been featured in The New York Times, Wired, CIO Magazine, Information Week, NPR, O'Reilly's Radar, Read Write Web, Washington Monthly, The Washington Post, Washingtonian Magazine, Washington Life Magazine, and nearly 500 blog posts across the web. We actively connect winning developers to opportunities to speak at conferences and with the press, helping them receive recognition and, at the same time, spread the word about Apps for Democracy.

Item 5 - Listen to Feedback and Act on it

Technology developers are very smart people - there's nothing worse for a smart person than being asked for input but it not being acted upon. For this reason, during your contest - as with Apps for Democracy - plan to have a mechanism in place for feedback to be received and acted upon during and post-contest. The most common form of feedback throughout your contest will most likely be related to the types of data published, and the format that data is published in. During Apps for Democracy, we worked side-by-side with liaisons both in The Office of the Chief Technology Officer and those responsible for the citywide data warehouse. Developers were able to request new data feeds, in divergent formats, and have access to new feeds within 24-48 hours. While this kind of responsiveness is ideal - it's not absolutely necessary for a successful contest. However, it does generate significant buzz within a technology community when participants feel their requests are being listened to, and acted upon, in near real time. This also helped brand the city as a responsive body, capable and willing to engage with citizen technologists.



Item 6 - Bring the Message to the Developer

It's one thing to know how to market to developers - it's another to know where to find them. Our approach is three-fold, and composed of Key Marketing Elements and a Facebook Social Ads Campaign.

	Year	1															
	Month	1				2				3				4			
	Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Marketing to Developers (Outreach)																	
Key Marketing Events		A			B			C					D				E
Facebook Social Ads																	
Facebook Social Ads (Ad Design)																	

Table 5 - Marketing Detail	
Label	Key Marketing Elements
A	Splash page with e-mail sign-up live, press release, initial outreach to media and developers
B	Full site launch, full campaign launch, host first "camp"
C	Integration with a nearby technology conference by sponsoring/speaking/hosting a code jam
D	Host final code jam
E	Host awards ceremony

Key Marketing Element A

The first thing you should do is register a contest website domain, host the site, and publicly display a "Splash page," notifying visitors that the full site will launch on a specific date. At the same time craft a press release and distribute it via wire service and to your own press contacts.

Key Marketing Element B

The best way to kick things off is with a one- or two-day un-conference focused on all things related to the contest. This event will allow you to deeply engage interested technology developers, answer questions about the contest in person, and source initial ideas for applications to be developed. You'll need to secure a venue, provide event operation logistics, and plan for between 50-100 attendees depending on how big a market you run the contest in.

Key Marketing Element C

This element is included in the calendar to show that you'll need another key marketing effort at this point in the contest. You could do another devcamp - or try to host a code jam of some kind at someone else's tech conference. Whatever you do, you look for a good opportunity to a) reach a new audience and b) keep the contest at the top of developers' minds.

Key Marketing Element D

Create and host a final code jam for entrants to participate in. This is the last chance for you to make some noise about the contest, and to get developers engaged to compete.



Key Marketing Element E

iStrategyLabs has created and hosted two awards ceremonies for civic data challenges and numerous other events attended by the technology community and press. For this event, you should think about finding a lounge or other upscale venue to host a cocktail party-style awards ceremony. Don't do a sit down affair; it's overly expensive and not something the tech community will really be into. Make sure you have an A/V setup to demo the apps!



Other Optional Marketing Methods: Facebook Social Ads

Facebook Social Ads can be a highly targeted, efficient way to get the word out about your contest. The social ads platform can be found here: <http://www.facebook.com/ads/create/>. A sample of our campaign from the first Apps for Democracy contest is here:

Apps for Democracy Ad Campaign		
facebook		
Targeting	Targeting Facebook users with an interest in: Coding, Computer Programming, Hacking, New Technology, Programming, or Technology	Targeting Facebook user by geography: Within 100 miles of DC
Creative	 <p>Got what it takes to mash-up DC.gov's data to win cash and tons of street cred? Join the Apps for Democracy Group. Now till 11/13!</p> <p>Drove to Facebook Group to generate viral distribution of campaign through "Group Join" news feed broadcasts.</p> <p>Kept driving group joins for the first three weeks.</p>	 <p>Got what it takes to mash-up DC.gov's data to win cash and tons of street cred? 4 days left. 60 chances to win. Submit today!</p> <p>With a week left in the competition, we swapped creative daily and drove people to the contest site itself to encourage immediate registration.</p>
Metrics	<p>1,337,715 Impressions</p> <p>697 Clicks</p> <p>\$433.31 spent</p>	<p>Very efficient marketing approach!</p>

Component 4 - Judge Recruitment

Judge recruitment is a simple yet effective way of securing additional evangelists who will be likely to spread the word about your contest and provide an expert review of submitted applications. For our Apps for Democracy contests, we have had a mixture of city officials, venture capitalists, academics, and technology leaders act as judges.

Component 5 - Initial Screening

iStrategyLabs has now screened 60+ applications submitted to our own contests, and another 45 during our involvement as a judge of the Apps for America contest. Upon review, we typically provide entrants with feedback so they can further iterate on their submission if the contest deadline has yet to elapse. We've found that this ensures a higher quality of applications, which better meet the needs of the city and citizen. Constructive feedback also gives technology developers a greater chance of winning an award.



