

Prodigy develops mobile app for matric learners

To assist the matric class of 2015 succeed in their exams and achieve a higher pass rate than their predecessors, educational publisher Oxford University Press South Africa (OUPSA) commissioned 17-year-old programming prodigy Jacques Blom to develop flippit, a study app aimed at helping matric learners study.



Launching at the start of the third school term, flippit comes at an opportune time when matric students start biting down ahead of their mock and final exams.

Blom, a Grade 11 student at Westerford High School in Cape Town, together with fellow high school student and programmer Sanjiv Ranchod, collaborated with OUPSA to design the app, which is available to download free from the Google Play Store. It consists of digital flashcard "decks" for 14 subjects, which allow students to learn content, test themselves and compete against other students, making it fun and easy to study before tests and exams.

"We realised that there is a definite need for technology that facilitates learning on the go, especially for tech-savvy matric students who are at a critical stage in their school careers," says Steve Cilliers, OUPSA MD.

"Working with Jacques has been great as he has ensured that the app is relevant and suitable for the user - the swotting 21st century student. He thinks from the perspectives of both the developer and the user, so we've been able to get the best of both worlds to ensure that flippit helps learners study."

Blom has been working with technology his entire life. He started programming when he was just five years old and now runs React Technology, a web and mobile app development company, in partnership with Ranchod. He was named one of the Top 200 Young South Africans by the Mail & Guardian in June this year and is an example of how South African youth are positively shaping the educational landscape.

"As a high school student, I understand how frustrating it can be to study for exams, because you're never sure exactly how and what to memorise. This solves this problem by letting you study in a flashcard format, making it fun and interactive," says Blom. "It's convenient, too: once a subject deck is downloaded, the app can be used offline, so a student can study for a few minutes when they have free time, wherever they are. I hope that flippit makes it much easier for matric students to do well in their exams."

"In 2015, OUPSA celebrates its 100th year of publishing for South African teachers and students. To celebrate this milestone in part, we want to make flippit as accessible as possible to students across the country. The app will always be free, while the flash cards will be freely available for the matric class of 2015," adds Cilliers. "We've poured considerable resources into developing an engaging and accessible study aid. We hope that students will engage with flippit and give us feedback to ensure that we can help the current and future generations of South Africans ace their matric exams."

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