

ADVERTISEMENT

# Can region become next great tech hub?

## An ambitious venture led by NKU will hatch 50 start-ups, breed entrepreneurs of tomorrow

11:28 PM, Jan. 16, 2012 | 5 Comments

Recommendations Sign Up to see what your friends recommend

Recommend 39 Tweet 0

Written by Amanda Van Benschoten

FILED UNDER

- Business
- History
- Procter & Gamble

Northern Kentucky leaders aim to leverage the region's brainpower and business clout to create new high-paying jobs – and become the nation's next great technology hub.

Today, they'll launch UpTech, a business accelerator program expected to bring the world's best and brightest technology entrepreneurs to Northern Kentucky. With the aid of Northern Kentucky University's College of Informatics and more than 40 of the region's top companies, UpTech's goal is to turn fledgling ideas into viable business ventures that ultimately will transform the local economy.

"This is one of the most important moments in Northern Kentucky's history," said Adam Caswell, president of the Campbell County Economic Progress Authority and an UpTech co-founder.

### What is UpTech?

UpTech is a business accelerator program that will leverage a \$5 million investment fund to bring 50 start-up technology companies to the region over the next three to five years. Through a partnership with Northern Kentucky University's College for Informatics and the region's business community, UpTech will provide start-ups with an intensive six-month program to help turn their fledgling ideas or products into viable business ventures.

UpTech will provide start-ups with up to \$100,000 in seed money, compared to a typical accelerator's investment of \$20,000-\$30,000. The six-month training is longer than the typical three months. And the Greater Cincinnati business community is pitching in, donating \$1 million of time to help start-ups with their unique marketing, accounting, technology and legal needs.

### ADS BY PULSE 360

AdChoices

#### President Reduces Amount Homeowners Owe

Kentucky Homeowners are using this ridiculously easy trick to pay off their homes in half the time. Consumerinquire.com

#### 51-Year-Old Now Looks 27 Again!

Mom Reveals Clever \$5 Wrinkle Therapy That Makes Botox Doctors Furious Read More consumerlifestyletrends.com/

#### Mortgage Rates Hit 2.75% (3.1% APR)

If you owe under \$729k, you probably qualify for the Govt Refi Program. www.MortgageRatesExperts.com

Leveraging a \$5 million investment fund, UpTech will nurture 50 tech start-ups in the region over the next three to five years. The startups will be selected by national technology experts from companies like Cisco, Summus Software, Procter & Gamble, Dell, Scripps Howard and CBS Studios.

Each startup will receive up to \$100,000 in seed money and hands-on mentoring from a team of local companies picked to fit their specific needs. The start-ups will come in waves of 10 at a time beginning May 1 for an intensive six-month program.

The program is designed to build an "entrepreneurial ecosystem" among local businesses, universities and investors that encourages, funds and mentors entrepreneurs with great ideas. Business leaders say that ecosystem is essential – yet still deficient in the region – to create the next generation of high-paying jobs and economic opportunities.

"I really have high hopes, because although there may be similar programs going on around the country, this is one of the most

ambitious and impressive in terms of dollars and the number of



### My \$12,759 Grant Check

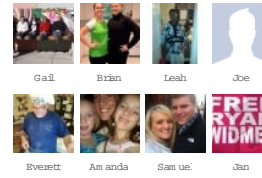
Read How I got a Free \$12,759.62 Check from the Government. - Kevin

ADVERTISEMENT

### Like Us On Facebook

Cincinnati Enquirer on Facebook Like

6,604 people like Cincinnati Enquirer.



Facebook social plugin

Most Popular Most Commented More Headlines

- A top lawyer's fall into the pit
- How Reds stack up by position
- Reds lineup geared for winning
- UC set for another shot at UConn
- Car backs over deputy during pursuit

### Most Viewed



companies,” said Steve Stevens, president of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. “If we just accomplished half of what was proposed here, we’d feel a really big impact in this community.”

The bold venture is built around NKU’s cutting-edge College of Informatics, where students study everything from cybersecurity to new applications for mobile devices. Start-ups will have access to the college’s faculty, staff, students and its state-of-the-art, \$53 million Griffin Hall, which opened in October.

“I think that appealed to a lot of us when we heard about UpTech, is its boldness,” said Kevin Kirby, dean of the College of Informatics. The college is one of the few around the country focusing on digital technology and the flow of information in the 21st century. It unites various fields that deal with information, from journalism to software engineering.

