

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **@protocol Appathon Targets Young Zimbabwean Developers in Challenge to Build Privacy-focused Consumer Applications**

***Harare, Zimbabwe – 1 February, 2021***

US-based The @ Company (The At Company) is bringing the @protocol Appathon II to Zimbabwe, targeting young developers and technology enthusiasts. The challenge: to build innovative consumer applications on @protocol, an open, permission-based protocol that makes great user experience and automatic privacy compliance easy. This initiative, being run in association with the Computer Association of Zimbabwe (CSZ) for the country, runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> of February to the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 2021.

The appathon is running in two tracks; the first one for developers in Zimbabwe, and the second, targeted on the US, Canada, Bermuda and Bangladesh. These two tracks will be held concurrently, and participants will be actively engaged in the same activities and reviews. By having a track dedicated to Zimbabwe, notably, Zimbabweans will make up the largest number of participants by nationality.

“We are internet optimists and believe there is an opportunity to build privacy-conscious applications on our @protocol. We are thrilled to launch the @protocol Appathon II in partnership with CSZ and look forward to seeing what Zimbabwe’s young developers and technology enthusiasts will build on our @protocol.” stated Barbara Tallent, co-founder and CEO of The @ Company.

Current students and recent graduates are eligible to enter the appathon. The cut-off for graduates is exactly two years, or less, since their graduation date by the 31 of January, 2021.

“This initiative is one that presents an open opportunity for budding developers in Zimbabwe”, stated Allen Saruchera, the CSZ President, on occasion of the launch, “It resonates with our objective of contributing in developing technology startups in Zimbabwe within the education segment of our community from where we draw a sizeable part of our overall membership as CSZ.”

Participants in the event are going to go through a 3-part programme. The first involves team formation and submission of team concepts (ideas), following an introduction to the @sign world. Facilitators and mentors will help individuals locate themselves in entry teams and build models for their applications of choice.

After a process of rigorous adjudication based on the strengths of both the team and the concept, 24 teams will be selected to proceed to the 4-week long appathon – 12 from each track. This will be the main highlight of the challenge, as participants deep-dive into developing prototypes on @protocol, and pitch their demos to another panel of judges where half of the teams from each track will be selected to proceed to the final stage.

The last part of the programme will focus on mentorship – with experienced and highly skilled development and business process experts take the participants through development methodology (AGILE), design-thinking, UI design, startup funding and marketing.

A total of 3 teams from each track will, at the end of this last stage, be announced as winners and will each receive cash prizes, platform funding and mentorship to support incubation of the emerging startups.

Interested eligible participants can register for the appathon at: <https://atsign.com/appathon-ii>

### **ABOUT @PROTOCOL**

@protocol is an open, permission-based protocol that makes great user experience and automatic privacy compliance easy. It is designed to automatically comply with all global privacy regulations making it a robust protocol on which to build privacy-focused apps. @protocol's data encryption and P2P-technology design attributes give application users total privacy and control over their own data. Apps are built through Flutter software development kits (SDKs). *More:* [atsign.dev](https://atsign.dev)

### **ABOUT THE @ COMPANY**

At The @ Company (The At Company) is a technology organisation working to create a better internet which prioritises user privacy. To achieve this, the company has built and operates the @protocol platform which allows for secure and private data access and transfer – as an active operating environment powering apps in all categories which puts privacy and ownership of data forward as a fundamental right. The @ Company strongly believes in the goodness of the internet as a place where exploration of the world, commerce and communication can effectively happen without fear of online surveillance and data breaches. *More:* [atsign.com/about](https://atsign.com/about)

### **ABOUT THE COMPUTER SOCIETY OF ZIMBABWE**

Computer Society of Zimbabwe (CSZ) is an Internationally recognized professional body for Zimbabwe's community of ICT professionals. The organisation sets out to champion the development of the ICT industry in Zimbabwe by establishing beneficial relationships and providing independent professional counsel for the benefit of members, government, industry and society at large. It drives this mission through thought-leadership, education, research, and standards development – all enabled by cross-cutting partnerships and a large pool of experienced practitioners in various disciplines focused on technology and integrated with it. *More:* [csz.org.zw/about-us](https://csz.org.zw/about-us)

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