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General

Why is HRM holding the Apps4Halifax contest?

HRM received approval from Regional Council to move ahead with an Open Data Pilot, and we want to highlight the 17 datasets that have been released on our open data catalogue site (www.halifaxopendata.ca). App development contests have been recognized worldwide as a great way to complement the release of public open data.

HRM believes that staying ahead of the innovation curve is essential to the Municipality's future, and that connecting with the software development community will foster new technology that improves the quality of life of HRM's residents and visitors.

HRM also believes that releasing data to the public provides important transparency that encourages government accountability and accessibility.

What is an app? What app platforms will be accepted for the App Contest?

"Apps is an abbreviation for application. An app is a piece of software. It can run on the Internet, on your computer, or on your phone or other electronic device." (Marziah Karch, About.com Guide)

The following five (5) app platforms will accepted for the app contest:

- Browser/Web apps
- iOS
- Android
- Blackberry OS
- Windows Mobile

What is Open Data?

Open Data is a philosophy and practice, to provide some of the municipally-generated data to the public in a machine-readable format, without the restrictions of copyright, patent or other control mechanisms and, most importantly, free of charge. The most commonly used Open Data focuses on structured data, such as geographic data, scheduling, statistics, and demographic data.

The objective of Open Data is to eliminate burdens to access data created or managed by government agencies, while respecting privacy and sensitivity concerns. It enables entrepreneurs, academics, community groups, other learning communities, developers, and interested citizens to use data to improve the social experience and stimulate economic growth through data apps.

What are the different contests I can enter?

Whether you have a great idea for an app that you'd like to share or would like to create an app to submit in the development contest, there are a number of different contest streams you can participate in from August through December 2013.

Ideas Submission Period (August 8-September 6, 2013)

Idea Adventure Contest: Join us on our Online Scavenger and be entered into 10 prize draws of $50 gift cards (total $500).

Idea Submissions Random Draw: Everyone who submits an idea during our Idea Submission period (Opens at 10 a.m. AST on August 8th, 2013 until closes at 4:00 p.m. on September 6th, 2013).

App Submission Period (September 9 – November 29, 2013)

Open Data Hackathon: Takes place September 13-15th

App Development Contest: Create an app that will benefit HRM residents within one of 4 categories. Deadline: November 29, 2013, 4:00 pm AST.

What are the contest categories? Can my app be eligible for more than one category?

Based on talking to other municipalities around the country about their lessons learned from hosting their own app contests, and from a scan of best practices from the international open data community, HRM has decided on the following four contest App Categories:

- **Live It Up** - These apps are aimed at supporting leisure and fun in the HRM, such as recreation, museums, cultural events, and other events.
- **Your City** – These apps are designed to help people to understand what's happening in the HRM such as election boundaries, virtual tour guide or public safety.
- **Go Green** – This category will encourage a more environmentally-friendly HRM such as recycling, enjoying parks and trails, or using green products.
- **Keep 'er Movin'** – These apps are intended to help people get around the HRM such as public transit, driving, biking and walking.

You can identify the category you feel best fits your app, and if you feel that your app speaks to more than one of these categories, you can click all category boxes that you feel apply to your app submission. The HRM Contest Administrator reserves the right to reclassify the apps at their discretion if it is felt it is better suited to another category.

Additionally, Esri Canada has sponsored a new 'Maps in Apps' contest category challenge.

Maps in Apps Student Challenge

Who can enter?

To be eligible for the student prizes, individuals or teams must be registered at an accredited College or University in Nova Scotia. Students may be full or part time in the 2013/2014 academic year. An app can be submitted by an individual or team of up to or including 4 students. Students must develop their application using Esri technology, while the use of freely available Esri content in their application is highly encouraged. Additionally, students must meet all other criteria set out by HRM for the Apps4Halifax contest.

What's in it for you?

Participating students will have the opportunity to win 1 of 3 scholarship prizes. The prize package for each team or individual will include:

- Cash prize of $2,000
- Access to ArcGIS software and training
- Opportunity to speak at a GIS Conference

Maps in Apps Startup Challenge

Who can enter?

To be eligible for the Startup prize, businesses must be registered as a for-profit business in Nova Scotia, be in business for less than 3 years, have 10 or less employees and have less than 1 million dollars in annual revenue. Businesses must develop their application using Esri technology, while the use of freely available Esri content in their application is highly encouraged. Additionally, businesses must meet all other criteria set out by HRM for the Apps4Halifax contest.

What's in it for you?

Participating developers will have the opportunity to win an incubator package. The prize package will include:

- Access to ArcGIS software and training
- Mentoring

How will the winners be chosen for the each contest and what are the prizes?

Ideas Submission Contest
There will be 5 random draw prizes of iPad mini's each valued at approximately $380 each.

Idea Adventure Contest
There will be 10 random draw prizes of $50 cash gift cards for correctly answered submissions.

