

Apps for the Army Challenge Builds 53 Apps in 75 Days

Over the past 75 days, 141 soldiers and Army civilians registered in teams or as individuals to participate in the Apps for the Army (A4A) application development challenge. By the May 15th deadline, 53 web and mobile applications were developed and submitted, marking a prolific period of internal Army innovation.

A sampling of submissions include apps that: support data collection in disaster relief situations, analyze threats in an area of operations, inventory property, and provide Mess Hall options. The apps submitted included 17 Android, 16 iPhone, 10 ASP.NET, 7 LAMP, 2 Blackberry and 1 for AKO.

Next, the apps must pass a security certification. They will then be judged on six criteria by a panel of judges from across the Army in eight categories. The Army plans to announce winners at the LandWarNet Conference in early August. Selected submissions will receive employee cash awards from a total cash pool of \$30,000.

Launched less than three months ago, A4A is the Army's first internal application development challenge. It was open to all Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians. The Army provided application development teams with key resources such as a cross-platform, cloud based, secure development environment.

"Soldiers and Army civilians are creating new mobile and web applications of value for their peers—tools that enhance warfighting effectiveness and business productivity today," said Lt. Gen. Jeff Sorenson, the Army Chief Information Officer/G-6. "And, we're rewarding their innovation with recognition and cash."

A4A marks a shift away from traditional Army development practices by using the latest in agile development methods, while focusing on rapid deployment. Milbook, AKO, and Twitter facilitated the cross-pollination of ideas, problems and solutions among developers over the course of the challenge. Forge.mil served as the collaborative software repository for participating teams.

The pilot program will help define the business processes needed to make applications easily available to the Army enterprise.

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