

Innovator



Susan Combs Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

Today's Ideas for Tomorrow's Texas **Winter 2010**

"Innovation is the central issue in economic prosperity."

Michael Porter



Filling the apps gap. Do you have the latest?



Technology allows devices to find each other



Researcher finds new breakthroughs in DNA testing



Predicting storm-related power outages

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Austin 'truly' good fit for games company

Austin's burgeoning computer games industry recently added another company to its lineup: True Games Interactive, a California firm that is moving its headquarters to the Texas capital.



A New Look for Texas Innovator Online!

Everyone has a reason to read *Texas Innovator*. That's why beginning with this issue, *Texas Innovator* online is turning into something new. Something better. We give you not only the latest in Texas technology news and innovation, but also smarter, more strategic government programs and more efficient business processes. We've integrated social media bookmarks and sharing, RSS and more. Visit us now at www.texasinnovator.org

True Games specializes in free "massively multi-player" online games, an increasingly popular genre in which players interact in "shared worlds" for role-playing, action and strategy-based adventures. Some of these games have literally millions of active players.

"Earlier this year we started a new development studio in Austin, and also one in Beijing, China," says Jeff Lujan, founder and CEO of True Games. "As we built those teams and day-to-day work between the offices began, we started to think about the possibility of combining the two U.S. offices into one.

"There wasn't any one reason, but a combination of several factors that helped us make the decision to move our headquarters to Austin," says Lujan.

According to Lujan, his company was

initially attracted to Austin by its critical mass of skilled game developers, as well as the city itself.

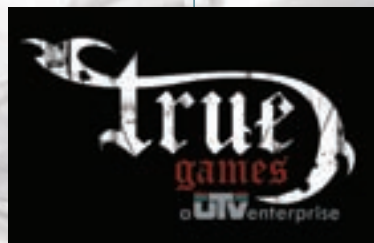
"Like any company, we took a lot of factors into account when we made the decision," Lujan says. "Austin has many attractive qualities, including a good quality of life and standard of living, low taxes and a talented pool of artists, programmers, producers, designers, testers and more.

"It's important for us to have our full operations team working closely with our development team. Now that they're under one roof, communication will be easier and that will give us the best chance for success," he says.

True Games' Austin studio employed 10 before the news of the headquarters move. "Following the holiday break we will officially be headquartered in Austin, and over the course of 2010 we will be looking to hire somewhere

between 35 and 50 people," Lujan says.

For more information, contact True Games Interactive through its Web site at www.truegames.com



A Message from Comptroller Susan Combs

Innovation in Texas never slows down. One goal of *Texas Innovator* is to bring you profiles of people who are shaking up technology and science in Texas.

We strive to inform Texans about new startups and today's ideas that tomorrow will make our lives and our businesses better.

To better deliver this to you, we've launched a new, sleeker *Texas Innovator*. We've integrated social media tools to help you have complete access to read and share news about technology, science and

innovation in our great state and beyond. After all, business moves at the speed of innovation. This helps us do the same. Visit us now at

www.texasinnovator.org.



ENERGY/UTILITIES

Predicting hurricane- related power outages

Scientists at Texas A&M University may be on their way to helping officials predict power outages resulting from hurricanes.

Using data from Hurricane Katrina and four other destructive storms, researchers from Texas A&M and Johns Hopkins Universities have found a method to accurately predict power outages in advance of a hurricane. Their approach provides estimates of how many outages will occur across a region as a hurricane approaches.

To see how Texas A&M is helping to predict hurricane-related power outages, visit <http://tamunews.tamu.edu>.



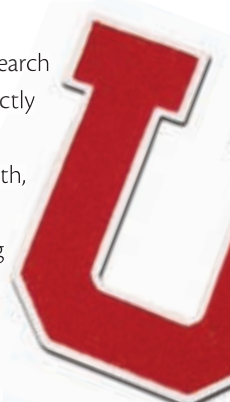
EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Top universities revamp research communications

More than 30 major universities have collaborated to create a new resource to communicate research initiatives and discoveries directly to the public. **Futurity.org** aggregates and publishes health, science, environmental and other news from participating universities, including Rice, Texas A&M and the University of Texas at Austin.

