

[We Built a Thing: the Virtual Design Master 2019 Hackathon Result](#)

There have been a number of times in my life and career where I have decided to share an idea with the world hoping that it may work and entirely willing to ride the results, whether it's to success or to failure. And by failure, I really mean to a profound learning experience. This past Friday (August 9th) proved to be the former. The Virtual Design Master virtual Hackathon was a success by my measurement. Let's see what happened

Build Year = Learning Year

Virtual Design Master has been around for 6 full years now in one form or another. We have seen a growth in the community supporting and participating in the events and we have given out well over 10,000\$ in prizes while providing what we hope to be valuable to our community peers. When this year's organizing meetings started, I decided to flip the script.

Moving from the traditional architect-focused program was not something I took lightly. What drove my desire to shift into a hackathon focus came from many interactions I've had over the past few years where many of my ops-origin friends and community peers shared that joining a hackathon is not easy to do unless you're a developer. I want to change that. [This article gives a good indication of the challenge.](#)

Small Team, Big Result

The hackathon event was designed to change the approach of a hackathon while still ensuring we tested with an actively engaged audience. This was a broadcasted signup with folks who knew they had to commit to 24 hours of availability, but we were up front in saying that this was not a full-out 24 hour straight coding exercise.

After a 4-part education series on what a hackathon looks like, we had a handful of folks jump in as either participants or volunteers. It was good enough to test the method. Then the day arrived and we found that life happens to us all and our numbers dropped to four participants. This is how we learn.

The pitch was to create. product that would allow algorithmic matching of people based on personality and skills in order to better match mentors with potential mentees. The result, after a lot of testing, site building, and collaboration, was a working system that is able to programmatically match people based on a few criteria and a simple web application to collect that information. This was the basic proof-of-concept which will be evolved into an actual product thanks to the testing and work that was done by the team (Joe Houghes, Angelo Luciani, Al Rasheed, and Me).

Lots of Content to Watch and Explore

The lead up to the event included a 4-part educational series presented as live webinars and each of those are available on demand here:

Episode 1 - [The Idea](#)



Episode 2 - [Building the Team](#)



Episode 3 - [Product Management for Hackathons](#)



Episode 4 - [Getting Ready and Test Pitching](#)



We live streamed a significant portion of the interactions as well which are all here in sections:

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Part 4

Part 5 - Finale and Demo

The Product and Presentation

All of the code and documentation from the event was created and shared on GitHub under the Virtual Design Master account. You can check out all the links which will also evolve as more documentation and updates happen beyond the hackathon.

Project page: <https://github.com/VirtualDesignMaster/Hackathon-Team-BusOne>

Wiki: <https://github.com/VirtualDesignMaster/Hackathon-Team-BusOne/wiki>

Presentation:

<https://github.com/VirtualDesignMaster/Hackathon-Team-BusOne/blob/master/rapidmatter.pdf>

Virtual Design Master - Episode 1 Recap - "The Idea"

Virtual Design Master Season 6 has begin with a fun twist this year! We launched the first of four webinars in an educational series that will end up with a super exciting opportunity to be a part of a 24 hour virtual hackathon that is happening in August.

[via GIPHY](#)

I was joined on the livestream by Virtual Design Master co-creator, Angelo Luciani (<https://virtuwise.com>) and as always this Hackathon-focused series also features the creative drive of Melissa Wright (<https://vmiss.net>). The 2019 event series is aimed at making the hackathon experience more "Ops-friendly" which has been a challenge in many events that I've been a part of in the past.

Episode 1 On-Demand Video

Watch the replay of the live webinar below which is all about how to come up with an effective hackathon (or startup) idea, and examples of working ideas that have been effective and fun to build at previous Hackathons.

As always, drop in a comment and make sure to follow my YouTube for Virtual Design Master and much more! There will also be a Team Virtual Design Master group at VMworld for the hackathon which I'm leading and there are so many opportunities to be a part of the VDM Hackathon as

everything from an observer to an active participant or even a volunteer!

The registration is open for Episode 2 (July 11, 2019), Episode 3 (July 18, 2019), and Episode 4 (July 25, 2019) already so jump on in and get set up to see the live sessions. Each webinar is also streamed to the YouTube channel and available on demand.

Webinar Registration Links



Episode 2 - Building the Team



Episode 3 - Product Management for Hackathons



Episode 4 - Getting Ready and Pitching your Idea

Podcast Episode 77 - Virtual Design Master (@vdmchallenge) Season 6 Announcement with @angeloluciani

The Virtual Design Master (<https://virtualdesignmaster.io>) team is back at it with a new season featuring an entirely new approach to the event. This year we share the details from Angelo Luciani, Melissa Palmer, and Eric Wright as we move to make a truly inclusive introduction to hackathons with an informative webinar series and a 24 hour virtual hackathon in summer 2019.

Listen to the episode here:

<http://podcast.discoposse.com/e/ep-77-virtual-design-master-vdmchallenge-season-6-announcement-with-angeloluciani/>

Listen and Subscribe on iTunes here:



Episode 77 - Virtual Design Master (@vdmchallenge) Season 6 Announcement with @angeloluciani

PODCAST LINK:

<http://podcast.discoposse.com/e/ep-77-virtual-design-master-vdmchallenge-season-6-announcement-with-angeloluciani/>

Annual Top vBlog Results Show - On-Demand recording available!

With another great year of working with Eric Siebert and the community team including John Troyer and Angelo Luciani, we have the final results of the top 25 vBlogs online!

The show was recorded and broadcast live and can be viewed on-demand here for you anytime. Congratulations to all of the participants in the program, all of the great content creators, and many exiting moves up the ranks by people who have earned a spot among their peers and their readers as top-level bloggers.