2ND EDITION, MAY 2024

SERENDIPITY-CO.COM

SERENDIPITY COLLECTIVE™

Meet the
FINALISTS

A vision for
LOCALISED INNOVATION AND GLOBAL IMPACT

THE ROLE OF PLAY
in fostering innovation

WHAT IS 2024
looking like
for the Collective

The process of
THE INFINITY LOOP

Notes from
THE EDITOR

THE ALCHEMY
of innovation

Seeking 'Extreme'
BLUE-SKY IDEAS

SERENDIPITY COLLECTIVE™

SERENDIPITY COLLECTIVE™

MAIN ORGANIZERS

Ideateplus

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

DIGIBIO

SPONSORS

ONR Global

The U.S. Office of Naval Research Global (ONR Global) provides worldwide science & technology (S&T)-based solutions for current and future naval challenges. Leveraging the expertise of more than 50 scientists, technologists and engineers, ONR Global maintains a physical presence on five continents. The command reaches out to the broad global technical community and the operational fleet/force commands to foster cooperation in areas of mutual interest and to bring the full range of possibilities to the Navy and Marine Corps. Shortly after ONR was founded in 1946, the command assumed the responsibility of the wartime-era's Office of Scientific Research and Development liaison office in London. It aimed to identify promising research opportunities in Europe and the Middle East. By 1977, the ONR's European and Tokyo offices had combined to form the international field office with a single, Department of the Navy-wide, international S&T strategy for fostering international collaboration. Over the decades, ONR Global has reached out to increase and expand its cooperative activities with offices in Singapore, Tokyo, Santiago, Prague, and most recently, Sao Paulo in 2014.

ANDHRA PRADESH MEDTECH ZONE LTD

Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Limited (AMTZ) is India's First Integrated Medical Device Manufacturing Ecosystem, which presents an exciting partnership with the Serendipity Collective. Ideas that pass through the collective may be incubated into the AMTZ program for rapid acceleration through the TRL phases.

The goal of this progressive initiative would be to make Andhra Pradesh an internationally recognized manufacturing hub for medical devices, help in national agenda of import substitution, make Andhra Pradesh a leader in medical technology exports, generate employment, and contribute to volume generated cost reduction of medical devices for patients.

This project has received funding from the European Union's HORIZON Teaming for Excellence programme under grant agreement 101060066

AGENDA

DAY 1 MORNING

We will kick-off the event with a warm welcome from our key sponsors. They will also share their vision for the Serendipity Collective and lay down some basic ground rules for the two-day event.

Next, each team will have the opportunity to discuss their idea in what we call “Lightning Talks”. The lightning talk aims to explain how your idea works as clearly and concisely as possible and you will receive feedback and insights from your cohort.

All teams will then participate in a “Concept Poster” creation session, where your high-level business model is articulated in a one-pager, highlighting the known and unknown components of your solution.

We will then break off for lunch and visit the various “Idea Booths”, as a source of inspiration and collaboration.

DAY 1 AFTERNOON

Following lunch, we have the privilege of presenting our first keynote speaker and an opportunity to pitch our concepts to the cohort.

The next workshop session is about feedback on the concepts. The artists in your team will be responsible for leading this activity.

We will end the day with a feedback and closing session, followed by a “Networking Apero”.

DAY 2 MORNING

Our second day commences with a bang, with a keynote speech, who will inspire each of us with his vision of the future.

The rest of the morning and early afternoon is pre-pitch practice and validating our solutions with our peers and potential target audience.

DAY 2 AFTERNOON

By mid-afternoon each team will be prepared to pitch their concepts to a select funding panel for the 50,000 USD prize and support in taking our crazy inventions to the next step.

We will end the Serendipity Conference with reflections and closing from our main sponsors.

WANTED: VISIONARY IDEAS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

UNLEASH YOUR GENIUS AND CHALLENGE THE LIMITS OF CONVENTIONAL THINKING!

The stage is set for the unveiling of the Serendipity Collective 2024 Global Challenge, proudly presented by IdeatePlus and sponsored by ONR Global.

Serendipity Collective 2024 Global Challenge:
A Melting Pot of Futuristic Visions

At its core, the Serendipity Collective is more than a challenge; it's a visionary confluence. Here, researchers from a myriad of disciplines converge to share their dreams for the future of science, society, and humanity.

This year's edition sharpens focus on specific themes, yet retains its foundational ethos: a cradle for ideas that reimagine what lies ahead. Reflecting on last year's success, which saw over 70 proposals and funding of $50,000 each for three teams, the challenge stands as a testament to innovation addressing regional and global concerns.

JOIN OUR TRIBE!

We are looking for individuals brave enough to look over the edge and into the unknown. An unknown where the constraints of the natural world (as we currently understand it!) might no longer hold true to form. An unknown where those limitations do not prevent us from developing truly disruptive solutions.

To get there, we want scientists and engineers to partner with artists and writers, emboldened by individuals from the humanities and social sciences, to challenge our limits of understanding… to challenge humanity to create a better world.

Do you have a visionary, transformative idea to share with the world? Join our collective now!

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them"

- Albert Einstein

Welcome to the second edition of Serendipity Collective Magazine! We're a publication fuelled by the belief that innovation thrives at the intersection of seemingly disparate disciplines.

That's the very heart of the Serendipity Collective itself - a vibrant community where artists, scientists, engineers, and dreamers come together to forge groundbreaking ideas with the potential to change the world.

A Vision for Localized Innovation and Global Impact (Page 11 & 13)

This section dives into the core philosophy of the Serendipity Collective:

Local Powerhouse, Global Impact:
• The Collective believes in the power of local communities to address global challenges through bottom-up innovation.

• Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: It fosters a vibrant ecosystem where individuals from diverse backgrounds can work together to create groundbreaking solutions.

• Success Stories: The Collective highlights its achievements, including attracting over 1,300 innovators and 73 visionary ideas in its inaugural year.

• Spreading the Word: The Collective plans to expand its reach through local chapters, podcasts, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

Meet the Ideas and Selection Panel (Page 16 & onward)

The remaining pages are dedicated to showcasing the finalists of the 2024 Global Challenge:

• Finalist Ideas: Each finalist idea is presented with a short description highlighting its potential impact. Ideas span various fields like healthcare, sustainability, and food production.

• Selection Panel Expertise: The magazine introduces the esteemed judges who will evaluate the pitches, providing their diverse backgrounds and areas of specialization.

Noteworthy Additional Content:

Pages 12 & 13 offer insights into the success of the Collective's first event in Berlin, emphasizing the spirit of collaboration and the transformative power of the initiative.

Pages 14 & 15 detail the Collective's "Simple 4-Step Rapid Innovation Process" for fostering creative problem-solving.

Page 20 introduces Serendipity Collective Ventures, a new investment initiative focused on impactful businesses creating a positive global change.

So, what is the world you envision? What problems yearn for solutions, what possibilities wait to be unleashed? Don't wait to unleash your genius. Join the Serendipity Collective, share your vision, and become an architect of a brighter tomorrow.

A VISION FOR LOCALIZED INNOVATION AND GLOBAL IMPACT

IN A WORLD WHERE CONVENTION OFTEN STIFLES INNOVATION, IDEATEPLUS, SPRIN-D (THE GERMAN AGENCY FOR DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION) AND THE U.S. OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH GLOBAL (ONRG) JOINED FORCES TO CHALLENGE THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE.

The Serendipity Collective™ is a platform that empowers dreamers, scientists, visionaries, engineers, artists, and people from the humanities to bring their most audacious, blue-sky ideas to life. It emerges as a dynamic and innovative organization dedicated to fostering groundbreaking ideas and solutions addressing the world's most pressing challenges.

At its core, the Collective embodies a philosophy of localized innovation, believing in the power of community-driven efforts to spark significant global changes.

This philosophy is rooted in the understanding that local communities are best positioned to identify and address their unique challenges. The Collective's approach emphasizes that innovation is not a luxury but a necessity in today's rapidly evolving landscape. Therefore, it encourages a bottom-up approach, where ideas are nurtured and developed at the local level before being elevated to a global platform.

A CATALYST FOR RADICAL INNOVATION

Built on a foundation of collaboration and cross-disciplinary innovation, the platform brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering a vibrant ecosystem where ideas can intersect and spark groundbreaking breakthroughs. By bridging the gap between science, art, engineering, and the humanities, it is creating a new paradigm for innovation, where the most audacious ideas can flourish. In its inaugural year, the platform attracted over 1,300 unique visitors from 60+ countries, 225 innovators, and 73 visionary ideas.

IT'S A MOVEMENT THAT THRIVES ON THE POWER OF LOCAL INSIGHTS AND GLOBAL IMPACT, A PHILOSOPHY DEEPLY EMBEDDED IN ITS DNA.

At the heart of the Collective is a belief in the transformative power of localized innovation. This notion is not just a theory but a lived experience, as seen in the Collective's approach to nurturing ideas within community chapters. These chapters, spread across diverse locations, are the cradles of creativity where members from all walks of life come together to share, grow, and turn their visions into tangible impacts. Having already 6 local chapters across two continents, The Collective's structure, decentralized yet interconnected, ensures that

innovation is not confined to silos but flourishes in a rich environment of collaborative efforts.

The local chapters of the Serendipity Collective™ are designed to empower innovators at the grassroots level. They provide a nurturing ground for ideas, enriching the quality of proposals for global funding each year. The chapters uphold the Serendipity philosophy, serving as beacons within their communities and acting as catalysts for change. Each chapter is led by a dedicated Chapter Leader, who plays a pivotal role in fostering a collaborative environment where members from diverse backgrounds can connect, share ideas, and work towards common goals. These chapters are not just groups of individuals but integral parts of the Collective. Every member, regardless of their background or expertise, contributes to the Collective's success. The chapters thus serve as incubators for emerging talent, providing mentorship, training, and resources necessary for nurturing innovative ideas.