The concept is led by Duke, Stanford and the University of Rochester. The project strives to provide an outlet for research news, which the consortium believes is decreasingly covered by traditional media.

Read the latest academic research and news in science, technology and culture from all over the country at www.futurity.org.



EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Stocktweeting.com fuses Twitter, Wall Street

An Austin-based startup is hoping to better connect investors through Twitter.

Stocktweeting.com, a project of Austin-based investor relations firm HagensMedia LLC, lets Twitter users engage each other and discuss publicly traded companies by filtering content based on stock symbols and company mentions.

For more information, check out www.stocktweeting.com.



EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Filling the apps gaps

There's an app for that, an app for this, and an app for anything in between. And where there are apps gaps, companies like Austin-based AVAI Mobile Solutions are working to bring new possibilities.

"Apps" is shorthand for applications, small programs that can be loaded onto mobile devices.

The Houston Zoo recently turned to AVAI to develop an app that would "make the zoo experience more interactive for visitors," says David Brady, the zoo's vice president of marketing. "The whole idea is to open up a conversation with our guests."

During the Houston Zoo's first two weeks on the Apple App Store in October, more than 3,000 users downloaded the free app. Today, zoo-goers can easily stay connected with others in their party using the "Friend Finder" features, which utilizes AVAI's mobile platform and real-time GPS coordinates. The app shows users the nearest exhibits, zookeeper presentations, snack options and restrooms. So there's no more need to continually fumble around with crumpled paper maps, which appeals to environmentally conscious visitors, suggests Brady. The many videos accessible through the app offer users ways to learn more about their favorite animals.



"For instance, they can watch clips and learn about giraffes, get acquainted with our giraffes or keep tabs on the zoo's newest giraffe born earlier this year and see how it is being raised here at the zoo," says Brady.

To see how one Texas musician is using an app to reach fans, and how a popular Texas amusement park is enhancing the user experience through mobile applications, read this story in its entirety at www.texasinnovator.org.

UT researcher maps DNA replication enzyme

A University of Texas researcher has found the atomic structure of an enzyme that is responsible for DNA replication in human mitochondria, a key step in potentially limiting the toxic effects of medications and some degenerative diseases.

Dr. Whitney Yin, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry, says her discovery of polymerase gamma's structure will allow pharmaceutical companies to design drugs that can differentiate between the enzyme and diseases. That allows normal cell growth to continue while viral replication can be stopped.

One important application, Yin says, would be in designing anti-HIV medications that would not cause side effects ranging from nausea to bone marrow loss to organ failure.

Yin's discovery, funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Welch Foundation, is also being used to show how mutations in polymerase gamma lead to epilepsy, encephalopathy and Alpers Syndrome, a fatal childhood disease that causes brain and liver failure.

To see how the mapping of an enzyme's DNA can help in the worldwide fight against the AIDS virus, go to www.utexas.edu/news/2009/10/15/enzyme_hiv_drugs.



The In Crowd

Innovations and innovators come in all forms. In each issue of *Texas Innovator*, The In Crowd will help bring you a little closer to some of Texas' brightest innovators, their perspective on why Texas is ideal for new approaches and even tips on fueling the creative mind inside us all.



Kevin Koym
Tech Ranch Austin –
Founding Partner

Tech Ranch Austin offers space for startup companies with great ideas, a small staff and need for low overhead, to accelerate their venture. Founding Partner Kevin Koym says Tech Ranch extols a new model for how to make an entrepreneur successful "as opposed to the traditional, old-style venture capital model."

