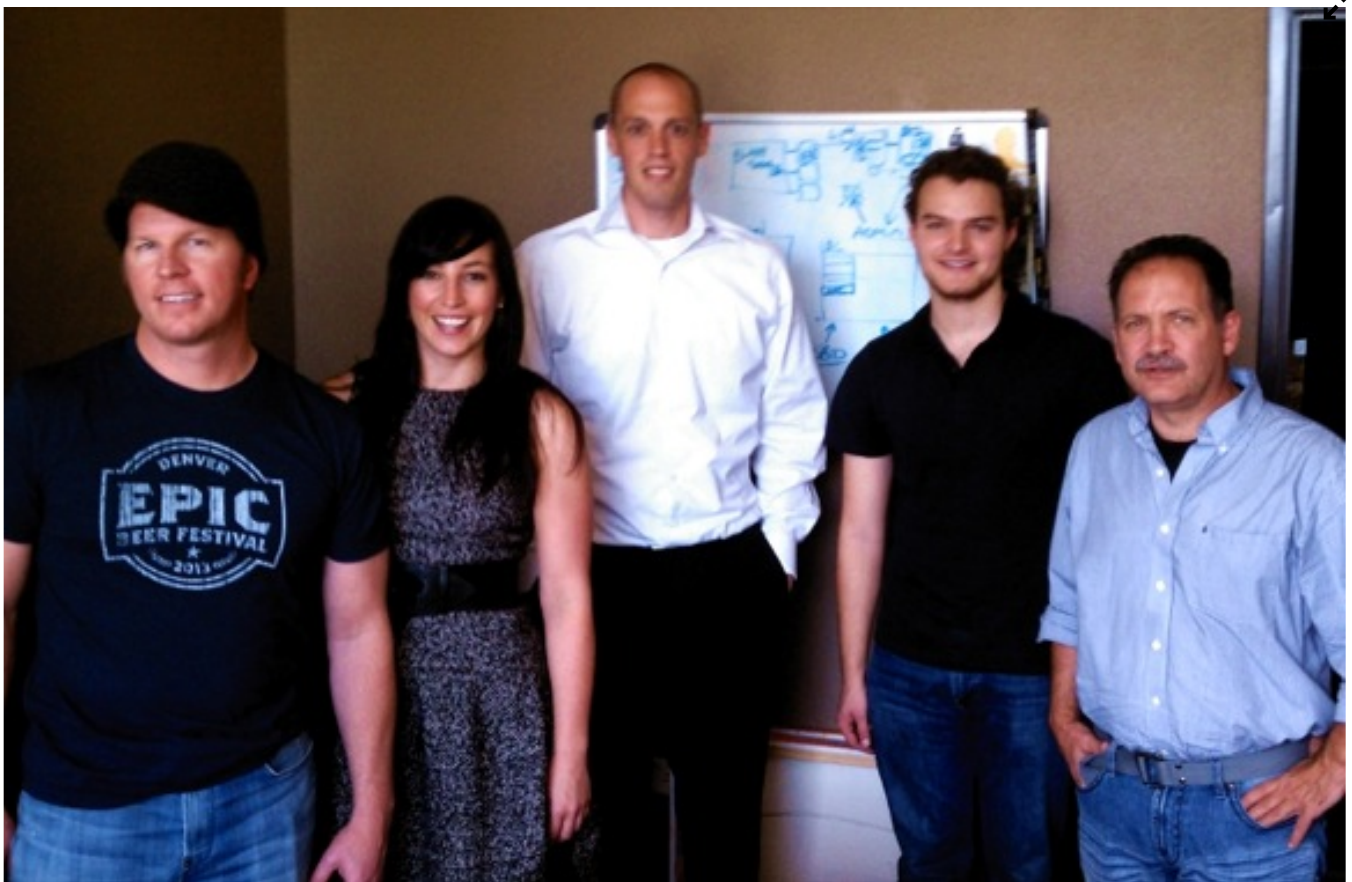


TxtChk takes top honors at Startup Weekend Denver

ERIC PETERSON | TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2013



TxtChk

The TxtChk team.

Denver-based TxtChk won top prize at Startup Weekend Denver, a 54-hour hackathon that was held at Thrive in Cherry Creek Sept. 13-15.

The company -- the name of which may change as the business evolves -- aims to

use technology to combat the dangers of distracted driving for fleet owners, says Co-Founder Joe Fromandi.

"Initially we were thinking about texting and driving," says Fromandi. "It's actually broader than that -- it's distracted driving related to cell phone usage."

"What we've come up with is a front-end app and a back-end solution that really disincentivizes distracted driving," he adds. More details will be forthcoming as the five-person team fleshes out the business model and the technology.

Fromandi points to the winner of the 2012 event, Rachio, to explain TxtChk's current state. "We're where Rachio was a year ago," he explains.

Startup Weekend Denver "was an absolutely excellent experience," adds Fromandi. "Starting a business is a complicated effort. Startup Weekend Denver is a semi-structured event that helps guide you through the process. We're amazed at what we accomplished in 54 hours."

TxtChk won three months of office space at Galvanize and \$2,500 of legal work from Meyer Law, among other perks. The team consists of Fromandi and J.R. Harrell, Grant Wilkinson, Natalie Taylor and Matt Goswick.

Nine teams and 55 people participated in this year's Startup Weekend Denver, which was the fifth local edition of the event. Supported by the Kauffman Foundation, more than 1,000 Startup Weekend events have been held in nearly 500 cities worldwide to date.

Organizer Jon Rossi says there was about 25 percent return rate from Denver's 2012 Startup Weekend, "which is ideal because we're getting new blood." Teams form at the event on an "ad hoc basis," he adds.

"The great thing about it is you never know what pitches you're going to hear," says Rossi. "This year, we had everything from a food-truck app to a nonprofit idea -- the first one I've heard in 19 events."

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