Bijan Anjavi
Tech Launch Arizona
Innovation Fellows Program
Introduction

• Academics
  • Freshman Pre-CS Major at the University of Arizona.
  • Pursuing the 5-Year Bachelor of Science/Master of Science in Computer Science.

• Hackathons
  • Frequent attender of Major League Hacking events.
  • Hackathon: 36-hour nonstop event where coding enthusiasts from across the country come together to create cool stuff.
  • Founding member and legal director of Hack Arizona, Arizona’s first major collegiate hackathon. 400+ attendees, held in all five floors of the Science-Engineering Library.

• Intellectual Property
  • Interested in going to law school after undergrad to pursue either patent law or corporate law.
  • Audited Patent Law (LAW 655C) at the law school during the Fall 2014 semester.
Fall 2014

• Began the Tech Launch Arizona Innovation Fellowship in October 2014.
• Researched the commercialization and licensing process via readings, discussions, media materials, etc.
• Assigned to work with a local Tucson-based startup (i.e. Acomni) during the Spring 2015 semester.
• Created a Spring 2015 Technology plan to apply the knowledge I learned in real-world situations.
Spring 2015

- As is the case with many startup plans, the plan quickly changed and I got to work on exciting new problems that I had not anticipated.

- The following slides are an overview of the companies I worked with, the work I completed for them, the outcomes, recommendations for next steps, and a reflection on the TLA Innovation Fellows Program as a whole.
• **Aztera** is the company handling the Acomni commercialization process.
• Aztera’s main challenge was finding a way for Acomni to commercialize/possibly become acquired.
• Worked with Eric Smith and Michael Muglia, the business development experts of Aztera, who helped guide me through the research process and assigned me tasks.
Acomni and the Ondo

- Acomni, LLC was founded in Tucson, Arizona, by Jonathan Sprinkle and a team of researchers in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. The team currently includes:
  - Dr. Jonathan Sprinkle (Technical Advisor)
  - Manuel Teran (Interim CEO)
  - Dr. Sean Whitsitt (Software Engineer)
  - Jackie Ouellette (Electrical Engineer)
Acomni and the Ondo

- The goal of Acomni is to provide technology that both aids electricity utility companies and end-users in managing energy.
- They made their first step into this venture with a device called the Ondo, a smart thermostat device that also gathers data about a home’s ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) usage.
- The Ondo’s control-loop algorithm creates a model of the user’s heating and cooling environment, using data such as local climate/temperature patterns, user-behavior patterns, etc.
- The Ondo then can modify the temperature/price set points to optimize HVAC energy usage and/or keep in line with the user’s budget.
The Ondo

Mobile Application

Ondo Hardware Interior
Sample Work Completed

• Analyzed the current smart thermostat market, including potential sources of competition and partnership in local regions.
• Identified networking opportunities and other HVAC trade show events in the region.
• Researched End-User Licensing Agreements (EULA) for other smart thermostats.
• Investigated ZigBee Communication, a specification of high-level communication protocols that helps create personal area networks (an alternative to Wi-Fi).
Outcome

- Throughout the semester, while completing my research, I was able to witness and assist in the growth of a partnership between Acomni and a confidential third-party utility-provider in the Southwest region.

- Currently, the team at Aztera and Acomni are waiting on a response from this provider after sending them a proposal for a potential million-dollar partnership.
Recommended Next Steps

• Acomni and Aztera need to have a plan in place to implement regardless of the response of this third-party provider.

• If they respond with an approval of the proposal, then Acomni can swiftly move into talks on how to implement mass production of Ondo device.

• If the answer is a no, Acomni can move forward with their other plans for commercialization with backup partners.

• Also, since Acomni is waiting on patent examination that has been fast-tracked for June 2015, if the answer from the USPTO is positive, Acomni can gain another advantage to add to their slide deck (i.e. a patent on the device) for venture capitalists interested in investing.
TLA Innovation Program Reflection

• The TLA Innovation Fellowship was a great experience, as I got to witness firsthand the creation of a business partnership between one of the largest utility providers in the country and a Tucson-based startup.

• Personal Highlights of the Program:
  • Desert Angels.
  • Weekly meetings to hear what the other fellows were working on.
  • Looking over the provisional patent application for the Ondo and observing how claims are structured in a patent application.