Innovate UK

Next Wave: Breakthrough Wave 1

Winners profiles



Introduction

Meet the next wave of UK createch innovators

From AI-powered animation and immersive live performance to smarter gaming, safer digital identities and new ways for creators to protect and monetise their work, 40 ambitious businesses are developing technologies that could reshape the creative industries.

They are the winners of Next Wave: Breakthrough Wave 1, the first pilot competition from Innovate UK's new Next Wave programme. Backed by £10 million, the competition attracted 700 applications, with 40 SMEs selected to receive grants towards projects costing between £110k and £500k, helping to accelerate innovative createch products, services and experiences.

Building the next generation of UK createch

Createch brings together creative innovation and cutting-edge technology to create new products, services and experiences. It sits at the heart of one of the UK's strongest economic opportunities: the creative industries already contribute £145 billion a year, while createch is forecast to grow ten times faster than the wider creative industries over the next decade, generating an additional £18 billion in economic value and 160,000 jobs.

Innovate UK Next Wave is designed to turn that potential into growth. It will help high-potential UK createch businesses start, scale and stay in the UK, combining funding with access to expertise, networks, real-world testing, finance and international opportunities. By 2035, the programme aims to help create at least ten businesses valued at £100 million+, two valued at £1 billion+, whilst unlocking over £300 million in private investment.

40 businesses. Four sectors. One ambition.

Breakthrough Wave 1 is where that journey begins. The cohort spans advertising and marketing, film and television, music, performing and visual arts, and video games, with businesses based across the UK.

Their ideas are remarkably diverse, but their ambition is shared: to solve real industry challenges, create new commercial opportunities and build globally competitive creative technology businesses from the UK.

This collection introduces the innovators, technologies and ambitions behind the first Next Wave cohort.

Winner profiles

Huey Games Ltd

Website: Huey Games Ltd
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Seed
Founders: Rob Hewson, John Ogden
Location: North West
Founded: 2016

Huey Games builds AI tools that help video game studios release titles across multiple platforms faster, cheaper and more predictably.

The problem and opportunity

Most video games now release across PC, console and mobile — but converting a game to perform well on each platform is slow, costly and unpredictable. Developers routinely discover performance problems only after months of engineering work, forcing rework, delays and lost margin. Existing profiling tools only reveal issues once the port is already running on target hardware — too late to prevent the cost.

The solution and innovation

Huey's AIGO (AI-Guided Optimisation) project uses machine learning to help developers anticipate how a game will behave on target hardware before significant engineering has been done, then surfaces targeted guidance for the issues it identifies. The innovation combines over a decade of hands-on cross-platform games engineering experience with the kind of real-world data only a working porting studio generates.

Market and ambition

Cross-platform work accounts for a substantial share of game development budgets globally. Huey will apply AIGO's insights across its own fast-growing porting business first, then selectively through a wider offering as the capability matures. The project creates three new UK roles and underpins wider growth.

Founder perspective

Rob Hewson directed BAFTA-nominated LEGO titles at TT Games before co-founding Huey Games with CTO John Ogden, whose technical leadership spans every console generation since the original PlayStation. Across thirty-plus shipped titles they have seen performance optimisation drain studios' time and margin. AIGO turns that into advantage.

Maro

Website: Maro
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founder: Stephen Jones
Location: London
Founded: 2024

Maro shows publishers and creators how their content performs across every platform, so they can boost engagement and commission what works.

The problem and opportunity

Media brands are increasingly shifting to video to reach audiences - publishing across websites and apps, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and aggregators like Apple News. Native dashboards cover one platform each and enterprise tools don't track variants of the same video (eg landscape v portrait, short v long form). Teams commission blind, missing engagement and revenue that sustains journalism, especially at regional and independent titles.

The solution and innovation

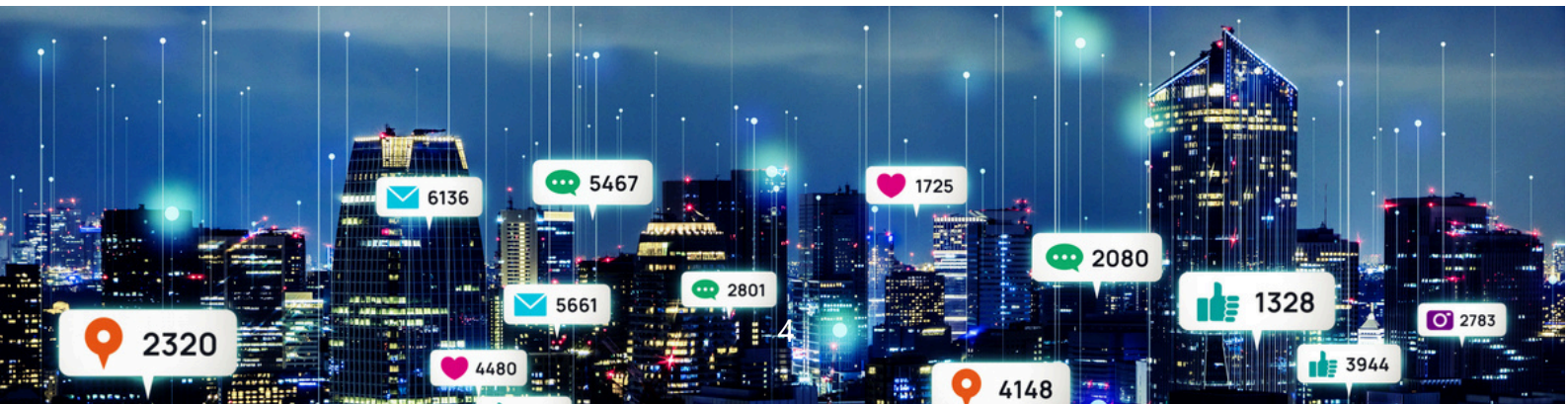
Maro's proprietary engine recognises the edited versions of the same video wherever they're published and links them to one story, so publishers see total performance across every platform, scored against their own priorities. No competitor links variants. This builds on Maro's existing article analytics solution, used by eight publishers, which grew Hello!'s cross-platform engagement by 33–102%. Metro and Canadian Press are confirmed pilots.

Market and ambition

Targeting 12,900 publishers globally (120 in the UK), then podcasters and creators via a self-serve tier. Maro has £107k ARR, zero churn and a pipeline including some of the biggest brands in global media. By 2029 we aim to lead UK video analytics for publishers, with a sales team and US expansion, on track for £7.5M revenue over five years.

Founder perspective

Steve Jones spent nearly two decades in journalism at MSN, ITV News and later PA, where he led their first analytics and insight division. Jovan Lekovic led data visualisation for the BBC's audiences team and worked at Disney and with Steve at PA. Together they built Maro, working with some of the world's leading news and magazine brands.



Lurtis Ltd

Website: Lurtis Ltd
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Seed

Founder: Jose Maria Pena
Location: South East
Founded: 2016

We develop AI-based technology to drive digital innovation in businesses.

The problem and opportunity

Video game studios face a hard trade-off in interactive storytelling: hand-authored branching narratives are labour-intensive and combinatorially expensive, while large language models (LLMs) generate fluent prose but lose causal coherence and cannot be steered reliably toward an intended ending. Neither gives narrative designers control over a story that adapts to real player agency.

The solution and innovation

MORGAINE is designed for and by narrative professionals. The designer retains full creative authorship: cannot override the goals the writer has set, never trained on creators' work, and studios keep all their material in-house. Story quality is measured against the author's intent. One writer can achieve — adaptive, responsive stories that previously required a large team (10× per authoring hour) rather than substituting the writer's judgement.

Market and ambition

Lurtis estimates global games revenue to reach $206.5bn by 2028, with a serviceable market of £40–55m/yr globally by the early 2030s. Our proposed market roadmap is UK (2028), Spain (2029), and France and Germany (2030), covering a total of 4,410 games companies.
We estimate ~1,540 narrative-focused studios and ~3,000 freelancers.

