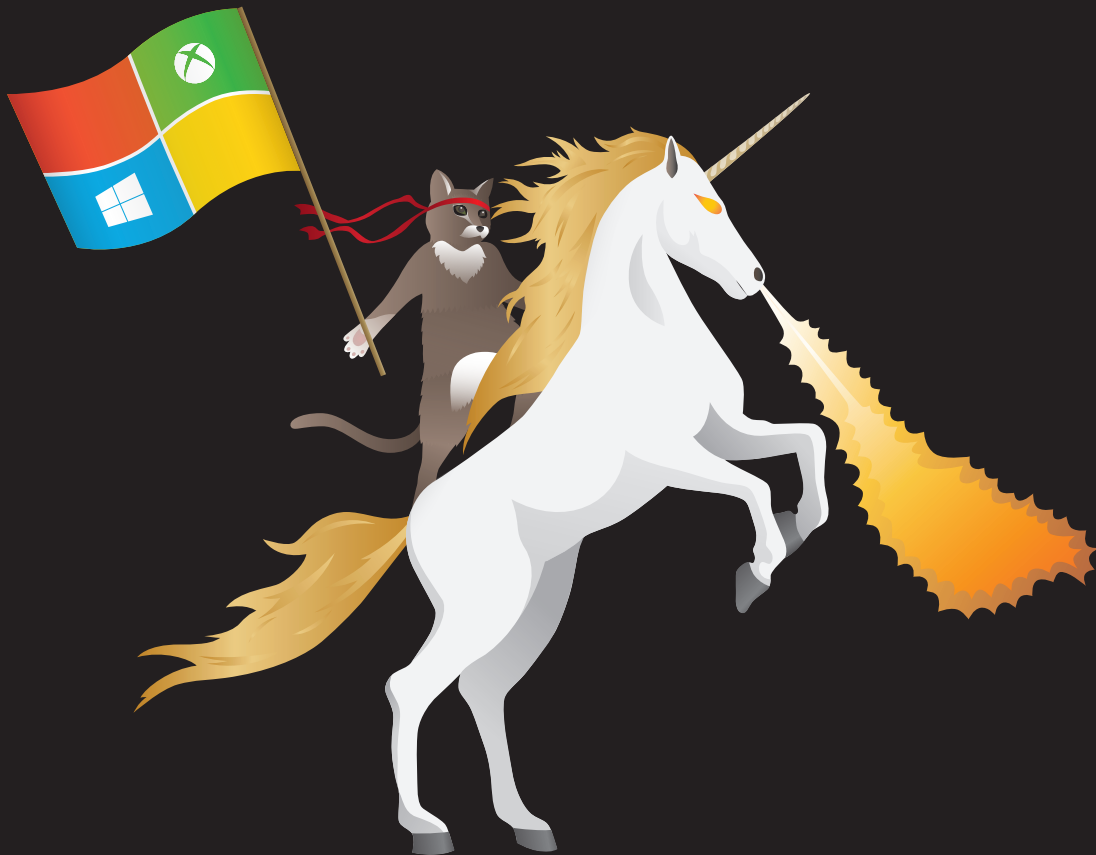


Windows Insider Program

# #WINsiders4Good Event in a Box

## Create-A-Thon

A complete guide to hosting your own Create-A-Thon:  
A hack-a-thon for social good, powered by Windows Insiders



I'm a  
Windows  
Insider

## Welcome!

---

At Microsoft, our mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. And when we work together, we can do amazing things.

The Windows Insiders are one of the biggest communities of people using tech for good in the world. And Create-A-Thons (CATs) are a great way to harness the skills and energy of that community to tackle social issues like homelessness or affordable housing.

We know that in just two or three days we can't completely solve a problem that has plagued us for decades, but we can chip away at the foundation, tearing down those issues, piece by piece.

