Teaching the Next Generation of iOS Developers:

Swift App School and MacStadium join forces to deliver app development education globally

Swift App School helps young people around the world learn the fundamentals of creating apps by teaching them the open-source programming language, Swift. Swift App School's team of teachers hosts Summer App Camps and online classes year-round based on proprietary content, which is designed to instill confidence in young coders and empower the next generation of app developers.

The Formative Years

Swift App School's founders started an on-site summer camp in Asheville, NC in 2015, where instructors led groups of teens through a beginner's course in Swift, focusing on how apps are made, basic coding knowledge, and UI/UX Design. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to go remote, founders Charles Long and Bob Williams got creative on how to offer the program remotely.

First, Swift App School explored a Mac cloud-hosting service but concluded that it was too challenging to configure a remote desktop client on student machines remotely and the lack of provider support made it untenable as their long-term solution. Then they tried another cloud-based Mac remote desktop solution, but after an unplanned outage, decided that the service was not stable enough to rely on for such a large piece of their mission. They even considered self-hosting their own Mac mini data center, but soon realized that the investment and maintenance would be unmanageable. Their main focus was, and still is, to help students learn to code apps, and maintaining a data center would detract from just that.

Finally, Swift App School discovered MacStadium's Workspace solution, which provides high-performance virtual Mac desktops through an HTML5 browser. This ensured that students could use any computer available to them at home and still access the Mac desktop needed to power their lessons.

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Who:
Swift App School helps young people around the world learn the fundamentals of creating apps by teaching them the open-source programming language, Swift.

Situation:
Many Swift App School students do not have access to the expensive Mac hardware needed to learn Apple-specific programming languages like Swift.

Solution:
Swift App School uses MacStadium's Workspace solution to create a "virtual Mac lab," providing reliable, remote access to the Mac-specific programs like Xcode needed to learn how to create iOS apps.

Impact:
Swift App School has been able to host sessions on Workspace serving students worldwide to inspire the next generation of app developers.

Learn Mac from Anywhere

Workspace virtual Mac desktops are hosted on genuine Apple hardware, giving Swift App School and its students easy access to the Mac-specific programs like Xcode needed to learn how to create apps from any computer they have on hand. MacStadium's Workspace is core to Swift App School's ability to deliver upon its mission to empower students of all backgrounds with the resources to participate.

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> "If you don't have a Mac, it's a complete barrier [to learning app development]. The reality of working with underserved students is that all they have is a Chromebook from their school. We wanted them to be able to type in a web address, enter a password, and be ready to learn. That's the experience we were able to create with MacStadium."

-Charles Long, Swift App School co-founder

> What's really nice about this solution is, as soon as the student logs in, they have Xcode right there. They didn't have to download it; they didn't have to install it. It's seamless for the user."

Bob Williams,
Swift App School co-founder

With their new Workspace "virtual Mac lab," Swift App School uploads their class list to create user accounts for the session and sends access information to each student in advance of their first day. As students log in, Workspace creates a macOS virtual desktop for each one, based on a designated base image that the Swift App School teachers preconfigured to include all the tools and resources each student would need to successfully complete the lessons. This saves the teaching staff time configuring individual machines and ensures that every student has the same, correct set of materials.

The Workspace virtual macOS desktops also made remote troubleshooting and support more realistic for the Swift App School teachers. If a student machine got hung up, the teacher could simply terminate the instance through the administrative portal rather than try to talk a teenager through a complex reset process.

Empowering Future App Developers Globally

Swift App School has been able to host sessions on Workspace serving students worldwide, including a "Fundamentals of Swift and Computer Science" session for students in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The Swift App School team conducted the class from over 2,600 miles away for a class of 15 youths who completed coding a basic app as a final project on their Workspace macOS virtual desktops.

> " "The platform provided was greatly effective for our work and enhanced our overall experience. [It] facilitated our interactions and contributed to a more productive and enjoyable learning environment."
>
> -Michelle Salinas, Physics Teacher at InterAmerican Academy in Guayaquil, Ecuador "

For co-founders Long and Williams, an additional benefit of the Workspace solution is that it removes the administrative work of hosting Macs, allowing them to focus on teaching more classes and creating engaging educational content for their quickly growing student population. And as Swift App School expands their curriculum and reach, they will scale their Workspace subscription to keep up with demand, without taking on any extra cost until it's truly needed.

Learn how MacStadium's Workspace solution can help your business at macstadium.com/mac-workspace

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