



Chicago Envoy 25-29 June 2018



Join us and learn about what makes this city so unique.

Program - Who will you meet?



Fred Hoch

Founder of TechNexus and Executive Chairman of Illinois Technology Association (ITA)

<https://www.technexus.com/>

<https://www.illinoistech.org/>

Fred is the Founder and General Partner of Chicago's TechNexus Venture Collaborative, a venture development and innovation services firm building a new, collaborative model for leading corporations to engage and extract value from the global entrepreneurial ecosystem. TechNexus operates an incubator from its headquarters in Chicago, where more than 400 ventures have grown. Fred is also the Executive Chairman of the Illinois Technology Association (ITA), a business services organization with more than 500-member tech companies. ITA serves as a platform for strategic development of the tech industry in Chicago helps its member companies grow, build and elevate their business. **Fred will give us an overview of the Tech scene in Chicago, how Chicago competes with other US tech hubs, and opportunities for international companies.**



Craig Vodnik

Co-founder of Cleverbridge and Board member of Hyde park Angels

<https://www.cleverbridge.com/>

Craig is a Co-founder of Cleverbridge, the market leading full-service e-commerce platform for software and subscription model businesses. Craig started the business with 3 co-founders in 2005 and bootstrapped the company to profitability in two years. Today, the company has over 300 employees and offices in Chicago, San Francisco, Cologne, and Tokyo. Before Cleverbridge, Craig worked at companies in the financial services, e-commerce, banking and publishing industries, starting with his first job as the webmaster at the Chicago Tribune, where he led the technical efforts to launch the newspaper online in 1996. Craig is also co-chair of the Digital Media & Technology subgroup at Hyde Park Angels, an early stage investor group. He works with associates to source, evaluate and recommend companies for presenting to the broader membership of Hyde Park Angels. His interests are in e-commerce, software, Software-as-a-Service and

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marketplaces. Craig will share the story of growth and business practices of Cleverbridge as well as his perspectives as an angel investor.



Jason Birnbaum
 VP of Operations and Employee Technology at United Airlines
<https://hub.united.com/>

Jason is the Vice President of Operations Technology at United Airlines, world's third-largest airline when measured by revenue. In his role at United, Jason has overall responsibility for all the technology systems that support United's 88,000 employees including all Operations Divisions, Corporate HR, Finance and Communications. Prior to joining United in 2015, Jason was the CIO for SIRVA, a worldwide relocation and logistics company. Prior to that, he spent 16 years at General Electric, including CIO of GE Consumer and Industrial Europe based in Budapest, and CIO of GE Healthcare Global Supply Chain. Jason has a BS from University of Missouri and an MBA from University of Illinois. He is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt. **Jason will share his perspectives on mobile technology, social media and how United is leveraging technology to better serve its customers and employees.**



Marc Jason Grens
 Co-Founder & President of DigitalMint
<http://www.digitalmint.io/>

Marc is the Co-Founder & President of DigitalMint, one of the largest on-demand bitcoin cash exchanges in the USA that operates in 14 states and is expanding to over 40 states in 2018. Additionally, DigitalMint is one of the very few vertically integrated bitcoin cash exchanges in the market today that is BSA/AML Compliant and builds & owns their own technology. Since 2011, he refocused his efforts to work with tech entrepreneurs, making angel investments in tech companies and acted as a hands-on accelerator to help businesses grow. Marc serves on the advisory board for companies in the financial technology, business services and pet technology industries. **Besides presenting Digital Mint and Marc provide an overview of trends in bitcoin, blockchain and how they are influencing the financial sector and other industries.**



James Spalding
 Director of Marketing at PepsiCo – Tropicana
<http://www.pepsico.com/>

PepsiCo is a global food and beverage leader with a product portfolio including 22 brands that generate more than \$1 billion each in annual retail sales. Their main businesses are Quaker, Tropicana, Gatorade, Frito-Lay and Pepsi-Co. **We will learn from Jim about PepsiCo's brand strategies, how they utilize digital/social media and where they see the future for FMCG.**



Mark Rose
VP Strategic Marketing at Tronc
<http://www.tronc.com/>

Tronc, Inc. is a media company rooted in award-winning journalism and headquartered in Chicago. Tronc operates newsrooms in ten markets with titles including the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, New York Daily News, The Baltimore Sun, Orlando Sentinel, South Florida's Sun-Sentinel, Newport News, Virginia's Daily Press, Allentown, Pennsylvania's The Morning Call, Hartford Courant, and The San Diego Union-Tribune. Their brands have earned a combined 105 Pulitzer Prizes and they are committed to informing, inspiring and engaging local communities. **At the meeting we will learn how publishing is changing in terms of technology, content, readership, marketing and advertising.**



Jackson Jhin
Investment Analyst at Chicago Ventures
<http://chicagoventures.com/>

