



# European Network of Design for Resilient Entrepreneurship

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## Welcome to ENDuRE, the European Network of Design for Resilient Entrepreneurship

The European Commission has highlighted Entrepreneurship as a powerful driver of economic growth, job creation and innovation. Recent communications from EU are clear: Europe needs more entrepreneurs. However, entrepreneurs still lack basic cultural and academic skills to compete in a worldwide market, and more investment in entrepreneurship education is needed. To reach these goals, formal education is not enough. Ideas are only really put into action when learning is supported by direct experience in a business environment.

The ENDuRE Knowledge Alliance is an innovative approach to educating and supporting entrepreneurs, aimed at increasing the resilience and competitiveness of European start-ups. The project will design and develop a holistic framework to transform ideas into technically and economically viable businesses. Academic institutions and companies will form an alliance that will work to minimise the probability of start-ups failing, help them grow quickly and overcome what is known as the *Valley of Death*. This alliance is composed of three universities (University of Pisa, University of Surrey, IDEA Entrepreneurship Center of University of Southern Denmark), and four companies from Denmark (Blue Ocean Robotics), Italy (Polo Tecnologico Navacchio and CEDIT) and the United Kingdom (iVeridis).

The ENDuRE project aims to develop educational and practical tools in order to provide short-term benefits to more than one hundred students and start-ups, as well as positively impact the activities of European universities, companies and public bodies involved in the project. Educational and training materials will be developed for specific stakeholder groups, including start-ups at various stages of their growth.

### The Objectives

The ENDuRE project aims to design and execute a new framework based on **frontal teaching** and **problem-oriented learning**. The alliance will develop tools and methodologies for start-ups to make right decisions in highly dynamic markets and uncertain conditions. These will focus on improving:

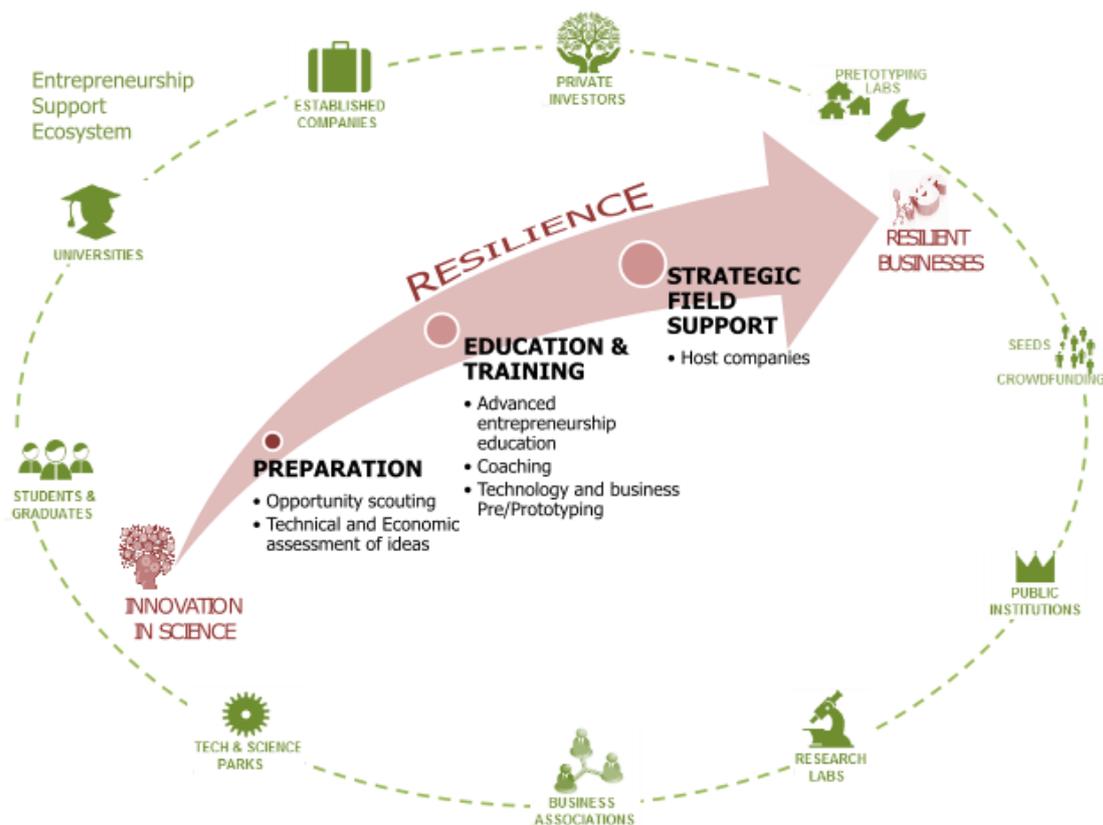
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- Opportunity scouting
- Technical and economic assessment
- Viability analysis
- Technology and business pre/prototyping

