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CloudTop Garners Robert P. Goldberg Grand Prize at MIT \$100K Entrepreneurship Competition

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Article Text:

CloudTop, a startup that has created a new set of tools that enables developers of Web applications to integrate users' online content in a unified and simple way, was awarded the Robert P. Goldberg \$100,000 grand prize.

According to a release, CloudTop beat out seven other finalist teams during the MIT \$100K Entrepreneurship Competition finale held on the MIT campus.

MIT said this year's teams of finalists in the business plan contest - whose offerings included, among others, the cryopreserving of fish eggs and new patent-pending wireless throughput-increasing technology - emerged from a pool of 215 teams. A panel of judges made up of entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, scientists, and industry professionals chose CloudTop on the strength of its business plan and presentation.

By handling authentication and application programming interface integration, Cloudtop's offering, Filepicker.io, allows developers to integrate Dropbox, Gmail, and other services into their application with only one line of code, MIT added. Filepicker.io's vision is to become the underlying infrastructure layer for Web applications that allow users to view, manage, and work on files entirely within their browser.

CloudTop was founded by Brett van Zuiden, 22, an Electrical Engineering and Computer Science student at MIT who was named by the Phenom List as one of the top five undergraduate computer scientists at MIT.

Van Zuiden's fellow co-founders are Anand Dass, 31, an MIT Sloan MBA 2012 who ran a \$35 million sales organization at a global IT services company; Liyan David Chang, 22, an MIT senior studying Computer Science and Political Science who served as a key researcher in the MIT Media Lab's Sixth Sense Project; and Thomas Georgiou, 19, an MIT sophomore studying Computer Science whose team won this year's MIT 6.570 Mobile App Competition. Georgiou won first prize in the 2011 Facebook Hackathon held at MIT.

"Our motto is 'anywhere, anytime, any device,'" says Dass. "Our goal is to usher in the future of computing by allowing access to all of a user's content and applications. By winning the \$100K, we are even better positioned to create our vision."

The MIT \$100K Competition's runner-up team, LiquiGlide, also nabbed the Audience Choice Award sponsored by KPMG. LiquiGlide has created a super slippery coating that allows for dispensing of food items such as ketchup and mayonnaise. Developed in the Varanasi Research Group at MIT, this new coating is made from nontoxic materials and is applied to food packaging.

The MIT startup Janus Data, which provides users with the opportunity to monetize data, was presented the Thomson Reuters Data Prize, a \$10,000 award given to a team for the most innovative use of data as a core part of a company's business plan.

The winner of the **Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation** YouPitch Prize was the MIT startup Invisergy Corp., which offers a transparent, solar power generating window technology designed to offset up to 10 percent of a building's energy usage. This YouTube-based elevator pitch contest was open to students around the world who were invited to present a 60-second pitch of their business ideas and then promote these videos to solicit as many "likes" on YouTube and Facebook as possible. All teams with over 500 "likes" were judged by an elite panel of entrepreneurs.

The institute said the MIT \$100K Competition remains an economic barometer on what new ideas are being funded by venture capitalists. Since its debut in 1989, the MIT \$100K Entrepreneurship Competition has facilitated the birth of more than 160 companies, which have gone on to raise \$1.3 billion in venture capital and build \$16 billion in market cap. MIT noted that more than 30 MIT \$100K startups have been acquired by companies such as Oracle and Merck. Over 4,600 people are currently employed by MIT \$100K companies.

Alice Francis, MIT Sloan MBA 2013 and the co-managing director of the MIT \$100K Competition with fellow MIT Sloan MBA Adam Borelli, said at the finale that the business plan competition will now be referred to as the 'launch competition.'

"This year we incorporated activities to test competitors' ability to set goals, execute against goals and reach milestones, to understand the needs of their customers and adapt to feedback, and define a clear company vision," says Francis. "This decision was made after talking to previous years' semi-finalists and finalists who shared that they weren't solely focused on writing business plans but, rather, actually going out and launching their companies during the contest period. Making these changes to the competition enables the MIT \$100K to provide the best learning opportunities to MIT's hottest startup teams as they strive to launch."

More information:

www.mit100k.org

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