

theWONDRY

The Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center at Vanderbilt University
www.theWONDRY.com



GCEC Award Category: Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center

Center Director & Submitter:

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1. Briefly discuss the rationale for creating this entrepreneurship center to include how stakeholder interest and support were gathered.

Launched in November 2016, the Wond'ry (www.theWONDRY.com) has become the epicenter for innovation and entrepreneurship at Vanderbilt University and a catalyst for fostering a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Nashville community and beyond. With over 40,000 aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs entering the Wond'ry since its Grand Opening, this Center has become the sandbox for all academic disciplines and interests spread across Vanderbilt's community of 6,871 undergraduates, 5,716 graduate students, and 4,300 faculty and staff to creatively converge, collide, explore, and invent. Ultimately, the Wond'ry is where one learns how to turn abstract ideas into concrete realities and launch new ventures.

VU's student body is both incredibly diverse (53% female, 45% minority) and highly talented with 95% of all students coming from the top 10% of their high school class. The Wond'ry was born out of a desire to continue this tradition of academic excellence and the recruitment of top student talent, as well as to create a vibrant, innovation ecosystem throughout the VU community. The creation of the Wond'ry was directly tied to the goals and vision outlined in VU's [Academic Strategic Plan](#) which was launched in 2013 during a multi-year effort fully supported by the VU Board of Trust, Administration and Faculty. This Academic Strategic Plan resulted from months of meetings, discussions, and efforts on the part of the VU community to better align its future strategic direction and more broadly to shape the future of higher education to be more focused on immersive and experiential learning opportunities.

In addition to this internal institutional support, the Wond'ry also received much student and external community stakeholder support. VU's on-campus entrepreneurial ecosystem is home to 40+ student-led entrepreneurial organizations all of which now call the Wond'ry "home." These students pushed for the Wond'ry in an effort to create more cohesive entrepreneurial programming and mentorship and a central physical common ground where cross-campus innovation and entrepreneurial efforts could flourish. These students through direct and committee requests over several years further convinced VU's Chancellor and Provost to develop a place where their entrepreneurial passions could be further honed and their aspirations realized. Likewise, the creation of the Wond'ry was greatly supported by the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and organizations, such as the state-backed public-private partnership [LaunchTN](#) and its local offshoot the [Nashville Entrepreneurship Center](#). The Wond'ry has been seen as a key way for VU take on a more active role in entrepreneurial efforts as the premier academic institution in Nashville and the state of Tennessee.

As a result of these combined efforts and the development of the Academic Strategic plan, the Wond'ry was approved and construction commenced in 2013 and was completed in 2016. Located in the newly built 230,000 sq ft Innovation Pavilion in the heart of VU's campus, the Wond'ry has become the headquarters for trans-institutional collaborations between students and faculty from all levels and disciplines—from engineers to scientists to humanists to entrepreneurs to artists. The Wond'ry is truly where "Wonder" meets "Foundry" and new endeavors come to life.

2. Provide a graphical timeline depicting major milestones and metrics for the development of the center from conception to current year. Include the initial milestones you set and how you met them

