Leicester Tech Startup Community

www.leicesterstartups.com (coming soon)

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facebook.com/LeicesterStartups

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Backstory

- My company has been making websites and apps for other people for 10 years.

- Earnings are limited by market rates and we want to break out of this.

- We have the skills to deliver quality work (but not on our own)

- Great tech business ideas are 'out there' and we can help steer and develop them

- We can invest with our *time*

Our Plan

- Tap into other peoples' ideas
- Share our own ideas
- Avoid the 'lone inventor' mentality
- Collaborate with other companies and organisations to complete the picture
- Invest our time in return for a share in joint ventures and startups.
- We want to be part of a tech *community*.

What is a 'Startup'?

- "A company or temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model" (Wikipedia)
- "A human institution designed to deliver a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty" (Eric Reis)
- Running a small company like a science experiment
- NOT: A business services company

What is a Startup Community?

- a.k.a. 'Business Cluster'
- A critical mass of entrepreneurs, suppliers, academics, creative minds, investors, mentors, etc.
- A grassroots network that people turn to for help, inspiration and feedback.
- An ethos of community: helping each other out rather than a 'zero sum game'
- Open minded, receptive to wacky ideas, not stigmatising failure.

Brad Feld: Boulder Colorado

- Helped turn Boulder Colorado into one of the top places for startups globally.

- Boulder population only 100k, one university, low diversity.

- Helped create a global startup movement

Boulder Thesis

- Entrepreneurs *lead* a startup community while everyone else *feeds* the community
- Feeders include the government, universities, investors, mentors, service providers and large companies
- Continual activities and events are essential to engage all participants
- Top-down government-driven clusters are an oxymoron
- Building an *entrepreneurial culture* is critical

What's Good About Leicester?

- Two universities
- Diverse population
- Lots of techies
- Flourishing creative business community
- Good international connections
- Great raw materials - full of potential

What's Bad About Leicester

- Fragmented groups
- Silo mentality
- Loneliness - no one knows anyone
- Good people leave all the time
- Non-techie business leadership
- Lack of vehicles to break down barriers
- No tech community

Where to Start?

- We need continual activities that engage the entire entrepreneurial ecosystem (startups, entrepreneurs, academics, investors, lawyers, business groups, local government, etc)

- Networking, seminars, lectures, conferences, hackathons, competitions, mentoring, etc

- Need to give people the courage to share business ideas and seek collaborators.

- "Give before you get" ethos

How You Can Contribute

- Tell other startups, techies & entrepreneurs about this (do it now!)

- Run or assist with events

- Suggest fresh ideas for activities

- Offers of venues, speakers, equipment, sponsorship, etc.

- Form a startup!

How Will This Benefit Me?

- Opportunities to create or assist startups
- Open-minded community where you can freely share business ideas.
- Opportunity to learn
- Networking opportunities
- PR Opportunities
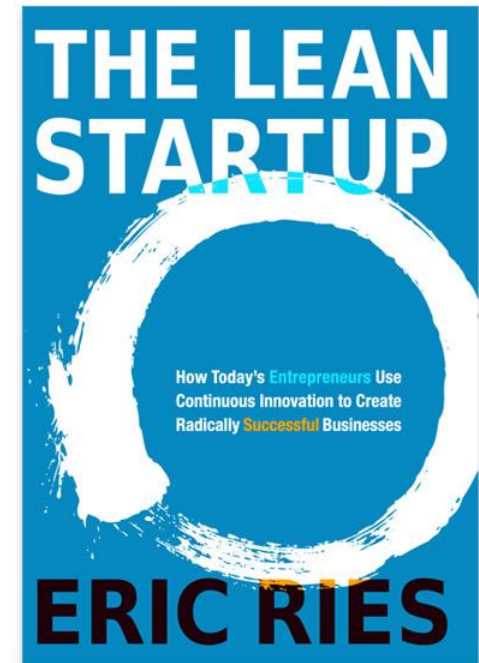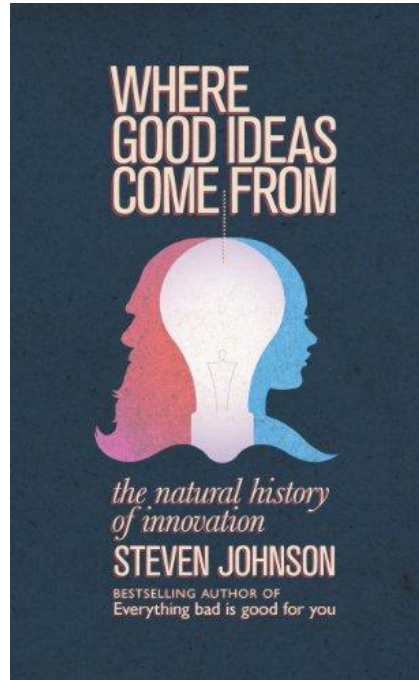- Enhance the reputation of Leicester
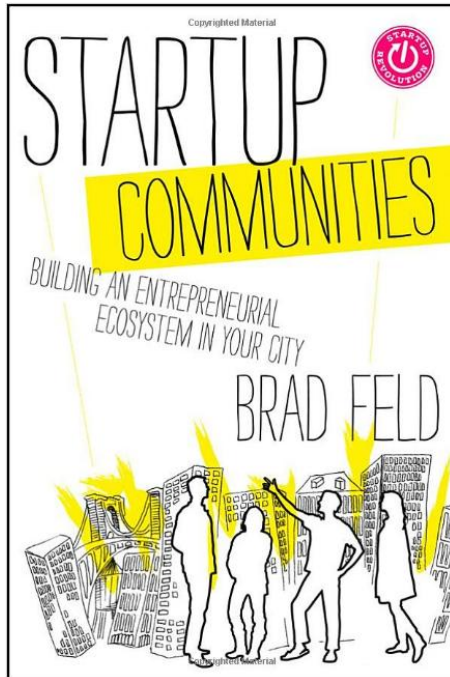- Intellectually stimulating – fun!

What This Is Not

- A private geeks-only club
- A BNI-style networking club
- An opportunity to just plug your business
- A public sector led scheme
- A formal organisation with a committee
- Ben's baby

Let's Start Some Startups

www.startupgenome.com

Further Reading

….plus more background at http://onlyinleicester.blogspot.co.uk/