This philosophy was vividly showcased in the Collective's first on-site event held in Berlin in May 2023. Here, the spirit of the Serendipity Collective™ came to life as a gathering of radical innovators from around the globe. Eight multidisciplinary teams, having been shortlisted for their revolutionary ideas, competed in a pitching event that was more than just a competition; it was a celebration of human ingenuity and collaborative spirit.

These ideas were put to the test at a 2-day innovation collaboration and pitching event in Berlin, where an expert panel of judges selected 8 ideas to receive $50,000 in funding from ONRG and IdeatePlus. Two of these ideas have already formed startups and progressed from TRL 0-2 in just six months!

To attract innovators, the team worked with the company Ideateplus. Walper said Kevin D'Silva, IdeatePlus CEO, and his team were instrumental in helping develop and manage the event, setting up a web-based platform to crowdsource and push out a social media campaign.

DR. SCOTT WALPER, SCIENCE DIRECTOR FOR SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY, ONR GLOBAL

The Berlin event encapsulated the essence of the Serendipity Collective's philosophy. It wasn't just about the funding or the competition; it was about creating an environment where ideas could collide and evolve, where innovators could learn from each other and from experts, and where the process of innovation was as valued as the outcome. The event demonstrated the Collective's commitment to not just dreaming about a better future but actively building it through collaborative, community-driven efforts.

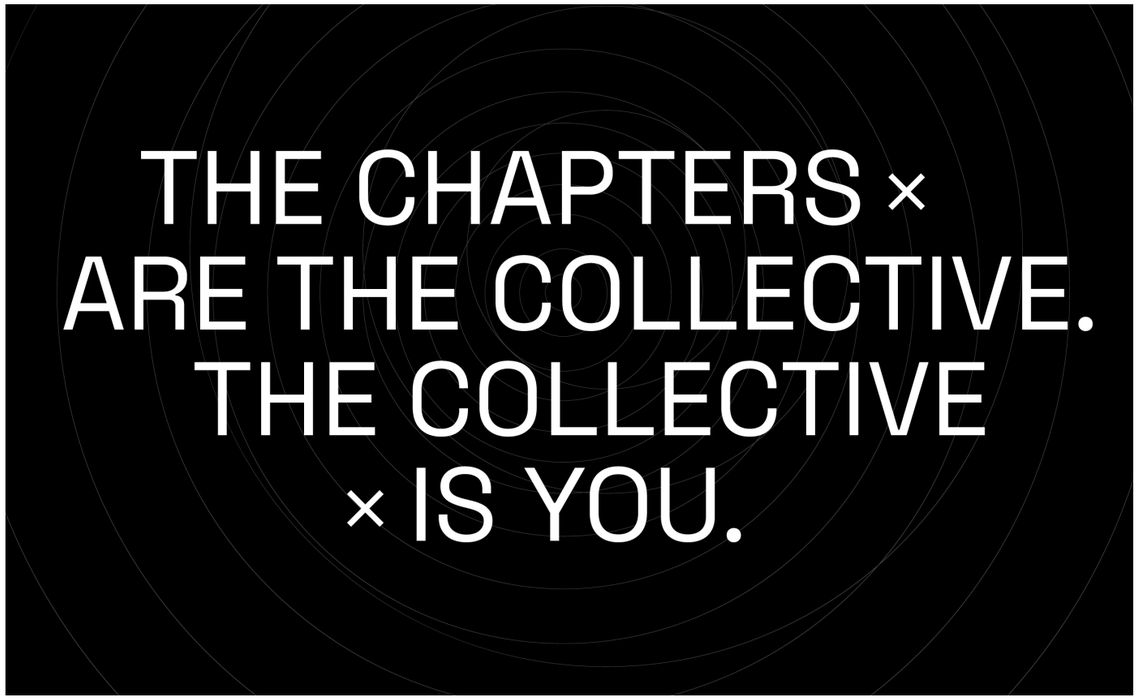
The Serendipity Collective™ , therefore, is more than just an organization. It's a movement of dreamers and doers, thinkers and creators, all united by the belief that the next big idea can come from anywhere and anyone. It's about empowering local chapters to be the hotbeds of innovation and providing them with a global platform to share their ideas. This blend of local insight and global perspective is what makes the Collective unique and its impact far-reaching.

The thought was we would put out a call for a 'Serendipity Collective,' where we would sponsor a workshop and ask people to tell us their craziest ideas.

RHETT JEFFERIES, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, ONR GLOBAL

The Collective envisions a world where innovation is driven by the collective intelligence and collaborative efforts of communities across the globe. By nurturing local talents and ideas, and elevating them to a global stage, the Collective aims to redefine the boundaries of what's possible, challenging the status quo and driving impactful change.

In 2024, IdeatePlus is expanding the reach of the Serendipity Collective™ to even more corners of the globe. Local Chapters will



be established in areas of interest, to broaden the platform's engagement and foster a more diverse community of innovators. Serendipity Collective Podcasts will also be launched to share innovative ideas with a wider audience and build brand awareness. Additionally, Ideateplus will leverage its Innovation Knowledge Hub to provide participants with valuable insights on how to create and validate ideas effectively.

It was also one of the most prominent German American activities ONR Global has led.

DR. PATRICK P. ROSE, INNOVATION MANAGER AT SPRIN-D

The Serendipity Collective™ is open to innovators of all backgrounds, from scientists and engineers to artists and humanists. If you have an audacious idea that has the potential to shape the future, we encourage you to join us in Estonia this June for the second edition of this transformative event.

Together, we can unleash the power of human ingenuity and create a world beyond our wildest imaginations.

THE PROCESS

We believe in a simple 4-step Rapid Innovation Process which includes:

THE INNOVATION INFINITY LOOP

1. Demand
Research and analysis; Understanding target need;
Develop user personas and concise problems statements

2. Ideate
Generate potential solutions ; Brainstorming and crowdsourcing;
Collaboration amongst team members

3. Validate
User journey and empathy mapping; Wireframes and prototypes;
User testing; Pitching

4. Experiment
Developing digital solutions; Further testing and feedback
Refining the approach

THE NUMBERS

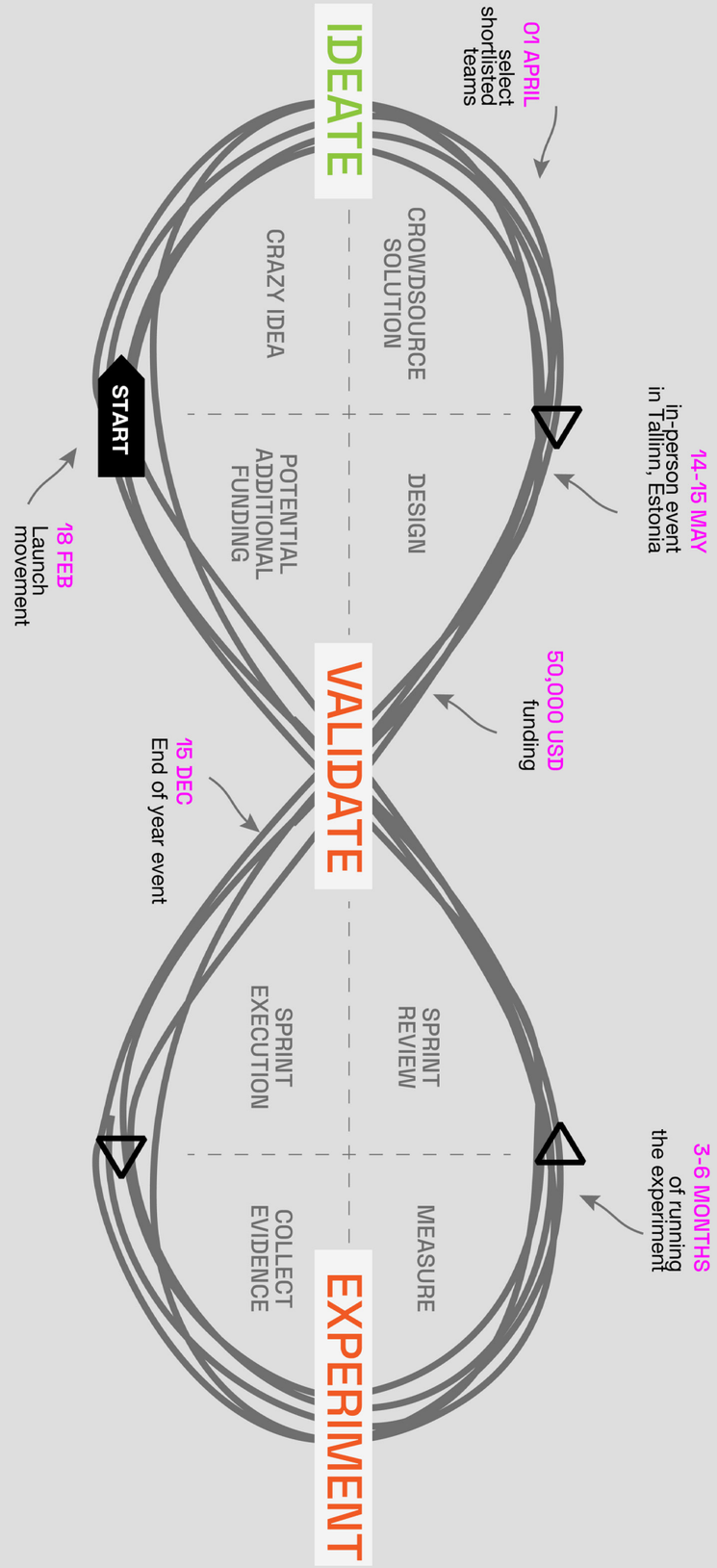
Stats from our selection process that include the official website and the registration platform

+900
unique visitors on website

+280
active participants

63
countries

100
visionary ideas



MEET THE IDEAS SELECTION PANEL

MATTHEW DE ABAITUA

Matthew De Abaitua's debut science fiction novel "The Red Men" was shortlisted for the Arthur C. Clarke Award and adapted into a short film 'Dr Easy' by directors Shynola for Warp Films/ Film4. His science fiction novels IF THEN (Angry Robot, 2015) and The Destructives (Angry Robot, 2016) complete the loose trilogy about AI and consciousness.