The college specializes in five fields, and UpTech will target start-ups in those areas: health information technology, cloud computing virtualization, business analytics, digital media and cybersecurity.

UpTech’s co-founders won’t yet identify the individuals and companies that have donated to the \$5 million investment fund, but they say most are individuals who have given at least \$50,000, and many \$100,000 or more. In exchange, investors will receive an equity stake in the start-up companies.

There are dozens of business accelerators across the country and several in Greater Cincinnati. The Brandery in Over-the-Rhine, which works with brand marketing start-ups, is ranked among the top 10 business accelerators in the country.

“It’s great to have more start-ups and more energy around entrepreneurship in the region,” said J.B. Kropp, a Brandery co-founder who now works for Twitter. “...The next two, three, four years in this region is going to be phenomenal, because you’re going to have so many businesses starting up.”

UpTech’s co-founders say it is designed to complement, not compete with, local programs like Brandery. But its co-founders said they also incorporated the best practices of programs around the country and tried to amplify them.

“We needed a burst of entrepreneurial activity, and the way that we could do it was through this concept of a big idea: do something different. Do it bigger, better than some of these other communities are doing,” said Casey Barach, an UpTech co-founder and vice president of entrepreneurship for the Northern Kentucky e-zone, which works with tech start-ups and companies launching new products or technologies.

One of UpTech’s biggest selling points is the involvement of NKU’s College of Informatics.

Students who intern with the start-ups will receive invaluable real-world experience – and, if the start-ups stay in the region, potential post-graduate jobs.

“Everywhere in the world wants to be the next great technology hub, but we have an advantage few other regions have, and that is the ability to supply the workforce to support this sector,” Caswell said.

UpTech began about a year ago when Barach brought the concept to an economic competitiveness working group of Vision 2015. The



A Wintery Mix Drive

Jan. 12, 2012



#### 10 Stocks to Hold Forever

Buy them, forget about them, and never sell them.

[www.StreetAuthority.com](http://www.StreetAuthority.com)

AdChoices

#### PHOTO GALLERIES



David Scacchetti



New Reds acquisitions

ADVERTISEMENT

working group fostered and developed the idea, but it ultimately took the entire community – from NKU, to businesses, to investors – to make it a reality.

“One of the things that makes Northern Kentucky special is that we think big,” said Bill Scheyer, president of Vision 2015 and an UpTech co-founder. “We have big ideas, and through years of partnerships and collaborations, we know how to turn them into reality.”

The effort will need a push from Frankfort: officials say it is imperative for state lawmakers to approve a bill that provides a tax credit for “angel investors” who invest in technology start-ups. The tax credit is necessary in order to line up local financing for start-ups that emerge from UpTech. Otherwise, officials say, the start-ups are likely to leave the region for other states that offer the credit, such as Ohio and Indiana.

UpTech will be unveiled today at an 11 a.m. event at NKU’s College of Informatics. The Northern Kentucky business community will receive a sneak preview at a 7:45 a.m. breakfast.

[View Comments \(5\)](#) | [Share your thoughts »](#)

**TOP VIDEO PICKS**  
selected by Taboola



**Celebrating Carl Lindner's Life (2)**  
Oct 21, 2011



**Celebrating Carl Lindner's Life (3)**  
Oct 21, 2011



**Cincinnati Police investigate**  
Jan 13, 2012

**YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN**

[Did you see the Ch 9 News meltdown?](#) (Cincinnati.Com)

[Marvin's decision to stay a game-changer](#) (Kentucky Enquirer)

[NKU to change part-time MBA](#) (Cincinnati.Com)

[Cadillac Ranch to become Cincy's on Sixth](#) (Cincinnati.Com)

[Ruling: Man drowned under his car](#) (Cincinnati.Com)

**SPONSORED LINKS**

[Home insurance: You may be in the doghouse if your dog is a blacklisted breed](#) (InsuranceQuotes.com)

[US Dollar Ready to Break to 12 Month Highs if Euro Collapses](#) (DailyFX)

[Dell, Salesforce.com Deepen Partnership Around SMB Cloud App Delivery](#) (PCWorld)

[Startup Scenes Across the Country: Could a Better Location Improve Business?](#) (The Business Finance Store)





[These 5 Things Flush 40 lbs. of Fat Out of Your Body](#) (Newsmax.com)

[?]