---

*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not.*

*~Dr. Seuss*

*Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.*

*~William James*

## Table of Contents

What is a #WINSiders4Good Create-A-Thon (CAT)? .....	4
What are the goals for the CAT? .....	4
Want to organize your own CAT? .....	4
Staying connected	
Enlisting Insiders .....	4
Post-event follow-up .....	4
Best practices for a successful CAT	
Content .....	5
Roles .....	5
Participants .....	5
Scheduling .....	5
Venue .....	5
Food and refreshments .....	6
The topic .....	6
Finding your non-profit partner .....	7
The logistics: venue .....	7
Appendix A: Sample flows for CAT (2 day and 3 day versions)	
Example: Seattle 2 day .....	8
Example: Cologne 3 day .....	8
Appendix B: Before the event	
Planning timeline .....	9
Appendix C: Invitations for non-profit organizations	
Invitation template .....	10
Appendix D: Detailed programs based on the WIP team's lessons learned on the road	
2 Day model: detailed program .....	11
3 Day model: detailed program .....	12
Appendix E: Non-profit organizations and NGO partners.....	13

## What is a #WINSiders4Good Create-A-Thon (CAT)?

---

#WINSiders4Good Create-A-Thons are a series of two- to three-day events modeled after traditional hack-a-thons with an added twist.

They bring Windows Insiders' techie minds together with local creative talent and non-profit/civil society organizations to hack a social issue that they care about.

The content can vary by event (e.g. homelessness, refugee crisis, political engagement, etc.) and the final outputs can take the form of a website, an app, a program design, maybe even a policy, the sky is the limit.

## What are the goals for the CAT?

---

CATs help the Windows Insider Program and the Windows Insiders achieve complementary goals. Windows Insider Program can run CATs to engage and activate Windows Insiders to do more with Windows 10 and with the Windows Insider community.

Windows Insiders connect with one another as well as local talent to use their skills and talents in a new way. In turn, this event helps to bring new skills and talent into the Windows Insider Program, making feedback for Windows more robust and making our Windows community much richer and diverse.

## Want to organize your own CAT?

---

We are excited to work with our amazing Windows Insiders to produce CATs worldwide.

Let us know you are planning an event by writing us at [wipevent@microsoft.com](mailto:wipevent@microsoft.com).

## Staying connected

---

### ENLISTING INSIDERS

A Slack group has been set up that includes CAT participants from across the globe. Please complete this [form](#) so that we can add you to the Slack group.

Have your attendees also complete the form on Day 1 of the event so that we can all support what you are doing even though we can't all be together.

### POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

Use the hashtag #WINSiders4Good when promoting the CAT and the events throughout the days. This way, we can retweet and join in on the fun from afar.

Once the event is over, we would love to hear from you.

We would like all content and intellectual property created during a CAT to belong to the world. We encourage you to post your code on [GitHub](#) and allow others to borrow or improve it. We can all be the change we hope to see in the world.

# Best practices for a successful CAT

## CONTENT

- **Choose your issue wisely**, so that the gathering will be focused on solution creation and less on debate. An ideal issue is one that **unites your community** and has facets that could be addressed in a short span of time.
- Having **issue experts** participate enriches the experience, so reach out to representatives from civic/non-profit organizations who can present a perspective on the issue and potential solutions. When they're able to participate during the **entire duration** and provide input into the solutions, this is an ideal scenario. Click [here](#) to select from a list of recommended philanthropies.
- **Additional content** around how to create solutions, how to create a strong pitch, along with more technical tutorials on Microsoft Azure, Data Science, among others, can add to the learning component of the CAT. We have some of this content recorded for you, but we also encourage you to engage with experts in your local geography.

## ROLES

- Identify the "**master of ceremonies**" who will kick off and close the events, bring teams together and to announce key events throughout the CAT.
- Enlist friends or colleagues who will help you with the **logistics**, such as: Did you run out of water? Need forks? Making signage? You want to make sure that small issues such as these don't tie you up or derail the agenda. We highly recommend 2-3 additional "cat herders" to ensure the days go smoothly.

## PARTICIPANTS

- At the CAT, we recommend each team to consist of **different types of thinkers** with **different skills** in order to create a dynamic solution. We want more than just coders and developers, we want you to enlist creative talent from the design and art worlds.
- An **ideal team** includes creative thinkers as well as techies. In addition, the team needs someone to project manage your solution to keep it on track. Throw in a "wildcard" – someone who can make you think and you're going to be unstoppable!

