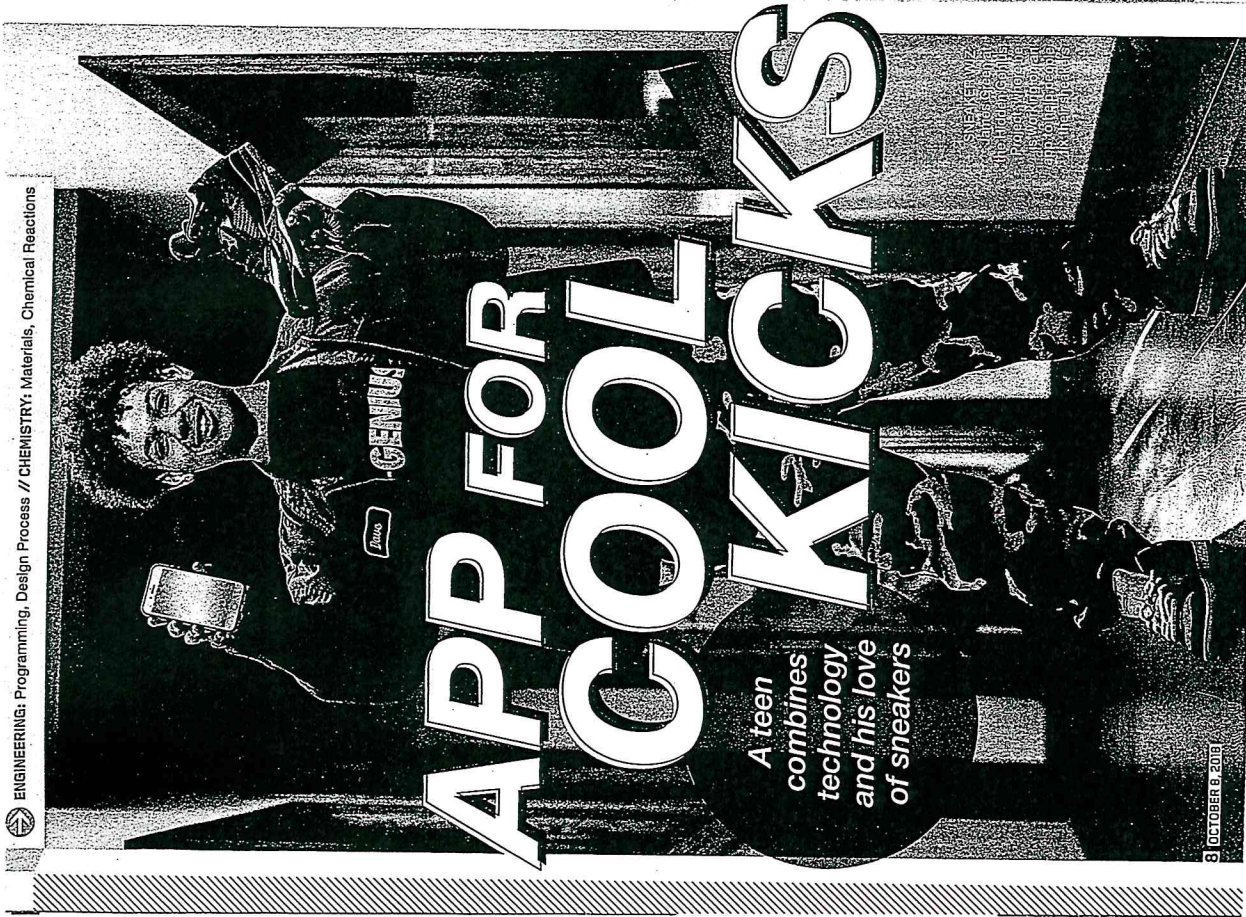




ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How might technology be used to turn a hobby into a business?

Two years ago, James Green dropped out of high school in the 10th grade. "I was getting caught up with doing negative things," says James, who is now 18. "I wasn't motivated in school. I was struggling and lost." Then James discovered the Hidden Genius Project. The program, based in his hometown of Oakland, California, trains and mentors black male youth in technology, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills. "I decided to give it a shot—and it changed my life," says James.

The skills James learned from the program helped him figure out how to use technology to turn a hobby he loves—collecting and restoring sneakers—into a business idea. He and a friend, who was also enrolled in Hidden Genius, began developing an app called *FixMyKicks*. It aims to help "sneakerheads"—people who collect, trade, and admire sneakers—connect over the web to repair and customize their kicks.

Before joining Hidden Genius, James had never pictured a future for himself in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) field. Unfortunately, he's not alone. According to the National Science Foundation, less than 5 percent of all science and engineering workers are African-American. James, who returned to high school and is now a freshman at Merritt College in Oakland, hopes that his story motivates other kids like him to discover the importance of STEM.

FIXING KICKS

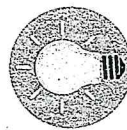
James has been obsessed with sneaker culture ever since he was in middle school. He would search the web to track down vintage kicks, which often looked beat-up. After scoring one particularly hard-to-find pair, James decided to get them repaired. He brought them to a cobbler—someone who fixes shoes—who charged James \$70. But when he got the sneakers back, they didn't look right at all. He felt ripped off and upset that he lost money he couldn't afford to waste.

"That's when I decided that I was going to teach myself," he says. James did research on the internet to learn how to repair and customize sneakers (see *Sneaker Solutions*, p. 17). He eventually became so skilled that

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HOW TO DEVELOP AN APP

Software developers follow this process to design apps.



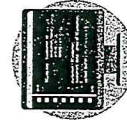
1 DISCOVERY AND STRATEGY

Decide what the app aims to accomplish and why.



2 FRAMEWORK CREATION AND DESIGN

Write a description of the app's features and create a visual design to show how the components will look.



3 APP DEVELOPMENT

Write code that allows the app to function.



4 BETA TESTING

Ask people to test an early version of the app to find "bugs," or errors in the program.



5 REFINING PHASE

Fix problems in the app with new pieces of code, called patches. After the app is released, update it as needed to fix problems that arise.

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SWEET SCORE:
A teen shows off limited-edition Kicks at a sneaker convention in New York City, which attracted thousands of "sneakerheads."