**[Why Aren't You "Funded"?](#)**

2,000 Entrepreneurs Have Raised \$1 Billion With My Simple 'Formula'  
[Growthink.com/VentureCapitalFormula](http://Growthink.com/VentureCapitalFormula)

AdChoices ▶

<p><b>METROMIX</b></p>  <p>Photos: Big Pimpin '12</p> <p>More from Metromix</p>	<p><b>CUSTOMER SERVICE</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Advertise</td> <td>Subscribe Today</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Submit a Story</td> <td>Manage Your Account</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Submit a Letter to the Editor</td> <td>Change Address</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Submit an Event</td> <td>Delivery Problem</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Send Your Feedback</td> <td>Pay Your Bill</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newspapers in Education</td> <td>Billing Questions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reprints</td> <td>NIE Adopt a Class</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newsroom Staffs</td> <td>E-Edition</td> </tr> </table>	Advertise	Subscribe Today	Submit a Story	Manage Your Account	Submit a Letter to the Editor	Change Address	Submit an Event	Delivery Problem	Send Your Feedback	Pay Your Bill	Newspapers in Education	Billing Questions	Reprints	NIE Adopt a Class	Newsroom Staffs	E-Edition	<p><b>SHARE</b></p> <p> <b>Share Stories</b> Submit your stories to our site!</p> <p> <b>Share Photos</b> Share your photos in our community photo galleries.</p> <p> <b>Share Events</b> Get your upcoming event listed in our free calendar listings.</p>	<p><b>MOBILE</b></p> <p>Use our mobile site and iPhone apps to keep updated with what's going on around Cincinnati.</p> <p><a href="#">Mobile Site</a></p> <p><a href="#">Mobile App</a></p> <p><a href="#">Baseball Report App</a></p> <p><a href="#">Football Report App</a></p> <p><a href="#">Porkapolis</a></p> <p><a href="#">CinStages App</a></p>
Advertise	Subscribe Today																		
Submit a Story	Manage Your Account																		
Submit a Letter to the Editor	Change Address																		
Submit an Event	Delivery Problem																		
Send Your Feedback	Pay Your Bill																		
Newspapers in Education	Billing Questions																		
Reprints	NIE Adopt a Class																		
Newsroom Staffs	E-Edition																		

ADVERTISEMENT

[Site Map](#) | [Back to Top](#)

**NEWS**

[Latest Headlines](#)  
[Crime & Courts](#)  
[Education](#)  
[Government](#)  
[Nation/World](#)  
[Archives - Free](#)  
[Archives - Paid](#)  
[Traffic](#)  
[Weather](#)

**LIVING**

[Home & Garden](#)  
[Food](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Moms](#)  
[Dating](#)  
[HYPE](#)  
[Deals](#)

**SPORTS**

[Bengals](#)  
[Reds](#)  
[UC](#)  
[Xavier](#)  
[High School](#)  
[Statistics](#)  
[Paul Daugherty](#)  
[Cyclones](#)  
[Blogs](#)

**BUSINESS**

[Markets](#)  
[Stocks](#)  
[National Headlines](#)  
[Career News](#)  
[Real Estate News](#)  
[HYPE](#)  
[Blogs](#)

**ENTERTAINMENT**

[Metromix](#)  
[Movies](#)  
[Eat & Drink](#)  
[Music](#)  
[Calendar](#)  
[Theater](#)  
[Comics & Games](#)  
[HYPE](#)  
[Blogs](#)

**OBITUARIES**

[Obituaries](#)  
[Lives Remembered](#)  
[Kentucky](#)

**LIVING**

[Home & Garden](#)  
[Food](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Moms](#)  
[Dating](#)  
[HYPE](#)  
[Deals](#)

**BLOGS**

[News & Opinion](#)  
[Sports](#)  
[Entertainment](#)  
[Living](#)  
[Moms](#)  
[CincyBlogs](#)  
[Message Boards](#)

**FOLLOW US**

[Twitter](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Mobile](#)  
[RSS](#)  
[E-mail Alerts](#)

[USA Today](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars for Sale](#) | [Homes for Sale](#) | [Apartments for Rent](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Yellow Pages](#)

**GANNETT**

Copyright © 2012 news.cincinnati.com. All rights reserved.

Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#), [Privacy Notice/Your California Privacy Rights](#), and [Ad Choices](#)