ANNOUNCING
The Twenty-Seventh Annual
Berkeley
Programming Contest
Sponsored by Google™

In preparation for the 2017 Pacific Northwest Regionals of the 40th Annual ACM Scholastic Programming Contest, there will be a semi-informal programming contest on Saturday, 14 October 2017, from 1000–1530. This contest is open to any registered Berkeley student (graduate or undergraduate) who fulfills the ACM eligibility requirements below. The contest will take place in the terminal rooms on the second floor of Soda Hall. Remote participation is also possible. Contestants will receive at least eight programming problems to solve in five hours, with all problems supplied by The Judge, Prof. Paul "Hack 'em High" Hilfinger. Programs are to be written in Standard C/C++ using the gcc compiler, in Java using version 8 of the JDK, or in Python 3. Contestants may not use pre-typed program text in electronic form, except what The Judge supplies, but are free to bring paper copies of anything. As in the ACM contests, I will score on the basis of the number of problems solved, with ties broken according to elapsed time and the number of unsuccessful answer submissions.

The winners will receive local fame and recognition. From them, we will choose teams to participate in the ACM Programming Contest. Contestants must be willing to participate in the ACM Pacific Regionals, which will be held in November at an as-yet undisclosed date and location. Since naturally we intend to win the regional contest, contestants must also be willing to participate in the International Contest Finals to be held during 15–20 May 2018 in Beijing, China.

The U.S. has fared poorly in these contests of late. Berkeley was the second-to-last U.S. team to win the Contest Finals, and that was in 1996. This year, the top U.S. team (Berkeley) placed 6th, with MIT in 10th. The reason is simple: teams from China, eastern Europe, and Russia, (as well as a few Canadian teams) take the contest very seriously and practice quite a bit, at the expense of more conventional academics. I can't ask you to ditch your courses, but I will be asking the teams chosen to commit to more practice than in the past.

If you would like to participate, please visit the contest website, at URL
        http://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~ctest/contest,
which has links to our on-line registration page, plus collections of past problems and other information. Our facilities are limited, so please make sure you meet the eligibility requirements described on the registration page. If too many people sign up, we may have to modify the contest somewhat. I will post such adjustments on the contest website and e-mail them to registered participants.

You may find a good text on data structures and algorithms helpful (e.g., *Algorithms* by Cormen, Leiserson, and Rivest). What really helps, though, is practice. You can find links to additional suggestions for how to prepare yourself on the contest website.

Eligibility. We can send a currently unknown number of teams (as space permits) to the regional contest, each comprising three registered students. You must have participated in at most four ACM regional contests and one ACM finals contest previously. All contestants must have started college (at Berkeley or elsewhere) in or after spring 2013, or were born in or after 1994, or have completed no more than 8 semesters of full-time college study (or equivalent). In some cases (such as military service or other hiatus in your education), your eligibility may be extended. In particular, students may participate while they are on internships. Please send mail to The Judge at Hilfinger@cs.berkeley.edu if you have questions.