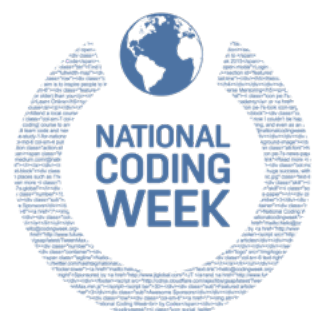# MEETUP TOOLKIT FOR NATIONAL CODING WEEK

Meetups for adults or codeclubs for children are a great way of reaching out to learn from your peers, share your skills or get involved with your local community.

This toolkit contains ideas for events you can host during National Coding Week at your meetup.

www.nationalcodingweek.com

NATIONAL CODING WEEK

# THE AIM OF NATIONAL CODING WEEK

The aim of National Coding Week is to help build people's confidence and digital skills at fun and engaging events. By helping beginners learn new skills you're providing them with valuable experience that will spur them on to learn more.

To make sure your event is successful, decide on your specific aims. For example:

- Are you aiming the event primarily for your existing members?

- Do you want to use your National Coding Week event to recruit new members?

- Could your event be used to share, showcase or celebrate what your members are doing?

- If you have never run a meet up before - do you want to establish one during National Coding Week?

ASSESS THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE AVAILABLE
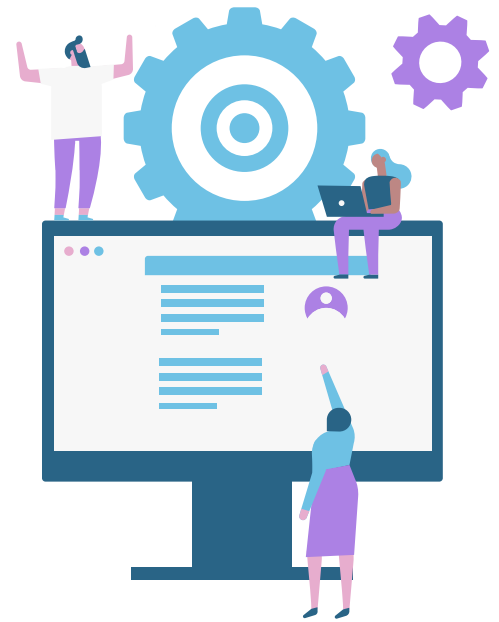
**You need to assess the resources you have available.
This will help you decide what event(s) you are capable of hosting.**

Hardware and software.

Your hardware and software are the physical tools needed to host your event or workshop. Ask yourself:

- How many computers and other hardware (eg **Raspberry Pi**) do you have available?

- Do you need to ask people to bring their own laptops?

- Will there need to be certain software installed on the computers?

- How feasible will bringing their own equipment be for members of your community?

What if my hardware and software resource is limited?

National Coding Week isn't just about coding! You can organise an event that covers any area that helps people improve their digital awareness, digital confidence or digital skills.

For example, you could host a class on:

- Cybersecurity Essentials
- Big Data – Your Privacy
- Digital Marketing for Beginners
- Careers in Coding
- Websites and User Experience
- Introduction to Open Source
- 3D Printing

Assess your capacity.

Then, figure out exactly how much time and what skills you have to devote to running your event.

Ask yourself:

• How long will your event be?

• How much time do you have to organise and promote your event? Will it be enough?

• What capacity do you have to run more than one event?

• What skills do you need to host this event? (eg coding, presenting, coaching).

What if my own skills are limited?

Don't worry – there are many online tutorials available that have been designed for new learners. You can facilitate these during a workshop, rather than trying to teach the skills yourself.

Here's a list of **free** online tutorials suitable for absolute beginners:

• freeCodeCamp
• Codecademy
• Khan Academy (especially Hour of Code)
• Codewars
• GA Dash

Consider a collaboration.

In our experience, there are many fantastic companies out there who want to be involved in National Coding Week. They are held back from doing so because they don't have a suitable venue where they could host an event, so this is where you can step in.

Provide a platform where companies can teach others and share their skills. Collaborating with local experts can help you achieve more than you could on your own.

Types of companies that respond well:

• Web agencies
• Design agencies
• IT / Tech consultants
• Freelancers

Audience.

You need to work out exactly what people are interested in within your community and what they are capable of learning or achieving within the timeframe of your event.

Ask yourself:

• What topics are they interested in?
• What has worked well for you in the past?
• What is their technological skill level?
• What prior knowledge do they need to have?

