

HOSTED BY **UCL ADVANCES** & **MOBILE MONDAY LONDON**



Supporting London's Mobile Ecosystem

PROGRESS REPORT FOR

UCL | **MOBILE** 
THE | **ACADEMY**

Where mobile minds meet, think and grow



INTRODUCTION

The Mobile Academy is a collaboration between University College London (UCL) and Mobile Monday London.

It is a new style of programme intended specifically to address the challenges of teaching a very rapidly changing subject.

Over 210 people have been through the five courses since September 2012.

The course has been very well received by its participants and many have said that their experience of the programme has contributed to subsequent successes.

This document summarises our experience of developing the principles, format and content of the programme. We also describe who participates in the programme and the outcomes that have resulted from their attendance.

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“Brilliant insights, fresh thinking, interesting contacts, a new understanding of what it means to be ‘mobile’”

The objectives of the programme come from two different sources and two very different organisations. The co-founders explain their motivations in creating the programme:

Jo Rabin, Monday Monday London & Co-Founder of The Mobile Academy

Mobile Monday London is the community for people involved in building and deploying mobile products and services. With over 14,000 members it has the objective of being a catalyst for mobile business and innovation. Since 2005 it has helped members to keep abreast of continuing and ever accelerating change by staging topically themed events and by facilitating knowledge exchange among members.

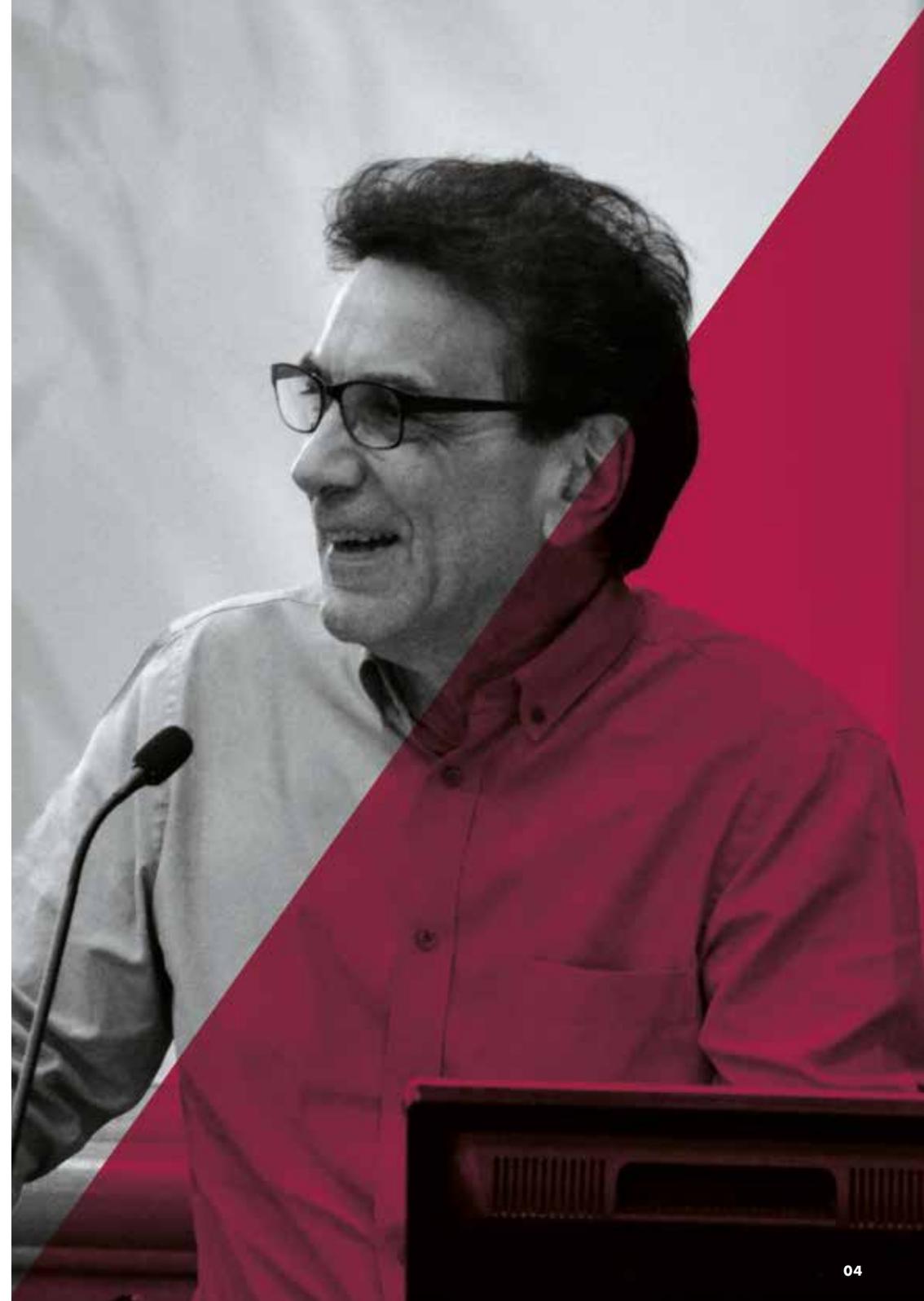
Mobile Monday London provides a forum for people from all disciplines. It provides an environment where small and large businesses feel equally at home, within which fruitful partnerships form and where funding and acquisitions take place.

