

Innovation at USC - February 2009

A Word From "Z"

Greetings from India!

Three of us from the USC Stevens Institute are currently here lining up partnership opportunities for USC student innovators who applied for our [Global Impact](#) program, in partnership with the [Deshpande Foundation](#).

Many of the challenges we are witnessing here in India are chronic issues that have transcended the ups and downs of the world economy.

Back at home, which seems worlds away at the moment, we are clearly anxious about the challenges we face in the current economic crisis. My latest column asks not who is to blame, but rather, "How can we avoid a similar situation in the future?"

Although it's easy to say, "Let them fail," it's even more important we commit to investing in the innovation ecosystem.

In a nod to Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, I suggest we study evolution, and natural ecosystems for inspiration.

Hope you enjoy!

[Read the column>>](#)

USC EXCLUSIVE EVENT

TEDx USC

The University of Southern California and the prestigious [TED](#) conference have partnered to deliver an independently organized TED event at USC. TEDx USC will take place on Monday, March 23, 2009 from 1:00 pm - 7:30 pm at the USC in Bovard Auditorium.

TEDx USC will stay true to the spirit of the TED Conference - hosting the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers and challenging them to give the talk of their lives in 18 minutes or less. The half-day event will comprise a mix of pre-recorded talks from TED 2009 in Long Beach and live talks. Sprinkled throughout and in-between the lectures will be short films, musical performances, and other bits of thought-provoking entertainment.

This event is invitation-only and seating is limited. If you are interested in attending, you can please visit <http://stevens.usc.edu/TEDxUSC> to request an invitation.

If you have any questions, please contact [Elisa Wiefel Schreiber](#), at [the USC Stevens Institute for Innovation](#).

TEDx USC has been generously supported in part by our friends at [CNN](#).

Featured Events:

There are a ton of events happening at USC and in Southern California - and we want to make sure you have the scoop! For more events, check out the [Events Calendar](#).

* February 5, 2009 | [Innovation Eve](#) | Judy Estrin | 6:30 PM

On Thursday, February 5, 2009 at 6:30pm, come and join the USC Innovation Driven Entrepreneurial Association (USC IDEAs), the Viterbi Graduate Student Association, & the USC Health Care Business Club in welcoming Ms. Judith Estrin to USC for the first in a new speaker series, Innovation Eve. Judy Estrin has founded seven companies, is the former CTO of Cisco, and was named one of FORTUNE Magazine's "TOP 5 Most Influential Businesswomen." During this premier event, Ms. Estrin will speak to the USC students about the importance of collaboration, and share lessons from her recently published book, "Closing the Innovation Gap." A networking session with snacks and beverages will be hosted at the conclusion of her talk. R.S.V.P. to uscideas@gmail.com for priority seating.

* February 6, 2009 | [Startonomics LA](#) | 8 AM - 6 PM

Korn Hall, UCLA

Starting a business? Launching a product? Hosted by [DealMaker Media](#), [Startonomics](#) aims to provide strategies and tactics to set goals and measure startup success from veteran investors and entrepreneurs who've been there, done that, and won. Hear from: David O. Sacks (former COO, PayPal - acquired by eBay for \$1.5 Billion); Jim Benedetto (VP Technology, MySpace); Neil Patel (named "One of the Most Influential People on the Web" by Wall Street Journal). Friends of USC get a special VIP Price (\$120 off). RSVP [here](#).

* February 19, 2009 | [Innovation in Hollywood: Past, Present & Future](#) | 5 PM

Annenberg Auditorium.

Join us in welcoming author [Scott Kirsner](#) for an exploration of Hollywood's relationship with innovation -- from the days of Thomas Edison to the era of YouTube, the iPod, and the Xbox. This discussion will explore how new technologies and new ideas have shaped the movie industry, and where we're heading next. Kirsner, author of a new book, [Inventing the Movies](#), will open the evening by taking us on an illustrated spin through Hollywood's tech history. He will be joined by [Steve Schklair](#), CEO, 3ality Digital Systems, [Evan and Gregg Spiridellis](#), Co-founders, JibJab Media and [Cliff Plumer](#), CEO Digital Domain. Following the formal program, there will be time to network and meet the author. This event is produced in collaboration with the [USC Annenberg School for Communication](#), the [USC Stevens Institute for Innovation](#) and the [Entertainment Technology Center @ USC](#) and is part of Dean Wilson's initiative on Sustainable Innovation. To RSVP click [here](#).