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TOP TEN TIPS

1. Choose a topic

Choose a topic that is of interest to your community/target audience - after all why should they attend yours?

2. Be clear on your target audience

Be clear about who your target audience is, this will help when marketing and promoting your event. For example if you are a:

- Teacher - your audience could be fellow teachers or children
- Designer - your audience could be coders
- Digital marketing professional - your audience could be web developers, fellow
- Marketing professional or digital freelancers

3. Choose an appropriate venue

Check costs, refreshments, availability (is it available 45 mins before your event and 30 mins after?). Does it have appropriate audio visual resources including connectors to laptops?

4. Cap number of people

To avoid turning people away, cap the number of people admitted. An event with 10 people may be just as relevant and interesting as an event with 30.

5. You don't have to stick to one format

Meetups can be formal or informal and you can alter the format each time you hold one.

These are examples you could follow:

- Networking over coffee/cakes/beer/pizza
- A panel discussion
- Guest speak and Q and A
- Presentation
- Hands-on coding session

6. Use the right channels

If you're using a meetup-type app or facebook make sure you get people to RSVP so attendees know they won't be alone.

7. Remember it's non-profit

During National Coding Week we don't expect event holders to charge for holding an event other than to cover costs. We want events to be accessible to all.

8. Encourage everyone

Remember when you hold an event new people may be apprehensive so make them feel welcome and encourage them to return. Don't have too much jargon and include new members in any discussion. After all it's an opportunity to gain feedback and ideas that will sustain your group.

9. Have someone help out

Have someone helping you on the day to meet and greet, take photos and help with the organisation, evaluation and follow up.

10. Have fun!

Logistics

If you haven't run a meet up before then why not attend a local one and see how they are run? Speak to the organisers and they will be happy to give tips and advice.

You could run an informal one with friends - there's nothing wrong with doing this and it will build your confidence and appetite for running something bigger.

Communication

It's really important to promote your National Coding Week event. The channels you use will depend on your audience.

Define clearly who your target audience is for each event. Then, figure out how your particular audience finds out about events.

You could promote your event on any of the following online and offline channels:

- Twitter
- Eventbrite or Meetup
  (or any other event platform)
- Printed posters or leaflets around
  town or in the library
- Facebook (wide user base)
- LinkedIn (popular with professionals)
- Instagram

If in doubt, ask people in your target market how they find out about events!

When promoting your event:

- Make your event descriptions as specific as possible.

- Promote your event at least a month in advance, and keep reminding people about it in the run-up.

- Include specific beginning and end times, dates and locations, so attendees can plan ahead.

- Be thoughtful and inclusive about the language you use, and try to attract a wide audience.
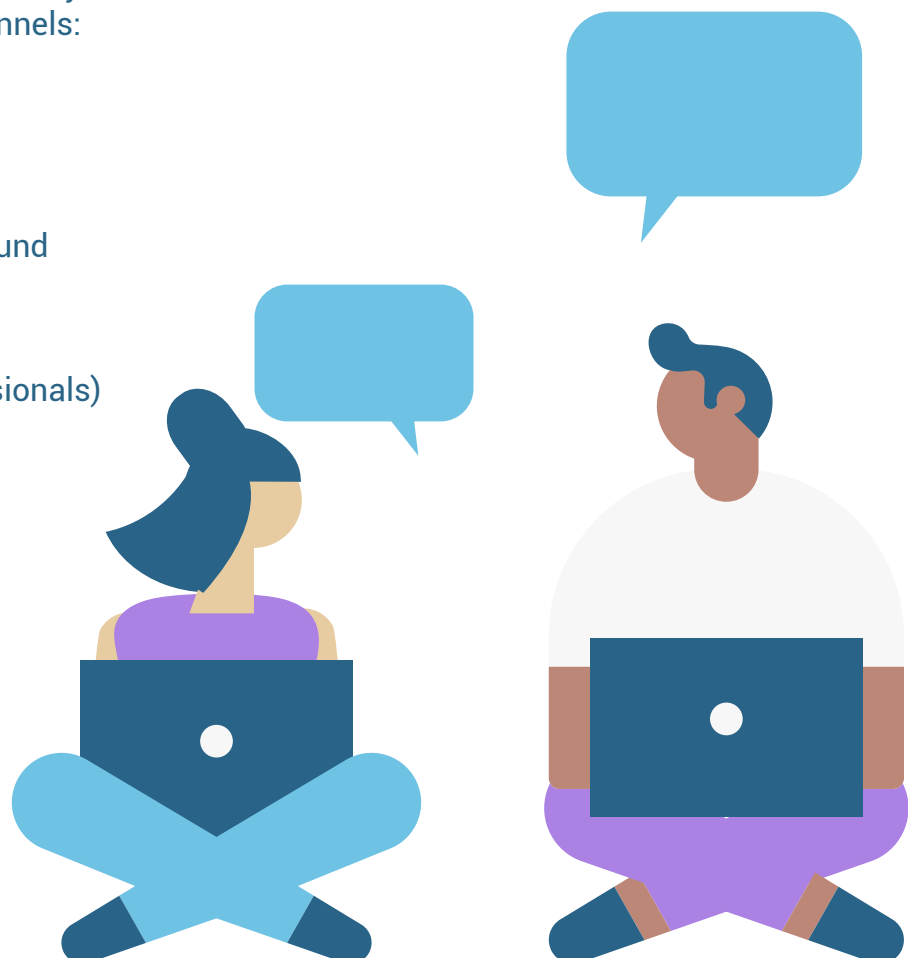
WRAPPING UP YOUR EVENT