At our regular events we often choose a particular trend or development as the focus of a discussion led by a diverse panel of industry experts. The objective of these events is less for attendees to be talked at by the experts and very much more for attendees to participate in the discussion of the topic

in hand. There is very deep expertise in the community and those with that expertise are usually very willing to share it.

As much as there is that depth of expertise, there are many participants who are starting their journey in mobile – sometimes a daunting prospect given its breadth, rate of growth and pace of change. We realised that we could provide more support for this group through a more structured pedagogic approach than is possible or desirable in our events.

The opportunity to work with UCL to build upon their early pilot courses was therefore something that fitted extremely well with extending and strengthening the community. Our emphasis on the importance of knowledge exchange and of active participant participation fitted extremely well with UCL's intentions and fitted specifically with our philosophy of engagement: By the community for the community.



Alastair Moore, UCL Advances & Co-Founder of The Mobile Academy

Mobile, as we all know, is constantly changing. It's why the students and businesses we support need an environment where learning can happen in the context of many unknowns – a place where participants have a licence to explore without an exact outcome in mind. It was in this context that The Mobile Academy was born.

UCL Advances, UCL's centre for entrepreneurship, strives to lead the UK's universities in the support it gives to students, graduates and entrepreneurs equipping them with the skills they need to start their own businesses; bring new products to market; build skills and grow a professional understanding of the ecosystem.

From masters students wanting to build retail apps, to departments wanting to use apps to collect scientific data, through to Geomatics and Geography doing large scale transport projects with apps, we saw a large demand for up-to-date mobile understanding. With the landscape changing so rapidly, it quickly became apparent that our teaching needed to change too.

In response we decided it would be a good idea to invite industry practitioners from all corners of the ecosystem to become the tutors in their areas of expertise. We ran early pilots and soon realised that it made sense to find a partner who could reach more of these experts and curate useful and up to date content. We are delighted that we found

Mobile Monday London to co-found and iterate this programme.

There have been a number of other factors that we wanted to incorporate into the programme. It's been really important to us that the programme is suitably diverse; it works equally well for corporates, start-ups and those that have never developed a mobile offering before. We wanted also to maximise on the peer-to-peer learning that is possible where participants already have real life work experience and we wanted to structure the business approach around lean methodologies.

Through the Continuing Professional Development aspect of the programme, we have created a vehicle that is not just structured learning. It is all the things you would expect from a traditional teaching approach, plus self-defined learning pathways that are influenced by what the participant is working on, so people take out what they need as they work on their idea through the programme.

This new programme format allows a university to work with external bodies, provide dynamic content in a fast changing industry and to act as a facilitator for the learning and development that comes from within an ecosystem. We look forward to welcoming many more participants onto the programme.



COURSE PRINCIPLES AND STRUCTURE

A unique and broad programme for those developing new products and services.

The Mobile Academy is a practical programme teaching how to start and continue developing new ideas and businesses. It provides a grounding in business, design and technology of mobile.

