



Hope Foundation's  
International Institute of  
Information Technology



**Department of Information Technology**

**ACM Student Chapter &  
Information Technology Student Association (ITSA)**

**Webinar on**

# **“How to Win a Hackathon and International Collegiate Programming Contest”**

On 8<sup>st</sup> October 2021

**Webinar Report**

## **Introduction:**

Hackathons are where your crazy idea becomes reality. Hackathons and Programming Contests have always been popular among engineering students, but since lockdown, they have blown up as businesses have taken to the digital world to find solutions to the problems society is facing.

## **Objective:**

The main objective of this webinar was to help students understand what the importance of participating and winning a hackathon and programming contest is as an IT student. Our goal was to gear them up for the exhilarating experience of winning hackathons and lead them towards the way of success.

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## **Event Details:**

The webinar was organized on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021. It was graced by highly qualified, speaker Mr. Prashant R. Nair, who is an ACM Eminent Speaker and also an Associate Professor, Computer Science & Engineering at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham University, Coimbatore.

He briefly explained about the how to prepare as an individual or a team for any programming contest. He provided tips and strategies towards team formation, selection of right contest, abstract submission, solution development, pitching, winning online & onsite hackathons as well as acing hardware & software hackathons. He also shared his experiences and best practices as a mentor giving operational strategies for students to ace International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC).

By not limiting to the aim of his talk, he also gave the students an insight about various domains in which students can come up with their exceptional ideas.

## IDENTIFY THE CORRECT / RIGHT CONTEST

- There are so many contests being hosted every day!
- Identify the best one which suits your skillset. Ideally, your team should have done something considerably in the area which you wanna go in the contest.
- Websites like Hackerearth.com, Hackerrank.com, dare2compete.com has got many contest details and they host the same seamlessly.
- Once the contest is chosen, the next step is very important.
- **We have the platform for you, now! This is an ideal start.**



08-10-2021



Prashant R Nair (CSE)



Prashant R Nair (CSE)

## CONTEST ORGANIZATION

- 3-Tiered process (College level contest, Regional competitions followed by World Finals) with around 100 teams advancing to ICPC world Finals
- Unofficial Tier: University competitions to pick the participants from the school. (Jun – Aug)
  - Run by team coaches
- Regional Contest (Sept – Dec)
  - Typically 50-100 Teams
  - Run by local contest staff
  - Regional Winners get to go to World Finals
  - Depending on Region size, sometimes the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place teams may be invited to World Finals
- World Finals (Feb – Apr)
  - 100 teams invited
  - International Hosts
    - 2009 Stockholm, Sweden
    - 2008 Banff, Canada
    - 2007 Tokyo, Japan
    - 2006 San Antonio, USA
    - 2005 Shanghai, China

Your microphone is muted.



Prashant R Nair (CSE)



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## HOW DO WE BUILD THE SOLUTION?

- Take all the components you need with you (Here, keep everything ready for your online hack!)
- Clearly understand what you are going to build in the hack duration (24 hrs/ 48 hrs /72 hrs etc). Every person's role should be clear. Do not interfere in another's role
- Target not too many things to be solved in 24 hrs. Take one challenge. Solve it! You shall win. Too many ideas at a time is a mess!
- Make sure your product/project works under all ideal conditions. (If you have some assumptions, it should be clearly conveyed)
- Be sure about in what aspects you shall improve the product. A product definitely shall have many factors for improvement. Before the judges say it, you should identify.
- Clearly have the working architecture as a diagram and know what is the selling point of your innovation.
- Be honest about your product, software or hardware or both
- Make sure the hardware is clearly fabricated or software is well written following the coding guidelines. It is preferred to have documentation done as well, which can be given to judges to have a quick look.



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## HOW TO ACE ICPC?

- Battle of the Brains", a battle of logic, strategy and endurance
- Familiarity with contest platforms like CodeChef, Hacker Rank, Mooshak
- Similar contests are Google Code Jam, IOI, TopCoder, Facebook Hacker Cup
- Innovation, Creativity, Stamina, Team Work and primarily knowledge of data structures and algorithms
- Also strong foundation in machine learning, data science, combinatorics, number theory, graph theory and cryptosystems.



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Around 120 students were fortunate enough to get benefit from the insights offered by the speaker regarding this fascinating topic. The event concluded with a Q&A session.

## **Conclusion:**

This webinar was a great team collaborated effort of all the members of I2IT ACM Student Chapter and ITSA. This webinar with highly qualified speaker amongst us, we had our many questions answered by them and in the end it was a well-executed event.