When he and co-founder Kevin Lamis formed the Tech Ranch Austin partnership in 2008, and a separate venture in Cedar Park this year, their plan was to offer direct and indirect support for startup businesses in a collegial environment.

"Our classes are not for learning about business, they are about launching ventures," Koym says.

Tech Ranch Austin's Venture Forth program costs \$495 and helps entrepreneurs learn by doing as they take their business from concept to reality during an eight-week program.

So far Tech Ranch Austin has had a hand in developing 12 companies, Koym says. Those are companies using the Austin facilities to operate, develop and collaborate.

"We are intimately involved in four companies," he says. Those firms, Vitasio, Zehliche, IPX and Piryx, are in various stages of growth.

Koym says Tech Ranch Austin's Barn Builders program pairs entrepreneurs with laid-off workers who volunteer their skills for four to six hours each week. Some have ended up creating their own jobs, he says.

For a \$250 monthly fee, companies can join the Pioneers Program working out of Tech Ranch Austin's communal space, sharing infrastructure, the collaborative working environment and conference and classroom facilities.

Find out about joining Tech Ranch Austin's programs at www.techranchaustin.com.

For more details on Tech Ranch Austin, and to read how the organization helped take one couple's concept from idea to funding, read the full version of this story online at www.texasinnovator.org.

Wi-Fi goes direct

The Austin-based Wi-Fi Alliance, a wide-ranging union of technology firms, has created a program that allows Wi-Fi devices to communicate directly, eliminating the need for routers and the traditional home/office/hotspot network.

Wi-Fi Direct will streamline communication between Wi-Fi CERTIFIED wireless devices, such as mobile phones, cameras, printers, keyboards, headphones and laptops. Wi-Fi CERTIFIED

The specification includes WPA2 security and management features for enterprise applications. The technology allows supported devices to find each other and list what services they can offer. The system range is up to 200 meters, says Kelly Davis-Felner, marketing director.

Davis-Felner says the application can be used for a variety of purposes, including dockless synchronization of music devices; HD video streaming; video game sharing; and industrial monitoring applications.

"That tangle of wires behind your TV will go away sometime soon," says Davis-Felner.

The Wi-Fi Alliance will start certifying Wi-Fi Direct devices in 2010. Only its members will be allowed to certify their products to the specification.

To see how the Wi-Fi Alliance may help you master your wireless gadgets, visit www.wi-fi.org.

devices are those produced by the Wi-Fi Alliance, including Apple, Microsoft, Intel, Sony, Texas Instruments, Cisco, Dell and many other tech firms.

The technology allows devices that don't require an Internet connection to communicate directly. It's expected to compete with Bluetooth, although proponents say it will have faster speeds and a greater range.



SUSAN COMBS, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

Visit Window on State Government on the World Wide Web at: www.texasinnovator.org

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A WORLD OF INNOVATION

Sweden

TeliaSonera, a Swedish mobile technology firm, has announced completion of two 4G networks in Oslo and Stockholm, and expects to roll out access to customers in early 2010. 4G networks can downlink data nearly 10 times faster than current 3G technology.

India

Students at India's J.T. Engineering College have devised a robotic sensor that detects vibrations and changes in soil and water temperature in an effort to predict earthquakes up to three hours before they occur.

The ground-based sensors transmit an alert via microwave back to its robotic hub. It is believed that sensors across the country could use the Internet to send alert signals.

For more information about the J.T. Engineering College, visit its Web site at www.jtmcoef.ac.in.

Germany

Liquid glass could one day coat products and surfaces around the world, protecting from dirt, heat, UV radiation, bacteria and more. German-based Nanopool's product — which is almost entirely silicon dioxide, or glass — is sprayed on to surfaces, is environmentally friendly and can be cleaned with only water.

In testing, sterile surfaces treated with the product and cleaned with hot water were found to be as clean as after a bleach cleaning.

For more information, contact Neil McClelland, neil.mcclelland@nanopool.co.uk, or visit www.nanopool.eu/couk.

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