There are four principles that guide what we do, how we present ourselves to the outside world, how sessions are designed and how we deliver the participant experience:

1

CRAFTSMANSHIP We engage expert industry practitioners as tutors. They give practical advice, toolkits and case studies based on their years of experience, failures and successes. Where possible they map their experiences to theory, but often the textbooks have not been written and in some cases will never be written – so the teaching comes from experience which is not possible to gain elsewhere.

2

PEOPLE-CENTRED Participants are encouraged to identify all the people that are to be touched by their product at an early stage, and to keep them involved as they develop their product and proposition. To help them with this, the course includes a practical toolkit for doing your own research.

3

DIVERSITY We bring together people from a range of backgrounds and with diverse skills to increase the opportunities to learn from each other.

4

CO-CURATION Organisers, tutors, participants and industry collaborators all get involved in the production of each course. Participants contribute to sessions with learnings from their own experiences, they share helpful material and volunteer their products to be worked on as case studies.



"The networking has been invaluable from top people at IBM and Vodafone, industry experts and other large companies to developers, designers and business start-ups"

"A "must" if you want to start a tech business in London"

"Diverse and unique – nothing like this out there"

"It's like a mini-MBA for mobile product development"

Programme structure Creating the learning environment

Held in central London locations, participants sit in groups for the formal sessions and there are also informal areas where participants gather outside those sessions. Both of these aspects are conducive to the co-curation principle that they will learn from each other as well as from the expert tutors.

The programme takes place on two nights a week (Tuesday and Thursday) over a ten week period with a much appreciated week off half way through, which gives participants a chance to review earlier classes. The sessions run from 6.30pm – 7.30pm followed by a break from 7.30pm – 8.00pm and then from 8.00pm – 9.00pm. It is usual for a good number of participants to continue discussion over a drink afterwards.

“The coffee break and pub trip is really useful as it relaxes people and gives the opportunity to disseminate what we have learnt and really get to know each other”

The programme is divided into three main streams - Business, Design and Technology. The Design stream runs as a process, starting with verifying assumptions about user needs

and the corresponding opportunities. It is the only stream where there is a progression from the previous session and where participants work their way from ideation through to design review. Within the other streams sessions are placed naturally to suit the product development process, for example PR is towards the end of the programme and sessions about choosing the right technology are in the first half.

“Comprehensive, insightful, practical, inclusive, interactive and visually interesting”

Sessions have a number different formats including workshops, presentations and demonstrations. There is always material to support each session that participants can keep for future reference. There is always time for questions in each session and tutors often continue discussions into break times. There is a “Drop In Night” at the end of the programme where tutors offer 20 minute surgeries throughout the evening. During the final session of the programme, participants are also given the opportunity to present to the whole class and receive feedback.

The topics covered on the programme are:



BUSINESS

What does Mobile Mean

Writing a Business Plan

Building a Business Case

Mobile Payments

How to Create a Brand

Marketing a Mobile Product

Building Successful Teams

PR Planning

How to Avoid Legal Potholes



TECHNOLOGY

Technical Landscape

Mobile Capabilities

HTML5 vs Native

How to work with Android

How to work with iOS

How to work Cross-Platform

Back-End Systems and APIs

Building Prototypes

Drop-In Surgeries



DESIGN

Needs & Opportunities

Concept Testing

Value Proposition

Design Principles

User Journey

User Stories, Lean & Agile

Prototyping

Design Review

User Research Methods

Tutors

Here are some of our regular tutors:



JO RABIN

Director of The Mobile Academy & Mobile Monday London
Seasoned CTO – Wiforia, Sponge, dotMobi, Flirtomatic, Reuters Mobile.
Former Chair of three W3C mobile-related working groups.



JULIA SHALET

Course Director & Product Doctor
Founder of Product Doctor, Director at Azenby, Co-organiser at Mobile Monday London. Directed Space Makers Brixton Village project. 12 years at T-Mobile.



PRIYA PRAKASH

Designer & Social Entrepreneur
Founder of Design for Social Change (D4SC), 12 years hands-on strategic digital product design & leadership experience at Nokia & BBC iPlayer.



BRUCE LAWSON

HTML5
Evangelist of Open Web Standards for Opera. Worked with the W3C & Web Standards Project since 2002. Co-authored "Introducing HTML5".



IAN MERRICKS

Entrepreneur & Business Advisor
Managing Partner at White Horse Capital. Has launched 25 businesses in Technology, Media & Telecoms & worked with EMAP, IPC & The Wireless Group.