His memoir "Self & I: A Memoir of Literary Ambition" (Eye Books, 2018) was shortlisted for the New Angle Prize for Literature, and his social history "The Art of Camping: The History and Practice of Sleeping Under the Stars" (Hamish Hamilton, 2011) was one of The Economist Books of the Year.

His speculative documentary on machine learning and animal communication "The Dolittle Machine" was broadcast on Radio 4 in May 2022. He is a senior lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Essex and head of the Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies.

LOUISE AGERSNAP

Louise Agersnap (B.A. and MA Pol. Sci.; B.H.A.) is an innovation and change management leader with extensive experience & knowledge of global health, development and the innovation ecosystem, acquired through 20+ years in the United Nations, private sector & government, NGO, and academia.

Currently leading the Innovation Hub at the World Health Organization, Mrs Agersnap is responsible for the development and execution of the strategy for WHO's Innovation in Health mission.

In that context, Mrs Agersnap is facilitating the 'matchmaking' between countries' needs and demand and the supply of scalable solutions particularly in primary healthcare, Noncommunicable Diseases, and Mental Health, and supporting their scale up, and facilitating global consultations aimed at building the global WHO architecture and strategic partnerships to shape and enable WHO's support to Member States with regards to leveraging health innovation for the public good.

Louise is furthermore a selling artist with exhibits at galleries in Luxembourg and Madrid and at www.louiseagersnap.com

SCOTT A. WALPER, PHD

Dr. Scott A. Walper is the Science Director for Synthetic Biology for the Office of Naval Research Global (ONRG), a component of the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research whose mission is to enable research and technology that benefit the Navy and the Nation. ONRG serves as the international arm of this agency with a mission of building collaborations with international researchers and enabling transformative science.

Prior to joining ONRG, Dr. Walper was a research scientist at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory leading a team of researchers focused on building capabilities in synthetic biology within the Naval Research Enterprise and the U.S. Department of Defense. His research focused on harnessing the natural processes of microbial species and re-engineering them for applications in cell-free catalysis, sensing, and materials development. Projects of the Walper lab included 1) the production of highly-stable, catalytic bio-based nanoparticles that could be used for the degradation of chemical compounds such as pesticides; 2) engineering gut bacteria to sense and respond to the chemical signals of pathogenic bacteria; and 3) the production of ultra-thin, transparent cellulose films that could be used as a platform for wearable electronic devices. Dr. Walper also contributed to numerous other programs across the Naval Research Enterprise and other Department of Defense partner labs allowing him to contribute his expertise to diverse topics such as cell-free biosensors, phage-based therapeutics, recombinant antibody diagnostics, and nanoparticle-assembled catalytic systems.

Science Directors of ONRG cover a range of technology areas range from synthetic biology to quantum science. Our mission is to enable foundational research through grants to support Blur Sky concepts and to foster collaboration between international researchers and the U.S. through workshop support and travel awards to facilitate visits to the U.S. and engagement with Naval scientists & engineers, program officers, and leaders.

KEV D'SILVA

Kev was the founder of Nestlé's employee-driven innovation program (InGenius) & Ideateplus.

Seven years as a serial intrapreneur within a complex corporate landscape resulted in insights that helped inspire others to kick-start or persevere in their enterprise innovation journey. His latest endeavor, Ideateplus provides a rapid innovation process that helps enterprises achieve customer-validated experiments, while developing the competence of their employees. Ideateplus provides tangible results to enterprise innovation while creating a functionally diverse and fun learning environment.

Kev has spent the past 24 years as an IT professional in a variety of executive management roles ranging from Procurement, Vendor Management, Strategy and Innovation. He has primarily worked in a corporate environment within the sectors of FMCG (Nestlé), Pharmaceuticals (Merck Serono) and Telecommunications (Vodafone, Orange).

PRABITHA URWYLER, PD DR.

Prabitha Urwyler is a distinguished professional currently serving as Scientific Officer and Programme Manager for Bilateral Cooperation at Innosuisse, the Swiss Innovation Agency. With a rich and diverse background, she brings a unique blend of experience as an accomplished biomedical researcher in a clinical setting and an experienced software engineer in the technology and media industries, spanning a remarkable 13-year career. Prabitha embarked on her academic journey with a Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science & Engineering from Mangalore University (1995), laying the foundation for a multifaceted career. She further honed her expertise with an M.Sc. in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Bern (2008) and a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Basel and the Paul Scherrer Institute (2012), followed by Venia Docenti (PD, habilitation) from the University of Bern in 2019.

Her research career started with her PhD, followed by postdoctoral experiences at the Biomaterials Science Centre at the University of Basel and at the University Psychiatric Hospital in Berne, culminating in her role as Deputy Group Leader at the Gerontechnology and Rehabilitation Group within the ARTORG Centre at the University of Berne. In the field of interdisciplinary biomedical research, Prabitha has explored a wide range of areas including nanotechnology, biosensors, biomaterials, implant surfaces, micro/nanofabrication, neuroscience, psychiatry, neurodegenerative diseases, gerontechnology, ambient assisted living, telehealth and rehabilitation. Beyond her academic pursuits, Prabitha has actively contributed to fostering equality and community engagement. She served as the Gender Equality Officer of the ARTORG Center, an intermediate staff representative at the University's Senate, and the founding president of the Biomedical Engineering Club Bern.

In addition to her professional roles, Prabitha is an experienced co-founder, holding two active positions. She currently serves as a Board Member of the Swiss Chess Federation, where she also assumes the role of Head of the Tournament Commission. Further expanding her reach, Prabitha is a member of the FIDE social commission. Prabitha Urwyler's diverse background spanning academia, research, and entrepreneurship establishes her as a dynamic leader and valuable contributor to the realms of innovation and bilateral cooperation.

CHRISTOPHE MARIE

Christophe Marie is currently a Director Supply Chain EMEA and Group Supply Chain Process Owner - Bostik, Group Arkema at Bostik, bringing experience from previous roles at Bostik, Tarkett, Edelia Groupe Edf and LGM. He holds a Masters @ Université de Caen Normandie. With a robust skill set that includes Engineering, Microsoft Excel, Sales, Process Improvement, Supply Chain and more, Christophe Marie contributes valuable insights to the industry. Within the Aptar Innovation Excellence team, he is leading Aptar Product sustainability strategy. His primary goals include building and driving strategy to achieve the commitments made by Aptar through the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, which is led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme.

A VISION FOR A BETTER TOMORROW: SERENDIPITY COLLECTIVE VENTURES EMERGES

Imagine a future where humanity thrives, not just survives. A future where groundbreaking solutions address climate change, resource scarcity, and the ever-evolving complexities of technology. This isn't science fiction; it's the vision behind Serendipity Collective Ventures (SCV), a pioneering investment initiative poised to become a catalyst for positive global change.

SCV isn't your typical investment firm. We go beyond financial gain, prioritizing a lasting positive impact. Envision a world where investors achieve strong returns while simultaneously supporting ventures that create a more sustainable and equitable world. This is the essence of SCV – impactful investing for a brighter future.

A UNIQUE SYNERGY: GOVERNMENT BACKING MEETS PROVEN SELECTION

SCV ushers in a new era of collaboration. We forge partnerships with government agencies, leveraging their expertise and resources to identify and cultivate promising ventures. This powerful synergy reduces risk for investors while accelerating innovation cycles. Imagine a dynamic environment where groundbreaking solutions flourish, fueled by the combined might of government support and private enterprise.

But SCV doesn't stop there. We provide investors with exclusive access to a pipeline of pre-vetted startups – ventures that have already undergone the rigorous selection process of the established Serendipity Collective initiative. This ensures a focus on high-growth potential companies with a strong track record for success. Imagine bypassing the countless pitches and sifting through countless proposals. With SCV, you gain access to a curated selection of the most promising ventures, poised to become industry leaders.

EMPOWERING EARLY-STAGE VENTURES: A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO SUCCESS

SCV understands the challenges faced by early-stage ventures. That's why we take a two-pronged approach to de-risking investment and empowering these future leaders:

• Focus on Science, Validation, and Government Expertise: Scientifically sound ventures receive non-dilutive capital, allowing them to focus on crucial development stages. Furthermore, government involvement acts as a powerful validation signal, potentially attracting additional investment and partnerships. Imagine startups with access to specialized government knowledge, facilities, and networks – an invaluable boost that accelerates innovation and development timelines. Combining Government

• Backing with Proven Selection: SCV offers a unique synergy by merging the rigorous pre-selection process of the Serendipity Collective with the additional

validation and support of government backing. This two-fold process significantly increases the likelihood of identifying high-potential ventures with exceptional growth trajectories. Imagine a world where only the most promising ventures, vetted by a proven selection process and bolstered by government support, reach your investment portfolio.

