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More than 250 sign up for AT&T Mobile App Hackathon this weekend

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More than 250 computer programmers, graphic designers, and entrepreneurs have signed up for this weekend's free AT&T Mobile App Hackathon taking place at the University of Miami Life Science & Technology Park in Miami. Several groups will be joining the event from Latin America, too. At least $5,000 in prizes will be offered, organizers say.

A hackathon brings together computer programmers, graphic designers, and business developers for a day or a weekend to create software and apps. Starting at 6 p.m. Friday and running through Sunday evening, the participants will break into teams and collaborate to create mobile applications that could form the foundations of future tech startups.

More than a dozen speakers and mentors from Refresh Miami, Lean Startup Circle, CareCloud and other local organizations and companies will assist the teams. Sponsors will provide access to APIs, or specifications for building software applications, from AT&T, Amazon, Github and Almira Labs.

On Sunday, the teams will pitch their products for a chance to win cash prizes and services in various categories.

"Hacking is a problem-solving skill set that is of extreme value in our technology-driven world today and is at the forefront of innovation," said Milana Kuznetsova, CEO of ESENEM and one of the organizers of the event. "The message of this Hackathon is geared to promoting entrepreneurship."

This weekend's hackathon has also gone international. On Saturday, at least 150 additional developers are expected to join the competition remotely from co-working spaces in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia, said Wifredo Fernandez, who is co-founder of the co-working space The LAB Miami and is coordinating the international teams.

"We will be connecting to these spaces via Google+ throughout the day, allowing participants from each country to interact. The idea is we are connecting hackathons across the Americas," Fernandez said, adding that a $1,000 prize will be offered in the international challenge.

About 60 hackers will be participating at SUMA Conectivo in Mar del Plata, Argentina, said Carlos María Schauer, who opened his space about three months ago. "My co-working space will be full, full, full."

In South Florida, the AT&T Mobile App Hackathon will be at the UM Life Science Park at 1951 NW 7th Ave., Miami. The event is a collaborative effort brought together by AT&T, ESENEM, CVOX, GeekyBeach, Florida International University's Americas Venture Capital Conference (AVCC), Wexford Science & Technology, The LAB Miami and The Knight Foundation. "This

hackathon represents Miami's continued emergence as a vibrant and dynamic technology and entrepreneurship hub," said Faquiry Diaz, co-chair of AVCC.

Registration is still open, organizers say. For more information and to register, go to http://mobileappmiami.eventbrite.com/ . On Twitter: #backinhack

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