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Students compete to make the best health app

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BY [KATE THACKREY](#) ([//AUTHOR/KATE-THACKREY](#))

Healthcare providers are looking to move their data online. UT-Austin students have an app for that.

Student teams crafted working app models from fake healthcare data during a 15-hour coding marathon on Saturday. Judges chose the best apps based on presentations and demonstrations.

The apps addressed the time constraints of doctors. Most prioritized important facts, such as patient history, current illnesses and medications. They also included time lines and organized past records for easy navigation.

The winning team, Primum non Nocere, won tickets to present their work at South by Southwest Interactive this March.

All challenge participants received tickets to the SXSW Health and MedTech Expo on March 12.

Brian Vodicka, a computer science and mathematics junior, is a member of the winning team.

“We wanted to give the doctor a better idea of what the patient is going through,” Vodicka said.

The competitors included undergraduates, graduate students and recent UT grads with varying levels of coding experience.

Leanne Field, director of the health IT program, said that she wants participants to get excited about new opportunities.

“We’re always trying to bring the latest technology to the students in our program,” Field said.

Students developed their apps using FHIR, an open source software that allows different healthcare providers to share information over one application.

Jim Karolewicz, vice president at Cerner Corporation and one of the judges, said that by opening up communication between companies, innovation can happen more quickly.

“Health care has always been a closed box,” said Karolewicz.

The event was organized by the health informatics and health IT program and the computer science department and sponsored by Cerner Corporation, Seton HealthCare Family, Jericho Systems and SXSW Interactive. Athenahealth also provided engineers to help students during app development.

Nishil Shah, a computer engineering and computer science senior, said the healthcare companies are slowly attracting more computer scientists through events like the FHIR Health App Design Challenge.

“It shows that we can make better products in a very antiquated industry,” Shah said.

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