A VISION FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE: THE FOCUS AREAS

SCV's vision extends beyond mere investment. We focus on areas critical to humanity's future, including:

• Endurance in Extreme Environments: Imagine advancements in materials science, propulsion systems, and human performance that allow us to thrive in the harshest environments.

• Cognition, Behavior, and Psionics: Imagine a deeper understanding of the brain, leading to improved human-computer interaction and manipulation capabilities.

• Autonomous Systems: Envision the future of artificial intelligence and machine learning, exploring both technical and biological methods to create advanced autonomous systems.

• Energy Storage, Regeneration, and Sustainability: Imagine novel energy sources, including renewable fuels and efficient storage mechanisms, that power a sustainable future.

SHAPING A BETTER TOMORROW: JOIN US

SCV would operate as a structured, closed-end venture capital fund, providing startups with a comprehensive support system designed for success. From expert evaluation and government sponsorship to shared support services, expert mentorship, and collaboration with government scientists, SCV empowers ventures to reach their full potential. Imagine a world where startups have access to the resources and guidance they need to revolutionize our world.

By combining innovative investment strategies with a focus on social good, SCV offers a compelling opportunity for investors and humanity alike. We stand as a beacon of hope, illuminating a path towards a brighter future where cutting-edge technology solves humanity's most pressing challenges and a sustainable, equitable world becomes a reality. The future we envision is within reach; together, we can make it a reality.

MEET THE FINALISTS AND THEIR IDEAS

RESHAPING THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE WITH VIRTUAL HUMANS

Idea Owner

MARINA KOVAČEVIĆ

The development of a Virtual Human Digital Twin Platform is proposed, enabling unprecedented personalized medicine

through dynamic, comprehensive digital replicas that predict diseases, simulate treatment outcomes, and optimize patient care with a high level of precision and ethical consideration.

REPRODUCTIVE LONGEVITY THROUGH MICROBIOME MODULATION

Idea Owner

RONNY SZELINSKY

Addressing the global challenge of declining birth rates due to age-related infertility, the proposed microbiome reproduction platform offers a groundbreaking therapeutic approach

by enhancing reproductive tissue health through selected bacterial and metabolite materials, potentially extending women's reproductive lifespan.

CELLTRONIC

Idea Owner

AMPARO PASCUAL-AHUIR

Celltronic is a pioneering project focused on creating bionic cells that blend biology with electronics to help adapt life forms for space colonization.

By replacing organic cell parts with inorganic ones, these cells can endure extreme space conditions, potentially revolutionizing space colonization, medical technology, environmental remediation, and industrial processes.

TRANSFORMING THE POLYMER INDUSTRY WITH BIO-BASED, SELF-HEALING VITRIMERS

Idea Owner

BIRGITTA EBERT

Using vitrimers, a new type of plastic that combines the best parts of traditional plastics

with the ability to be recycled and self-heal, making them perfect for tough environments like space or the ocean. This could help solve the plastic pollution problem and make materials used in aerospace and marine more durable and sustainable.

IM-PLANT-ING BRAINS

Idea Owner

MARCO RINAUDO

A project that explores how plant-derived particles, called ExoPlant, might influence brain health through a simple, non-invasive method.

Discovering these effects could lead to new plant-based treatments for brain conditions and encourage cleaner, more efficient hydroponic farming techniques.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY MARINE BIO FACTORY

Idea Owner

SOFIA FERREIRA

A groundbreaking project that uses special microorganisms to turn seawater plastic waste into useful products like biofuels.

This process could be set up in any coastal area, reducing pollution and offering an economical solution to handle plastic waste without needing to move it inland or use fresh water.

NEXT-GEN ANTIMICROBIAL ANIMAL FEED ADDITIVES

Idea Owner

NASIM AMIRALIAN

A new way to keep farm animals healthy without antibiotics by using special compounds from plants called triterpenoids,

made in yeast and delivered through eco-friendly cellulose fibers in their food. This method could reduce antibiotic resistance, improve animal gut health, and is better for the environment, benefiting animals, farmers, consumers, and local wildlife.

OUR FOOD CAN FINALLY BE OUR MEDICINE

Idea Owner

BOJANA BLAGOJEVIC

A new era in food production called Precision Food, which designs food specifically tailored to individual needs based on factors like age, genetics, and lifestyle,

aiming to optimize health and potentially prevent diseases. This approach could significantly reduce healthcare costs and improve public health by customizing diets to manage and prevent chronic diseases, impacting everyone from consumers to food producers and healthcare systems.

MICROPLASTIC BIOSENSORS

Idea Owner

YEMI AYANKUNLE

Creating a comprehensive system to accurately identify and measure the types and amounts of microplastics in various environments,

including water, air, soil, and even human blood. This system uses advanced technologies and aims to understand the impact of microplastics on health and the environment.

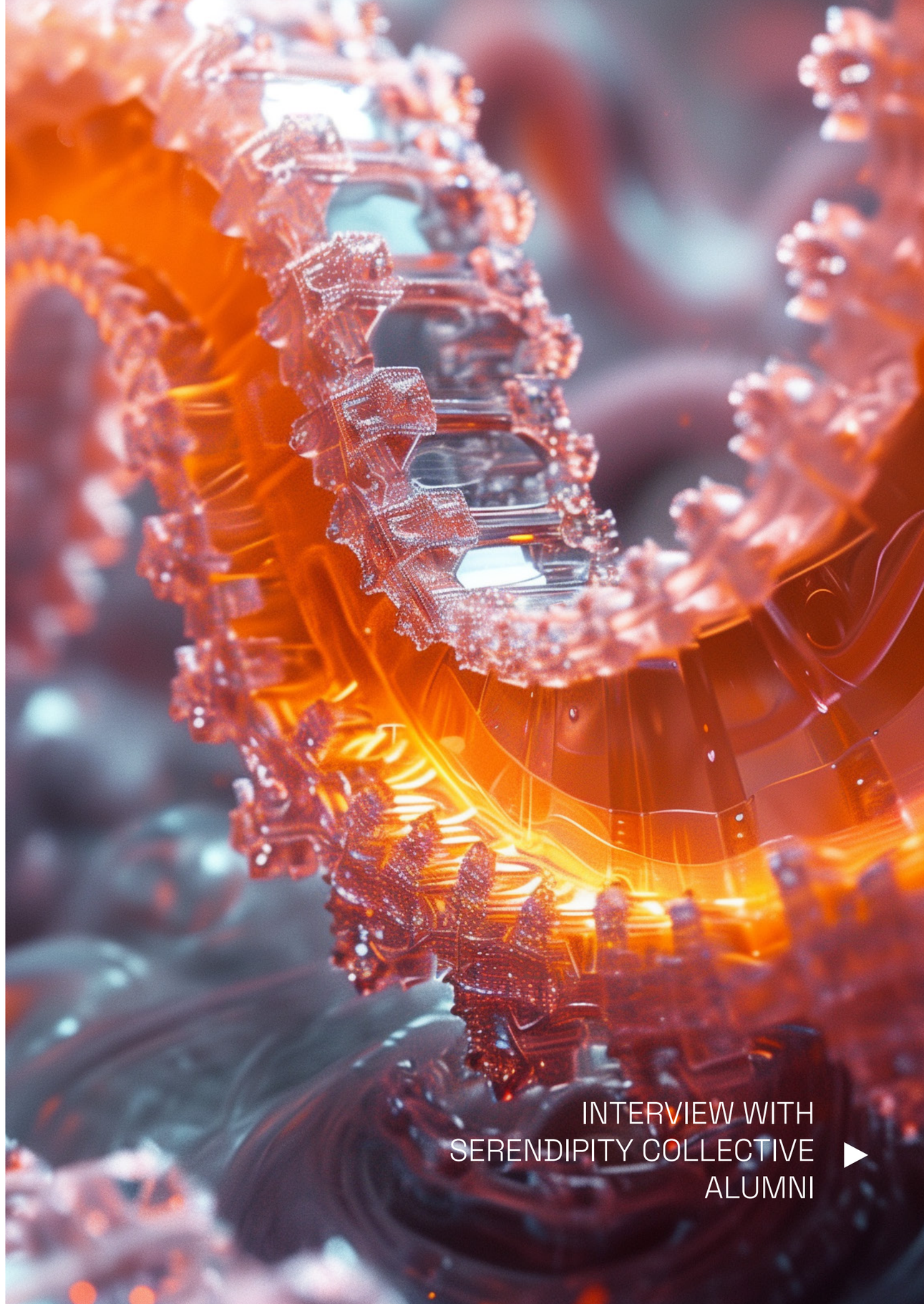
UNDERSTANDING BIOLOGY USING MODERN AI

Idea Owner

FELIX KAMIETH

A project that uses the latest AI and deep learning technologies to tackle one of biology's biggest mysteries: how complex life evolved from single cells.

By analyzing huge amounts of biological data, like gene sequences, with AI, we aim to discover patterns that could explain this complexity. Our approach is innovative, drawing from the concept of artificial life, and it involves creating AI models that can learn and adapt in ways similar to living organisms. This could not only help us understand life better but also improve how AI systems learn and adapt to complex problems.



INTERVIEW WITH Igor Balaz

2023 Project: CONTROLLABLE EVOLUTION OF METACOGNITIVE MACHINES

HOW DID PRESENTING YOUR PROJECT ON SUCH A GRAND STAGE FEEL, AND WHAT WAS THE AUDIENCE'S REACTION?