ANDREAS CONSTANTINO

Business Analyst
Founder & CEO of VisionMobile, he has worked with Microsoft, Intel, Mozilla, Amazon, AT&T, Telefonica, Nokia and Huawei. He also teaches at Lund and Athens University.



ALEX MEISL

Marketing Veteran & Founder
Former chair of the Mobile Marketing Association & Director of the IPM, co-founder of Sponge. Directed many international mobile marketing campaigns for large brands including Adidas, Barclays & Coca Cola.



KIERAN GUTTERIDGE

Developer & Entrepreneur
Co Founder & CTO of Intohand. Agnostic developer for mobile - iOS, Android, HTML5, Blackberry & Qt.



LISA DEVANEY

Public Relations
Founder of the Hai Media Group. Clients have included: Hiplogic, Skyfire, AdMob & Vodafone. Three of her clients have sold for millions.



STEVE DEVO

Technical Architect
Managing Consultant at IBM focusing on mobile. Ex-Vodafone Group creating web sites, mobile internet solutions & designing new technologies.



JOHN SPINDLER

Business Advisor & Funding Specialist
CEO of Capital Enterprise. 15+ years' experience as an entrepreneur & business advisor. Director / Co-owner of audio designer & manufacturer Ferguson Hill.



RUSSELL BUCKLEY

Mobile Marketing Entrepreneur
Angel Investor, currently working with the Government to help UK Tech companies get funding overseas. #1 employee at AdMob that sold to Google for \$750m in June 2010.



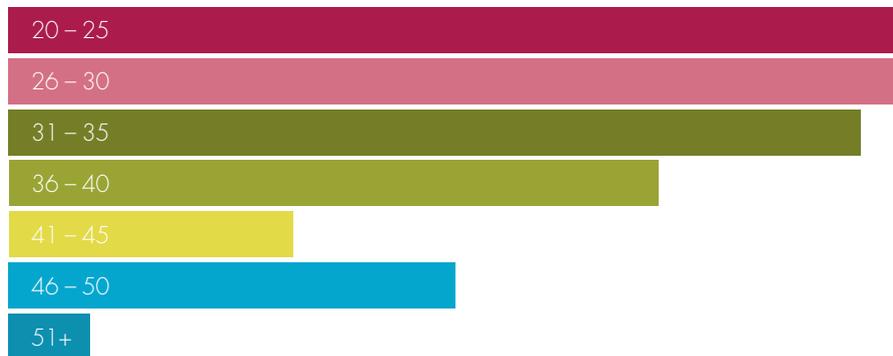
CRAIG STRONG

Agile & Lean Coach
Agile/Lean coach focused on building great teams around customer needs & changing organisational practice. Previously worked at Sky & NOWTV. Currently at Pearson plc.

OUTCOME

The programme attracts a broad constituency. Playing to our core principle of diversity, we believe that people with different levels of experience benefit from sharing knowledge with each other. Within our cohorts, we also find craftsmen who contribute to the co-curation bringing their experience to share with the group.