Component 6 - Apps Posted Publicly

There are a number of strategies related to posting applications publicly once they've initially been screened. Our recommended approach is to screen the app, and then post a viable one as soon as they've past muster. Posting applications to a directory as they come in is recommended for the following reasons:

- Bloggers and the media often write about new and exciting apps posted.
- Other developers see what has been posted and either a) avoid similar apps or b) build better ones to compete with the posted one. Outcomes 'a' and 'b' are both beneficial for a contest.
- When combined with a "People's Choice" voting mechanism, this encourages developers to get their app finished as early as possible so they have more time to accumulate votes.

Component 7 - Public Voting for "People's Choice"

In the first edition of Apps for Democracy, we created a "People's Choice" award; the top two applications that had the most votes in our directory received \$500 cash prizes. This method drove significant buzz, and encouraged a "promotional war;" application developers reached out to their friends, family, and broader technology community, sending them to our site to vote on their app. During this process, nearly 4,000 votes were cast in the last few days of the contest. New entrants found out about the contest through this promotional activity, and joined the contest by submitting their own application.

Component 8 - Awards Ceremony & Final Judging

iStrategyLabs has now led the judging committees for two Apps for Democracy contests, as well as served as a judge for Apps for America. A sample judging guide is included in Appendix A. As for the awards ceremony, both Apps for Democracy awards ceremonies have been held at upscale lounges, where application demonstrations have taken place. Awards ceremonies for the tech community should not be a 'sit-down dinner' kind of affair - a more informal and inviting format is recommended and preferred.

Component 9 - Results of Contest 1 Marketing

Once all applications have been submitted, and prizes have been awarded, make sure all the relevant media, bloggers, and technology community influentials know about the results. Our experience has taught us that a significant portion of attention garnered by civic innovation contests is driven by people reviewing individual applications in the press and on their blogs. Ensure that for a two-week period subsequent to the awards ceremony you're actively reaching out to those who should know about the results.



Appendix A - Sample Judging Guide

Introduction

On behalf of DC's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and iStrategyLabs, thank you kindly for volunteering your time to evaluate submissions to the Apps for Democracy innovation contest. This brief guide will get you up to speed with regard to how you'll be evaluating applications and recommending them for specific awards.

Purpose

The first key to determine which applications deserve awards is to understand why we created Apps for Democracy in the first place. The purpose of Apps for Democracy is provide applications that make OCTO's data more useful and usable for the citizens, businesses and government agencies of Washington, DC.

Prize Structure

Prizes	Count	Indie	Agency	Total
Gold	2	\$2,000 x 1	\$2,000 x 1	\$4,000
Silver	6	\$1,000 x 3	\$1,000 x 3	\$6,000
Bronze	10	\$500 x 5	\$500 x 5	\$5,000
Honorable Mention	40	\$100 x 20	\$100 x 20	\$4,000
Peoples Choice*	2	-	-	\$500 x 2
Total	60			\$20,000

1. Indie and Agency prize pools are mutually exclusive (1 gold for Indie, 1 gold for Agency)
2. People's Choice awards are not mutually exclusive and will be award automatically to the two applications with the most votes in the Application Directory. You do not need to judge these.

Awards criteria

Please keep the following 4 criteria in mind when evaluating applications.

1. Usefulness to the citizens, visitors and government of Washington DC
2. Potential for application to be useful for other governmental bodies outside of DC
3. Appeal of the application from a usability perspective
4. Inventive and original nature of the application



About Peter Corbett



[Peter Corbett](#) is the founder and CEO of [iStrategyLabs](#) – a creative agency that develops solutions to clients’ challenges and brings them to life in the digital and physical world. Peter has won multiple industry awards, including 3 Addys, the Great Washington DC Board of Trade's "One To Watch" award for being "A rising entrepreneur who has a bright and sustainable future in Greater Washington", and has been named one of the most influential Washingtonians under 40 by Washington Life Magazine. Washingtonian Magazine included him in their Tech Titan list of the top 100 people shaping technology innovation in the greater capital area and GovFresh called him a “Top 25 Most Fascinating Communicator in Government IT” and Government Technology Magazine included him in the 2010 “25 Doers, Dreamers and Drivers” list.

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About iStrategyLabs



[iStrategyLabs](#) is a word-of-mouth agency that develops creative solutions to clients’ challenges and brings them to life in the digital and physical world. Our headquarters is located at 1510 19th Street, Washington, DC 20036 and our New York office is located at 220 Lafayette Street, Ste #2, New York, NY 10012. Our client work includes GEICO, Intel, Microsoft, American Eagle Outfitters, NASDAQ OMX, NPR, PBS, The US Army, Corona, Rockstar Energy Drink, Fuze Beverage, the Washington DC Conventions and Visitors Bureau (washington.org), the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Share Our Strength, Capital Area Food Bank, DC’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer, the Alexandria Community Trust, and more.

We’ve created successful marketing campaigns that spread via word-of-mouth by focusing on the following three areas: interactive strategy (connecting with communities online), experiential marketing (connecting with communities physically), and content creation (connecting with audiences through content). We are differentiated from other agencies through our ability to execute campaigns both online and offline, as well as by taking a ‘social approach’ to all that we do. This approach centers on thinking of audiences as communities of individuals that we can add value to – rather than advertise at. We look to bring these customer communities closer together, while creating brand evangelists who spread the word about our clients and campaigns. Over time, we have developed specific specialties in engaging the youth segment (12-24), technology communities, and educators.

[Download Our Full Capabilities Here](#)