The ENDuRE entrepreneurial programme, based on a learn-by-doing approach, will be an opportunity for the alliance to test and develop the new tools and methodologies. Student entrepreneurs participating in the entrepreneurial programme will receive the highest level of coaching and strategic support in order to test and validate their business ideas. By the end of the project, university students, graduates and entrepreneurs should have access to a set of homogeneous and multilevel didactical material for their entrepreneurial needs. These materials will be scalable, transferrable and suitable for start-ups at various stages of their growth and maturity.

## ENDuRE at a glance



## Key elements

The ENDuRE entrepreneurial programme will support students to develop business ideas. The alliance members will **test methodologies and tools** and **merge them together to create a best practice model**. This model will be used as a basis for the programme that will be disseminated to students across Europe.

## ENDuRE objectives & outputs

The ENDuRE project will allow longer term benefits impacting on:

- EU citizens interested in startups creation
- EU Faculty members, laboratories and organizations that aim to provide effective education, training and support in the entrepreneurship field
- EU entrepreneurship networks, contributing also to shaping regional, national and European policies.

Scholars and practitioners will join our European Network of Design for Resilient Entrepreneurship, a group designed for exchange, support and discussion.

The programme will initially be trialled on three teams of students, selected from the ENDuRE alliance universities. The students will be hosted by a foreign company in order to learn and develop key entrepreneurial skills.

### A scalable and adaptable project

The ENDuRe project will build a scalable and adaptable tool-kit that can be tailored to fit specific start-up environments.

### A European network

The ENDuRE project aims to create a network comprised of all the actors participating in the European entrepreneurial ecosystem. The network will enable to highlight and learn from the particularities of different start-up environments across Europe.

## Startup strategies: a basic guide so often overlooked

*Stephen Mooney reflects on tangible sales, marketing and customer acquisition strategies in the mobile app market. Stephen is an experienced entrepreneur, currently serving as director of **iVeridis** and assisting early-stage startups through the UKTI's Global Entrepreneur Programme and the SetSquared Partnership.*



I have seen a lot of business plans and investor pitches and, almost universally, the one constant amongst tech entrepreneurs is their unwavering belief that the market desperately wants what they are pitching.

In many ways, this is the true spirit of the entrepreneur. However, **many of these aspiring entrepreneurs don't have a realistic user acquisition approach to match their ambition.** Too few have a tangible go-to-market strategy that can allow their business to grow; the majority instead relies on hope and luck to achieve their ambitions. Unfortunately, this leaves the startup landscape strewn with companies that have great products and no customers, and propagates an early landing in the dreaded 'valley of death'.

Take for example the mobile app market. In the time it takes you to read this article there are probably a hundred budding, global entrepreneurs trying to build the next killer app. I consider myself an early adopter, but the fact is I really only have about 50 apps on my phone and use 5 to 10 of them in any week; the numbers just don't add up. The reality is that most great apps run out of money long before they get discovered unless they have a tangible sales, marketing and customer acquisition strategy.

Here are some of the common 'strategies' I routinely come across:

1. I will use social media to acquire users: I don't know about you, but I have been using social media for years now and I have about 9,200 twitter followers, about 1,000 connections on LinkedIn, and 350 friends on Facebook - likely all above average. Nevertheless, about every 3 months someone favorites or re-tweets something I say - a slow process for getting the word out!
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2. I will hire a sales team when the product is ready: I am still trying to find the killer sales guy that can lift my ventures to the upper stratosphere. The reality is that hiring (and firing) sales people is one of the most frequent and expensive tasks of the entrepreneur and can only be done once the Unique Sales Proposition (USP) is defined and the product has traction.
3. This product sells itself: No it doesn't. The probability that you have created the next Facebook or Candy Crush Saga is so infinitely minute, you should assume nothing goes 'viral' any more and products don't sell themselves.

**Whatever you are trying to bring to market, the chances of you being successful without a comprehensive strategy is very slim. Here are some tips to help you get started:**

- **The lean startup:** keep your idea simple and stick to your most basic core offering. It's easy to become over-excited and develop lots of cool functionalities for your product. However, it's very unlikely anyone will ever know your product anywhere near enough to use advanced functionalities. Instead, let your customers tell you the features they want and are willing to pay for.
- **Set metrics:** one of the easiest ways to get started is to set metrics and targets which are linked to your revenue model and your growth plan. For example if you are trying to build the next killer app, define what success looks like and set an increasing monthly goal of users.
- **Know your addressable market:** once you have set that goal, think of who exactly that user is. Is it the 40-something male, early-adopter Entrepreneur-in-Residence, or is it (more likely) the 20-25 year old female Instagram user?
- **Test on customers:** and factor in how much that is going to cost. There are some great marketing and promotional tools out there to help define your users and reach them at low cost, but you can't do this until you know who they are.
- **Define your USP:** what makes your product different and what is the business case for someone to use your product?