Founder perspective

Jose M Peña is a former Professor of the Technical University of Madrid and Deputy Director of the Supercomputing and Visualisation Centre of Madrid; with 150+ scientific publications in artificial intelligence; Editor in Chief of the Intelligent Data Analysis Journal; founder of 3 start-up companies (fintech, biotech and AI).



Awkward Studios

Website: Awkward Studios
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founder: Hollie Abbott
Location: Wales
Founded: 2025

We make entertainment IP for broadcasters and are building Screenstorm from that know-how, to help TV teams develop ideas & stay organised.

The problem and opportunity

Every new TV show starts in development - but it's a notoriously disorganised process. Ideas scatter across notebooks, Notion and Excel, and brainstorms favour the loudest voices. Teams lose hours pulling ideas together and maintaining slates, while good ideas are lost, repeated or never shared. Groups can't see across their labels, so double-ups happen - and generic tools don't fix this. Development needs a system, in a sector driving UK growth.

The solution and innovation

Screenstorm is a web-based platform taking screen ideas from first spark to pitch, joining idea games, structured development and slate tracking in a way no other tool does. The challenge is trust: unreleased ideas are a company's most valuable asset, so protection is built in, and we're researching how AI can help without putting IP at risk. Senior TV development professionals tested our bootstrapped MVP, giving strong, constructive feedback.

Market and ambition

We're starting with UK TV production, a £3.66bn sector, then content creators. For our MVP games and logging app, testers said they'd pay about £9.50 a month for solo use. In 2-3 years we aim to launch monthly & annual plans for individuals, teams and production groups, add new tools and events, and enter the $313bn global screen market.

Founder perspective

A decade winning commissions for broadcasters, leading development teams & teaching at top training institutions means I'm often asked for brainstorm games, slate tips & ways to encourage quiet voices. As a neurodivergent founder I really value systems, so we're building a tool I'd use daily to cut wasted company time, money & lost ideas.



Hootenanny

Website: Hootenanny
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founders: Chris Peabody, Grace Taylor
Location: South East
Founded: 2022

Hootenanny identifies artists' real fans from scattered streaming, social and ticketing data, so artists can reach them directly.

The problem and opportunity

Streaming pays most artists very little, and their audience data is scattered across streaming services, social platforms, ticketing and mailing lists they don't control. Artists can see that listeners exist but not who or where they are, or how to reach them. Existing tools sell dashboards to artists on monthly fees without turning that data into income, so most independent artists still have no direct, paying relationship with their fans.

The solution and innovation

Hootenanny's Fan Intelligence Engine resolves fragmented data from streaming services, social platforms, ticketing, mailing lists and an artist's own sales into a single fan picture. Machine learning models score which cities and people are most likely to engage and pay, recommend the next action and run it through automated campaigns and email funnels, learning from each result. Nearly 150 artists have signed to the live platform.

Market and ambition

There are around 11 million artists worldwide, most of them independent and without the data teams major labels use to understand their audiences. Hootenanny starts with UK independents and their managers, growing through industry partnerships, and aims to have 2,000 artists using its platform by the end of 2027.

Founder perspective

Chris Peabody has worked across A&R, distribution and label management for 17 years, signing more than 2,000 artist and label agreements and building Old Rope Records. Co-founder Grace Taylor is an award winning artist manager. Between them they have seen first-hand how little independent artists know about the fans who support them.



Digital Tactics

Website: Digital Tactics
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Seed
Founder: Chris Dean
Location: South East
Founded: 2011

Redstring by Digital Tactics helps game studios and writers keep every character, faction and quest consistent with their story world as the game grows.

The problem and opportunity

Narrative is one of the costliest parts of making a game. A dedicated narrative designer costs a UK studio around £36,000 a year in salary, and half of game developers self-fund, so many indie studios go without. Big studios ship scripts of 450,000 words or more and pay heavily to keep lore consistent across sequels and live updates. Wikis store lore as documents, branching tools script hand-written dialogue, and generative AI drifts from canon.

The solution and innovation

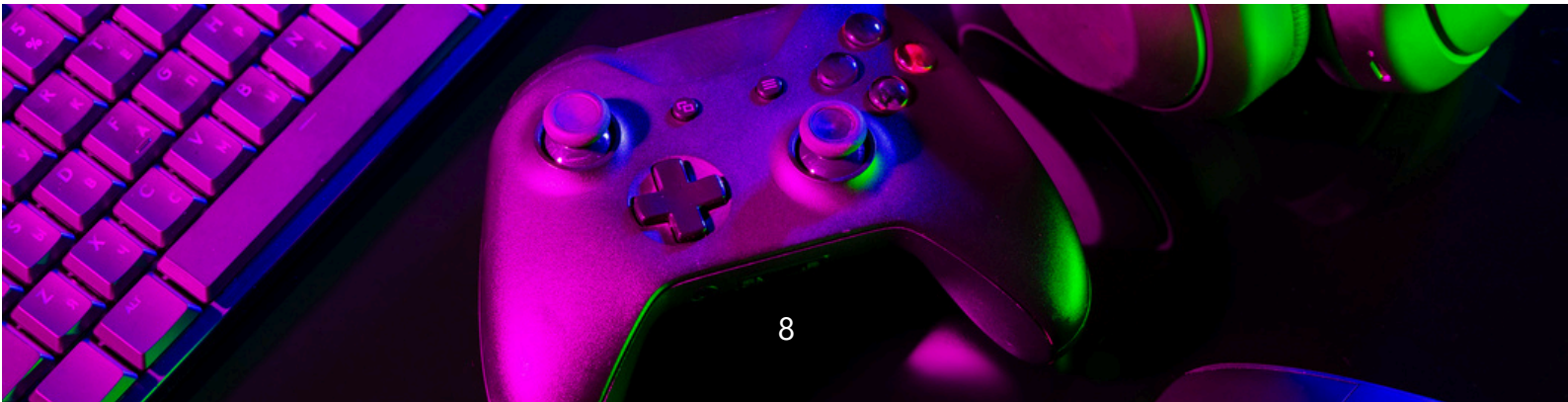
Redstring maps a game's world, its characters, factions, places and histories, as one connected model with the source of every fact recorded. From that model it will derive lore bibles, character arcs and story events, and export them to the tools studios already use. Writers keep every creative decision, and their work never trains AI without consent. It builds on our systems-thinking engine SOSX®, which delivers similar processes to other domains.

Market and ambition

Redstring is for indie studios without writing teams, AAA narrative teams and individual game writers, UK first. Narrative directors already sit on our validation panel, and a public beta opens at the end of 2027. We aim for £500k-1 million in annual recurring revenue within three years of launch, then broaden into TV and film.

Founder perspective

Chris Dean spent a decade as Head of Technology at Endemol Shine UK, running live TV audience-participation systems. He founded Digital Tactics in 2011 and has since delivered more than 170 client projects. He built SOSX to map complex systems, then saw that a story world is one: characters, factions and histories pulling on each other.



Motion Marble

Website: Motion Marble
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Seed

Founder: Carl Strand
Location: West Midlands
Founded: 2021

Motion Marble is a multi-creative agency offering services ranging from 2D/3D motion graphics and live-event design to real-time applications and immersive experiences.

The problem and opportunity

Brands increasingly seek genuine engagement, and existing solutions have consistently promised participation while depending on costly hardware, dedicated apps or elaborate setup. With hardware supply strained and budgets tightening, the sector favours software-first solutions running on infrastructure venues already own. With UK GDPR enforcement tightening around experiential data capture, engagement that is privacy-preserving by design is now required.