Hackathon
Judging will be performed by participant votes. Prizes will be listed on the Hackathon Page at apps4halifax.

App Development Contest

There will be 5 cash prizes awarded in each Category: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Student App, and People's Choice.

We are in the process of determining an expert judging panel comprised of both HRM and community representatives to judge the Gold, Silver, Bronze and Student App. Public voting will be used to choose the People's Choice winners.

The judges will make their selection based on the following equally weighted criteria:

Accessibility – ability for the application to be used by a broad array of citizens
Usability – usefulness and utility to citizens overall or any particular demographic of users
Creativity – originality, uniqueness and inventive nature of the application

Number of Community Votes Received

What are the key competition dates?

- The Ideas Submission period opens 10:00 a.m. AST on August 8th, 2013 and closes at 4:00 p.m. AST on September 6th, 2013.
- The App Submission period opens 10:00 a.m. AST on September 9th, 2013 and closes at 4:00 p.m. AST on November 29th, 2013.
- The Open Data Hackathon takes place September 13-15th, 2013.
- The Public Voting period opens 10:00 a.m. AST on December 2nd, 2013 and closes at 4:00 p.m. AST January 6th, 2013.
- The Judging period opens 10:00 a.m. AST on December 2nd, 2013 and closes at 4:00 p.m. AST on January 7th, 2014.
- The winners for all categories will be contacted by email by 10:00 a.m. AST on Monday, January 13th, 2014. If a winner cannot be reached within three (3) consecutive working days following the first attempt of contact, declines the prize, or fails to return the required release form, the prize shall be forfeited and HRM has the right, at its sole discretion, to select another winner. Winners will be publically announced at the Award Ceremony on January 18th, 2014

How do I follow the Apps4Halifax contest and receive updates?

Sign up for email updates in the "E-Newsletter" section of Apps4Halifax; follow us on Twitter: @hfxgov, hashtag #apps4hfx; or email us at opendata@halifax.ca.

Do I have to use an idea from the idea submission phase when developing an app?

No, you are free to use either your own idea or an idea suggested by the public on our ideas page.

How else can I participate?

- Browse the idea submissions page and submit feedback
- Submit an idea that contest participants can address
- Browse the apps submissions page and submit feedback
- Become an In-Kind/Partner sponsor
- Spread the word through networks and social media
- Enter into one of our contests

Idea Submission

Opens at 10:00 a.m. AST on August 8th, 2013 and closes at 4:00 p.m. AST on September 6th, 2013

What is an Idea Submission?

It's important for this contest to engage people beyond the web development community. We need everyone's ideas for how we can leverage technology to make HRM a better community. So if you have a suggestion for an app, but don't know how to build it, tell us anyway.

We also want to reward you for taking the time to submit an idea. It's hard to judge ideas – all ideas are good - so if you submit an idea, you will be entered into a random draw to win a prize.

Who is eligible to submit an idea?

See eligibility section under Contest Rules.

Do I have to submit an idea to be eligible for the app submission?

No, you can still submit an app during the App Submission Period even if you didn't suggest an idea during the Idea Submission Period.

What happens to my idea after I submit it?

Once you submit your idea, it will be reviewed by our contest moderators before being displayed. Even though we encourage application developers to consider all your great ideas, it doesn't guarantee they will build an app around your specific idea. It is also not part of judging criteria that they choose an idea from the Idea Submissions as they may have a great idea of their own. It also doesn't mean that someone won't develop your idea in the future outside of this contest.

How do I submit my ideas to the Apps4Halifax contest?

You will need to complete the form provided at apps4halifax.

Can I enter more than one idea to the contest?

Yes, we want to see all your ideas!

App Submission

Opens at 10:00 a.m. AST on September 9th, 2013 and closes at 4:00p.m.on November 29, 2013

Who is eligible to submit an app?

See Section 2 of the App Rules for a complete list of the eligibility requirements.

How do I submit my app to the Apps4Halifax contest?

You will need to complete the form provided at apps4halifax

All apps must be hosted and publicly available on the contestant's own website or a third-party website. All contestants submitting apps to this contest must make their apps freely and publicly accessible from

the time of entering the contest until the end of the Awards Ceremony. (12 a.m AST on Sunday, January 19, 2014)

Once I submit my app, does HRM own it, or do I?

We want you to prosper from your creation. Application developers retain ownership rights of their submitted apps and are permitted to sell the use of their applications commercially (after the judging period has closed) if they choose to do so. We want to better the community through your app and provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs to showcase their talent.

Do I have to build an app based on an idea submitted to Apps4Halifax?

No, you can use an idea on the Apps4Halifax Ideas page but are not required to. Please feel free to use your own ideas.

Does my app need to work after the contest deadline?

Yes, in order for there to be real value for residents, all apps submitted to this contest must be made publicly accessible for a minimum period of 120 days after the contest entry deadline.

What kind of data must I use? Where can I find it?

