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## What the hack is a hackathon?

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Submitted by Diane Wild, Senior Consultant, Communications and Public Affairs

What happens if you get 80 or so tech-savvy brains in a room for a weekend -- ranging from students to experienced programmers -- and entice them with experts, data and sponsored cash prizes for the best solutions to Fraser Health's challenges? We don't exactly know, and that's the beauty of a hackathon: anything could happen.

A hackathon is an event where programmers and others involved in technology and software development collaborate and compete to develop solutions to specific challenges. The most promising ideas can be further developed into working systems.

Facebook's 'like' button and chat functions came out of company hackathons. In the health care world, data mining has uncovered a lung cancer treatment in an already-approved anti-depressant and apps have been created to help refugees navigate government services.

In a B.C. health authority first, Fraser Health is hosting our hackathon at Simon Fraser University's Surrey campus on

January 21 and 22 in conjunction with the City of Surrey and Innovation Boulevard. Nine challenges will be presented to registrants based on themes of:

- Patient-centred services
- Frontline staff engagement
- The overdose crisis
- Mental health and substance use

And of course, because anything could happen with that many innovative people in a room together, there's a wild card category for an out-of-the-box solution.

Want to know more, or register yourself? Visit the registration site at [healthhackathon.ca](http://healthhackathon.ca)

(<http://healthhackathon.ca>) and read our media release (<http://news.fraserhealth.ca/News/December-2016/Fraser-Health-first-ever-hackathon.aspx>).

## Comments

Dave Brown (<http://qiqhealthcare.com>)

Excellent idea. Not sure how much word on this has circulated in the Vancouver tech community. A notice should be placed on the Pixel Crafters meetup group: <https://www.meetup.com/Vancouver-Tech-Co-Founders/>  
*21/12/2016 12:25:05 PM*

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Diane Wild

Thank you, though Communications can't take the credit - this is a Fraser Health-wide project. Dr. Victoria Lee and Philip Barker are the powers behind the hackathon, along with a lot of other departments and people.  
*15/12/2016 9:07:19 AM*

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Carole Falkner

Whoooohaaa, great way to start 2017. Congrats to FH Corp Communications for making this possible- no small feat. And to be leaders in the province for such an innovative approach.  
*14/12/2016 3:04:37 PM*

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