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The KIT – Knowledge & Information Technology No. 231 - 2 January 2018

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→ Special New Year Issue

Happy 2019 to everyone! To start the year off, we're doing something a little different in this issue. We're presenting the work of eleven startup companies, based in San Francisco and "incubated" in part by the Nixon Peabody law firm. While their missions may be very far from your professional interests, we think there is value in reading about what new markets may exist "out there." And of course, most startups these days are exploiting information (using analytics and machine learning) or create new requirements for IT solutions. Please let us know whether you find this issue useful!

→ Eleven Startups

In the list below, almost each company's name is a hyperlink to its website. cébé is *not* endorsing these companies -- we are just showcasing the diversity of innovative ideas. Do your own diligence if they interest you in any way.

Patchd -- This is the brainchild of Robert Quinn, an Australian who suffered multiple bouts of sepsis and managed to survive against the odds. Sepsis, a chain reaction that develops from an infection, kills 270,000 people a year in the US alone, and accounts for one-third of all hospital deaths. Patchd collects vital signs using a chip in a chest patch, analyzes the data and claims to detect advance patterns indicative of sepsis up to ten hours before a doctor would notice the symptoms. The algorithm was trained on 47,000 patient records from Johns Hopkins. Pilots are planned with other major hospitals and the UK National Health Service, which can provide access to one million more records. Patchd recently raised \$1.9 million in seed funding.

Goodly -- Goodly automates the administration of a new type of benefit, where employers help repay their young employees' student loans. These programs are shown to increase employee retention by 50%, but are usually managed manually. Goodly went through the Y Combinator process, got a seed round of over \$1 million, and onboarded their first customers.

Ivy Food Tech -- You would think that document management is a solved problem, but the traceability requirements in the food supply chain make it a daunting challenge. In the US, 7 to 10 documents are needed per supplier per product, resulting in perhaps 50 documents per product -- hundreds of thousands for a supermarket chain -- with various expiration dates. Ivy automates the tracking and handling of these documents, tagging them by supplier, by ingredient, by product, etc. They have three clients so far, including Lotus Foods.

Rain Neuromorphics -- The idea behind this startup is to emulate on a chip the structures found in the brain, resulting in a processing unit combined with memory that is uniquely suitable to implement machine learning algorithms and would supplant the use of GPUs for that purpose. First silicon is expected in the second quarter of 2019.

- Knowledge Capture
- Taxonomy development
- Enterprise Social Media

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Snappr -- Matt Schiller (another Australian) claims that this is "the biggest thing in photography since the DSLR." Snappr is an online site to book freelance photography jobs, including short-term requests. They are already in operations, with a run rate of \$4 million a year (prices start at \$59 an hour). They raised a seed round of \$2.5 million in June 2017, and are now raising Series A funding of \$8 million. The team is just four people.

Endo Industries -- Nancy Do's company is, according to her, where "modern agriculture science meets the cannabis industry." Growers need to improve the quality of plant genetics. In its tissue culture lab, Endo customizes strains for disease resistance and uses new plant cloning techniques to avoid contamination, so that growers can distribute reliable products to distributors. There is a \$38 million "starter plant" market just in California. Endo has 6 people, launched a \$4 million seed round, and obtained multiple licenses.

Backcourt Dribble -- This startup, named for a forbidden move in basketball, offers tools for fans of female team sports to receive and share news about matches, teams and athletes. The mainstream media have largely neglected this market. Backcourt Dribble offers notifications of viewing opportunities, Twitter discussions, and targeted offers (sports apparel, etc.) with real-time Twitter sentiment analysis.

BioLumen -- This company's founder claims to have invented a product that will lower the metabolic burden of carbohydrates and sugar in food, which trigger non-alcoholic fatty liver disease" (NAFLD), which most people don't know about but which affects 24% of the world population." Besides the fact that it sounds like those annoying miracle cure ads in the middle of your newsfeed, and that this seems to have no intersection with IT, we can't find a website for the company!

Kyndoo -- Kelly McDonald's "social media marketplace" helps connect "valuable influencers" with brands that can pay them to advertise their products. Frankly, we call these people skills, and we think this practice gives both marketing and social media a bad name.

Next For Me -- This startup connects and publishes news and resources for people aged 50+. It helps them discuss age-specific concerns, find events of interest, or overcome ageism when looking for new ways to support their financial needs.

Tall Poppy -- Leigh Honeywell, a cybersecurity incident response expert, co-founded the company to help employers provide a benefit to employees who are victims of online harassment (often the higher-status people in the company, hence the reference to the *tall poppy syndrome*). They address three aspects: educate employees about cyberthreats, monitor harassment, mitigate impact. They have pilot project agreements with Twitch and Mozilla, and estimate the market to be \$9 billion in the US alone.

➔ **Seen Recently...**

"If you're anything like me, you're taking stock of your work and your life, and wondering where all the time went."

-- Bill Gates, on December 30