* February 24, 2009 | [Tech Coast Angels Fast Pitch Competition](#) | 5 PM

UCLA Anderson School of Management, Korn Hall

Interested in entrepreneurship, early-stage investing, or meeting early stage investors? The 4th annual Tech Coast Angels Fast Pitch Competition in Los Angeles is an event for entrepreneurs looking to jump-start their entrepreneurial dreams and for investors seeking to hear about the latest in innovation in Southern California. Meet leading local Venture Capitalists who are doing deals, hear from exciting new start up companies, and learn the art of the pitch. 10 companies compete for three awards. Event will include networking reception. To register or apply to pitch, visit: www.pitchtheangels.com

* February 27, 2009 | [Greif Seminar Series / Scott Shane](#) | 10:30 AM - 12 PM

JKP300 - Popovich Hall - Marshall School of Business

As part of the Greif Seminar Series, the Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies invites leading entrepreneurship researchers from around the world to visit the Marshall School to present their recent research. On February 27th (Friday), the Greif Center and Marshall will be hosting Professor Scott Shane (Case Western Reserve University, Ohio). Scott is the co-author on the paper that won the 2008 Greif Research Impact award for most cited management

article and is a leading management scholar who has done exemplary work on university-based innovation and technology commercialization.

* March 5, 2009 | [Venture Capital - University Interface: Best Practices to Make Maximum Impact](#) | 4 PM - 6 PM

Ezralow Lobby NOR 1315

Dr. Richard Hull, Senior Director of Innovation Advancement and Business Development for the USC Stevens Institute, will be presenting findings from a comprehensive national survey of venture capitalists (VC) that explored the issues affecting university-VC relations. The HSC faculty workshop will take place on March 5, 2009 from 4-6 PM at the Ezralow Lobby NOR 1315. Light refreshments will be served. Please rsvp to [Bonnie Phan](#).

* March 17, 2009 | [2009 Intellectual Property Institute](#)

Beverly Hills Hotel

The USC Gould School of Law [2009 Intellectual Property Institute](#) is the region's most important conference of the year for IP professionals. At this event, the IP industry's top legal experts and business people spotlight key legal and business issues in patent, copyright, trademark, trade secrets, international IP, and related fields. Register [here](#).

Research

* White Paper | [Venture Capital - University Interface: Best Practices to Make Maximum Impact](#)

The USC Stevens Institute for Innovation released a white paper detailing the findings of a comprehensive national survey exploring the issues affecting university-venture capital (VC) relations in an effort to better understand - and ultimately improve - the spinout process for all of the stakeholders involved. The suggestions in the white paper come from insights shared by venture capitalists and cover five key areas: understanding investor motivations, supporting entrepreneurs, streamlining bureaucracy, improving access and visibility, and fostering a culture of innovation on campus. To read the entire paper, click [here](#).

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Newsbites

More 'Innovation at USC' news is available on the USC Stevens Institute [website](#).

* [USC Scientist Receives Presidential Honor](#)

President George W. Bush presents Early Career Award to Keck School professor Li Zhang at the White House.

* [Humayun Holds Chair in Biomed Sciences](#)

Mark Humayun, professor of ophthalmology, cell and neurobiology, and biomedical engineering at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the Doheny Eye Institute and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, was named the inaugural holder of the Cornelius J. Pings Chair in Biomedical Sciences in a Town & Gown ceremony on Jan. 14.

* [Watt Now?](#)

Launched earlier this year, the USC Energy Institute is a think tank aimed at building a

community of energy and environmental researchers and - perhaps most importantly - helping form good policy.

* **Embryonic Stem Cells From Rats Derived**

A major USC advance in biomedical science will contribute to basic and applied research and drug development.

Contests and Competitions

Looking for more opportunities? Check out other contests and competitions [here](#).

* **2009 New Venture Competition**

In an effort to emphasize business efforts over plans, the USC Marshall School of Business has renamed the previous Business Plan Competition, "the **New Venture Competition**." It's easier than ever to have a chance to compete. Seeking businesses of all types that are near ready-to-launch. The requirements have been simplified and the process streamlined, with a new submission platform now available.

* **Global Venture Challenge 2009** | March 25-28, 2009 | \$25,000 cash prize

Presented by [Oak Ridge National Laboratory](#) (ORNL) and the [University of Tennessee](#) (UT). An educational event designed to foster entrepreneurial spirit, the Global Venture Challenge aims to engage students, industry, government, and the investment community in the discovery, and development of innovative ideas. The focus of this year's event is on energy, one of the world's most critical issues. Graduate school teams from across the globe are being recruited to develop unique and innovative product ideas that can solve existing market needs and have the potential to become sustainable businesses.

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