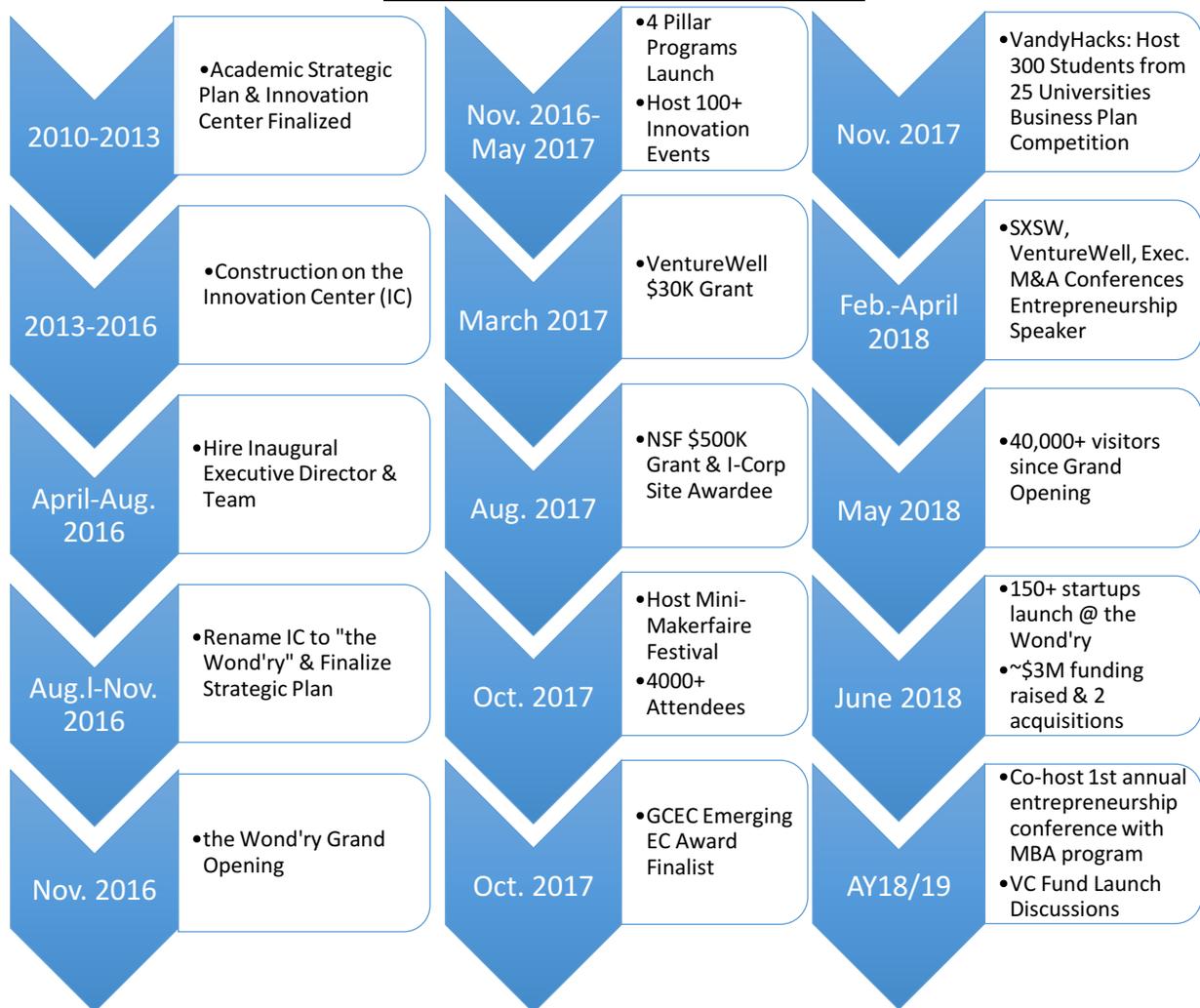
After the Grand Opening of the Wond'ry in 2016, our metrics were focused around three main areas 1) fostering utilization of the space, 2) launching new trans-institutional collaborations/endeavors and ventures, and 3) developing into a thought leader on innovation and entrepreneurship both regionally and nationally.

These metrics and milestones have been exceeded through extensive proactive on-campus outreach and marketing, the successful creation and implementation of four very well-received, award winning Pillar Programs around innovation and entrepreneurship and the subsequent launching of an additional 100+

innovation and entrepreneurial events per academic year. These efforts combined with our significant proselytizing and promotion of our unique approach to the external community have helped us to exceed our goals of 15,000 visitors (we are at 40,000+), launching of 80 new startups (we are at 150+), and presenting at one major conference per year (we have presented at 3+ per year since our opening). These efforts have been further bolstered by the Wond'ry being recognized as a National Science Foundation I-Corps site, the first in Vanderbilt's history, and the Wond'ry receiving ~\$2M+ in grant and philanthropic funding to date.

To specifically foster entrepreneurial successes, the Wond'ry through our PreLaunch/PostLaunch Pillar Program and I-Corps efforts have created a robust lean start-up focused curriculum, which in turn has spurred the launch of 150+ new for-profit ventures created by students, faculty, and staff from across academic disciplines over the last two years. These new ventures have now raised in aggregate over \$3M+ in funding from a variety of federal SBIR/STTR grants, business competitions, angels, and/or venture capital (See Appendix for the Top 30 list). In addition to funding, these startups have also gained significant recognition/awards, generated hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in revenue, and have created dozens of new jobs. Two of our startups have already been acquired by strategic competitors, further bolstering the Wond'ry's prestige as an entrepreneurial leader. To further catalyze these efforts, the Wond'ry is currently working with Vanderbilt administration to design and launch a \$10-15M investment fund with the hopes of a AY19/20 launch date.