The solution and innovation

Motion Marble is developing a reusable commercial framework that decouples minimal audience input from rich on-screen output. Audience phones can be used to send tiny binary cues through a deliberately stateless layer, collectively driving the direction of arbitrarily complex, high-fidelity visuals in real-time. This is a technical innovation, extending and recombining proven technologies at a scale and in a configuration not previously achieved.

Market and ambition

Motion Marble today operates as a bespoke supplier, where every interactive commission is a one-off build. This project moves us to the owner of a reusable production framework that can be delivered repeatably and affordably to the interactive digital out of home (DOOH) market. The motivation is to democratise large-scale audience participation, today reserved for the largest budgets, developed and owned in-house by a small, ambitious team in Kidderminster.

Founder perspective

We have developed unique skill sets across several industries that elevate brand content across screens. We sit at the forefront of innovation, developing exciting ways for audiences to interact with brands.
We're passionate about delivering the best experience and building on the success of our work, which has reached thousands of people.



Ten24 Media Ltd

Website: Ten24 Media Ltd
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Seed

Founders: James Busby, Chris Rawlinson
Location: Yorkshire and the Humber
Founded: 2011

Ten24 combines real human scans with AI to help game and film studios create lifelike characters with less manual modelling.

The problem and opportunity

Creating lifelike digital humans is slow and expensive for game and film studios. Scanning requires specialist capture and clean-up, while photo-to-3D tools can leave artists rebuilding facial detail. Ten24 is developing AI trained on consented human scans to create accurate, editable 3D heads from a single photo, cutting production costs and helping UK studios compete.

The solution and innovation

Ten24's prototype reconstructs a recognisable, editable 3D head from one photo. Our core IP combines an owned dataset of 7,600 consented people with proprietary AI models and trained weights. Sega, EA and PUBG have licensed the underlying data. Next Wave will scale the technology and validate production quality and time savings with game studios.

Market and ambition

We target global game studios, from AAA to mobile, building on paid dataset licences to Sega, EA and PUBG. Over the next three years, we aim to convert studio pilots into recurring platform licences, grow export revenue and create skilled jobs in Sheffield, with film and VFX as further markets.

Founder perspective

Jamie and Chris were character artists who pioneered photogrammetry to speed up game production, turning it into Ten24. Trusted by leading studios, they understand both scanning and artists' workflows. Now they're building an AI-powered synthetic scanning rig, a natural evolution of the innovation that started the business.



Forceteck

Website: Forceteck
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Seed

Founders: Dario Cazzola, Roy Shubhabrata
Location: South West
Founded: 2023

Forceteck turns standard video into biomechanical data, so sports teams can measure and improve athlete speed without wearables.

The problem and opportunity

Speed and movement quality decide performance and injury risk in sport, but measuring them needs force plates, motion-capture labs or wearables costing thousands. Only elite clubs can afford them, so academies, schools and grassroots coaches rely on stopwatches and the eye. Talent is missed, avoidable injuries go unflagged and the UK's sporting pipeline narrows. Existing tools are costly, need specialists and don't scale beyond the top tier.

The solution and innovation

SprintAI extracts lab-grade biomechanical data from ordinary video, filmed on a phone or club camera, with no wearables, markers or specialists. Built on University of Bath research, our proprietary computer vision models and sport-specific datasets are hard to copy and improve with every session analysed. Already used by national teams in football, rugby, cricket, athletics and Premier League clubs.

Market and ambition

We start with elite and academy football, rugby and athletics in the UK and Europe. Next we take the same engine to broadcast footage, bringing player speed and biomechanics to life for fans. Within 3 years we aim to be the standard for movement data across professional sports, starting with rugby.

Founder perspective

Forceteck began at the University of Bath, where Dario, an academic in sports injuries saw elite-level insight locked in labs. Roy brings decades of health innovation leadership in the private sector and as an entrepreneur. Together they pair deep science with the experience to take it to market.



ASK BOSCO®

Website: ASK BOSCO®
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Seed

Founder: John Readman
Location: Yorkshire and the Humber
Founded: 2019

AI analytics for online retailers. See where ad spend makes profit and what to do next, based on stock, margins and returns, not just clicks.

The problem and opportunity

Ad platforms focus on clicks and sales, not profit. A product might look like a winner, but returns, tight margins or low stock can quickly change that. Big retailers have teams to connect advertising with stock and profitability data. Growing retailers often don't, leaving them to piece things together manually. This means decisions based on an incomplete picture, wasted spend and missed opportunities.

The solution and innovation

ASK BOSCO® AutoPilot builds on our ASK BOSCO® AI Analytics platform to make and carry out ad decisions that match each retailer's priorities: growth, margin, clearing ageing stock or winning higher-value customers. It reads all data, acts within agreed limits and hands bigger decisions to people. 28% of ASK BOSCO® user queries already ask: what should I do? ASK BOSCO® AutoPilot closes that gap, turning insights into action within agreed limits.

Market and ambition

Initially targeting UK Shopify Plus retailers turning over £5m-£50m online, which is approx 3,300 businesses. Next, we'll target agencies managing multiple accounts. Five retailers are lined up for pilots. Within 3 years, we aim to support 680 retailer accounts and expand to the US where ASK BOSCO® already has early traction.

Founder perspective

John Readman has spent 30 years in digital marketing, watching growth-stage retailers lose margin to ad decisions made without stock, returns or profit in view. He founded Modo25 digital marketing agency and built ASK BOSCO® with the team that runs client accounts. John won AI Entrepreneur of the Year 2025 and Ecommerce Personality 2026.



Recce Digital Ltd

Website: Recce Digital Ltd
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Seed
Founder: Jim Irving
Location: London
Founded: 2024

Recce Signal helps film and TV producers reach audiences, understand demand and improve their chances of securing funding and distribution.

The problem and opportunity

Independent UK film and TV producers struggle to reach audiences, demonstrate demand and secure funding or distribution. Traditional audience research is expensive and often inaccessible to smaller producers, while existing platforms offer limited opportunities to test content or engage potential viewers. This restricts commercial opportunities, weakens investment decisions and leaves potentially valuable British productions undiscovered.

The solution and innovation

Recce Signal combines targeted content sharing with AI-powered audience insights, enabling producers to test projects, engage viewers and demonstrate demand to investors and distributors. Built on Recce's existing film and TV recommendation platform, it turns real audience engagement into actionable commercial intelligence.
The platform already has thousands of users, providing a foundation for development and industry validation.

Market and ambition

Recce Signal initially targets UK independent film and TV producers, with ambitions to expand internationally. Building on Recce's existing audience of thousands of users, we aim to establish commercial partnerships, secure paying customers and become a leading platform for audience intelligence and content discovery within five years.

Founder perspective

Founder Jim Irving brings over 25 years' experience in TV production, digital innovation and audience engagement, including senior roles at the BBC and Deltatre, and founding and successfully exiting a media technology business. His experience connecting content, technology and audiences inspired Recce and its ambition to transform content discovery.



Animotion Technologies Ltd

Website: Animotion Technologies Ltd
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founder: Philip Sibson
Location: South West
Founded: 2025

Animotion develops AI-assisted tools that help professional traditional animation studios reduce production costs and timescales.

The problem and opportunity

Traditional animation is highly labour-intensive, with rising production costs and pressure on UK studios to deliver competitively. Existing AI tools are often task-specific or poorly suited to typical animation production inputs, style consistency and artist control. Studios need faster workflows without sacrificing creative authorship.

The solution and innovation

Animotion is developing an artist-controlled AI pipeline spanning several production stages (inbetweening, clean-up and inking can account for over 50% of production budgets). Our software is designed to maintain consistency, combining proprietary technology, datasets and workflow know-how. Studio partners are already supporting pilots, demonstrating significant efficiency gains.

Market and ambition

Animotion currently targets UK 2D animation studios with a planned international expansion. Four UK studios are supporting evaluation, with early commercial services now being offered while technology matures. Over 2-3 years, Animotion aims to convert pilots into recurring software licences and scale to an international customer base.

