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# TopCoder′s Weekly Online Programming Competitions

I would like to introduce you to TopCoder, a company committed to identifying and promoting the best computer programmers through head-to-head competition.
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TopCoder is a high profile set of programming competitions that culminates in a national championship for college students: The TopCoder Collegiate Challenge, and a national championship for all members (professional and college), The TopCoder Invitational. We seek to provide value to programmers of all skill levels through the use of head to head competition.

TopCoder competition offers the following benefits to members:

- Fair and objective assessment of programming skill.
- Ability to learn from highly skilled (professional and college) programmers.
- Ability to obtain a rating demonstrating skill level.
- National recognition for highly skilled developers.
- Exposure to employers and national software/hardware manufacturers.
- Ability to win cash prizes twice a week - all the way up to the $100,000 grand prize - based on skill.

- **No cost or obligation to the member**.

How it works:

- TopCoder holds online competitions twice per week.
- Developers have the choice to compete in C++ or Java.
- Programmers compete in a three phase competition consisting of:

  - Phase I - Coding solutions to three problems of varying difficulty
  - Phase II - Challenging other programmers code through the use of 'challenges' to their code.
  - Phase III - System test performed by TopCoder's servers for accuracy.

- Programmers are separated into rooms of 10 per room, giving each developer between a 1 in 10 chance of winning.
- Seeding and Divisions are utilized so programmers only compete against members of a similar skill level.
- Cash prizes are awarded based on the placement in each room, with the top performing developers winning a larger share of the prize pool. The winners will split a $10,000 prize purse PER MATCH!

TopCoder currently has over 10 thousand members, with all of the top schools (i.e. MIT, Stanford, CMU, etc.) and top companies (IBM, Sun, Microsoft, etc.) represented. Over 500 of these members compete in each match.

This is a great way for programmers to assess their skills against some of the best coders in the country. It is also a great way to learn as all of the problems and solutions are available online.

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