Too many entrepreneurs come to market with a product that solves their own problems rather than their customers'. **You would be surprised at how many prospective customers are willing to give you real feedback on your solution.** Companies are currently desperate for innovation: if the price is right, they make for great early adopters. Friends, family\*, universities and startup incubators provide another great low-cost validation point to allow you to talk with potential users and gain feedback on product and sales strategy.

Irrespective of your product and market, don't launch without first knowing where you are trying to get to and how it is going to be achieved. This sounds like common sense, but the reality is that it often gets lost along the way. If you don't know how to build a sales and marketing plan, seek help through people that have done this before. **Mentor networks, sales and marketing events, conferences and business incubators all provide reliable support to help entrepreneurs get started.**

\*Disclaimer: always take what your loved ones tell you with a pinch of salt.

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# Entrepreneurship at the University of Pisa

## 16 projects developed during the PhD+ 2015

The 5th edition of the PhD+ programme of the University of Pisa, aimed at promoting creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial mindset, ended on March 31. During the programme, 16 projects were developed, ranging from agrifood to ICT, Internet of Things, Engineering, Leisure and Entertainment.



*Students presenting their ideas during the final pitch of PhD+ 2015*

**12 sessions, with 20 national and international speakers,**

attended by **97 participants**, mainly PhDs and master students of the University of Pisa, were some of the main figures of the 2015 edition. The lectures were held in English to give the program an increasingly international dimension. During the final pitch, students presented their projects in a session attended by students from the Master in Business Administration of the University of Pisa with which the PhD+ is collaborating.

### Other projects presented in PhD+ 2015

Enjoy Wine (Xiaoguo Ying), VideoTalent (Maria Laura Tamburello), Optical System for Lithography (José Maria Gonzales Castro), ABCDEARMONDAY (Antonella Garzelli), Recycling bioactive compounds for cosmetics and food production (Morena Gabriele), Digicane (Leo Dvortsin, Sheina Kransnopolky), Travelogin (Antonio Campus, Lorenza La Rosa), Save Food (Claudia Molfetta, Lorenzo Sossi), Sound absorption system (Veronica Palla), NoteATTIVE (Eleonora Galassi), Smart Soccer Channel (Tommaso Giorgetti).

Among the projects that received particular attention from the audience were: **Echoes**, by **Stefano Lischi** and **Daniele Staglianò**, a radar system to apply in ports/harbors which, through innovative imaging technologies, allows to detect the shape and dimensions of boats in transit.

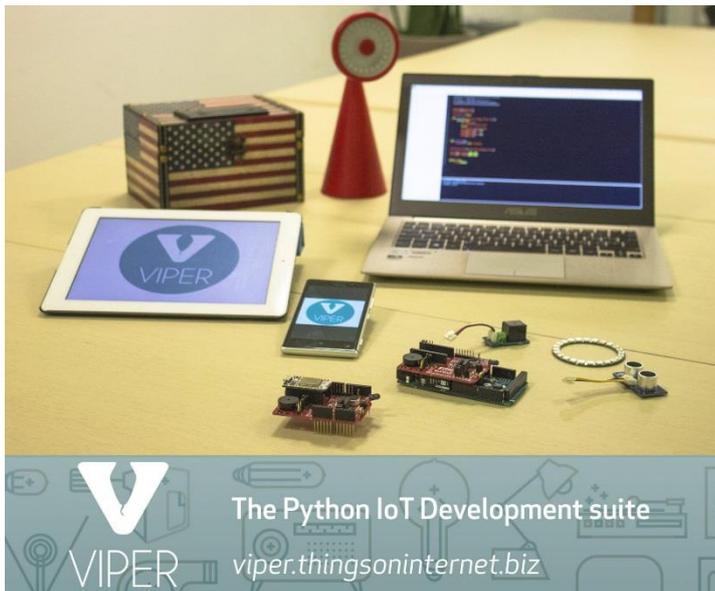
**Sound Shoes**, by **Lorenzo Cominelli**, a musician and PhD student in Computer Science who has developed a shoe with motion sensors that produces music with a simple footmove. **Matchome**, a website and an app dedicated to soccer supporters, who can meet and attend/follow their favorite team matches at home, designed by **Sara Compagnone**, a student in Marketing and market researches.