Founder perspective

Founder Philip Sibson combines deep-tech commercialisation and R&D delivery experience with a passion for traditional animation. He founded Animotion after identifying the opportunity to apply AI to labour-intensive 2D animation while keeping artists in control, and bringing together experts across AI, Animation, and Creative Technology.



Kyma Horizon

Website: Kyma Horizon
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founder: Andrea Michelon
Location: London
Founded: 2025

Candela by Kyma Horizon measures how a film set is lit, so visual-effects teams can light computer-generated elements correctly first time.

The problem and opportunity

Every visual effects shot depends on knowing how the set was lit. Since 1998 crews have recorded it with a mirrored chrome ball, which samples light at one point and assumes every source is far away. On LED virtual-production stages, where video walls light actors from a few metres, that fails. Artists then rebuild the lighting by eye, shot after shot, a cost borne across a UK sector with £6.8bn of production spend.

The solution and innovation

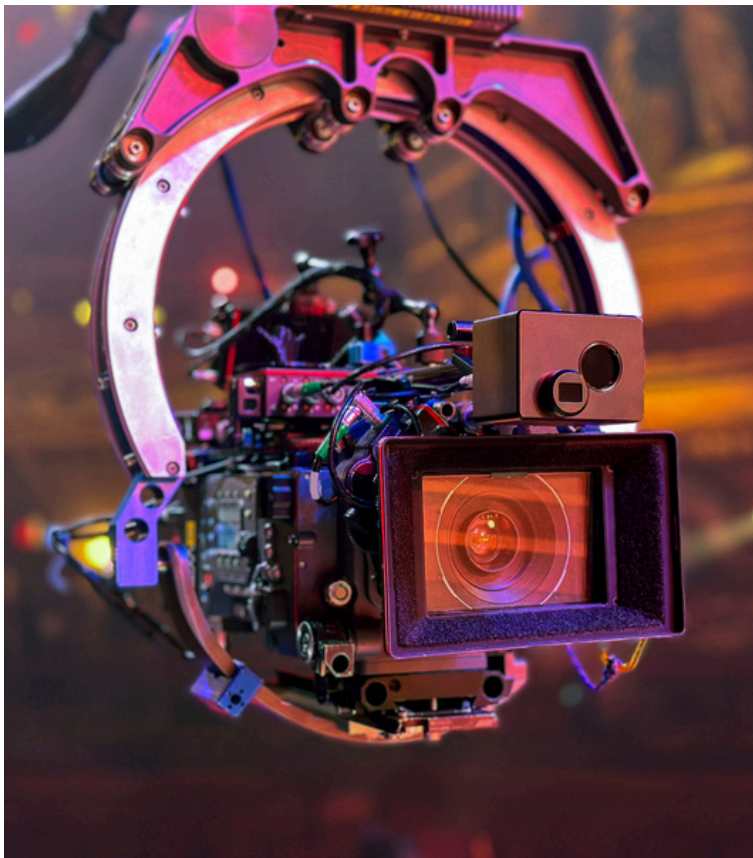
Candela is a hand-carried rig: camera, depth sensor and near-infrared probe. In one pass, inside a minute, its software measures the position, brightness and colour of light across the set, and how each surface reflects it. Results arrive in the open formats VFX pipelines already read. It will be validated on a working LED-volume stage and a conventional set against a public accuracy benchmark we will publish.

Market and ambition

Visual effects is a USD $11bn global market heading for USD $20bn by 2034, and LED-volume stages are its fastest-growing part. We start in the UK, where around 160 productions a year record a lighting reference, aiming for a paid public beta within a year of the project, then stages, games and 3D asset capture.

Founder perspective

Andrea Michelon spent twelve years as a production technologist on 50-plus scripted titles for Netflix, Disney and Amazon, and since 2024 has built machine-learning tools for production pipelines. Co-lead Gabriella Sinella recorded set lighting as a VFX data wrangler on Jurassic World: Dominion and Spider-Man: Far From Home.



Go Diverse Limited

Website: Go Diverse Limited
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founders: Vishal Mishra, Himanshu Sharma
Location: West Midlands
Founded: 2023

Building global standard for autonomous testing of digital ads, so brands and agencies can trust their message reaches audiences as intended.

The problem and opportunity

Brands and agencies spend billions on digital advertising, yet what audiences see can differ from what was approved. Cropping, muted playback and shortened formats can erase key messages and disclosures. Existing tools check formats and brand guidelines, not whether meaning survives delivery. This creates wasted spend, compliance risks and consumer confusion- and an opportunity for the UK to lead a new global standard in advertising verification.

The solution and innovation

We're creating a new category of advertising verification. Our platform recreates how ads appear to real audiences- cropped, muted or cut short - and identifies exactly when critical messages, offers or disclosures are lost. Unlike existing tools that check file formats, it tests whether meaning survives. With Brunel University London, we will validate results against human judgement to support a future global standard.

Market and ambition

Global ad spend is forecast at $1.34tn in 2026, and we estimate a £70m UK serviceable market. In three years, we aim to win leading brands, enter Europe and the US, and forge platform partnerships. Our ambition: turn UK-built advertising verification into essential global infrastructure, ensuring every digital ad delivers its intended message.

Founder perspective

Vishal Mishra worked with corporate buyers before building technology businesses. Co-founder Himanshu Sharma engineered the AI behind their products. Having already brought previous Innovate UK-backed research into commercial use, they are tackling a simple but overlooked question: does an advert still say what it should when people see it?



Happaning

Website: Happaning
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Seed

Founder: Ando Eniwumide
Location: London
Founded: 2020

Happaning turns live-event footage from every angle into searchable, verifiable replays and new sponsor revenue for organisers and brands.

The problem and opportunity

Live events are filmed from hundreds of angles by crews and audiences, yet that footage stays fragmented and unverified. Broadcasters and organisers can't easily find or trust the best moments, and sponsors still buy exposure up front with little proof of where their brand actually appeared. Existing tools handle single feeds or manual clipping, so most of the value captured at UK events is lost.

The solution and innovation

Our patented ViiVid Technology automatically synchronises many camera views into one experience viewers can explore from any angle. ViiKey lets anyone ask for a moment in plain English and see it instantly. Next Wave funds ViiBES, which turns brand appearances across every angle into measurable, biddable sponsorship inventory.

Market and ambition

We serve broadcasters, rights holders and event organisers in music, sport and culture, in the UK, Europe and Asia-Pacific. Clients include the BBC, SXSW, CMA CGM, the Department for Business and Trade and the Met Police. Next, we will run ViiBES at major UK festivals in 2027 and scale internationally.

Founder perspective

Ando Eniwumide, a former musician, spent nearly two decades as a technologist, latterly at BAE Systems and the MoD. ViiVid was born at a concert where he couldn't see the bassist play. Inventor of six patents and an EIC People's Choice Award winner, he leads with CTO Colin Agbabiaka and CRO Theo-Lee Houston.



TrueRights

Website: TrueRights
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Seed

Founder: Benjamin Woollams
Location: London
Founded: 2024

TrueRights is the system of record for creative rights, helping creators price, license, protect and get paid for their content and likeness.

The problem and opportunity

Creators, athletes and musicians now license their content and likeness to brands and AI companies, yet rights live in emails and PDFs. Pricing is guesswork, deals take weeks, payment is slow and misuse goes unpaid, so value leaks from the UK's creative industries. Agencies and marketplaces handle one deal at a time; none hold a record of who owns what, what they've consented to and on what terms, which AI-era licensing needs.

The solution and innovation

TrueRights records who owns what, what they've consented to and the terms of every deal. On that record we price licences programmatically, run the deal and take payment. We're named in each commercial agreement, so we monitor use and enforce the creator's rights, invoicing for misuse to secure fair payment. That same record is the infrastructure for licensing IP into AI tools for commercial use, so creators are paid when AI uses their work.