the Wond'ry Major Milestone Timeline



3. Provide a list of specific achievements to date with a brief explanation.

The response to the Wond'ry by both the VU campus community and the external entrepreneurial community has been incredibly positive. In its second year of existence, the Wond'ry has already hosted over 40,000 visitors to the center all pursuing various innovation and entrepreneurial related endeavors. Moreover, the Wond'ry has successfully launched four award winning Pillar Programs around innovation and entrepreneurship and has hosted an additional 100+ innovation and entrepreneurial related seminars and workshops each academic year. These efforts have not gone unnoticed as VU most recently was ranked a "Top 15" best university nationally by *US News & World Report* and the #10 "Most Innovative University in the World" by *Thomson Reuters Corporation*.

In addition to these efforts, our Executive Director has been requested to speak on fostering an entrepreneurial culture and launching startups at numerous national conferences including SXSW, VentureWell Foundation's Annual Open Conference, IDEACon 2017, Nashville Startup Week, and 36:86 Conference (Nashville's version of South by Southwest, SXSW) as well as numerous other on-campus and off-campus seminars and events. Moreover, our Director was also recognized as a Nashville Business Journal's "40 Under 40" awardee for being a positive change-maker and influencer in our city.

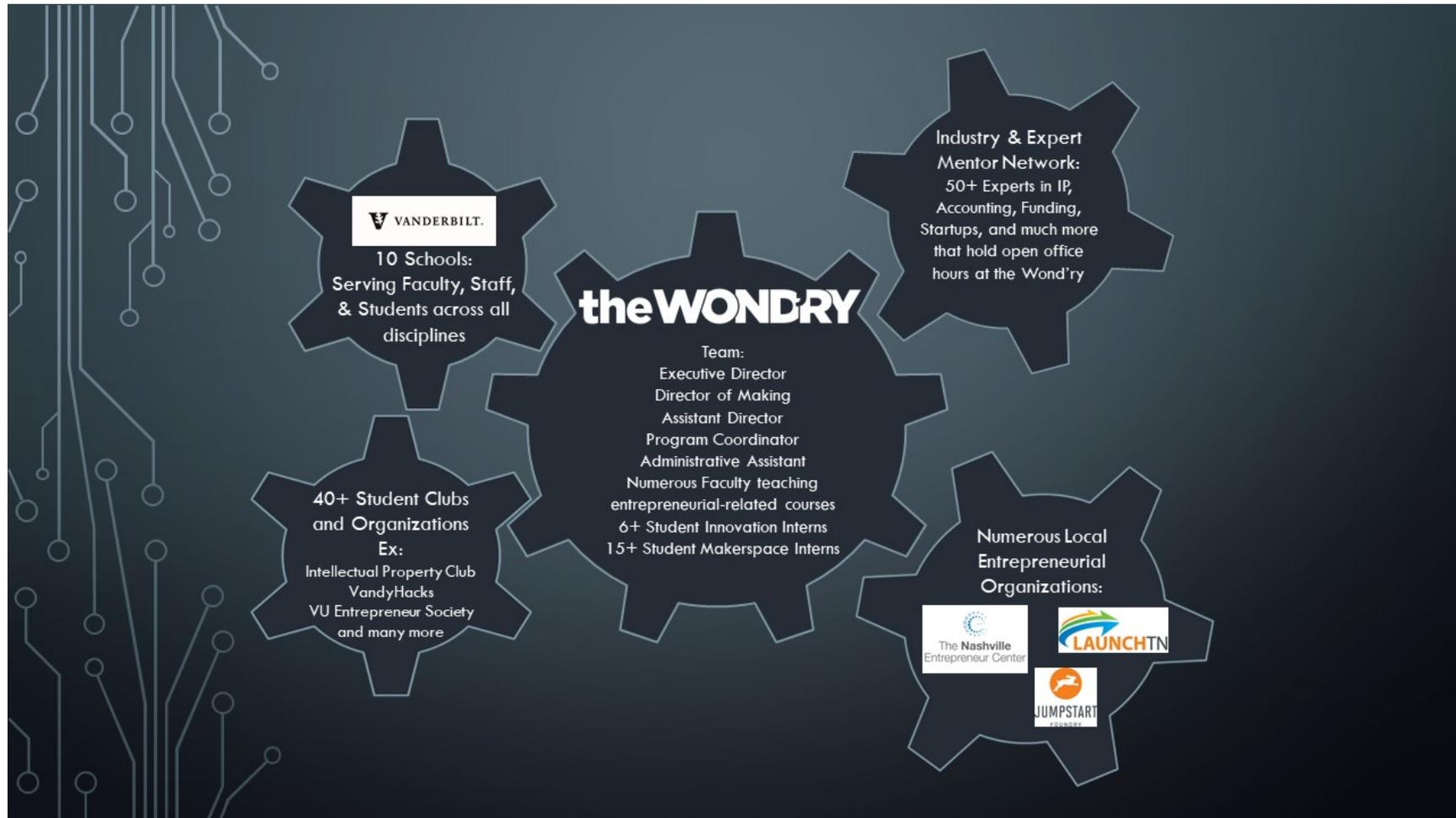
As an innovation center, the Wond'ry is unique in that it not only fosters entrepreneurship and commercialization but also teaches our visitors more creative, thoughtful, and unique approaches to solving problems across all disciplines. These solutions often have commercialization potential, but in certain cases they purely benefit society in a more altruistic capacity. In serving the entire innovation spectrum, the Wond'ry can be as inclusive as possible, attracting all types of people at all stages of their respective innovation and entrepreneurial journeys. This broad approach has aligned us well with Vanderbilt's commitment to "inclusive excellence" while also ensuring that we have had significantly more participation in our programs (as seen by our 40,000+ visitors) than our peers despite our relatively short tenure of existence. Most importantly, this has also allowed us to introduce and inspire entrepreneurship in certain diverse populations who may have never seen themselves as or given themselves the chance to be "entrepreneurs." In that respect, the Wond'ry is a very special endeavor.

