

A Platform to Empower Competitive Programmers and Better Online Judges

During Round #3 of the Facebook Hacker Cup 2017 in February this year, I received the following message from the official Facebook Hacker Cup team

The solution has been updated, thanks for investigating!

It brought a smile to my face as it proved, without a shadow of doubt, that a platform focused at enabling competitive programmers to assist one another is a powerful tool that can help improve even the biggest and most prestigious of online judges – that too, on a global stage! But let's back up here.

Established in 2014, uDebug is a burgeoning online community of competitive programmers who strive to help each other out. The platform empowers users by allowing them to discuss strategies to problems on chat and contribute both test input as well as hints.

We begin the talk by giving a brief overview of uDebug, currently in its second incarnation. Then we take a look at all the collaborations between uDebug and various other competitive programming tools and online judges over the years. We also take this opportunity to highlight how attendees of the Collaborative Learning Institute Symposium are some of the most open and willing partners. In particular, we look at how a couple of last year's World Finals speakers integrated their online judges with uDebug. Later we explore how the model uDebug employs actually helps both competitive programmers as well as online judges by studying specific instances – including the one alluding to Facebook. Finally, we conclude the talk by showcasing some of the latest user-focused features uDebug has to offer to the competitive programming community.