## SCHEDULING

- **A 3-day event is a recommended maximum.** Additionally, the event should take place on the weekend, beginning Friday evening and ending Sunday afternoon. When space or budget does not allow, 2-day events work as well, Friday night and ending Saturday night. Keep in mind, additional time helps prototypes to be more complete.
- **All-nighters are not recommended.** It exhausts the attendees and you will see diminishing returns. Negotiating the use of space overnight may also be difficult.

## VENUE

- You will be in this space a long time, **bright and airy space** with windows work best to keep the creative juices flowing!
- Make sure it's **easy to find**, central and most importantly, make it easy for people to enter the building. Include **directional signage** and make sure folks at the entrance (receptionists, concierges, etc.) know what and where your event is as they will be the ones asked for directions.
- **Electrical outlets and extension cords** – decide how many you think you need, then double it! There will be laptops, phones, etc. needing power throughout the event.
- Being able to access the internet is essential so check the **Wi-Fi** at your venue. Is there a charge to use it? While in your designated event space, does the signal drop? Is the connection fast/strong enough to handle the number of devices you will be connecting?

### FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS

- **Have snacks and beverages ready when attendees arrive.** It helps to keep people busy and fueled as others arrive. Ensure there are square meals as people are working hard, have snacks and beverages throughout the day. Working throughout the day creates hungry Insiders! Be sure to offer vegetarian, kosher, and halal options.

### THE TOPIC

Select a topic that unites the community, one that allows constructive dialog and solution building. Create-A-Thon isn't about arguments or debates; it is about learning more about an issue you all care about, supporting local organizations that tackle it every day and doing your part in making your community a better place.

We asked the Windows Insider community which issues they care about, these issues affect communities across the globe and gives you a starting point for the theme of your CAT. If you have other ideas you would like to suggestion, let us know!

1. Homelessness:
  - a. Chronic homelessness
  - b. Those newly released from jail/prison
  - c. Mentally ill
2. Affordable housing
3. Mental health/addressing the stigma associated with it
4. Use/collection of natural resources such as water
5. Education
  - a. Technology in education
  - b. Teaching coding at an early age
  - c. Improving access to education in impoverished areas
  - d. Funding of post-secondary education
  - e. Teaching older people how to use technology
6. Bringing/teaching technology to those that are just now getting access to the internet
  - a. Indigenous Australians
  - b. Tribal Africa
7. Feeding the hungry
8. Suicide prevention
9. Veterans support/benefits
  - a. Suicide prevention
  - b. Reentry to civilian life
  - c. Job skills
10. Using HoloLens to address physical disabilities using an adaptive mixed reality head set

## Best practices for a successful CAT (cont.)

### FINDING YOUR NON-PROFIT PARTNER

Now that you've selected a topic you care about, choose a local partner [here](#). Or, if you are associated with a non-profit that is not already on the list, send us a note at [wipevent@microsoft.com](mailto:wipevent@microsoft.com) to ensure we help to get your preferred organization added.

### THE LOGISTICS: VENUE

In addition to being a bright and airy space, as noted above, be sure to look for the following:

- **Internet access is critical!** Be sure that Wi-Fi is available and that the signal is strong throughout the venue. This will enable your attendees to easily gather and work wherever they're comfortable. Electrical outlets throughout the room as well as power strips are necessary. People will need to charge laptops, phones, etc. so there should be at least one power strip for each pod/team. In addition, the CAT herders will need power outlets for computers, projection equipment, etc.
- **Your room should be laid out in pods, each seating 4-6 people.** While the venue staff will set up the room in a nice orderly fashion, understand that your teams will likely rearrange the furniture to suit their needs throughout the day.
- Participants will often be so engrossed in their project that they will work through meal times. **Be sure that there is enough space to allow for food and beverage service in the CAT meeting room.**
- Your venue should be **centrally located**, based on where your participants will be coming from. It's helpful to choose a facility near bus/train/subway stations. Or, in cities where most people will be driving to the event, check for nearby public parking.
- **Be sure to place directional signage** at all entrances so that participants can easily find the room.
- **Flip charts, white boards, Post-It notes, Sharpie pens,** etc. are helpful tools to have available for capturing ideas.
- **Background music** can help keep the creative juices flowing. Just remember, it's *background* music – don't let it get so loud that it's a distraction.