Presenting our project on such a grand stage was both exciting and a challenge. The complexity of our project made us focus heavily on crafting an effective presentation that highlighted the most impactful aspects. For that, the two-day boot camp proved invaluable.

The interaction with other project teams allowed us to test different presentation approaches and receive crucial feedback. This helped us refine our narrative to ensure immediate audience understanding. It's worth noting the great support we received from fellow projects, which fostered a collaborative and insightful environment.

Overall, the audience reaction was very positive. Their engagement during the boot camp and the insightful questions helped us greatly to effectively communicate the project's core message.

By incorporating the feedback we received, we felt confident that our presentation struck a balance between comprehensiveness and clarity.

COULD YOU SHARE SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE BOOT CAMP PROCESS AND HOW IT HELPED REFINE YOUR PROJECT?

The boot camp process was instrumental in refining our project. It began with a "Lightning Talk" challenge, forcing us to condense the complexity of our project into a clear and concise message. This set the tone for the next two days, which focused on honing our project from various angles.

The boot camp offered a series of keynote talks tackling diverse aspects of bringing ambitious projects to life – from high-level concepts to visualization and final pitch preparation. Each session built upon the last, pushing us to consider the project through different lenses. But the true value came from the interactive sessions. We received invaluable feedback during critiques, where we could test our ideas and receive suggestions for improvement.

This collaborative environment, fueled by the expertise of the facilitators and the insights from other teams, proved crucial in refining our project and developing a compelling final pitch.

WHAT WERE THE INITIAL CHALLENGES IN TURNING YOUR THEORETICAL IDEA INTO A TANGIBLE EXPERIMENT?

The biggest initial hurdle was bridging the gap between our long-term goal – developing conscious digital agents – and a feasible, 6-month experiment. Essentially, we needed to translate a complex, theoretical idea into a tangible proof-of-concept.

The key challenge was determining the starting point. We knew we wouldn't achieve true consciousness in such a short timeframe, but how could we demonstrate progress towards that goal? Our solution was to develop a compelling example of computational agents that exhibit characteristics on the path toward consciousness, even if not fully there.

This shift in focus – from achieving consciousness to demonstrating a step in that direction – allowed us to design a tangible experiment that could validate our approach and generate excitement for the long-term vision.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIMENT EVOLVED FROM ITS INITIAL CONCEPTION TO ITS CURRENT STATE?

While the overall trajectory of our project remained constant, the specifics underwent a significant transformation from initial conception to its current state. Initially, we had a clear vision for the key features we wanted our digital agents to possess – characteristics associated with future consciousness.

However, translating that vision into a tangible experiment required us to address several critical questions. We needed to select the most representative aspects of future consciousness to focus on within the time constraints.

Defining an appropriate environment for the agents to reside in was also crucial, ensuring scalability to handle diverse future environments. Perhaps the most significant evolution involved the agents' internal structure. We needed a design that facilitated open-ended evolution, allowing for the spontaneous development of multiple cognitive hierarchies.

In essence, the core principle remained, but the practicalities of creating evolvable agents with the potential for complex cognitive development demanded a more nuanced approach.

THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR PROJECT, WHAT WAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE YOU FACED, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

The most significant obstacle we faced throughout the project's development was undoubtedly reconciling the project's two seemingly contradictory timescales. We had a well-defined, ambitious long-term vision – developing conscious digital agents – but only a limited 6-month timeframe for the experiments. To deal with that we constantly needed to maintain a high-level perspective while simultaneously focusing on the intricate details of crafting a microcosm within the experiments.

Overcoming this obstacle involved a lot of iterative refinement. We constantly revisited our initial considerations – identifying the most representative aspects of consciousness, designing an appropriate environment, and establishing an evolvable agent structure. Each step required adjustments to ensure the experiment remained feasible within the time constraint, yet still aligned with our long-term vision.

This back-and-forth process was crucial. By maintaining a clear understanding of the bigger picture, we were able to make informed decisions within the micro-domain of the experiment, ultimately paving the way for a successful proof-of-concept.

INTERVIEW WITH Jachin Edward Pousson

2023 Project: CO-CREATING MUSIC USING BRAINWAVES

We built systems to decode brain activity related to expressive intent. Every piece of music has some kind of message or emotion - looking at contrasting emotions between performers. It was an extension of previous work on two brains co-operating in a musical framework. Measure how synchronized they were. Inter brain synchronisation.

EVENT LIVE EXPERIENCE

Excited and nervous, never really done pitches to this type of audience. I had a positive experience, it was stressful but inspiring being in a room with exciting, futuristic ideas. Challenging but learned a lot about presenting information.

FROM BOOT CAMP TO REALITY

What role did the boot camp play in transitioning your project from an idea to a reality?
Development of the Idea: Accomplished more over the last year then in the previous 4-5 years. More resouces, and the core team. Been able to demonstrate the system.

WERE THERE ANY PIVOTAL MOMENTS OR BREAKTHROUGHS IN YOUR PROJECT'S DEVELOPMENT?

Evolution of Your Experiment: A particular technical aspect - measuring two people's brains at once (typically 32x500x2 data points per second). The ability to do the hyperscanning (had to procure some hardware and write a software programme). Next week they will go into the studio.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS YOUR APPROACH TO CO-CREATING MUSIC WITH BRAINWAVES CHANGED OVER TIME?

Local Community Engagement: They're sing Unreal game engine. It's quite a unique approach as they've visualised brain data using the game engine. It is good for visualising complex data.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ENGAGE AND GROW A COMMUNITY INTERESTED IN THE INTERSECTION OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MUSIC?

They've interacted with other communities and groups who have started similar projects. They'd like to eventually share a product/ device that can be used by musicians that gives you the capability to output certain inputs. A visual perspective - They've explored and tested some ways of how to control the output. It would OSC or DMX messages or used to control visual software.

INTERVIEW WITH Zorica Svirčev

2023 Project: PAN LIFE CARPET

The SC competition was advertised at the University of Novi Sad Faculty of Sciences by Head of the International Relations Office Ms. Gordana Vlahovic who has been very active in promoting SC.

After 7 months of continuing the idea, the team came to a serious business proposal. The SC pitch helped a lot with understanding how it works to pitch, how to make a business case etc.

Apart from this technical side/ process, the psychological support was most useful. The team acknowledges the encouragement, support and advice from the SC leaders they worked with and the spirit in SC. One of the wide-reaching benefits is that the idea can be improved by going through the competition.

WHAT DID THEY LEARN?

The pitch itself - it was confusing at the beginning about how to best do this and there was a certain time pressure during the Berlin event but everything was interesting and challenging. By the end of it, the team came away with new friends, feeling supported, and having much more knowledge. Unexpectedly good!

STILL DOING THIS PROJECT?

Yes. A pilot application of the idea was planned in the Middle East but the collaboration is now on hold due to the instability in the area.

WHAT WERE THE INITIAL CHALLENGES IN TURNING YOUR THEORETICAL IDEA INTO A TANGIBLE EXPERIMENT?

Financial issues.

TIPS FOR OTHER TEAMS

You must trust your idea. You must be sure of it. Otherwise it is not worth coming.

THE ALCHEMY OF INNOVATION: CULTIVATING COLLABORATION TO TURN IDEAS INTO GOLD

In the relentless pursuit of innovation, a constant flurry of initiatives champions cross-sector collaboration and open innovation. Yet, a nagging truth persists: we still struggle to translate groundbreaking ideas into tangible results. The culprit isn't a dearth of ideas, but rather a lack of support for the marathon of collaboration that fuels successful innovation.

This article delves into the transformative role of intermediaries in fostering innovation. We'll explore how they cultivate collaboration throughout its lifecycle – from igniting connections to building enduring relationships and nurturing a thriving ecosystem where ideas can flourish.

STEP 1: BUILDING THE SPARK: CULTIVATING TRUST AND CONNECTION

Intermediaries go beyond simply bringing people together. They play a pivotal role in fostering trust, the essential fuel that propels collaboration. This meticulous cultivation involves curating the experience. Intermediaries handpick participants and programs, ensuring alignment with mission and values. This fosters a sense of shared purpose, the bedrock upon which strong relationships are built.

Consider the Serendipity Collective (SC) , a program that bridges the gap between entrepreneurs and investors and mentors, tackling some of the world's most pressing challenges. SC's success hinges on two key cornerstones:

Discerning Selection: SC prioritizes not just financial success, but also social impact and the potential for collaborative magic. They meticulously select participants who not only possess strong ventures, but also demonstrate a collaborative spirit and alignment with the program's core values.

Crafting the Experience: SC fosters trust by creating a safe space for sharing, where both successes and challenges can be openly discussed. From workshops designed to spark inspiration to team-building activities that encourage camaraderie, the program meticulously curates experiences that facilitate meaningful connections.

This approach fosters a sense of "psychological safety," allowing entrepreneurs to learn from each other and discover potential collaborators who share their vision and values.

STEP 2: FROM SPARK TO FLAME: DEVELOPING STRONG COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Once an idea ignites and a connection forms, collaborators embark on the crucial stage of defining shared goals, metrics, and processes. However, many programs neglect this critical step, leaving collaborators adrift without a roadmap for navigating the complexities of translating their nascent idea into reality.

The importance of sustained support becomes evident when we compare the contrasting trajectories of two ventures. The first collaboration, lacking dedicated roles and clear responsibilities, ultimately faltered. Conversely, the second venture thrived by establishing a joint venture, providing essential structure and accountability for their collaboration.