Market and ambition

Around 7,000 creators have signed up, with partners including the BBC, seven generative AI studios, supplier agreements with TikTok and Meta, plus work with unions and governments. There will be 107 million creators by 2030; we start in the UK and US. We aim to reach and support 5 million global creators in the next 3 years and become the standard rights layer for creative licensing.

Founder perspective

Ben Woollams was employee #3 at Influencer.com, helping scale it to 150 people. He built partnerships with global platforms and supported growth into the US, Europe and the Middle East. He saw creators lose money to unclear rights and slow payment. Ben contributed to Oxford's consultation on copyright and AI and advises AI companies on creative rights and digital twins.



Aidos

Website: Aidos
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founders: Carole Osborne
Location: East of England
Founded: 2025

Aidos protects children's identities in online marketing by removing real faces and replacing them with synthetic ones before images go live.

The problem and opportunity

Every day, images of real people can be scraped online and turned into harmful manipulated content. Brands and agencies rely on visual storytelling to give customers a reason to believe and buy. But what would they do if, tomorrow, a child's face from one of their ads was scraped and turned into harmful abusive material? Blurring ruins the image and consent forms do not stop the harm, so the risk sits with the brand or agency that publishes it.

The solution and innovation

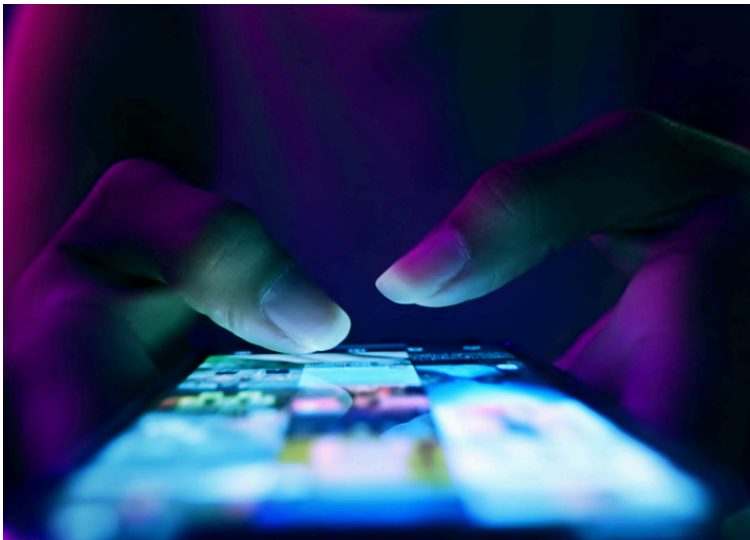
Aidos is a UK safeguarding solution built solely to protect identities. It permanently replaces every real face with a realistic synthetic one, so images keep their value but no real identity is left to steal. Our catalogue of synthetic faces is unique to us, made by us, and contains no real child. Schools in the UK and Italy already use Aidos, and Next Wave takes it into the tools agencies use every day, for photography and video.

Market and ambition

Aidos is already paid for and used by schools and nurseries in the UK and Italy. Innovate UK support will help take us into UK advertising, a £39bn industry and Europe's largest, publishing millions of images of real people a year. We start with a small focused pilot using a network of agencies, then roll out across the UK and Europe within three years.

Founder perspective

Carole Osborne has spent over 30 years in the creative sector, 15 running her own 55 person agency for some of the UK's biggest brands. Then a school she worked with told her about images being scraped from its website and turned into harmful abusive material. Her belief that powerful storytelling and protection must go hand in hand is what drives Aidos.



ip(x)

Website: ip(x)
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founder: Holger Behn
Location: London
Founded: 2026

ip(x) is creating the music infrastructure layer for artists and record labels to be able to manage their career end to end, from release to promotion to royalty collections.

The problem and opportunity

There are more artists than ever, most of whom don't have the expertise or knowledge to manage their career. The place to go to understand what to do next is an LLM, but LLM's are not industry experts and will not assist you in distributing your music, promoting it and ensuring that royalties are collected. The ip(x) infra layer is your music assistant, that will ensure your career is run professionally without needing a manager.

The solution and innovation

ip(x) holds the keys to the various industry partners who manage the various parts to an artist's career. After an initial 'surgery' whereby ip(x) understands who the artist is, the infrastructure layer will begin guiding an artist through their career, distributing the music directly through preferred partners, promoting it directly through robust solutions and ensuring royalties are collected accurately. All controlled via your LLM.

Market and ambition

The independent sector is the target market, growing rapidly and now accounting for over 50% of the market. An early partnership with un:hurd music unlocks access to 200,000 artists immediately, and the ambition is to reach millions of artists following year 1's launch.

Founder perspective

Hosh is a global touring DJ having amassed millions of streams and headlining the biggest stages in the world. Supported by Alex Brees, CEO and Founder at un:hurd music, a platform that serves over 200,000 artists globally, including some of the biggest artists in the world.



Cutpoint

Website: Cutpoint
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founders: Shir Comay, Gadi Guy
Location: London
Founded: 2026

Cutpoint is software for film and TV postproduction that lets editing, sound, effects, colour and delivery work at once instead of in turn.

The problem and opportunity

Film and TV edits keep changing until delivery. Every re-cut and new shot version is tracked and implemented by hand in every other department. Departments work in turn; an estimated 20 to 30% of all postproduction work is wastage. Existing tools are one per department. Cutpoint is the first inter-departmental sync tool, and in postproduction the first tool in a category becomes the standard. The opportunity is what Figma did for design: make postproduction multiplayer.

The solution and innovation

At our core is the diffing engine: it compares versions of shots or the whole edit, from project files or frames, and knows what changed and what each department must do. Software has worked this way for decades; postproduction is digital too, and Cutpoint brings the same principles to it.
Our users designed workflows that let multiple departments work at the same time. The result: postproduction schedules shrink and creative people spend more time on creative work.

Market and ambition

Film and TV postproduction spends about $30bn a year globally. About 25% of that is wastage. Cutpoint's products reduce the waste and compress schedules, and our goal is to capture a share of that wastage spend. The aim is to become the working standard for features and television worldwide: First UK, then LA.

Founder perspective

Shir Comay directed and edited film for 20 years, across seven features and 100+ commercial films, and saw every re-cut turn skilled people from creative work to administration. Gadi Guy is an engineer and architect from Google, Wix and Fireblocks, and CTO at their previous start-up. Cutpoint is their second company together.



GIGGLE BYTE STUDIOS LTD

Website: GIGGLE BYTE STUDIOS LTD
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founders: Adam Thornton, Mark Horneff, Gordon Ross
Location: South East
Founded: 2023

GiggleBox helps children learn through conversations, games and personalised stories with an animated character on a dedicated device.

The problem and opportunity

Children learn through curiosity, conversation and play, but digital entertainment often gives them little opportunity to speak, create or shape what happens. Parents want engaging experiences with educational value and visibility into their child's progress.
The opportunity is to make children active participants in compelling adventures, with learning built into the fun.

The solution and innovation

Our early GiggleBox prototype demonstrates voice conversation, animated characters, camera-aware play and personalised storytelling. Building on our Kuato IP portfolio, including patented Actor Director technology, the Innovate UK project will develop and integrate these capabilities, parent controls and authored gameplay, then test safety, responsiveness and enjoyment with children and families.

Market and ambition

We will sell GiggleBox devices to families, followed by additional games, stories and character content. Over the next three years, we aim to turn our working prototype into a family-tested commercial product, build repeat content revenue and pursue international distribution, with longer-term opportunities to license our technology.

Founder perspective

Our experience spans Grand Theft Auto and work with Hasbro, EA, LeapFrog, LEGO and Disney. We came together at Kuato with a shared ambition: to use great entertainment to educate. Forming GiggleByte was the natural next step, bringing our experience in games, learning and technology together to create something special for children.