To that end, our three most important entrepreneurial achievements to date include:

1. Through our PreLaunch and PostLaunch Pillar Program, launching 150+ new ventures in the last two years, 30 of which have gone on to raise significant funding in excess of \$3M and two have already been acquired by strategic competitors. Most importantly, these efforts have truly helped to further stimulate the interest in entrepreneurship on campus and enable the Wond'ry to be seen as this entrepreneurial epicenter and catalyst for fostering entrepreneurial endeavors and collaborations.
2. The Wond'ry has been awarded several major grants to further promote faculty, staff, and student entrepreneurial endeavors including a VentureWell Faculty Grant for \$30K, a \$600K grant from Accenture and \$150K grant from RGP Consulting for our Innovation Garage Program, and most recently a \$500K National Science Foundation Grant to launch an I-Corps Site program to promote STEM related startups. These education and further funding sources are important in providing both mentorship and non-dilutive capital to new ventures to help further solidify product/market fit and attain customer traction all in an effort to ensure long term viability and success.
3. Launching 100+ entrepreneurial related workshops and seminars each academic year has been a monumental achievement because of the almost herculean effort it has taken to pull off such a wide and deep breadth of endeavors. Yet this has also been incredible important because it allowed the Wond'ry to introduce innovation and entrepreneurship via a variety of different contexts and lenses and in turn attract and inspire a much broader and diverse array of participants to this field. This effort in turn has made the Wond'ry one of the most diverse Centers on campus in terms of demographics.

We greatly appreciate your consideration for this award as we feel it will further help spread awareness of the exciting entrepreneurial programs the Wond'ry has created and is supporting at Vanderbilt University.