Participant Age Range

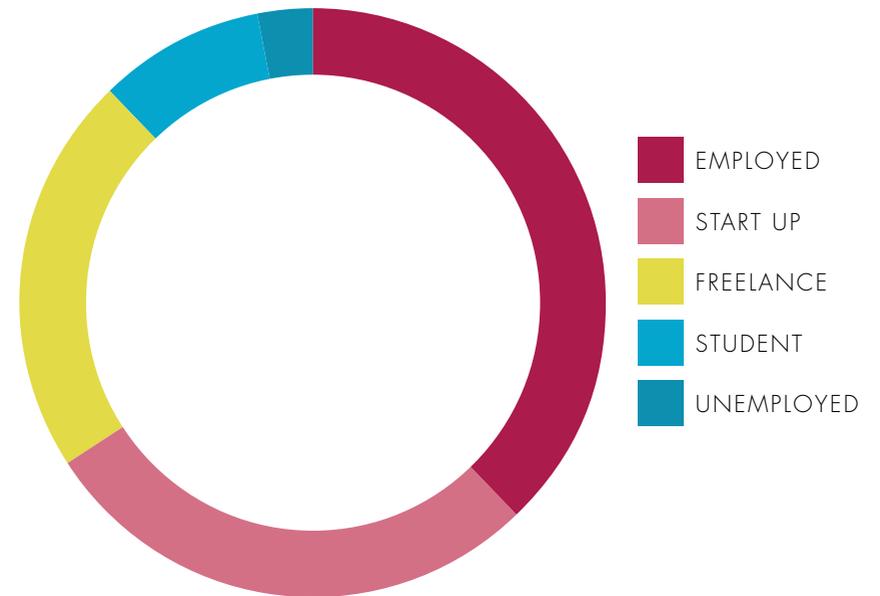


We consistently have 30% female attendance. This is high for a technology based sector and 40% of sessions on the programme are led by women.

While we don't maintain specific measures of participants' backgrounds they have represented a wide range of cultural, ethnic and national diversity.

Our objective is to make the course as widely accessible as is practical but at the same time to cover costs and encourage commitment by charging an attendance fee. We have benefitted from the provision of bursaries by ICT KTN which has allowed us to open the course to attendees primarily from social good projects who enrich the programme and otherwise would not be able to attend.

Resulting in a wide range of participant benefits. Motivations for attending the course and corresponding outcomes are quite diverse:



Some are sent by their business to bring mobile and entrepreneurial knowledge back to their teams.

The programme helps others to get their business ready to make an investment pitch or accelerator application.

There are a large number of founding teams who are already working 100% of the time on their new business and are coming to make sure they have the mobile angle properly covered. Some may already be on accelerator or incubator programmes and find the course content to be complementary.

A number of participants have full time jobs and come to broaden their skills, deepen their knowledge of mobile and find out what lean business practice is all about.

Looking to evaluate an early concept or discover a new business idea, there are lots of examples of alumni who have got their ideas off the starting block.

There are also a number of self-employed participants, working as freelancers or as small agencies – who have benefitted from the connections they have made whilst updating their mobile knowledge.

OUTCOME

Participant attendance is high
70% of participants attended 80% or more sessions
on our last course. Participants that fulfil course criteria
receive a Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
Certificate of Attendance.

Participants have become Tutors

In the spirit of co-curation, four of our
regular tutors are alumni of the programme.

Alumni evangelise the programme

Over half of the participants on our last
course were recommended by alumni.
Evangelising as they move around the
London scene, they are active and willing
ambassadors. Through alumni, organisers
and tutors are often invited to speak at
other events and provide expert surgeries
throughout the year.

Tutors going the extra mile

There are lots of examples of tutors
spending extra time coaching participants
and making useful introductions. We have
been delighted in how willing our experts
are to share their knowledge, give back
to the community and be a part of our
participatory learning model.