Stornaway.io

Website: Stornaway.io
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Seed

Founders: Kate Dimbleby, Rupert Howe
Location: South West
Founded: 2019

Stornaway lets broadcasters, streamers, producers and educational publishers make content interactive, accessible and localised.

The problem and opportunity

Broadcasters, streamers, producers and publishers must render a separate version of each programme for every audience: signed, subtitled, described or dubbed. Disabled and neurodivergent viewers get whichever version was affordable, and archives go unadapted. Accessibility is now law under the European Accessibility Act and Ofcom targets.

Interactive video platforms lock content to their own players, and existing formats are linear only.

The solution and innovation

Stornaway's object-based media format allows content to be assembled for each viewer, with interactivity, sequences, overlays, signing, subtitles, audio and languages as layers. It can be used to create new content using Stornaway's powerful authoring tool, or to programmatically retrofit existing libraries without re-editing, using AI under human approval. Mix Mups for Channel 5 won two TVOT awards and a Japan Prize Award of Honor.

Market and ambition

Stornaway targets broadcasters, streamers, producers and archives, plus education publishers and enterprise training, in a media localisation market growing from $4bn to $7.5bn by 2035. It licenses to enterprise accounts with 150% net revenue retention, a majority of which are exports, and aims to triple recurring revenue by 2029.

Founder perspective

Kate Dimbleby is a noted jazz/blues singer, musical innovator and creative producer. Ru Howe invented Spacetimecode as an object-based media format for interactive video, was a web video pioneer, and led innovative TV workflows at the BBC. They co-founded Stornaway in 2020, are married and co-lead a majority female team based in Bristol.



AUXA

Website: AUXA
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founders: Christos Michalakos and Marios Michalakos
Location: Scotland
Founded: 2021

AUXA develops AI-powered creative tools that help sound designers create, shape and control sound variations for games and media.

The problem and opportunity

Games and interactive media demand increasingly rich, varied audio, yet creating and managing sound variations remains time-consuming and labour-intensive. Traditional tools rely heavily on manual editing and repetitive workflows, while emerging AI solutions often lack the precision, consistency and creative control professionals need. This creates an opportunity for more expressive, efficient and creator-centred sound-design workflows.

The solution and innovation

AUXA is developing Varia, an AI-powered sound design platform that enables creators to transform their own recordings into controlled variations while preserving their original character. Combining advanced AI with a flexible system for building complex sound behaviours, Varia aims to give professionals new ways to create rich, dynamic audio experiences with greater creative control.

Market and ambition

AUXA will target game studios and sound designers before expanding into film and media. Within three years, we aim to establish Varia as a leading AI sound design platform, grow a global customer base and secure major strategic industry partnerships, making it an essential tool for audio professionals and content creators worldwide.

Founder perspective

Co-founders Marios and Christos Michalakos combine AAA game development experience at Rockstar Games, including Grand Theft Auto, with academic expertise in audio research. Drawing on their industry knowledge and creative experience, they seek to harness advanced AI to transform professional sound design and expand creative possibilities.



Locat Technology Limited

Website: Locat Technology Limited
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founders: John Hardy
Location: London
Founded: 2024

Games with no phone in hand that get people moving and playing together in real spaces, from a pub table to a park, nothing installed.

The problem and opportunity

A video game knows where every player is, what they are doing and what the rules say happens next. Physical play has never had that. Laser tag knows a hit happened; an escape room knows a switch was flipped; neither knows where anyone is, and tracking people indoors has meant cameras or anchors fixed to a building. So the mechanics video games are built on, territory, pursuit, hidden information,
have stayed on the screen.

The solution and innovation

Locat gives physical play what a video game has: portable positioning hardware that a venue puts down rather than installs, a wearable that knows who each player is without a phone, and a game engine that treats position as an input, indoors and out. The objects are the interface, so play is phone-free and children can take part. Nothing is fixed to the building and no internet is needed.

Market and ambition

First market: UK pubs, competitive-socialising venues and escape rooms that want new formats without a fit-out; then schools, youth groups, holiday parks and festivals with the same kit. Paid pilots run in 2027. The ambition is a platform other studios and hardware makers build on, sold to venues across the UK and then internationally.

Founder perspective

Locat began with the founder's five years running immersive games for hundreds of kids at a US summer camp, with no technology at all, and enjoying every minute. Those experiences could be made richer, and reach far more people, with the right hardware. A career in full-stack software, and more recently hardware, turned that into a company.



Olive AI Limited

Website: Olive AI
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Early-stage SME
Founder: Sojin Lee
Location: London
Founded: 2022

Olive AI is developing Sonora, an innovative agentic AI platform that connects fragmented music-industry data to help artist-management teams assess opportunities and make better-informed decisions.

The problem and opportunity

The music industry is under massive pressure from rising costs, market saturation and AI-generated music. Artists, publishers and management companies are struggling, with opportunities increasingly favouring established acts. Meanwhile, vital information is fragmented across systems, making it hard for managers to assess opportunities. Existing tools address isolated tasks rather than bringing together the evidence needed for informed decisions.

The solution and innovation

Olive AI will lead the development of Sonora, an agentic AI platform created with HarrisonParrott, a leading classical music management company. Sonora will connect fragmented internal and external data through a music-specific knowledge model, helping artist managers assess opportunities with reliable, evidence-based recommendations. The platform will highlight risks and uncertainties while keeping managers in control of decisions.

Market and ambition

Olive AI aims to scale Sonora across the global music industry, targeting artist managers, booking agencies, promoters, labels and venues. HarrisonParrott will adopt and validate the platform in 2028, ahead of its commercial launch. We target 50 customers and £827k annual revenue by 2031, expanding into new genres and markets.

Founder perspective

Olive AI develops trustworthy, practical AI solutions that help organisations make better decisions. Through Sonora, we combine our agentic AI expertise with HarrisonParrott's music-industry knowledge to reduce repetitive research, identify new opportunities and free artist managers to focus on artist development, partnerships and growth.



Parable Studios

Website: Parable Studios
Sub-sector: Video games
Stage: Seed

Founder: Ambrose Robinson
Location: North East
Founded: 2024

Parable builds tools for studios to ethically source data, train consumer-facing small AI models and ship them on their customers' devices.

The problem and opportunity

Players increasingly want in-game characters capable of holding immersive and unscripted conversation. Current AI NPCs are trained on data scraped from the internet and are hosted in data centres. For creatives, this has seen the theft of their work, used in content without payment, credit or consent whilst studios struggle to justify server costs. How can creatives participate in a tech movement damaging the planet and trying to replace them?

The solution and innovation

Parable addresses these challenges with a platform where creatives create and upload data with consent for AI training use, knowing their work is protected, can be revoked, and that they'll be paid when it's used. Data feeds into an accessible, creative-driven and patent-pending training process that creates small models for edge deployment. Parable proved its engine with a successful indie game and is proceeding with pilots at partnering studios.

Market and ambition

Parable was first to market for on-device LLMs in games at the start of 2025, selling over 4000 copies with zero marketing spend. We converted that pioneer status into two engine licensing deals for as-yet unannounced game projects. We aim to grow a foundation in games into a cross-industry data hub backed by the frontier in AI training.

Founder perspective

Ambrose Robinson was undertaking a PhD in AI when ChatGPT released, triggering a scraping and synthetic data goldrush amongst his peers. He noticed the data wasn't just unethical, but low quality and not fit for purpose for on-device game AI. He founded Parable to put real people (creatives, professionals) at the centre of AI development.



WeArisma

Website: WeArisma
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Seed

Founder: Jenny Tsai
Location: East of England
Founded: 2014

WeArisma shows global consumer brands what their creator, ambassador and event spend delivered, by reading video, audio and images directly.