Jackson is an investment analyst at Chicago Ventures, an early stage technology fund that invests \$500K-\$2M in software and tech-enabled startups. They invest in companies that are building innovative technology in geographic regions where there's historically been a lack of seed capital: places like Chicago, Austin, Madison and Denver. Jackson focuses his time on sourcing, evaluating, and supporting investments, with a particular interest in AI and machine learning applied to enterprise verticals. Prior to Chicago Ventures, Jackson co-founded Float Tickets, which provides peer-to-peer insurance for airline and event tickets. **At the meeting we will learn about Chicago Venture investment interests, tech trends, and investing in international companies.**



Kaitlyn Doyle
Director of Irish Angels
<http://irishangels.com/>

Kaitlyn manages operations of the Irish Angels group, which includes deal screening, due diligence, membership recruitment, and monitoring the portfolio. Irish Angels is an angel investor group focused on seed and early stage investments in the most promising ventures affiliated with the University of Notre Dame, through a founder or investor. Irish Angels is comprised of over 200 investors, including some of the nation's leading venture capital and private equity professionals as well as seasoned entrepreneurs. They invest across a variety of sectors including internet/mobile, software, special markets, scientific medical, and social enterprise. **Kaitlyn will share how the angel group operates, how they make investment decisions, how they co-invest with other groups and other investment trends.**

UPTAKE Uptake is Chicago's Unicorn who has raised over \$200mil, is valued at \$2.3 billion and have grown to over 700 employees in 4 years. Uptake is a predictive analytics SaaS platform that delivers solutions in major industries that increase productivity, reliability, and safety. They use machine learning to read and understand how machines are working and to anticipate when they may break down or need attention. Leveraging partnerships with industry icons, Uptake's platform aggregates enterprise and external data and applies cross-industry data science to produce high-value, actionable insights. They work in energy, construction, fleet management, agriculture and other industries. **At the meeting we will learn about their work, how they achieved their growth and how they engage their staff in achieving goals.**

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Manny Bernabe
Sr. Data Scientist at Uptake

Manny leads and develops strategic relationships for Uptake's Data Science team. He works with industry partners, universities advisors and business leaders to understand the opportunities for aspiring data-driven organizations. Manny brings a background from the Financial Services sector and specifically asset management. He has deep expertise in research and deployment of quantitative strategies in exchange traded funds (ETFs).



Gentzy Franz
Director of Organization Development at Uptake

"My job is to create the right programming, experiences and environment for helping our people grow, both individually and as a team. That work basically breaks down into three buckets: talent, learning and culture."

Reverb

Reverb.com <https://reverb.com/> is the online marketplace for musicians to buy, sell and learn about new, used, vintage and handmade music gear. When Reverb launched in 2013, it was founded on the principle that buying and selling musical instruments should be easy and affordable. Since then they've become a thriving marketplace that connects millions of people around the world to the gear and the inspiration needed to make music. The Reverb Marketplace is made up of hundreds of thousands of buyers and sellers – from beginner musicians to collectors, mom-and-pop shops to large retailers, and popular manufacturers to boutique builders and luthiers. The company raised over \$45 million from investors, have 150 employees and were projected to do \$400million in sales in 2017.



Nate Cooper
Co-founder and President of Wise Apple
<https://www.getwiseapple.com/>

Wise Apple is focused on changing the way kids eat, starting with a tech-enabled solution for school lunch. Wise Apple was launched in 2016 and has received \$3.6million in funding for expansion in 2017. Prior to founding Wise Apple, Nate was a founding partner of L3Hospitality group; the sole franchisee of LYFE Kitchen-which owns and operates 5 LYFE Kitchen restaurants in the Chicago area. Nate began his career as the first employee of LYFE Kitchen, growing it from a concept to a national chain with 20 locations and \$40M+ in sales. Nate serves as an investor and advisor to a variety of Food & Beverage and CPG companies in the Chicagoland area. In his free time, Nate is a passionate endurance athlete and has completed an Ironman triathlon and nearly a dozen marathons. He serves as a partner at Social Venture Partners Chicago and the associate boards of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum & the Lurie Children's Foundation for Hearing and Speech Rehabilitation. **At the meeting we will learn about their story, expansion, fundraising and how they are solving challenges of growth as a startup.**



Bill Fienup

Director of Innovation services and Co-founder of mHUB

<https://mhubchicago.com/>

Bill is a mechanical engineer, product developer and serial entrepreneur who has designed toys for Hasbro and researched fusion energy for Los Alamos National Laboratory. He is co-founder of mHUB, which is designed to give entrepreneurs a place to develop and manufacture physical products — a traditionally long and costly process — and connect them with established manufacturers, venture capitalists, experts and other resources. Bill started his career as a product design consultant for IDEO and Insight Product Development. He started several companies, including Ecofurn and MB Labs, which focused on connected devices. Bill holds 11 patents — including a bandage dispenser, biopsy needle and a NERF Atom Blaster™ with more pending, including several related to 3D printing. Bill's reputation as a thought leader extends beyond Chicago. In addition to being a repeat visitor to the White House for topics ranging from international trade to the maker movement, Bill has appeared on national television with his inventions. **At the meeting we will discuss trends in manufacturing, technology, and innovations coming out of mHUB, as well as product development and investors when it comes to physical products.**