4 A. Appendix: Provide a center organizational chart to include faculty, staff, other personnel, and strategic partners.



4 B. Appendix – the Wond’ry Top 30 Startups Launched & Respective Outcomes

PreLaunch & PostLaunch - the Wond’ry Top 30 Companies & Outcomes:			
Idea/Business Name	Description	Participant	Awards/Funding/Highlights
Hollon Research Group	AR/VR Treatment for Opioid Addiction	Graduate student	I-Corps National Program & Acquired by Strategic Competitor
Black Star Rentals	Bed/Futon Rental Company	Undergraduate	Acquired by Strategic Competitor
Skopos Labs	AI/Machine Learning Legislative Prediction Platform	Graduate student - Engineering	Venture Capital Backed
Zeno Power Systems	Nuclear Batteries	Undergraduate	I-Corp National Program, VC Backed & Y Combinator Finalist
PathFinder Therapeutics/Virtuoso Surgical	Endoscopic Surgery Robotic Tools	Faculty - Engineering	SBIR Phase 1 & 2
Go Science Go	Scientific Research Crowd Funding Platform	Staff - Medicine	SBIR Phase 1
Home-based Disease Tests	Infectious Disease POC Diagnostic	Staff - Engineering	SBIR Phase 1
Therapeutic Peptides	Drug Delivery Reagent	Faculty - Medicine	SBIR Phase 1
PathEx	Sepsis Diagnostic and Treatment Device	Staff - Engineering	SBIR Phase 1
Synchro Motion	Prosthetic Ankle	Graduate student - Engineering	SBIR Phase 1
Robotic ExoSuit	Robotic Devices to Mitigate Spinal Injury	Graduate student - Engineering	Federal Grant Funded
Halmos Technologies	Nanotechnology/Quantum Dots Construction Materials	Graduate student - Engineering	Federal Grant Funded
MyDay Pro	App for Type 1 Diabetes Monitoring/Behaviorial Analysis	Faculty - Medicine	Federal Grant Funded
NewsCart	Cloud-Based Curated News Content Platform	Graduate student - MBA	SXSW Winner. Raised Angel Backed
Sitelane	SEO and Web Development paltform	Undergraduate	Angel Backed - Profitable
Savvy Financial	529 College Savings Platform	Graduate student - MBA	Angel Backed
XP Culture	Software Platform for Mission Trips Optimization	Undergraduate	Angel Backed
Vana Learning	Education Software Platform focused on ADHD	Undergraduate	Angel Backed
FroehlerCopter	Stroke Treatment Platform	Faculty - Medicine	Angel Backed
Leaf Financial	Blockchain payment and transfer platform	Graduate student - Law & MBA	SXSW Winner - "Best Bootstrapped Company" Awardee
Prediction Health	Medical Transcription & Machine Learning Platform	Graduate student - Medicine	I-Corps National Program
Love in a Big World	Social Emotional Media Platform	Graduate student - Education	I-Corps National Program
Gridspan Energy	Mobile Energy Storage	Faculty - Engineering	I-Corps National Program
Sinunitis Device	Medical Diagnostic	Faculty - Medicine	Stanford BioDesign Fellowship & Microgrant
Cochlear Implant Technology	Software platform to optimize sound processing	Graduate student - Engineering	Microgrant
TechCoverage	AI Home Insurance Parametric Platform	Graduate student - MBA	Microgrant
Canvas	RFID Tag Clothing Platform	Graduate student - Education	Microgrant
SNERGie	Motion-oriented Battery Charging Device	Undergraduate	Microgrant
Luxeris - Diabetic Foot Ulcer Light	UV Diabetic Foot Ulcer Device	Undergraduate	Microgrant
Quick Response Diagnostics	Medical Diagnostic & Machine Learning Platform	Staff - Engineering	Microgrant

4 C. Appendix – the Wond'ry's Startup News/Funding Highlights

In the News

NSF I-Corps program gives boost to commercializing prosthetic ankle

 vanderbilt.edu/Bhuka



Vanderbilt's Wond'ry gets big grant

Sep 6, 2017, 2:42pm CDT Updated: Sep 6, 2017, 3:15pm CDT

Vanderbilt University's efforts to increase entrepreneurship among its students and faculty just got a half-million-dollar boost.

The Wond'ry, the name of the school's innovation center, recently teamed with the Vanderbilt Institute in Surgery and Engineering to win a five-year, \$500,000 National Science Foundation grant to become an Innovation Corps site, according to a news release.

The grant makes Vanderbilt one of about 70 I-Corps sites at universities across the nation and will fund programs that team professionals with students and faculty pursuing startup ventures, according to the release.

The professionals will guide the teams as they determine the commercial potential of their inventions and develop a market strategy.

Awarded Fan Favorite Device in Innovation Challenge at WearRAcon!

Posted by Karl Zelik on Friday, March 23, 2018 in [News](#).

Congrats to Matt, Erik & Dean, who pitched mechanized clothing (aka smart underwear) and won the Fan Favorite award in the Innovation Challenge at the Wearable Robotics Association Conference (WearRAcon) in Phoenix, AZ.