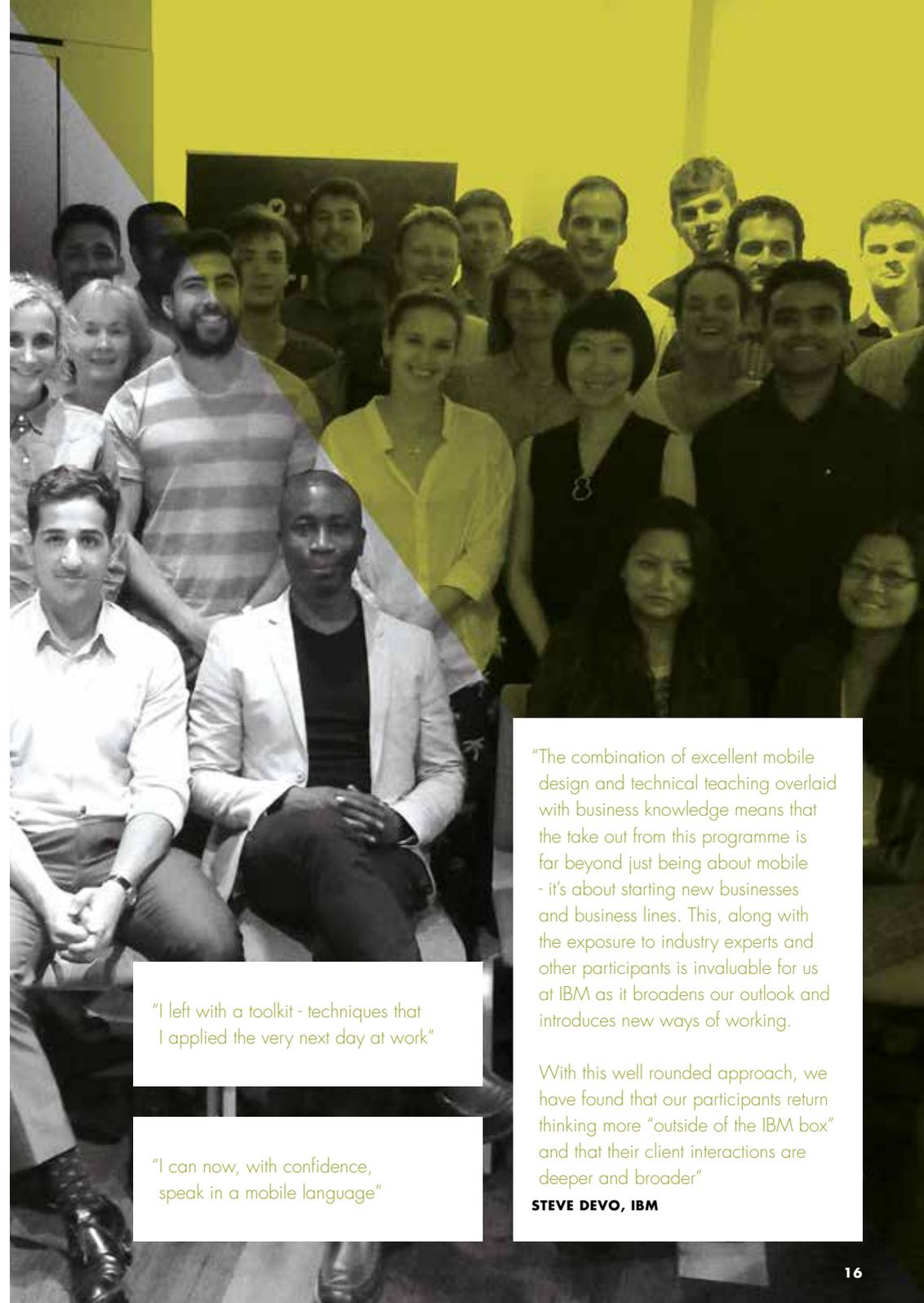
Community kindness

Businesses, event and community organisers
have extended goodwill to our participants
by offering places at various conferences,
including The Guardian Mobile Business
Summit, App Promotion Summit and
Droidcon. In addition, Lastminute.com
opened their office to us for a tour to
showcase agile working practices.

A very high advocacy score

Through continual iteration of the programme,
based on feedback from participants, we
reached a very high Net Promoter Score¹ on
our last course. This score puts us in a range
that is considered to be excellent.

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_Promoter



"I left with a toolkit - techniques that
I applied the very next day at work"

"I can now, with confidence,
speak in a mobile language"

"The combination of excellent mobile
design and technical teaching overlaid
with business knowledge means that
the take out from this programme is
far beyond just being about mobile
- it's about starting new businesses
and business lines. This, along with
the exposure to industry experts and
other participants is invaluable for us
at IBM as it broadens our outlook and
introduces new ways of working.

With this well rounded approach, we
have found that our participants return
thinking more "outside of the IBM box"
and that their client interactions are
deeper and broader"

STEVE DEVO, IBM

Official London tourist app,
in association with the Mayor's Office
Tony Sandler, What Now Travel?!



Having come from a non-technical background, I did not understand the app development process which made it difficult to work out the best way to progress.

Now the idea that I was working on has been built. It is the Official London Tourist App, in association with the Mayor's Office, and been showcased at major tech and travel events as a top innovation.

The Mobile Academy helped me to get to this point with best-in-class tutors giving an overview of all the elements I needed and introducing me to a network of people from different background who have supported me through this journey.

Thanks The Mobile Academy!



Over 5 million downloads within 6 months
James Metcalfe, BBC Weather

As the Product Manager for the BBC Weather, I came to the Academy looking for ways to improve the mobile experience. It was a new area for me - I needed to get as much information on the process and technologies as possible.

The Academy actually ran in parallel with much of our design and planning process, so was immediately applying learnings. For example I remember a class on HTML5 vs Native in the Academy, and then continuing the same discussion at work with the team the following day as we were really struggling to define the technology.

