

Innovation Engine announces digital media participants for summer boot camp

Entrepreneurs will access up to \$20,000 in seed funding, expert coaching

ATHENS, Ohio (June 22, 2012)—Ohio University’s Innovation Center has accepted six digital media startup companies into its inaugural Innovation Engine accelerator program. The companies, which come from Athens, Middleport and Columbus, Ohio, will participate in a 10-week “boot camp” that began Monday.

The Innovation Engine will provide intensive mentorship from seasoned entrepreneurs and industry experts, hardware and software, 24-hour accessible space and seed funding of up to \$20,000 each for five teams.

“We are extremely excited to begin the program,” said Jennifer Simon, director of the Innovation Center. “Our selection committee faced tough decisions in choosing teams from the highly competitive pool. The committee identified five companies, as well as one alternate, that show enthusiasm and product types likely to reach our program goals of follow-on funding and product launch.”

The Innovation Engine companies are:

- Flashcrop, which won first place in the Innovation Center’s Startup Weekend event in April, created a mobile application designed to make digital flash cards for students by taking pictures of notes, glossaries and study guides, and then turning those images into note cards. Their technology is unique due to its integration of new features with an interactive and intuitive framework, the company said. The Athens-based company includes members Richard Rodman, Chadwick Stroud, Max Heckel, Arkopaul Sarkar and Supradeep Kumar.
- Initio Creative, LLC, aims to be one of the pioneers in media production, evolving with the needs of customers and current markets, and providing the best possible media software products, the company said. The Athens-based company includes members Yuqin Jiao, Sicong Li, Justin Howell,

Sam Frank and Brian Grady.

- Lightborne Lore is an Athens-based digital games and animation company focusing on iOS and Android content. Lightborne Lore specializes in making episodic, story-based games and downloadable “expansion” content. Two new titles are in development. Their previous work includes “Perpetua,” a DaVinci-inspired perpetual motion machine that is part puzzle and part digital pet, as well as a short animation for the International SunSat Design Competition. Company members are Kyle Perkins, Michael Blohm, Jay Chaffin, Lena Goodnough, Douglas Trein, Samantha Williams and David Young.

- Brandbeau is a Columbus-based company that created a mobile app that offers real-time analytics for brand ambassador campaigns. Company members are Dave Ricupero, Faraz Khan, Trevor Heicht and Ven Ayyadevara.

- Affine Technologies of Middleport specializes in the creation of real-time interactive visualizations. Their proprietary platform allows for quick creation of customized data visualizations, which will help clients achieve their goals more reliably, in less time and at a lower cost, the company said. Company members are Chad Mourning and Scott Nykl.

- Parabox LLC has been selected as an alternate in the program. If any of the teams are unable to complete their time in the accelerator, Parabox will replace that team and will receive investment funds. In the meantime, Parabox will receive business coaching. Parabox is a small owner-operated company based in Athens, Ohio. It has worked on a number projects ranging from immersive 3D simulations to survey administering software. The company recently began work on internal game development projects, including one for an iPhone and Android release. Company members are Karl Henkel and Ryan Mohler.

At the end of the program, the teams will be expected to have a customer-validated product and an investment-worthy presentation. The presentation and product demonstration will be given at an investor

“Showcase Day” scheduled for Aug. 24, where the entrepreneurs will pitch their ventures to local, regional and national investors.

The Innovation Engine is part of a series of new initiatives, including the development of a digital media incubator at the Innovation Center, designed to address the surge of digital media entrepreneurs emerging from Ohio University and throughout the region.

The program is supported in part by WesBanco, Ohio University’s Vice President for Research and Creative Activity, Scripps College of Communication, Russ College of Engineering and Technology, TechGROWTH Ohio and the Center for Entrepreneurship.

Created in 1983, the Innovation Center was the first university-based business incubator in the state of Ohio and the 12th in the United States. The current 36,000-square-foot facility, which opened in 2003, is home to high-tech and biotechnology startup companies. The Innovation Center is located at 340 W. State St. in Athens, Ohio. For general information, visit www.ohio.edu/innovation.

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