# Appendix A: Sample flows for CAT (2 day and 3 day versions)

## EXAMPLE: SEATTLE 2 DAY

### Day 1

6:00-7:00pm	Welcome and Open Context Setting: The Complex Issue of Homelessness
7:00-7:30pm	Dinner and Form Teams
7:30-8:00pm	Idea Pitch, Finalize Teams
8:00pm	Start Work!
10:00pm	Turn in Machines/ Close

### Day 2

9:00-10:00am	Breakfast
10:00am	Lightning Talk: Intro to Prototyping
10:30am-12:00pm	Work Time/ Mentors Roam
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch and Learn: Intro to Data Science
1:30-4:00pm	Work Time/ Mentors Roam
4:00pm	Lightning Talk: Telling a Great Story
4:30-6:00pm	Wrap your Solutions
6:00pm	Presentations
7:00pm	Dinner and Connect
10:00pm	Close

## EXAMPLE: COLOGNE 3 DAY

### Day 1

15:00/3:00pm	Welcome and Introductions
15:30-16:00/ 3:30-4:00pm	Context Setting: Gaming for Good
16:00-16:30/ 4:00-4:30pm	Lightning Talk: Intro to Solution Design
16:30-18:00/ 4:30-6:00pm	Idea Generation/ Forming Teams
18:00/6:00	Close

### Day 2

9:00-10:00/ 9:00-10:00am	Breakfast
9:30-10:00/ 9:30-10:00am	Lightning Talk: Telling a great Story (Video)
10:00-12:00/ 10:00am-12:00pm	Work Time/ Mentors Roam
12:00-13:00/ 12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
13:00-15:30/ 1:00-3:30pm	Work Time/ Mentors Roam
15:30-16:00 3:30-4:00pm	Lightning Talk: HoloLens
16:00-18:00/ 4:00-6:00pm	Work time/ Mentors Roam
17:00/5:00pm	Dinner
18:00/6:00pm	Turn in Machines/ Close

### Day 3

9:00-10:00/ 9:00-10:00am	Breakfast
10:00-13:00/ 10:00am-1:00pm	Work Time/ Mentors Roam
13:00/1:00pm	Lunch
13:00-14:00 1:00-2:00pm	Finalize Projects
14:00-15:00 2:00-3:00pm	Presentations
15:00-16:00 3:00-4:00pm	Networking
16:00/4:00pm	Turn in Machines/ Close



## Appendix B: Before the event

### PLANNING TIMELINE

#### 6 Weeks Prior

- Choose a topic
- Find and invite issue experts
- Coordinate with experts to lock in a date (easier to do this vs trying to find experts that are available after you've already locked in a date)
- Once dates are selected, find venue
- Consider corporate "sponsors" that can
  - provide meeting space for free or minimal charge
  - provide food and beverage
  - provide assistance such as developers/coders, contacts with issue experts, etc.
- Coordinate with WIP team to invite local Windows Insiders

#### 4-5 Weeks Prior

- Lock in on the venue
- Confirm experts
- Invite attendees
- Enlist organizations that can help reach attendees to share the event invite

#### 2-3 Weeks Prior

- Monitor RSVPs
- Invite additional attendees as needed
- Confirm space and order food and beverage

#### 1 Week Prior

- Send reminder email to those who have responded
- Confirm/remind experts
- Order food and beverages
- Secure supplies such as name badges, Post-Its, pens/markers, etc.
- Confirm schedule with everyone supporting the event, such as the caterers, event space, speakers, etc.

#### Create-A-Thon Day

- Have fun!

## Appendix C: Invitations for non-profit organizations

### INVITATION TEMPLATE

Hello!

I am a member of the Windows Insider Program, one of the biggest communities of people using tech for good in the world. I have a feeling you might be a kindred spirit.