I was fortunate to meet many Tutors, technical experts and highly engaged course mates

who helped me become immersed in the world of mobile development. We ended up working with native Android and iOS developers from the Academy to develop prototypes for user testing and then the final app that launched in June 2013. We were able to release on both platforms at the same time (a first at the BBC) and had over 5 million downloads within 6 months, averaging over 4.5 feedback rating in both App stores.

This was viewed as a great success, and the quality of development was in no small part down to what I learned through the Academy process and the engaged passionate developers we had involved.



Covered in mainstream press Robyn Exton, Dattch

When I joined the Academy, Dattch was just starting to form, we'd got into an accelerator programme and I was looking to build the team.

The Mobile Academy connected me with our designer and our developer who are now full time team members and really helped focus me on product side of the business. It was a great network of people, great tutors and a great deal of information to learn across that wide mobile spectrum.

Dattch is now 6 team members and is live in the UK and US, with more countries planned for launch in 2014. We've now been featured in multiple mainstream press titles, from TechCrunch to the Guardian to Elle, won an award for Best Designed App at Launch conference and Best Pitch from Tech City News and closed a round of angel funding.



\$5 million in funding Leanne Summers, Medikidz

I joined The Mobile Academy to equip myself with the tools I needed to lead the production team at Medikidz into the digital age. Medikidz creates comic books to explain diseases to children.

Before the Academy we were dabbling in digital comic development. After and during the Academy we were gearing up the production process to be mobile ready.

We now have 3 apps on the Android and Apple App Stores and an HTML5 comic building engine. Participating in the Mobile Academy has helped me to lead the team to develop digital content in line with our current brand.

Excitingly, we've secured \$5 million in funding, which is going to help us to take our digital offering to the next level.

Closing thoughts from Alastair Moore, UCL
Working with Mobile Monday London has proved very successful and created many additional benefits for the University, including ongoing collaborative projects with companies like Atos and the BBC.

The partnership has helped create new products, new founding teams, new employment opportunities, and with over 180 participants, we can only capture a small proportion of the success stories on these pages.

The Mobile Academy cuts across all industries - it is an entry point for those who don't know if they need an app as well as being for those who are already on the road to delivering new cross-channel products and services.

Inspired by this success, and based on the same principles and programme format, UCL and TIGA launched The Games Quarter in June 2014. Games is a natural extension of our work in mobile for two main reasons. Firstly, gaming apps generate

significant downloads and revenue across most app stores. Secondly, gaming design and mechanics are an important form of interaction with users, so much of the expertise in gaming is relevant to all sorts of other industries. We anticipate that other sectors, for example Retail or emerging Digital Healthcare markets, would benefit from the sort of engagement and learning environment that this format has helped create.

Finally, based on our experiences with The Mobile Academy, UCL are now also offering one day courses with industry expert tutors on specialist and more niche topics. The courses are based around the same principles of diversity, co-curation, craftsmanship and user centricity.



Closing thoughts from Jo Rabin, Mobile Monday London
We set out to create a "different learning experience" and we've been very pleased with the way the programme has developed.

Working with UCL has been extremely positive - we have together been able to experiment and because of their support, iterate quickly.

We set out with particular objectives in course coverage and learning style, which have proven to be a sound basis for development over the four courses. We're looking forward to continuing that development and further refining the programme.

Over the years Mobile Monday London has tracked many members' success stories - of developing and selling their products and services, winning awards, receiving investment and being acquired. Our various cohorts from The Mobile Academy have gone on to their own success stories, have become experts in their own right and contribute to the broader Mobile Monday London community.

We're very happy to have been a further catalyst for business and innovation.



The programme has benefitted from many contributions in kind, especially from tutors. UCL is the underwriter of programme costs. Through Capital Enterprise and UCL the programme has received financial support from Royal Bank of Scotland, European Union backed Open Innovation project and from the 2014 Greater London Authority ERDF financed Capital Accelerator Programme. ICT KTN provided bursaries for all four of the courses to date.

We are very grateful for the support of all those mentioned here as well as the generosity and kindness of others not specifically thanked.

Compiled by Julia Shalet,
Course Director of The Mobile Academy.

You can find out about future courses at
THEMOBILEACADEMY.ORG.UK