Why a Vanderbilt researcher is using virtual reality to fight opioids

Adam Tashiro, USA TODAY NETWORK - Tennessee Published 10:00 p.m. CT March 17, 2018 | Updated 4:08 p.m. CT March 18, 2018



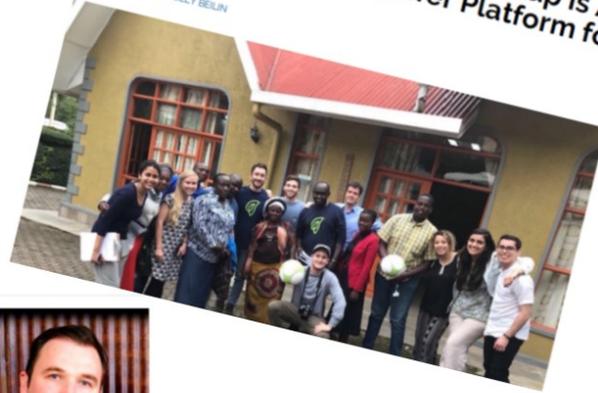
Video games were once Noah Robinson's only way to cope.

When he couldn't bear the challenges of growing up as an outsider, he fell into immersive worlds that eased his tensions and helped him feel less alone.

Now, as a graduate student at Vanderbilt University (<http://psuvtroan.com>), Robinson is applying the same premise to an unconventional, high-tech therapy that might help addicts get a firmer grip on recovery.

SXSW's Best Bootstrapped Startup Is A Blockchain Money Transfer Platform for Refugees

MARCH 14, 2018 BY HOLLY BEILIN



The 'shine' in gold particles has a new use – finding defects

 vanderbilt.edu/wondry

by Beth Ganser Jul. 10, 2018, 12:00 PM

That glint of gold has always captured our eyes, but now the precious metal has a new use – finding defects in 3D printing.

FROM CYCLIST TO ENTREPRENEUR

Wond'ry Wonder girl
7 January, 2018

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(/#facebook)

(/#twitter) (#email)

(/#facebook_messenger)

Text and pix by Chandani Jayatileke (/authors/text-and-pix-chandani-jayatileke-1)

Business (/business)



Funding Highlights



NewsCart, a cloud-based news aggregator platform that uses artificial intelligence to help companies discover and share news with their employees launched by James Murray (MBA '17), took first place at in the 2017 SXSW PitchTexas event in Austin, Texas. James participated in the Wond'ry's PostLaunch program in the months leading up to his pitch.

PitchTexas, hosted by University of Texas' McCombs School of Business, featured 16 business school startups competing for a \$5,000 prize, with finalists delivering their pitches to venture capital firms and entrepreneurs in SXSW's Startup Village.

James is now working on NewsCart full-time in Washington, D.C. and is also writing about his experiences co-founded this innovative software company. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/i-started-my-first-software-company-6-months-ago-heres-murray/>

Vanderbilt seniors Rob Trone and Joshua Stafford have been working with the Wond'ry team since summer of 2017 to build a new educational assessment tool for recording and tracking classroom behaviors for students with ADHD. They have developed a prototype and are currently piloting with a school system. Rob and Joshua participated in both the Wond'ry's PreLaunch and PostLaunch programs and were the recipients of a micro-grant. During the Celebration of Learning, this team received the "Do Good" award that went to the idea/team most likely to make a difference in the world.



Skopos Labs START-UPS @ the WOND'RY

What is Skopos Labs?
 Skopos Labs is a predictive analytics platform that helps businesses make data-driven decisions. It uses machine learning to analyze large volumes of data and provide insights into customer behavior, market trends, and operational efficiency. The platform is designed to be user-friendly and easy to integrate with existing business systems.

The Leadership Team
 John Nay, CEO
 [Other team members listed]

Support from the Wond'ry
 Skopos Labs is proud to be a member of the Wond'ry community. We have received support and mentorship from the Wond'ry team, which has helped us grow our business and reach our goals.

In the News
 Skopos Labs has been featured in several news articles and industry publications, highlighting our innovative approach to predictive analytics and our commitment to helping businesses succeed.

www.SkoposLabs.com

Skopos Labs, co-founded by Vanderbilt PhD student John Nay ('17) and now based in NY City, builds Bespoke AITM software centered on predictive text analytics. They have developed a patent pending machine learning technology that provides strategic forecasts around policy developments/impacts and regulatory document analysis. While still a Vanderbilt student, John secured a partnership with Wolters Kluwer to use

his platform as part of the highly regarded Federal Developments Knowledge Center. Skopos Labs has raised over \$1M in venture capital to date and John was recently named to the FastCase 50 as one of the top innovators in the legal space. <https://www.skoposlabs.com/news>