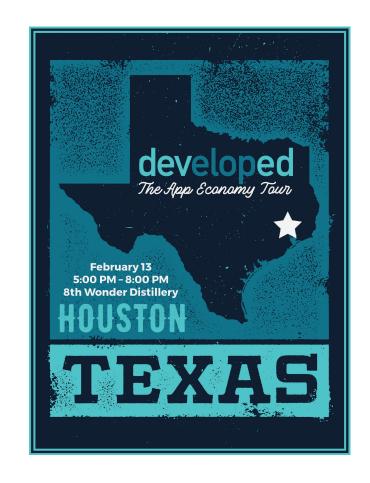# developed
The App Economy Tour

Developed | The App Economy Tour is a series of events that brings entrepreneurs, business leaders, industry experts, and local, state, and federal officials together for an eye-opening discussion on next-generation apps, game-changing mobile solutions, and innovations driving the app ecosystem. These events are an opportunity for developers and entrepreneurs, at any stage of the development or business cycle, to get more insight into how to build a brand, what rules and regulations they must be mindful of, how to get into app stores quickly and efficiently, and how to figure out what comes next in terms of funding streams and business opportunities.
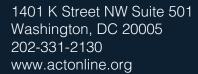
Houston, Texas
Thursday, February 13, 2020

The app economy is a $1.7 trillion ecosystem led by U.S. companies. The app marketplace is growing in areas outside of traditional tech hubs. In the United States, more than 83 percent of app companies are located outside of Silicon Valley, and 13 percent operate in rural or suburban areas.

Our penultimate stop on Developed | The App Economy Tour took us to Houston, Texas. The city, traditionally associated with oil, gas, and energy companies, recently experienced an influx of small companies innovating across sectors, and in response prioritized bringing in infrastructure to foster an environment that supports and helps to sustain a thriving startup community. The event on February 13th included a discussion featuring panelists representing the various components of Houston's tech ecosystem who shared their thoughts on how companies can utilize the resources and community in Houston to help jumpstart their businesses, market their companies more effectively, and treat data responsibly.

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February 13
5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
8th Wonder Distillery

HOUSTON

TEXAS

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1401 K Street NW Suite 501
Washington, DC 20005
202-331-2130
www.actonline.org

Developed | Speakers

The panelists shared their experiences as developers or working with developers and answered questions on how increasing attention from policymakers may shape the next 10 years of the app revolution.

Developed | Panelists

Milford Stevenson is founder of The Marketing Paper, a digital agency focused on content creation and managed IT services. He also founded UMALIC, a social media analytics platform for brands and influencers in 2011. During the panel, Milford shared tips for how companies can better use data and information they get from their users to improve their content creation and the creativity and effectiveness of their marketing. Milford also discussed data privacy issues and how to balance using robust data while protecting privacy and following best practices in data collection and use.

Lance Davis is a junior at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, majoring in Computer Engineering and Entrepreneurship as well as an Apple HBCU Scholar. In addition to an internship at Apple where he worked on Siri's software engineering team, Lance also has a leadership role in National Society of Black Engineers and volunteers for FIRST, a robotic challenge, and MATHCOUNTS, a nationwide math competition. During the panel, Lance shared his thoughts on how to bridge the computer skills gap and improve the way we talk to younger students about STEAM and computer literacy.

Betsy Furler is the founder of For All Abilities, a software platform that helps employers address a variety of disabilities their employees may have. During the panel, Betsy talked about the way she uses data and the responsibility she has to appropriately protect her users' data. Betsy also shared information on Houston-based resources that she tapped into to help her grow her most recent venture, and how those connections helped her as she approached her first funding round.

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Developed | Panel

The discussion covered a wide range of topics, including good privacy practices, diverse hiring, supporting STEAM programs in public K-12 schools, and smart marketing practices. Additionally, the panelists shared insight into resources available to developers and startups in Houston and ways to best utilize resources for startups, both local resources in Houston, and larger like those embedded in platforms, when launching a new company or product.

When discussing online platforms, Milford pointed out that in many ways, they do a lot of initial heavy lifting, which makes it faster for companies to get their product to market. "It's a lot easier if you build a platform and let users come to the platform. Why go sell yourself to someone, when you can go to a platform that works for you? And better yet, that pulls in data."

As the app economy has grown, the way that traditional jobs are done has changed as well. As Betsy pointed out, "my software is what I, as a human, have always done. But now, through software, my services can reach and help so many more people." She went on to explain that data becomes key for software like hers. "My product uses data, and it's crucial to have data so that my products work, so it is up to me to make sure that I, and my partners, are treating data responsibly."

Lance explained that even as a computer science student and a robotics coach, he still sees major gaps in computer skills and computer literacy. "Kids are basically born with devices in their hands, but that doesn't mean their tech literacy is strong."

"There is a lot of financial opportunity for companies who work with data. It doesn't have to be big brother coming to get you, there is such a thing as responsible use. We don't have to be afraid."
- Lance Davis

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Developed | Your Backyard

When considering difficult policy issues, the first question you likely ask is, "how will this impact my constituents?" At Developed | Houston, we asked those questions directly to your constituents. During Developed events, Members of Congress and their staffs get to speak directly with small business constituents about the app ecosystem, their relationships with software platforms, and how regulations affect their ability to grow and create jobs. We are happy to facilitate the ongoing dialogue between your office and any of our panelists. Let us know if you would like more information on Developed | The App Economy Tour, the panelists from our Houston event, or how you can get more information on policy issues critical to small businesses in Houston.

"Technology isn't a replacement for a person, it's a tool that can empower people. Tech provides independence, confidence, and different kinds of jobs."
- Betsy Furler

If you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to the App Association's senior director for public policy, Graham Dufault.

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