Here's where intermediaries can intervene and provide invaluable guidance:

• Structured Follow-up: Programs need to extend their reach beyond the initial, often exhilarating, idea generation stage. Regular follow-up meetings and dedicated resources, provide a framework for collaborators to refine their ideas and build a robust infrastructure for their collaboration.

• Holistic Mentorship: Intermediaries can act as coaches, fostering trust and open communication. Mentors need to equip collaborators with not just business and technical skills but also support them in defining a common language and establishing clear expectations, both crucial elements for successful collaboration.

STEP 3: KEEPING THE FIRE BURNING: SUSTAINING AND MANAGING THE TEAM

Long-term support is the oxygen that keeps the collaborative fire burning brightly. As ventures scale up, their needs for structure and relationship management become increasingly complex.

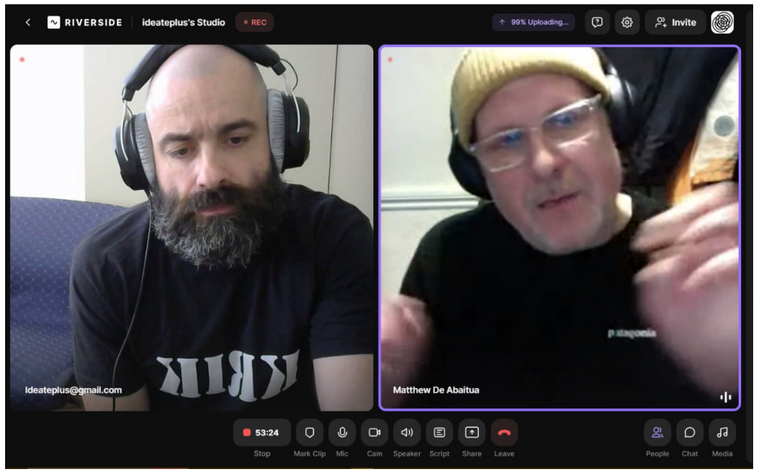
• Reflective Checkpoints: Facilitated workshops or calls can serve as essential checkpoints for collaborators. These gatherings provide a space for them to navigate evolving relationships, roles, and governance structures. Moreover, these reflective checkpoints offer an opportunity for entrepreneurs to learn from their experiences and adapt their approach, ensuring their collaboration continues to thrive.

• Cultivating the Ecosystem: Intermediaries can foster a thriving ecosystem by connecting entrepreneurs, mentors, investors, and other stakeholders. Ideateplus' Innovation Knowledge Hub connect idea creators with vital resources, funding opportunities, and the potential for collaboration with complementary ventures. By providing this long-term support, intermediaries empower innovation to not just spark, but ignite real-world change.

CONCLUSION

Innovation isn't simply about generating brilliant ideas; it's about harnessing the power of collaboration to transform those ideas into impactful realities. By meticulously cultivating connections, fostering enduring relationships, and building a supportive ecosystem, intermediaries play a vital role in the alchemy of innovation. As the article concludes, a focus on collaboration, not just on "moving fast and breaking things," is the key to sustainable innovation and the reduction of new venture failure rates.

WHAT IS 2024 LOOKING LIKE FOR THE COLLECTIVE?



The Collective started the year with recording a few podcast sessions, all made in-house by the serbian team lead by Dr. Miloš Svirčev. The podcasts' purpose is to share innovative ideas with a wider audience and build brand awareness.

Innovators, researchers, acclaimed writers, and scholars will grace our platform, sharing their stories, experiences, and advice for those aiming to change the world with their groundbreaking ideas. This initiative fosters a connection by providing a judgment-free environment where people with similar interests can engage, thus building a community around shared passions. Through social media, discussion forums, and in-person meetups, our listeners can interact, weaving a tight-knit fabric of innovative minds.

Furthermore, these podcasts serve as a powerful marketing tool, extending our reach to new audiences, enhancing brand visibility, and promoting our diverse array of products and services.

This year, Ideateplus has leveraged its Innovation Knowledge Hub to provide participants with valuable insights on how to create and validate ideas effectively.

The Innovation Knowledge Hub is designed as an all-encompassing platform offering comprehensive insights, featuring a Learning Management System filled with courses, resources, and interactive content tailored for the modern innovator. This platform is continuously refreshed with the latest trends and insights, ensuring that our community remains at the innovation forefront.

The Hub promotes a collaborative environment where innovators can share ideas and embark on joint projects, making the innovation process not just productive but also enjoyable. With features like a dedicated crowdsourcing app for idea evaluation, we enable innovators to apply their knowledge practically, fostering a community where everyone can contribute to shaping the future.

But the most significant highlight of 2024 is expanding the reach of the Serendipity Collective™ to even more corners of the globe. Local Chapters are established in areas of interest, such as the Balkans and Baltic zones, to broaden the platform's engagement and foster a more diverse community of innovators.

The Serendipity Collective™ operates on the belief that innovation thrives in a collaborative environment. By establishing Local Chapters, the Collective has created vibrant hubs where tech enthusiasts, social innovators, and the intellectually curious can come together. These chapters are more than just meeting places; they are breeding grounds for transformative ideas where members can explore new technologies, exchange knowledge, and challenge the status quo. Each chapter acts as a catalyst, sparking local initiatives that can have global implications.

Through workshops, hackathons, and collaborative projects, members gain hands-on experience with these technologies, guided by the ethos of learning through play and experimentation. This playful approach to serious technology demystifies complex ideas and makes innovation accessible to all members, regardless of their previous expertise.
The design of these

To support continuous growth and sustainability, the Serendipity Collective™ also focuses on building strong partnerships with local businesses, academic institutions, and governmental bodies. These partnerships not only provide additional resources and expertise but also create a broader network through which members can scale their innovations.

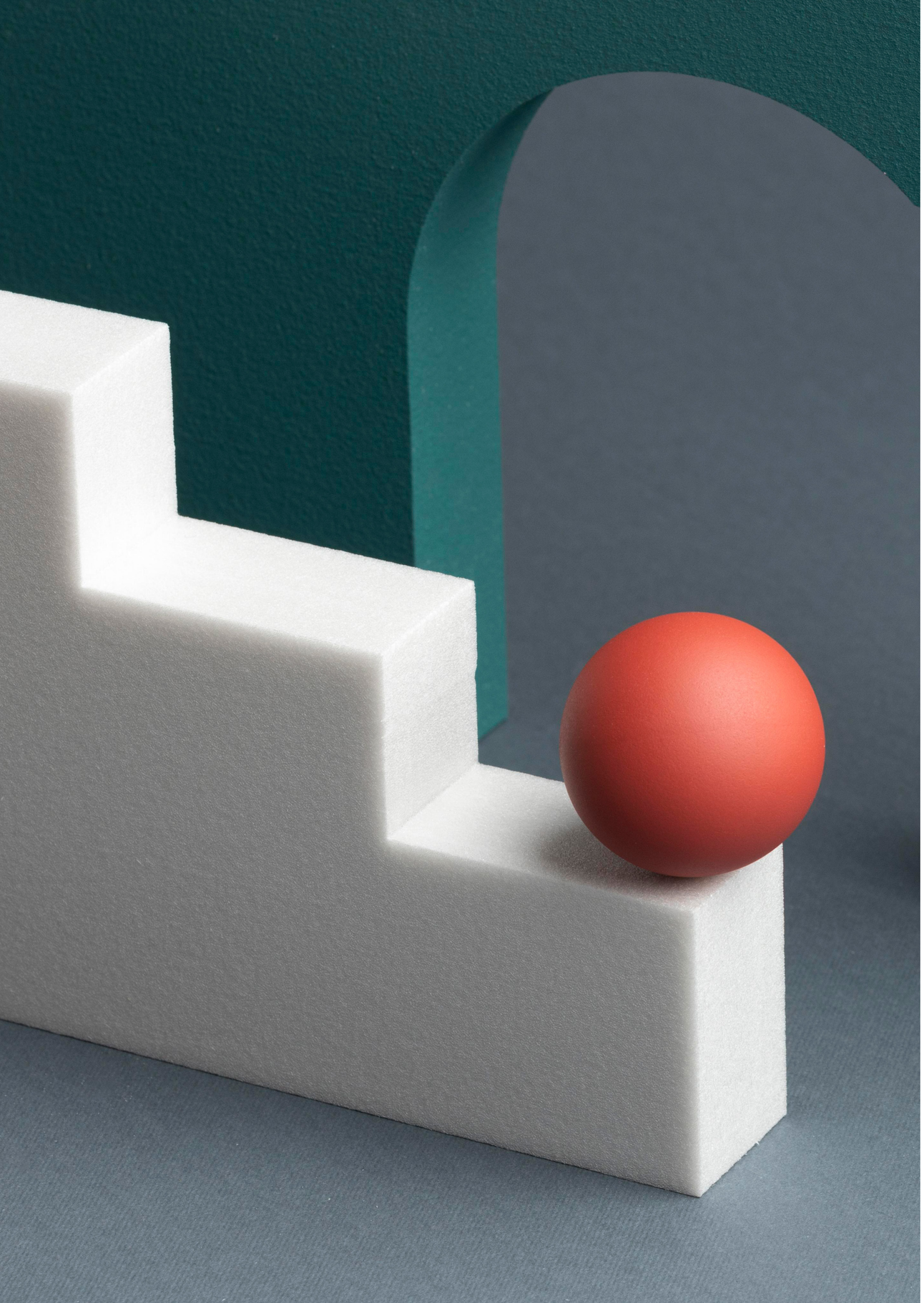
Each Local Chapter is empowered to tailor its programs and initiatives to meet the unique needs and challenges of its region. This localized approach ensures that innovation is not only relevant but also responsive to the specific circumstances of the community.