Here are a few more tips to help make sure your National Coding Week event is a runaway success.

- Inform your attendees about what tools and resources they will need to have ahead of time.

- Live tweet your event on social media so we can all follow along.

- Provide attendees with resources for further learning once the event has finished.

- Ask for feedback at the end of your event to see what you could do better next time.

- Send a follow-up email so attendees know their presence was appreciated.

TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

Tips

Here are a few more tips to help make sure your National Coding Week event is a runaway success.

- Keep your event simple and within your own confidence levels.

- Draw on friendly support from within your community to help.

- Include time for Q&A and evaluation.

- Make sure the events are fun and engaging - the aim is to build confidence so you don't need to go into great depth for each topic.

Share your event

There are many ways you can share your events with us, but here are a few to ensure we notice you.

- Use the hashtag **#nationalcodingweek**

- Tag us in your social media posts.

- Prefix your event title with National Coding Week.

- Send us an email at **hello@codingweek.org** We love to hear about your events!

STORIES OF SUCCESSFUL PAST EVENTS

Case studies - Here are some stories of successful past events to inspire you

A Web Designer wanted to reach out to his local tech community when he moved into a new city. The title of his first meetup was Web Design Fundamentals. The first meet up was an informal presentation open to experienced professionals and those who were new to the industry. He branded it as "a great opportunity to meet like-minded people, learn interesting things and have some laughs".

He also marketed it well with engaging phrases eg "Tell your friends! Be sure to share this event so nobody misses out". 37 People attended this event and after running 5 events he had 323 individuals as part of his meetup community.

CoderDojo Scotland

As well as the regular meet ups the CoderDojos did a few things differently for National Coding Week. Over 265 adults and children took part in a wide range of activities all over Scotland.

The Mitchell Library in Glasgow got creative and had youngsters teaching coding to their parents / guardians in a fun and engaging environment.

Edinburgh's CoderDojo teamed up with Edinburgh College and held an event in the local library featuring a session on coding with Python.

Codeup UK

CodeUp is the adult version of Code Club, providing free and friendly adult coding tuition. It is an open, friendly and supportive learning environment where any adult can attain new digital skills for zero financial cost.

CodeUp has grown from a small idea to a big community - you can join your local branch or even start your own. Check out the Organiser Manual on their **website** for more information.

Last year they ran 7 events for National Coding Week and over 200 people attended.

CodeUp locations:

CodeUp Lancaster, CodeUp Preston, CodeUp Leeds, CodeUp Huddersfield, CodeUp Oldham, CodeUp Wigan, CodeUp Chester, CodeUp Stockport, CodeUp Manchester, CodeUp Salford, CodeUp Sheffield.

Women Who Code

Run events across the world. In the UK they have events in a number of areas including London, Belfast and Edinburgh. Check out their twitter feeds @wwclnd, @wwcbfs @wwcedinburugh.

CODECLUB UK

A UK network of volunteers & educators who run free coding clubs for children. Part of @Raspberry_Pi. For National Coding Week in Scotland Lorna Gibson, Code Club's coordinator for Scotland ran a special 'Code With Grown Ups' session at her club at Wormit Primary School. Parents attended and learnt some coding skills alongside the children who attend the club.

GOOD LUCK! FROM NATIONAL CODING WEEK!

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