**NomoreQ**, a system to queue on line thus avoiding time wasting and stress, presented by **Antonello Cherubini** and **Gastone Rosati**; **Onlywine**, an innovative vinification protocol with a forefront technology to eliminate the use of sulphite in wine, presented by **Chiara Sanmartin**, research fellow at the Department of Agricultural Sciences.

[Click here](#)

to read more about the PhD+ 2015

# Viper hit goal on Kickstarter



The startup TOI - ThingsOnInternet - born at the University of Pisa within the PhD+ programme, conducted a successful crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter with the project VIPER, a smart object development suite that brings cloud and IoT connectivity to design projects with just a click of the mouse. The 22.579 dollars obtained will allow finalizing the development and releasing process, in view of the official market launch by the end of the summer.

As its name suggests, **VIPER** – or "Viper

Is Python Embedded in Real-time" – makes it possible for makers and embedded designers to create their next connected project in Python for Arduino, UDOO and Spark, all in real-time. And, unlike other solutions that already exist today, this collection of products is platform-agnostic and compatible with all sensors and kits.

The idea was first conceived after conducting some detailed market analysis, where the company discovered that designers, makers and programmers all faced a similar set of challenges. In hopes of simplifying how "things" are brought onto the Internet, VIPER converged a series of components to better streamline the process. This included an IDE to manage and program the boards, a Virtual Machine to serve as its operating system, a plug-and-play TOI Shield, an extensive library of ready-to-use functions, and a mobile app to act as the interface for smart objects. On top of that, it's also cloud-ready. With just a little coding, users can develop a wide-range of IoT applications, ranging from interactive storefronts, to home and industrial automation systems, to art and museum installations, to smart farming.

Since millions of developers already know Python, VIPER makes the programming language readily accessible for commercial interactive products as well, therefore amplifying the potential for smart objects to be as pervasive as mobile devices in their ease of design interactivity. To do this, VIPER provides a browser-based, minimal-installation development environment where users can write code with extensive library support and have it executed on any Arduino-like board. What's great for designers is that, with VIPER, it leaves them able to focus on the features and functionality, not the tediousness, along with a mobile app to control their creation for free.

The Kickstarter campaign has been an important market test for VIPER. **More than 320 backers from 25 different countries pledged the project**, mainly from US, UK and Italy. Besides single backers like professional product designers, makers, developers and researchers, many companies are showing interest in VIPER, including players from software development, embedded electronics and consumer electronics sectors. The leading embedded system manufacturer, Atmel, highlighted the potential of this solution with two different posts on its official blog.

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The campaign also helped to kick-start the first industrial collaborations for the development of a dedicated microcontroller board and the development of a set of 12 synchronized rotating platforms for luxury goods exposition installed in a Paris jewelry shop.

Check the official website for the next updates and news about the official market launch of the VIPER suit. More on <http://vipер.thingsoninternet.biz/>

## CEDIT involves stakeholders in Tuscany

CEDIT organized a first dissemination Conference of the ENDuRE project at Confartigianato Imprese Toscana on 2 April 2015, with some relevant stakeholders, such as business associations, VET organizations, Educational Centers.



Confartigianato Imprese Toscana is a business association operating in Tuscany. It represents and safeguards the interests of Provincial and Sectorial Associations and of its entire

membership, with public and private institutions, Public Administration, and with regional political, social and economic organizations. As Confartigianato is strongly linked with CEDIT, this business association proposed to host a dissemination conference with some of its members and other subjects that could take advantage from the ENDuRE project results.

During the meeting, Laura Simoncini, Director of CEDIT, and Alessandro Guadagni, ENDuRE project coordinator for CEDIT, presented the project and highlighted the most important features for the participating organizations. In particular, **the participants were interested in the detailed investigation that the ENDuRE consortium members are conducting. The results of this investigation, which aims to help better understand the challenges faced by the target stakeholders, will be used to develop educational tools in entrepreneurship.** In the meeting, attendants were provided with the investigation questionnaire and the CEDIT staff members organized a focus group to better understand the needs of the organizations.

The CEDIT conference also paved the way to achieve another of the ENDuRE project's main goals: creating a strong national and transnational entrepreneurship network to create more resilient enterprises and to facilitate the exchange of best practice in the EU.

*For more information about the ENDuRE project, please visit our website*

*[www.endureproject.eu](http://www.endureproject.eu) or e-mail us at: [info@endureproject.eu](mailto:info@endureproject.eu)*



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