Apps must incorporate at least one of the 17 Open Data datasets released earlier this year through HRM's Open Data Pilot. However, HRM is challenging developers to go beyond using only these datasets and we encourage you to mash-up whatever publicly available sources of data you can find to create the best apps to serve HRM residents.

- HRM Open Data Catalogue: https://www.halifaxopendata.ca/
- Other Government Open Data: GeoNova http://www.gov.ns.ca/geonova/about/whats_new/spring-into-geomatics-2010.asp
- Crowdsourced Data: HRM is always looking for new sources of data that can be used to improve the quality of life in the city. Apps may be submitted that generate new, high quality, open data sets.

Is my app eligible if it also uses commercial data?

As long as the commercial data is publicly available then you can feel free to use it.

What if I have questions about the data?

If you have questions about HRM's Open Data, please contact us by email at opendata@halifax.ca. The HRM Open Data representatives will respond promptly.

There will also be additional events during the contest where there will be opportunities to ask HRM staff questions directly about the data. Sign up to our e-newsletter to stay informed about these events.

Will more datasets be added to the HRM Open Data Catalogue during the competition?

No. Regional Council have only approved the release of the 17 datasets already identified for the period of the Open Data Pilot. There is no policy in place to release more datasets during the course of the contest.

Do you have an idea for a new dataset that would be beneficial to release? HRM wants to hear your suggestions: https://www.halifaxopendata.ca/nominate

Can I enter more than one app?

Yes. There is no limit to how many times an eligible person or organization may enter. An individual may also participate on behalf of more than one team, corporation, or non-profit organization. If you submit two or more apps that are substantially similar, the Contest Administrator reserves the right to disqualify submissions or require you to choose one submission to enter into the contest.

Can more than one person work on an app and receive credit for it? And if the app wins a prize, will the prize money be split among the creators?

Yes, teams are encouraged. If a team of individuals or an organization is selected as a prize winner, the Team Leader will receive the prize money and it will be up to the winning team or organization to reallocate the prize money, if they deem it appropriate.

If my app was largely developed years ago, can it qualify for this contest?

Yes, as long as it meets the minimum requirements of utilizing at least one HRM Open Data dataset, you are free to incorporate code that you have built/started/launched in the past.

What happens if I want to make changes to my app submission?

Your app will be hosted on a third-party site you've set up. Feel free to change the app through the course of the competition. After the close of the Public Voting Period on January 6, 2014 at 4pm and up until the end of the Judging period on January 13th, 2014 at 4pm, you are not permitted to make or allow to be made any changes or alterations to the app(s) that you submit. This includes, but is not limited to, any bug fixes, features or functionality. If you need to make a change to your form, please send an email to opendata@halifax.ca explaining what changes you require.

Can I update my app after the submission deadline?

No. You must not update your app, codebase, or any other aspect of your app between 4:00 p.m. AST on January 6, 2014 until the end of the Judging period on January 13th, 2014. Teams that are found to have updated their apps during the judging period will be disqualified.

Can my app include advertisements?

The contest rules do not prohibit advertising in apps. Please note, however, that if the content of the ads is deemed inappropriate, your submission may be disqualified.

We are an organization. Can we enter?

Yes, the contest is opened to all Nova Scotia organizations and they may enter and compete for the cash prizes if they are legally established entities (profit, non-profit, academic) domiciled in Canada and have a local presence (offices in Nova Scotia).

I'm having trouble using Socrata's API…

Socrata, the HRM Open Data solution, provides SODA 2.0 API, which is a RESTful API for accessing the datasets. Advanced operations such as querying and filtering are available, with the drawback being this can only be done with the attributes in the datasets, spatial queries are not available through the SODA 2.0 API with HRM datasets.

In order to work with the spatial information in the datasets, they have to be exported. To export a dataset, click on the

(Export) sidebar button and then select the "Download" subsection. The sidebar will display the available file formats for your dataset. Spatial data is available in the following formats: KML, KMZ, Shapefile, while the tabular data (only including attributes, not the spatial information) is available in the following formats: CSV, JSON, PDF, RDF, RSS, XLS, XLSX, XML.

A Shapefile is a geospatial vector format developed and regulated by ESRI. It is widely support by other GIS software solutions. KML, KMZ are popularly related to Google Earth and are an open standard regulated by the Open Geospatial Consortium.

Below are links to a few samples of open source applications that support Shapefiles or KML/KMZ:

- Quantum GIS – Open source, cross-platform desktop GIS application
- GDAL (Geospatial Data Abstraction Library): ogr2ogr utility for converting simple features data between file formats
    - Example: Converting Shapefile to GeoJSON
    - ogr2ogr Cheatsheet

Hackathon September 13-15, 2013

What is a hackathon?

The Open Data Hackathon is a 3 day-long event devoted to collaborative creation and coding that will benefit HRM residents. Over the weekend, participants will pitch ideas, form teams, and build creative app prototypes for their community. Still confused? Check out this awesome video to learn more about hackathons.