The Serendipity Collective™ places a strong emphasis on inclusivity and diversity. By valuing every voice and every idea, the organization ensures that everyone, from the seasoned technologist to the curious layperson, has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the collective wisdom of the community.

This democratic approach to innovation not only enriches the solutions developed but also strengthens the social fabric of the chapters.

As we look to the future, the Serendipity Collective™ is committed to continuing its expansion, enhancing its impact, and refining its approach to global innovation. By nurturing these Local Chapters and continuously embracing new ideas and technologies, the Collective aims to redefine what is possible, turning imaginative ideas into tangible solutions that can benefit the whole world. Through this expansive network, we are not just witnessing innovation; we are actively participating in the redefinition of our collective future.

Left: the recording of the first Serenidipity Collective podcast, with Miloš Svirčev and Matthew De Abaitua
Right: Meeting of the Novi Sad Local Chapter, lead by Marina Kovačević



THE ROLE OF PLAY IN FOSTERING INNOVATION

At the core of Ideateplus's ethos is a profound belief that innovation is not just about rigid methodologies but thrives in environments that foster experimentation, exploration, and a deep understanding of human behavior.

This approach recognizes that the deepest insights and breakthroughs often emerge from environments that encourage not just rigorous analysis but also unstructured exploration. Learning through play fosters creativity, enabling individuals to view challenges from new perspectives and discover unexpected solutions.

PLAY: THE FOUNDATION OF INNOVATION

Playful learning environments encourage experimentation by removing the fear of failure. In these spaces, mistakes are not seen as setbacks but as valuable learning opportunities. This mindset shift is crucial for innovation, as it allows individuals to test boundaries, explore various outcomes, and refine their ideas without the pressure of immediate success. Incorporating play into learning processes significantly boosts engagement and motivation. When individuals enjoy what they are doing, they are more likely to invest time and effort. This enjoyment, intrinsic to play, transforms the act of learning into a more fulfilling and effective experience, driving deeper engagement with the material or project at hand.

Play is a pivotal element in the realm of innovation, particularly for its role in facilitating exploration, learning, and adaptation within unpredictable environments. Dodgson (2017) emphasizes how this capacity for playful inquiry underpins the creative processes that drive forward-thinking solutions and breakthroughs. In environments fraught with uncertainty, the playful approach to problem-solving enables individuals and organizations to navigate complexities with agility, fostering a culture where innovative ideas can flourish.

This principle of leveraging play for innovation is not confined to theoretical discourse but finds practical application across various fields, including technology, education, and healthcare, demonstrating its universal value in sparking creativity and fostering innovation.

In the specialized field of new drug development, the concept of innovation as a form of play takes on a tangible significance. Styhre (2008) illustrates how this sector benefits from a playful approach to innovation, where the intricate process of developing new drugs involves not only rigorous scientific practice but also a significant degree of serendipity.

In the analysis, innovation work is examined as a highly specialized and idiosyncratic form of playing wherein the scientists are practising their skills while simultaneously being exposed to serendipity and other residual factors (e.g., luck, chance) outside their full control.

STYHRE, 2008

This perspective views the laboratory as a playground where scientists engage with their work through a lens of curiosity and openness to new possibilities, allowing for unexpected discoveries. By fostering an environment that encourages the practice of skills in novel contexts, the pharmaceutical industry exemplifies how structured play can lead to groundbreaking advancements in medicine and healthcare.

The government's role in nurturing innovation ecosystems is critically acknowledged, especially in its capacity to address market failures and stimulate research and development through targeted incentives. Leyden (1992) argues that without this strategic intervention, many potential innovations may never reach fruition due to inherent risks and investment uncertainties associated with new ventures. By providing frameworks that reduce these barriers, such as grants, tax incentives, and regulatory support, governments can significantly enhance the innovation landscape. This support is crucial for sectors where the cost of research and development is prohibitively high, ensuring that vital projects—ranging from renewable energy solutions to biotechnological research—receive the necessary backing to move from concept to reality.

Curtin (2011) explores the intrinsic link between innovation and skills development, positing that the dynamism of economic growth and the enhancement of living standards are heavily dependent on continuous innovation. This relationship underscores the importance of cultivating a skilled workforce capable of driving and sustaining innovation. Through education, training, and lifelong learning, individuals gain the competencies needed to contribute to and benefit from innovative economies. The development of skills relevant to the modern marketplace is not only crucial for individual career advancement but also for national competitiveness in a globalized economy. This synergy between innovation and skills development highlights the need for policies and educational frameworks that support skill acquisition aligned with future technological and economic shifts, ensuring that the workforce remains adaptable and equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Play has been shown to also enhance memory and knowledge retention. The interactive and immersive nature of playful learning makes it easier for individuals to absorb and recall information. This is particularly effective in complex fields where understanding nuanced concepts and systems is key to innovation. Learning through play breaks down barriers between disciplines, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. It encourages individuals to draw on diverse skills and perspectives, which is essential for addressing the multifaceted challenges of innovation. This cross-pollination of ideas enriches the creative process, leading to more comprehensive and impactful solutions.

The Innovation Knowledge Hub places a strong emphasis on the essence of play as a critical component of innovation, designing programs and spaces with play value at the forefront. These areas are crafted to stimulate the imagination, encouraging innovators to explore new ideas in an engaging, rewarding, and repeatable setting. By embedding play into the innovation process, Ideateplus ensures that the journey from idea to implementation is not only productive but also enjoyable and fulfilling.

By offering tools, resources, and a supportive community, Ideateplus empowers innovators to take charge of their innovation journey. The hub fosters a culture of autonomy and passion, ensuring that every innovator is equipped to drive their ideas forward with dedication and zeal. The play spaces are designed to encourage experimentation, allowing ideas to transform from abstract concepts into potential real-world solutions. This transformation underscores Ideateplus's commitment to practical,

hands-on innovation, fostering a seamless transition from playful experimentation to impactful presentations and pitches.

Play Is The Highest Form Of Research. —ALBERT EINSTEIN

WORK VS. PLAY: REDEFINING PROFESSIONAL INNOVATION

The distinction between work and play is increasingly blurred in innovative environments. Forward-thinking organizations are challenging the traditional view that these activities are mutually exclusive, recognizing that integrating play into work can enhance creativity, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. Integrating play into the workplace serves as a powerful catalyst for professional growth and innovation.

It encourages employees to approach problems with a fresh perspective, fosters a culture of continuous learning, and promotes a more dynamic and flexible work environment.

Incorporating elements of play at work has significant psychological benefits, including reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and improved well-being. This positive psychological state is conducive to creativity and innovation, as individuals feel more motivated and engaged in their tasks. Play also has a transformative effect on team dynamics. It builds trust, encourages communication, and fosters collaboration among team members. Through playful interactions, teams can break down barriers and work more effectively together toward innovative solutions.

Ultimately, the integration of work and play creates a balanced innovation ecosystem where creativity flourishes. Organizations that embrace this balance are better positioned to innovate, adapt to changes, and drive forward with groundbreaking ideas and solutions.

Integrating play into the innovation process redefines how we approach creativity, learning, and development. This approach emphasizes the importance of fostering environments where experimentation, curiosity, and imagination are encouraged, enabling individuals to transcend traditional boundaries and explore new possibilities. By prioritizing play, we tap into a deeper understanding of human behavior and unlock the creative potential that lies within each of us, paving the way for more impactful and human-centered innovations.

Tib Roibu,
Research and Innovation
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HERE'S TO THE PLAYFUL SPIRITS. THE CURIOUS MINDS. THE DREAMERS. THE EXPLORERS. THE ONES WHO PREFER A LEAP OF IMAGINATION OVER A STEP OF LOGIC. THOSE WHO SEEK THE MAGIC IN THE MUNDANE. THEY'RE NOT TIED TO THE CONVENTIONAL PATHS. THEY FIND THEIR JOY IN THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE DESTINATION. YOU CAN JOIN THEM, QUESTION THEM, BE INSPIRED BY THEM, OR OVERLOOK THEM. BUT ONE THING YOU CAN'T DO IS CONTAIN THEM. BECAUSE THEY EXPLORE THE UNCHARTED. THEY TURN WONDER INTO DISCOVERY. AND WHILE SOME MAY CALL THEM NAIVE, WE SEE PIONEERS. BECAUSE THOSE WHO ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO PLAY WITH THE UNKNOWN, TO ASK 'WHAT IF,' ARE THE ONES WHO TRULY EXPAND OUR HORIZONS.

MEASURING THE EXPERIENCE OF AI
Finding emergent relevance during interaction

If AI-driven content is going to dominate our digital experience, it has already been doing so for the past two decades. I have witnessed this firsthand, having worked on search engines and then researching and designing for users who are overwhelmed by content. Automatic delivery has enabled scaling, surrounding us with personalised product recommendations, tailored ads, customised feeds, and even more generated content. How can we manage the user experience in this context?

This is not a new challenge, but the scale is growing and, like other disciplines, we in the UX world are scratching our heads, going through a multifaceted mid-life crisis and asking: what does it mean to create value in an AI world?

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT UX FOR AI, AFTER ALL?

It is a question that fascinates us. The UX community has been trying to come to grips with the notion of AI, how to design for it, how to position the role of researchers and designers in this space, how to stay relevant in a movement driven by a fascination with technology.

Our attempts to make sense of this question yield criteria such as control, transparency, safety, trust and ethics (see Jessa Anderson's talk and Hal Wuertz's article). Somehow these attempts reflect as much existential angst on our part as they do real issues that demand our attention.