Because of the work that you do in the issue of {Insert Issue}, I would like to extend an invitation to a Create-A-Thon which we are hosting to address {Insert Issue}.

The projects can be a business, a non-profit, a program, a volunteer effort, a rebrand, anything. We will have experts from non-profits or other organizations who will be there to talk about the details of the local issue (homelessness, housing crisis, etc.) and to help guide solutions that will actually be useful to the city.

**I'd love for you to join me at our next Windows Insider Create-A-Thon (CAT) in a couple of weeks.** We will be gathering in {City Name} to tackle the issue of {Topic}.

**When:** Day, Date and Time (break down hours for each day as times may vary)

**Where:** Venue Name, Address, Room Name/Number (if appropriate)

**How:** Hyperlink to Registration Site (such as Eventbrite)

The goal of these Create-A-Thons are to:

- Use technology to actually create something good for the city we live in and love.
- Engage a more diverse set of creators within a city so that these unique points of view can solve hard problems in unique ways.
- Have the local community engaging with each other, both face to face and virtually afterwards.

The local issue we will tackle in {City} is {Topic}.

This #WINSiders4Good initiative is create BY Insiders FOR Insiders.

By empowering the Insiders to realize the power of tech and the rich community they belong to, they are going to change the world.

We hope you will come and be a witness to it.

# Appendix D: Detailed programs based on the WIP team's lessons learned on the road

## 2 DAY MODEL: DETAILED PROGRAM

### Day 1 \*

TIME FRAME	SCHEDULE TIME	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS	TOOLS
1hr prior	16:00/4:00pm	Space Set Up and Prep	Ensure the space is set up in such a way that it is conducive to connecting and working together. <i>Recommendation: Have beverages and snacks ready upon arrival.</i>	
30min	16:30/4:30pm	Mingle Time	Not everyone will be right on time. Allow for arrivals and mingling. This may not be necessary if everyone is super punctual, like in Germany :)	
15min	17:00/5:00pm	Program Introduction and Context Setting	Spend 15 minutes discussing why you have gathered the attendees together, what you aim to achieve and which issue the group will be addressing.	<a href="#">Sample PowerPoint Deck</a>
30min	17:15/5:15pm	Participants Introduction	Spend the time to have each attendee introduce themselves, what they wish to learn or can teach, what skills they bring to the table and any fun personal details they're willing to share.	
15min	17:45/5:45pm	Deep Dive into the Issues I	A local non-profit representative, the expert, should provide a discussion on the complexity of the issue, how their organization is approaching it, what is working and what isn't.	
15min	18:00/6:00pm	Deep Dive into the Issues II	<i>Recommendation: Having no more than 2 representatives that provide different types of solutions is ideal.</i>	
15min	18:15/6:15pm	Q&A with the Experts	Allow the group to pose questions to both the representatives after their presentations.	
30min	18:30/6:30pm	Dinner	Attendees mingle and begin percolating solutions and connecting with potential team members.	
30min	19:00/7:00pm	Form Teams and Pitch Solution Ideas	Ask those with potential solutions to present their ideas, have them state what types of skills is needed and help them form a team that includes a PM, a developer/coder, creative talent to bring design/UI/UX to the solution, and a wildcard for idea development and FUN!	
1.5-2hrs	19:30/7:30pm	Work Time	Ideas are fresh in their minds and new teams are formed. Give the teams time to get organized around the idea and how they will work together as a team. <i>Recommendation: All-nighters exhaust people. We encourage that you close the event at 9 or 10pm to allow everyone to rest before a long day of hacking.</i>	
	21:00-22:00/ 9:00-10:00pm	Close		

\*Please be advised, start time should be adjusted based on your target audience of attendees and typical local office or school hours.

