PayPal makes a real difference for six Irish charities in annual hackathon

- PayPal teammates had 24 hours to solve digital challenges for six Irish charities
- People from eight different PayPal offices attended the event
- Irish Youth Foundation was named the overall winner of the hackathon
- Other charities involved were the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, ALONE, Down Syndrome Ireland, Focus Ireland and Child Vision

Dublin, 20 November 2018 – [PayPal](#) today announces the success of this year's Opportunity Hack, its annual charity hackathon held in Ireland. The event, held at Castleknock Hotel and Country Club in Dublin, brought together PayPal teammates to solve the digital challenges of six Irish charities over a 24-hour period.

For the third year running, teammates and charities joined forces to create and develop digital resources and systems as part of the PayPal Gives initiative. In total, personnel from eight different PayPal offices attended the hackathon including individuals from Dublin, Dundalk, Berlin, Paris, Milan, Stockholm and Amsterdam.

Led by Jonathan Davies, EMEA Mid-Market and Small Business Manager at PayPal, teammates from various disciplines were tasked with working with charities to develop solutions for their most pressing digital needs.

A judging panel – which consisted of PayPal members including senior directors Anthony Rafferty and Mairead McIlkenny, as well as Emmet Ryan, Technology Editor at the Sunday Business Post, Guy Thompson, General Manager of Castleknock Hotel, and Anthony Cooney, CEO of the Fingal Chamber of Commerce – had the difficult task of choosing the best projects.

Based on the criteria – which included innovation, collaboration, impact, completion and presentation – the Irish Youth Foundation was crowned the overall winner. The organisation, which financially supports projects and develops programmes that make a difference to children and young people facing adversity in their lives, built an online system for grant-making.

The new system allows applicants to apply for grants via web forms and enables the Irish Youth Foundation to maintain, filter and notify applicants. It also allows the team to create reports and prevents them from having to process everything manually.

The other projects which benefitted from new digital solutions created at the hackathon include:

- PayPal teammates helped the Louth/Meath branch of Down Syndrome Ireland develop a new website that not only aligns with the charity's brand, look and feel, but is also easy to manage and update.
- For the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, which provides services and supports for those living with dementia and their carers, a virtual tea day was the aim. The organisation wanted to have the ability to send a virtual cup of tea to friends and family via email after making a donation. The capability also shows a live tea-drinking counter and money raised counter.
- Focus Ireland, the country's leading not-for-profit addressing and raising awareness about homelessness, joined forces with PayPal personnel to create a standalone donation platform to enable them to set up and accept donations in the form of both once-off payments and standing orders.
- ALONE, which provides housing and support for older people, wanted a virtual thrift store. The team developed a platform for sellers to pay to advertise their unwanted goods and receive donations from 'buyers.' This offers a number of payment options, without involvement from ALONE, and ensures that all funds go to the charity.
- PayPal teammates helped Child Vision, the only organisation in Ireland dedicated to the education and therapy needs of blind and multi-disabled children, to create an online community platform. The mobile app provides a hub for parents and volunteers, and hosts a donations centre for fundraising and event notifications.

Speaking about the hackathon, Anthony Rafferty, Director of EMEA Merchant Operations, PayPal said: *"At PayPal, we are passionate about giving back to the wider community and supporting our teammates in their careers. We want to help everyone reap the benefits of technology and that is what the hackathon is all about: it is a fun way to help charities harness digital and mobile funding for deserving causes, while providing PayPal teammates with a sense of achievement and an opportunity to develop their skills.*

"We started the hackathon three years ago and every year we are incredibly proud of how it engages Irish charities and our teammates. It is testament to both our people and the community around us."

Sabina Cotter, Head of Grants & Programmes, Irish Youth Foundation, said, "*Developing a bespoke CSR platform to manage our grants of programmes has been one of our key strategic priorities for the last two years but the two key stumbling blocks were the cost and secondly the time to invest in setting one up. Over two days an incredible team from PayPal created an unbelievable platform for us which will save us administrative time and resources and enable us to use this time to develop more funding opportunities."*

Guy Thompson, General Manager, Castleknock Hotel and Country Club, said, "*We are honoured to again be involved and host this year's Opportunity Hack. For the third year running, we've witnessed the contribution the event makes to worthwhile causes. It's brilliant to see PayPal so actively involved in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). As a former President of the Fingal Chamber of Commerce, CSR is something I'm particularly passionate about. I'm delighted that Castleknock Hotel and Country Club continues to collaborate with PayPal on this innovative initiative that provides charities with practical and tangible technological help."*

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