Peggy Parfenoff

President of WorldChicago

<http://www.worldchicago.org/>

WorldChicago is a Community Based Member hosting US Department of State citizen diplomacy programs such as the International Visitor Leadership Program, Professional Fellows, Youth Leadership and other international exchange programs. WorldChicago is a member of the Global Ties national network, and Peggy serves on the board member for Global Ties. Before joining WorldChicago in 2001, Peggy worked at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs as Director of Development. While working at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Ms. Parfenoff earned her M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University where she specialized in Public/Non-Profit Management and Marketing. Her international exposure started with a year spent studying at the Sorbonne in Paris, followed by many journeys throughout Europe, Eurasia, South America, Russia, Cuba, Vietnam and China. **At the meeting Peggy will share her perspective on opportunities in Chicago and useful resources. These perspectives come from rich experience of hosting thousands of entrepreneurs and leaders in Chicago.**



Emily Lonigro

President and Founder of LimeRed

<https://www.limeredstudio.com/>

Emily founded LimeRed, a user experience agency in 2004 with a plan to prioritize high-quality design, user experience, and meaningful social impact. They help all kinds of businesses and organizations make things better - digital platforms, programs, websites, apps, communications strategies and more. Her 14+ years in business spans design, sales, operations, user experience, branding, marketing and strategy in both online and offline programs for multinational corporations, nonprofits, universities, startups, and consumer brands. LimeRed is the only UX Agency that is both a Certified B Corporation and certified woman-owned (WBE). **At the meeting, Emily will share her views on what is shifting in building brands, how to stand out, trends in interaction with consumers, conscious design and much more.**



Mike Zafirovski

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mikezafirovski/>

Mike is founder/president of The Zaf Group, a management consulting and investment firm. The Blackstone Group is the firm's principal client where Mike is an executive advisor and also serves on the board of directors of three Blackstone companies: non-executive chairman of DJO Global Inc and PGI Inc, and independent director for Apria Healthcare Services. Since 2004, he has also served on the board of directors of Boeing, and since 2012, on the board of Stericycle. Previously, in a 34-year corporate career, he served 21 years as President/CEO/COO at Nortel, Motorola, and five GE businesses in the high tech, industrial, consumer, and financial services industries. He is a co-founder and director of Macedonia 2025, an organization dedicated to enhancing the country's economic and democracy developments. He is also a vice chairman of UI Labs, a research and commercialization collaborative focusing on digital manufacturing, design innovation, and "smart city" solutions. A native of Macedonia, he received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2004 and the Medal of Honor from the President of Macedonia in 2013. He also received the Distinguished Leadership Award from the NY Hall of Science in 2008. **Mike will share his perspectives of what it takes to be successful in the US market and is a great resource for any of your business questions.**



Branko Trajkovski

Founder of Bransys group

<https://www.bransys.com/>

Branko is a serial entrepreneur driven by the passion to solve problems that help clients save time and money. Bransys Group was first introduced into the marketplace in 2008 in Skopje, Macedonia with a very small team of only 4 developers. In 2014, with a 500% increase of the team members and a base of +500 clients and +700 projects, Bransys Group opened its second headquarter in Belgrade, Serbia. After the validation of our quality with few large clients and high branded names, Bransys Group, in 2015, decided to test its limits and expend on new markets. This led them to the US market and our new offices in Chicago, Illinois. **Branko will share with us his journey and experience with the US market and how it differentiates to Europe-Balkan region.**



Caitlin McAllister

Executive Director of Catapult Chicago

<https://www.catapultchicago.com/>

Caitlin is the Executive Director of Catapult Chicago, the only non-profit, peer-selected community for startups with business traction. With the bulk of her career based in hospitality at luxury level resorts, her path to running a tech hub is an interesting one! No matter where that path has led, building great teams has always been at the core. In her current role she helps 90+ startup founders do just that through programming, mentorship and community. **At the meeting we will learn how catapult serve also foreign entrepreneurs and we will meet with some of their current residents/founders and learn about their businesses and experience of growing their business sin Chicago.**

Suggested events (some are free, some have a small fee)

Wednesday, 27 June

6 - 8pm Is Blockchain technology worth for IoT solutions providers to make the investment move

<https://go.softwebsolutions.com/resources/iot-blockchain-event-chicago.html>

5.30 - 7.30pm RE-IMAGINED CITIES | CHICAGO 2.0: Meeting the innovators making Chicago a smart city
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/re-imagined-cities-chicago-20-meet-the-innovators-making-chicago-a-smart-city-62718-tickets-44683117407?aff=es2>

6 - 8.30pm Organized by AIGA -Chicago design community

<https://chicago.aiga.org/event/small-talks-morningstar/#> (event for design)

Thursday, 28 June

4.30 - 7.30pm Are you ready for your next capital raise? (the event is in 1871, and we have our last meeting of the day in 1871) <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/ansarada-readiness-series-are-you-growth-ready-tickets-45589958794#tickets>

5.30 - 8pm Founders Live (pitching)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/founders-live-chicago-tickets-46371324881?aff=es2>