## Appendix D: Detailed programs based on the WIP team's lessons learned on the road *(cont.)*

### 2 DAY MODEL: DETAILED PROGRAM *(CONT.)*

#### Day 2 \*

TIME FRAME	SCHEDULE TIME	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS	TOOLS
30min prior	8:30/8:30am	Space Set Up and Prep	Ensure the room is just as you left it and ensure breakfast set up takes place.	
30min	9:00/9:00am	Breakfast	Attendees reconnect with their team and fuel up for a productive day. <i>Recommendation: Have plenty of coffee and breakfast items.</i>	
30min	9:30/9:30am	Lightning Talk: Telling a Great Story	Video: Master Story-teller James Whitaker	<a href="#">How to Tell a Great Story Video</a>
2hr	10:00/10:00am	Work Time	Teams start outlining their project, assigning tasks, etc.	
1hr	12:00/12:00pm	Lunch	Time for everyone to take a break, get a bite to eat and come back to the group refreshed!	
4hr	13:00/1:00pm	Work Time	Teams continue to work on their projects	
1hr	17:00/5:00pm	Working Dinner	Teams finalize the presentations	
1hr	18:00/6:00pm	Presentations	Teams present their solutions	
1hr	19:00/7:00pm	Networking	Teams have a chance to mingle, discuss the solutions presented, share their contact information and make plans to get together to continue to work on these projects!	
1hr	21:00/9:00pm	Turn in Machines/Close	Wrap things up, thank everyone for their participation, close	

### 3 DAY MODEL: DETAILED PROGRAM

All of Day 1 can remain the same. Day 2, simply give attendees work time instead of presentations.

#### Day 3 \*

TIME FRAME	SCHEDULE TIME	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS	TOOLS
30min prior	8:30/8:30am	Space Set Up and Prep	Ensure the room is just as you left it and ensure breakfast set up takes place.	
30min	9:00/9:00am	Breakfast	Attendees reconnect with their team and fuel up for a productive day. <i>Recommendation: Have plenty of coffee and breakfast items.</i>	
3hr	9:30am-12:30pm	Finalize Presentations and Prototype	Down to the wire, teams finish their prototypes and their presentations.	
30min	12:30-1:00pm	Lunch		
1hr +	1pm-Close	Presentations	Give each team to walk through their solution (10 minutes) and allow for questions and answers from attendees. This time slot will depend on how many attendees and teams that you have.	
Closing Remarks				

\*Please be advised, start time should be adjusted based on your target audience of attendees and typical local office or school hours.

## Appendix E: Non-profit organizations and NGO partners

In searching for non-profit organizations and NGO partners, start with this list. If you don't see it here, feel free to reach out to us at [wipevents@microsoft.com](mailto:wipevents@microsoft.com).

[Action Aid](#)

[Acumen](#)

[Aflatoun International](#)

[Akshaya Patra Foundation](#)

[Amnesty International](#)

[AMREF Health Africa](#)

[APOPO](#)

[Ashoka](#)

[Barefoot College](#)

[BRAC](#)

[CARE](#)

[Ceres](#)

[Child & Youth Finance International](#)

[CIVICUS](#)

[CORDAID](#)

[Cure Violence](#)

[Danish Refugee Council](#)

[Digital Divide Data](#)

[Gain](#)

[Generations for Peace](#)

[Gram Vikas](#)

[Grameen Foundation](#)

[Habitat for Humanity](#)

[Handicap International](#)

[Heifer International](#)

[Helen Keller International](#)

[Help Age International](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[iDE](#)

[International Rescue Committee](#)

[Landesa](#)

[Medecins Sans Frontières /  
Doctors without Borders](#)

[Mercy Corps](#)

[Movember Foundation](#)

[One Acre Fund](#)

[Open Society Foundations](#)

[Oxfam](#)

[Partners in Health](#)

[PLAN International](#)

[Poverty Action Lab](#)

[Rare](#)

[Riders for Health](#)

[Room to Read](#)

[Root Capital](#)

[Saude Criança](#)

[Save the Children](#)

[Search for Common Ground](#)

[Skoll Foundation](#)

[The Aman Foundation](#)

[Tostan](#)

[Viva Rio](#)

[Voix Libres](#)

[World Vision International](#)

[YCAB Foundation](#)

[insider.windows.com](https://insider.windows.com)

Contact us at: [wipevent@microsoft.com](mailto:wipevent@microsoft.com)