The problem and opportunity

Brands plan creator, ambassador and event investment without a reliable view of where culture is heading. Search-trend indices show what people type, but cultural attention now lives in video, audio and images, and a large amount of it carries no caption, hashtag or handle. Existing tools read text around content, one platform at a time, and as a result, marketers in one of the UK's strongest creative industries plan on partial, backward-looking evidence.

The solution and innovation

WeArisma is building a multimodal cultural index: stable categories marketers can plan in, tracked from what appears and is said in content itself, not the text around it. It is the visual and audio equivalent of a search-trends index, turning frame-by-frame detection into forward-looking signal. It builds on eight years of curated data from 130 million influential sources and a platform already used by global brands.

Market and ambition

Social takes $306bn of the $1.3 trillion spent on advertising in 2026, and creator marketing is growing 30% a year. The index opens planning budgets at enterprise brands in luxury, beauty, fashion, drinks and retail, plus agencies and data partners. Within three years we aim to make it the industry benchmark for cultural investment.

Founder perspective

Jenny Tsai was a digital media director at Hearst, where she saw brands invest heavily in influence with no reliable way to measure it. She founded WeArisma in 2014 to fix that, building the proprietary data asset before the product. She leads a team combining engineering leaders from Microsoft and Skimlinks with social-insight experts.



Day30

Website: Day30
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Pre-Seed

Founders: Shumel Lais, John Sandall
Location: London
Founded: 2025

Day30 improves paid acquisition for subscription apps by telling ad platforms what a user is worth before the revenue arrives.

The problem and opportunity

Ad platforms now decide who sees an ad and which creative wins, learning from the conversion signal advertisers send back. For subscription apps that signal is broken: revenue arrives weeks after a trial, outside the platform's learning window, so advertisers report trial starts instead and most never pay. Budget flows to the wrong users and creative teams learn the wrong lessons. Fixing this takes a data science team most UK apps cannot afford.

The solution and innovation

Day30 predicts within hours of install how valuable each new user will become and sends that prediction to the ad platform as the conversion signal, so it optimises immediately rather than weeks later. Subscription apps such as Opal have seen a 33% lift in return on ad spend, independently measured. The next step is making the tuning of that signal autonomous, adapting it to live campaign context.

Market and ambition

Day30 serves subscription apps running paid acquisition on Meta, a category led by a US and a European vendor with no UK provider. Within three years the aim is dozens of clients, hundreds of millions in ad spend under management and eight-figure revenue, then expansion beyond subscription apps to ecommerce and fintech.

Founder perspective

Shumel Lais founded Appsumer, a UK ad analytics startup later acquired by InMobi, and has 15 years of mobile performance marketing experience. John Sandall is a data science leader with 15 years of experience and prior Innovate UK delivery. They saw advertising going autonomous and knew such systems are only as good as their signal.



Production Park Ltd.

Website: Production Park Ltd.
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Series C

Founder: Lee Brooks
Location: Yorkshire and the Humber
Founded: 2004

Production Park offers production rehearsal, education and innovation for live entertainment, developing 4DC to capture performances in 3D.

The problem and opportunity

Artists, producers and broadcasters need realistic content for new immersive viewing formats. Conventional video fixes the viewer's perspective, while existing 3D capture struggles with the scale and complexity of live performance. 4DC aims to close this gap, helping customers reach new audiences and earn more from each production while creating skilled jobs and export opportunities in West Yorkshire.

The solution and innovation

Production Park is developing 4DC to capture live performances as lifelike, moving 3D scenes, giving audiences an experience that's 'like being there'. It combines synchronised cameras and AI reconstruction, with continuous calibration in development for live use. Successful prototype trials, specialist software and production know-how underpin its advantage, supported by working stages and industry talent.

Market and ambition

Production Park serves touring artists, productions, studios and broadcasters, alongside educating future talent. Building on successful customer trials, we aim to launch paid 4DC pilots within the next two years and expand through rental partners, system sales and recurring software revenue.

Founder perspective

Lee Brooks helped build Production Park around the practical needs of live entertainment, uniting production, education and innovation. His engineering experience and industry relationships support 4DC and reflect his passion for bringing advanced technology and skilled opportunities to West Yorkshire.



Stagely Ltd

Website: Stagely Ltd
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founder: Daniel Lennox
Location: South West
Founded: 2024

Stagely's free app taking UK theatre beyond the West End, filling seats in every theatre, in every town via seat availability and prices.

The problem and opportunity

Outside London, theatre is hard to find. Listings sit on separate venue sites and big platforms favour the West End, so 56% of fans in our YouGov research found shows by chance. A third of seats went unsold across 177 UK venues in 2024 (TRG Arts), costing venues income and high streets £1.40 per £1 of ticket. Existing tools show what's on, not prices or availability. 67% of creative GVA sits in London and the South East.

The solution and innovation

Stagely is a free iOS and Android app listing productions across the whole UK, from regional and amateur shows to the West End, with personalised recommendations, local search, ratings, reviews and check-ins. Built with Innovate UK Creative Catalyst funding and launched in July 2026. Innovate UK-funded research from January 2027 will bring live prices and seat availability from different ticketing systems into one search.

Market and ambition

Stagely is for anyone wanting a great local night out, from the 17.1 million UK adults who go to theatre to last-minute planners. Launched in July 2026, it reached thousands of users at launch and is backed by Innovate UK, with two leading venues exploring pilots. Next: live availability for 859 regional theatres, then the USA and Australia.

Founder perspective

Daniel fell in love with theatre in 1990, listening to Peter Cushing in a local production of Little Shop of Horrors at Whitstable Playhouse. He worked backstage until graduation. After 20+ years in marketing and e-commerce, in roles at Pinewood Studios and for Andrew Lloyd Webber, he built Stagely so everyone can discover local theatre.



gigmate

Website: gigmate
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Pre-Seed
Founder: Rob March
Location: North West
Founded: 2022

gigmate embeds in ticketing checkouts and matches solo buyers into groups, turning abandoned single tickets into completed group sales.

The problem and opportunity

Many fans want to attend gigs but won't buy a single ticket alone, so the sale is abandoned. Ticketing platforms lose revenue, promoters and venues lose attendance, and fans miss live culture,
a particular issue for the creative sector. Platforms sell tickets to groups that already exist but have no way to build groups from solo buyers, and social apps sit outside checkout, so the sale is lost before anyone connects.

The solution and innovation

gigmate adds a matching layer to ticket checkout that pairs solo buyers with compatible fans, using graph-based machine learning on shared tastes and Tribe (genre community) membership. Defensibility comes from proprietary matching data and models that improve with each pairing. Validated by 2,767 members across 62 Tribes, 83% of 440 surveyed fans interested, and a planned pilot with Skiddle.

Market and ambition

Target market: ticketing platforms serving UK live music, worth £7.6bn in consumer spend in 2025 (+12.9%). Early traction: 2,767 members and 62 Tribes, with a Skiddle pilot planned for early 2027 to reach 10,000 users, mainly in the North West. Ambition: integrate with several UK ticketing platforms by 2028, then expand to Europe.

Founder perspective

I built gigmate as a consumer app, and after two years learned that fans won't find gig companions on their own app but will at checkout. So I rebuilt it as infrastructure for ticketing platforms, and I hold it to an evidence standard: build, test with real users, and only then scale.



Volta Interactive

Website: Volta Interactive
Sub-sector: Advertising and marketing
Stage: Seed

Founders: Alex Kane, Yuli Levtov
Location: London
Founded: 2021

Volta Interactive lets brands and venues turn any screen, from billboards to stadiums, into an experience crowds control from their phones.

The problem and opportunity

Brands spend billions on screens in public spaces, stadiums and live events, but audiences only watch. Impact is hard to prove and attention is fleeting. Making a screen interactive usually means an app download, special hardware or a costly one-off build, so it rarely happens. Media owners and agencies have no simple way to create, run or sell interactive campaigns at scale, leaving a valuable new form of engagement untapped.