Drawing on a Lacanian idea of how we base our desires on the lack we long to satisfy, this suggests that when we talk about trust, control and transparency, it's the fear of their absence that alarms us. We fear the possibility that AI will be uncontrollable, untrustworthy, opaque, and unethical.

We're in a strange relationship with the machine, and we're struggling to come to terms with it.!.

I think we should still try to find a better foothold, so let's dig deeper. Sure, these criteria are all worthy endeavours, and we need to put in place safeguards to deal with the threat (we've done it before with industrial and pharmaceutical regulation). But stopping at this level locks us into a reactive, protective state. Let's find the organising principles of AI and take a more active, productive stance.

A NEW MODE OF INTERACTION: NEGOTIATING RELEVANCE

Looking at the basics of how AI works gives us a good starting point. Machine learning (ML), the latest wave of AI, involves training high-dimensional statistical models to fit complex, real-world phenomena. It's about modelling signals and patterns, which helps with classification, prediction and content generation. So here's a simple topology of ML applications:

1. Classification, which involves determining the category of a given input. For example, is this a picture of a cat or a fluffy loaf of bread?

2. Pattern recognition and prediction, identify trends or predict future data points based on historical data. It's like having a crystal ball, but for mundane things like weather forecasts and traffic jams.

3. Content generation, which is an extension of prediction: new content is generated based on learned sequences and patterns. This could be text, images, music, speech, control signals (e.g. for robots), virtual environments and social interaction.

The common theme across these use cases is their dynamic, content-rich nature. For users, this means that interacting with AI is likely to involve exposure to recommendations, analysis, trends, curated material, simulated conversations, simulated environments and automated decisions.

A key category to consider then is **relevance**. If using AI applications involves so much dynamically curated and generated content that fits my needs (or technically, my signal), is that fit really good enough? Is it relevant?

Hal Wuertz's recent article came close to this notion by highlighting that our relationship with AI differs from traditional applications in that the purpose and content are not fixed, but in flux. Both the AI and the user change as they interact.

Adrian Zumbrunnen comes close to this when he talks about the need for intelligent interaction to match the context of use. I'd add: at any given moment, we would be asking: is this interaction or content relevant to the user, does it match expectations, hopes, problems and desires?

This may seem elementary, and it is. It really is a fundamental question of usefulness. But the catch is that in our current UX paradigm, we're used to solving the usefulness question early in the product lifecycle. We're used to figuring out usefulness in early product discovery, market research, exploratory research, and product-market fit.

What we're not used to, and here's the kicker, is that relevance is (increasingly) something that an AI application would strive to achieve dynamically, during the course of its use. To deal with this, we need to approximate the real end experience in real contexts, not just for one particular interaction flow, but for a range of possible flows, and identify how our users negotiate relevance with AI during use (see Zhaochang He's piece on UX design for conversational interactions). Lab settings, wireframes and static prototypes may become less useful in providing a reliable signal, and we need more than ever to test with the real thing (e.g. testing with real data, role-playing, Wizard of Oz).

In fact, it's the transformation of relevance from a static pre-use design goal to an emergent outcome of interaction that explains our concern with trust, control, ethics, contestability and transparency (see how Ericsson positions 'competence', similar to relevance, as a cornerstone of trust). These are safeguards against anti-relevant (or harmful) outcomes, and about providing an environment that allows negotiation to help users find relevance.

Ammar Halabi,
UX Research and Strategy
Excerpt from the article first published on
MAR 10, 2024, UX Collective

THE POWER OF LOCALIZED COMMUNITIES: BECOME A CHAPTER LEADER

IF YOU ARE AN INNOVATOR AND WANT TO BE PART OF A GLOBAL MOVEMENT THAT'S REDEFINING THE FUTURE, THIS IS YOUR MOMENT

START FROM SCRATCH
Individuals can start a local chapter and build their community on the existing Serendipity Collective framework by expressing their interest to create or to join a chapter via a dedicated form. After a discovery meeting and an evaluation, the chapter can begin its journey with its new leaders.

COMMUNITY BUILDING
Local chapters will serve as hubs for like-minded individuals to connect, collaborate, and innovate. The chapters should organize local meetups (physical or virtual) to dream up, share, discuss and select ideas for local or global funding. The meetups may also include local speakers to inspire & mentor the participants.

ON-BOARDING
Communities will be active on the Serendipity Collective website, with access to the Ideateplus Digital Innovation Hub, where each (registered) innovator can learn more about the Collective, interact with previous ideas and improve their own by going through the innovation journey.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
Local chapters can serve as incubators for emerging talent, providing mentorship, training, and resources via the Ideateplus Digital Innovation Hub as well as other local resources.

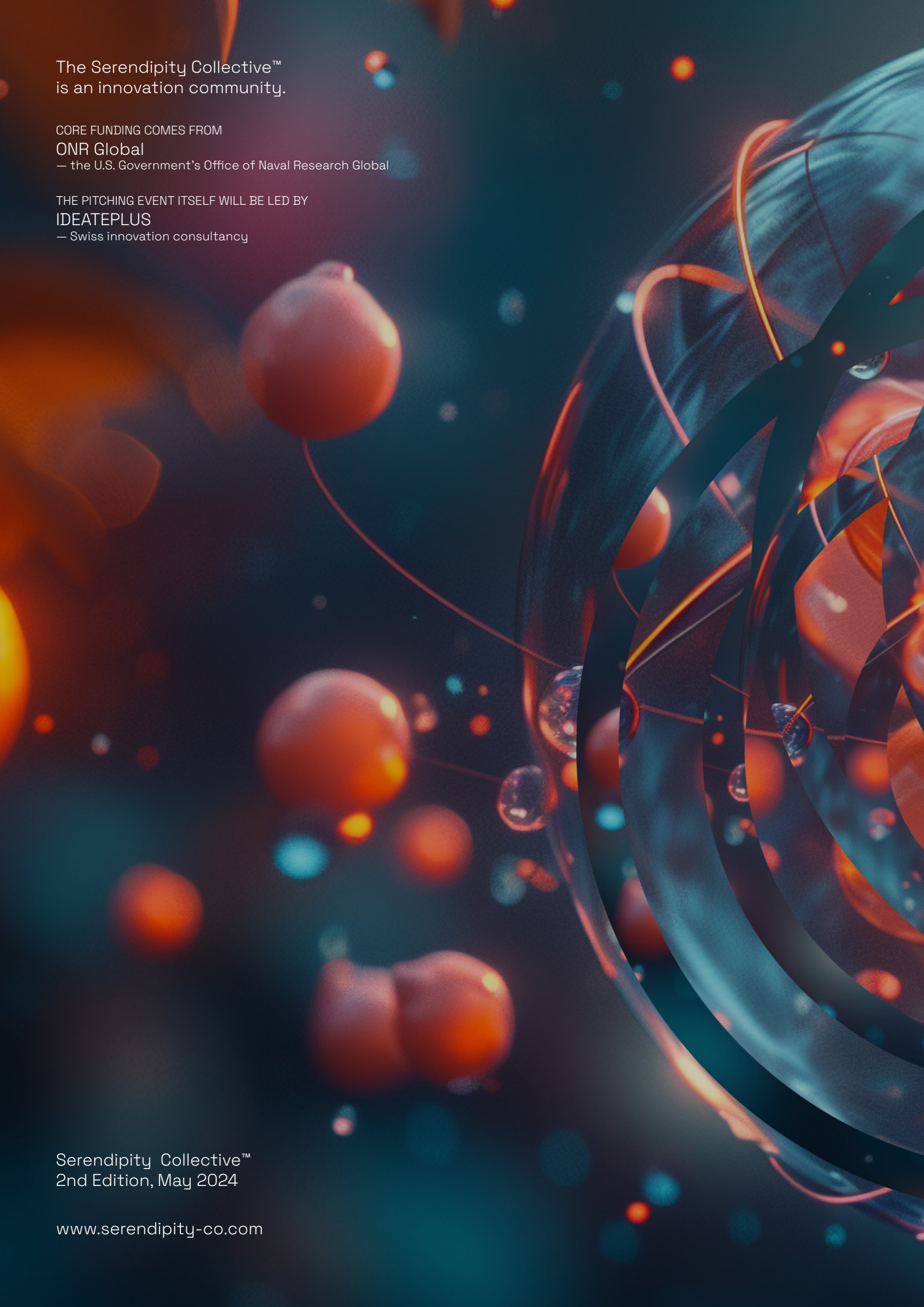
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
Each chapter will be provided with a list of topics, subjects, criteria that align with the Collective's philosophy. Thus, chapters can initiate discussions, projects, or proposals, based on local, national, or global needs and alignment with the overall innovation challenge.

SELF- ORGANISATION
Chapters can self-organize in the most creative ways the members can think of: coffee discussions, collaborative meetings, cross-chapter "task forces", knowledge exchange or even DAO structures.

FEEDBACK LOOP
Local chapters can provide real-time feedback on the effectiveness of projects, which can be invaluable for the overall innovation challenge. Also, the interaction with an international community (other chapters, the collective's leaders, etc.) further aligns the projects to the innovation framework and the expectations of future challenges.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION
Chapters are self-sustained and create their own schedule and pace of progress. With access to the Digital Innovation Hub and other Collective resources, each individual can innovate in their own rhythm. Important updates are made on each chapter's designated page: changing chapter leaders, announcing an event, and, in the best scenario: winning a Collective grant.

Read more on serendipity-co.com/chapters/



The Serendipity Collective™
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