

Students form community in ASU London Spark Challenge

First-place team awarded £2,000 prize for their organization app

By Scott Bordow, ASU News
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Story highlights

ASU London Spark Challenge builds community among students

36-hour hackathon asked students to use Kiro, an AI-powered development environment and agentic tool, to build AI-driven solutions centered on "inclusive excellence by design"

Winning team's idea, called Stoobler, is an app for students that organizes things like calendars, group chats, notes and presentations

LONDON — Community can be built in a number of ways.

A club. A neighborhood gathering. A favorite sports team. Anything, really, that brings people of different backgrounds together.

For more than 20 ASU London students, community was built this week in the form of a challenge, specifically the ASU London Spark Challenge, a 36-hour hackathon in which four student teams were asked to use Kiro, an AI-powered development environment and agentic tool, to build AI-driven solutions centered on "inclusive excellence by design."

By Friday afternoon, after the work was done and Team Minions was announced as the winning team and the recipient of the £2,000 first-place prize, the focus wasn't on the products that were developed or the science/engineering behind the products, but on the friendships that were made.

Friendships, the students said, that they're certain will last their next three years at ASU London.

"When we all met each other, it was just like this instant connection," said Ava Livermore, a member of Team Minions. "These people have just been my heart and soul for the past couple of days, and it seems like we're family already. So it's just an amazing experience to be able to meet everyone in person and be able to build those relationships."

Here's how the hackathon worked: Students majoring in computer science, engineering and business were put into teams and had two days to answer the challenge presented to them. On Friday, each team made a five-minute presentation about their product and then answered questions put to them by a panel of jurors.

"I think they had a unique challenge in this case, given that they were from three different disciplines," said juror Michelle Pfund, senior associate dean for education at Arizona State University's W. P. Carey School of Business. "And they're from multiple different countries, with multiple different perspectives. But they all came together really, really well. It was great to see."

Team Minions' winning idea was Stobler, a student-organized calendar that, Livermore said, organizes things like calendars, group chats, notes and presentations used in day-to-day group projects, and puts them all together in one app.

"Personally, when I do projects, I see a lot of different apps, and it's kind of annoying to track all of it and make sure that you are getting all the details and nitty-gritty things that you need to do," Livermore said. "Stobler takes all of the stuff and puts it all together so you're able to look at it in an efficient way."

Juror Jenny Wong, an instructor in ASU's Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, said the Minions team — composed of Livermore, Asmita Madired, Luca Tomeo and Reyna Patel — made a "really brilliant" presentation.

"As an engineer, I am a stickler for documentation," Wong told the team, adding, "I document everything. I really appreciated the activity that you provided and the detailed codes that you had. To be able to show the logic of your intention is really key when you're trying to show someone what your idea is because, fundamentally, it's not about getting it right the first time. You just have to get it right the last time. And as a beginning stage prototype, you have so many more iterations to go. Bring it all home."

The second-place prize of £1,000 went to Team Kirons — composed of students George French, Nadia Ali, Peter King, Zachary Alexander-Abt and Scottsdale Chaparral High school graduate Shelby Connell.

Team Kasper and Team Noise and Bias in Business tied for third and each received a prize of £250.

Juror John Rome, deputy chief information officer for Enterprise Technology at ASU, praised all four teams for their ability to articulate their projects in front of an audience.

"I remember my first days standing up in front of an audience," Rome said. "It's sometimes a grievously injurious process, but that injury is now a strength that you're taking forward. You'll be able to use everything that you did the last two or three days for the next four years."

And if the students run into any issues, they know their newfound community has their back.

ASU London: Behind the scenes

[Follow along](#) as ASU News reporter Scott Bordow shares what it's like to be reporting on this week's events from London, and shares some tips, ideas and locations he discovers along the way.

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This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



ASU London Spark Challenge Hackathon participants pose for a photo at the Tait Building, part of the nearly 300-year-old Clerkenwell campus of City St. George's, University of London, where ASU London is located, on Sept. 18. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University

Text image(s)



ASU London business management student Ava Livermore (center) works with members of Team Minions during the ASU London Spark Challenge hackathon on Sept. 16. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University



From left: ASU London students Luca Tomeo, Asmita Madireddy, Rayna Patel and Ava Livermore are awarded first place in the ASU London Spark Challenge. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University