The solution and innovation

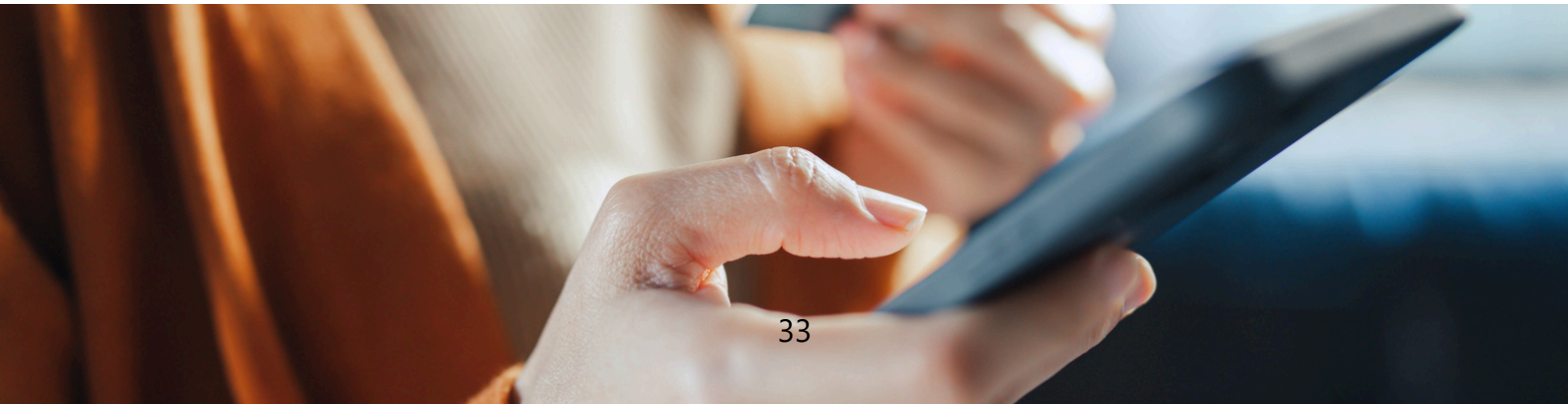
Volta's real-time platform lets thousands of people join an experience on a big screen by scanning a QR code, straight from their phone's browser. It has been proven at Super Bowl LX, where 91% of 7,113 participants came back to play again, in Times Square with OUTFRONT Media and at the Australian Open. Next Wave funding turns it into a self-serve platform that agencies and media owners use to build and sell interactive campaigns.

Market and ambition

Volta targets digital out-of-home advertising, live events and sport, then retail and hospitality. It works with OUTFRONT Media, Newcastle United and Cannes Lions. Within three years it aims to be the standard for interactive screen advertising, licensing its platform to agencies and media owners across the UK, US, Europe & Middle East.

Founder perspective

Alex Kane is an artist, designer and musician who founded Volta as a graduate project at Imperial College London and the Royal College of Art. Named one of TIME's Best Inventions, Volta grew from his work making live shows interactive. He leads with co-founder / CTO Yuli Levtov, who leads its real-time technology innovation & development.



Gig Lab

Website: Gig Lab
Sub-sector: Music, performing and visual arts
Stage: Pre-Seed
Location: North East

Founders: Victoria Smith, Gemma Shamah, Carl Bathgate, Helen McGee, Richard Maides
Founded: 2025

Gig Lab is the booking platform live music has never had; bringing venues and promoters together so more great gigs happen in more places.

The problem and opportunity

We're still booking live music venues like it's the 90s, through endless emails and spreadsheets. That friction drains time poor promoters and venues, puts great shows in the wrong rooms and takes live music away from whole towns. Diaries, deals and show data stay locked in spreadsheets and every independent works in a silo, when together they'd be far stronger.

The solution and innovation

Gig Lab brings every stage of putting on a live show onto one connected platform, from diaries and holds to advances, ticketing and settlements. Venues and promoters work from the same live data, and promoters can find and book a venue as easily as a hotel room. That builds the live music database the industry has never had, which powers human-led, explainable AI that shows promoters where a show will work before they take the risk.

Market and ambition

Gig Lab starts in the UK, built for every live music venue and promoter from grassroots to arenas. It has been pilot tested across 12 venues of 200 to 5,000 capacity, run by independents and small chain operators. We launch commercially in January and aim to become the booking infrastructure for UK live music within three years.

Founder perspective

Gig Lab's founding team brings experience from more than 100 venues, including senior roles at Live Nation and the O2 Academy network. Two of the team are trustees of LIVE Trust and Music Venue Trust. Decades inside the industry have shown them exactly where human-led AI can make live music fairer, smarter and stronger.



Gravity Sketch

Website: Gravity Sketch
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Series A

Founders: Oluwaseyi Sosanya, Daniel Thomas
Location: London
Founded: 2014

Gravity Sketch is an immersive 3D workspace built for ideation and collaborative problem-solving.

The problem and opportunity

Physical products are still designed through fragmented workflows that make it difficult to communicate ideas and collaborate across disciplines. Designers, engineers, and decision makers often rely on 2D representations of 3D concepts or costly physical prototypes. This disconnect delays decisions, limits creativity, and leads to unnecessary rework, wasted materials, and longer development cycles.

The solution and innovation

Gravity Sketch brings product development into a shared 3D environment where teams can create, collaborate, and evaluate ideas across VR and screen. By combining intuitive spatial design, real-time collaboration, and full-scale review, teams can make better decisions earlier. Trusted by global brands including Ford, adidas, and New Balance, Gravity Sketch is transforming how physical products move from concept to reality.

Market and ambition

Gravity Sketch serves global leaders in automotive, footwear, industrial design, and entertainment, including Stellantis, Nissan, and Netflix. Over three years, we aim to help 2-3 more industries revolutionise product pipelines, expanding access to collaborative 3D development and becoming a foundational platform for product development.

Founder perspective

Founded by a design engineer and an industrial designer, Gravity Sketch was born from a shared frustration: designing physical products through flat screens. They believed digital tools should feel as intuitive as working with your hands in a workshop, letting people think, create, and collaborate naturally in 3D, without tech getting in the way.



Hat Trick Animation Studios

Website: Hat Trick Animation Studios
Sub-sector: Film and television
Stage: Seed

Founders: Jonny McCausland, Liam Stout, Daniel Efergan
Location: London
Founded: 2026

We make AI-enabled animation for digital-first audiences, with provenance built in so every human contribution is traceable and paid.

The problem and opportunity

AI makes animation far cheaper to produce, but the industry cannot use it at scale because nobody can prove whose work went into an output, whether they consented, or what they are owed. Existing provenance standards prove a file is authentic but say nothing about rights or payment. UK AI and copyright policy is still unresolved – the onus is on the industry to prove the way forward.

The solution and innovation

Our pipeline records every human input as it enters and carries that record through to the finished output, with licence terms and payment attached to it. We believe it is the first in the world to track human contribution end to end. Built with CoSTAR funding and now being extended with Innovate UK and the University of Surrey, it lets us make animation cheaply, prove what is in it, and pay the people who made it possible.

Market and ambition

Our markets are digital-first audiences worldwide, broadcaster and streamer commissions, and producers who need the same provenance infrastructure.
The pipeline is in production now, with a forty-year catalogue behind it. Within three years we aim to launch six to seven owned properties a year and license the technology to others.

Founder perspective

We are spinning out of Hat Trick Productions, founded by Jimmy Mulville in 1986. He is joined by Creative Director Jon Petrie, Jonny McCausland, who built Hat Trick's innovation lab and games division, Dan Efergan, former Executive Creative Director for Innovation at Aardman, and
Liam Stout, exited founder of animation studio Screenpoint.





Learn more about Innovate UK Next Wave:
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