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Techies develop apps for urban governance

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A mobile application that enables the gamification of   garbage clearance — by providing bounty points to people who identify and later clear garbage — was named the best of 45 entries at the end of   a two-day hackathon organised by the Commissionerate of Municipal   Administration at Anna University on Sunday.

The   event saw the participation of 190 software developers, who formed 45   teams, each envisioning, coding possible applications and later on   presenting their code to enhance urban governance.

At   the end of the marathon presentations made by the teams to a panel of   senior officials of the State's municipal administration department, the   team of Vridachalem Pillay Subramaniam, Sesha Sendhil, Renuka   Srinivasan, S. Thirunavukkarasu and Charumathi Govindane wowed the

audience and panellists alike by completely re-thinking the aspect of   garbage clearance in their app 'TrashIt'. Such gamification apps are   very popular in mobile ecosystems like Google's Android and Apple's iOS.

Senior   officials, including Chandrakant Kamble, commissioner of municipal   administration, Vikram Kapur, commissioner of Chennai Corporation and   Sudeep Jain, chairman and managing director of Tamil Nadu Energy   Development Agency, said the hackathon was an eye-opener in many ways.

"The   problems that the coders are addressing are old. But they are looking   at them with a fresh perspective. This helps us too," said Mr. Kamble.   Mr. Kapur said some ideas presented by the coders — including an app   that would monitor garbage clearance — were already developed by the civic agency using others developers and were being used at a beta   testing stage.

Several municipal commissioners were also present when the coders made their presentations at the end of the hackathon.

Another application that won kudos was developed by a team of coders – Arun Kumar Ramanathan, S. Arun Kumar, Rajeswari Krishnakumar, Ganapathi Subramanian V. and Sudhakar Rayavaram, called 'Know Your City' that allowed a user to locate public facilities of their Corporation through a map. This app was named the second-best app of the event.

The 'Code for Urban Governance' Hackathon, jointly organised by the Commissionerate for Municipal Administration and ThoughtWorks, was in spirit similar to the hackathon organised by the Centre's Planning Commission.

All the project descriptions and the codes developed at the hackathon are to be released as open source material. They can later be accessed at the event's wikipage at Github, the online resource for coders.

Competition was part of hackathon at Anna University; apps on garbage clearance, facilities map, earn accolades.