Ireland's First Banking 'Hackathon' to explore better ways of serving customers

Event to harness new thinking for new ideas

21st January 2015: Ireland's first dedicated banking hackathon is to take place at NDRC at Dublin's Digital Exchange from Friday 30th January until Sunday 1st February. Organised by Ulster Bank, over 70 attendees have already signed up to join together in a marathon of brainstorming and software building focused on new thinking for banks and bank customers.

The weekend-long event is a partnership between Ulster Bank and global experts at the Open Bank Project. It will bring together a community of coders, designers, mentors and investors for an intensive period of peer-to-peer idea generation and programming. The goal is to provide an environment which fosters intensive innovative thinking and entrepreneurship for new service provision to bank customers. Participants will focus on the themes of making banking faster; helpful banking; inclusive banking, open data and emerging platforms.

Commenting on the event, Chris Davis, Chief Operating Officer, Ulster Bank said: He continued,

"We are very excited about this event. It's the first of its kind in Ireland and will bring together a community of people who are energetic, creative and innovative, to challenge the way banks serve their customers. As an industry we are going through a significant period of change - our customers are increasingly online, looking to interact with their money in different ways and we need to make sure that we listen to ideas from a non-banking community out there and are agile and proactive in meeting customer needs. At Ulster Bank we're aiming to become the number one bank for customer service, trust and advocacy and we're open to all ideas and new thinking on how to best serve our customers."

"We've also designed this event to reward innovative thinking and our prizes include incubation space at Ulster Bank's offices, mentoring opportunities with our senior executives, drones and tickets to the upcoming RBS Six Nations Rugby games."

Simon Redfern, founder of the Open Bank Project and CEO of TESOBE said:

"We at the Open Bank Project are thrilled to be working with Ulster Bank on these events. It's great to be engaging with the fintech communities in Dublin and Belfast and we're excited to see how this intensive peer-to-peer collaborative process will work in Ireland following a successful series of events we've held across Europe. There's no limit to the ideas that can be explored and we're thoroughly looking forward to seeing what emerges over the weekend."

Judges at the event include Dermot Berkery of Delta Partners, Louise Hodgson, entrepreneur, Undergraduate Awards and editor 'New Thinking, New Ireland', Marc O'Dwyer, CEO, Big Red Cloud and Chris Davis of Ulster Bank.

A second hackathon on the same theme will take place in The MAC, Belfast from Friday 13th to Sunday 15th February.

More information is available at http://www.hackmakethebank.com/go/ulster-bank/ or get in touch via twitter at @OpenBankProject

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Notes to Editors:

A group of people from a number of disciplines will come together to 'hack' out new ideas and bring them to a certain stage to pitch to a mutli-disciplinary panel of experts. The process is two-fold and as

well as creating ideas, participants will be able to avail of some pitch training and mentor sessions both at the event and following the event, for the successful projects. This process uses no real customer data, the project will create a 'sandbox' of data specially constructed by the project to emulate real situations, to use in the development phase.