

## 15 Interesting Startups From Ex-Googlers

[Jay Yarow](#) | Feb. 22, 2011,



*The Instagram founders*

One of the more impressive, if understated, effects of Google's success has been the proliferation of entrepreneurs that spent time at Mountain View. On Quora, we saw [a thread](#) listing all the startups that have sprung from ex-Google employees. The total number was 49, which, granted, isn't an overwhelming number, but it's more than most big tech companies. We've taken a look at just 15 of these startups to highlight the kinds of companies founded by ex-Googlers.

Start-ups	Comments	Web
(fluff)Friends	An online virtual pets game. Mike Sego. (Acquired by SGN.)	apps.facebook.com/flufff...
3LM	Android enterprise solution. Tom Moss and Gaurav Mathur (Acquired by Motorola)	
3rdPLACE	Independant digital consuling agency in Italy	www.3rdPLACE.com
800best.com	ZHOU Shaoning	800best.com
Aardvark	A social search service. Robert Spiro, Nathan Stoll, Max Ventilla. (acquired by Google)	Aardvark.com
AdCaptcher	Razvan Tirboaca, Founder,	
Animoto		www.animoto.com
AppJet	Makers of EtherPad, a real-time collaborative online text editor. Aaron B lba and J.D. Zamfirescu-Pereira (acquired by Google)	
Asana	Justin Rosenstein	
Atbrox	Amund Tveit search technology services	atbrox.com
Babytree.com	WANG Huainan	babytree.com
Beluga	Jonathan Perlow, Lucy Zhang, Ben Davenport	
BloomReach	Ashutosh Garg - early-stage, web search SAAS startup.	www.bloomreach.com
BonsaiSandals.com	Alex Vartan	BonsaiSandals.com
Brizzly	(acquired by AOL)	www.brizzly.com
Bundle Tech	Andre Schmidt (UK)	
Burbn	Kevin Systrom	
Campfire Labs	Sakina Arsiwala	
Carrot Sticks	Pete Koomen	
Cartomapic	Bart Denny (SE)	
Chai Labs	Gokul Rajaram	
ChoiceVendor	Yanda Erlich, Rama Ranganath	
Cloudera	"Hadoop for the enterprise" software company. (One of 4 founders is ex Googler Christophe Bisciglia.)	www.cloudera.com
Compass Labs	Dilip Venkatachari	
Cuil	A traditional search engine.	www.cuil.com
Dasient	Neil Daswani and Shariq Rizvi	
Didatuan.com	SONG Zhongjie	didatuan.com
Distilled Clothing	Sep Kamvar	
Factual, Inc.	Gil Ebaz	
fifty-five	Jean François Wassong (FR) & more	
FlightCaster	Brad Cross	
foursquare	A mobile social location tracking application.	www.foursquare.com
FriendFeed	A service for sharing with friends online. Bret Taylor, Jim Norris, Paul Buchheit, and Sanjeev Singh. (Acquired by Facebook.)	friendfeed.com
Harik Shazeer Labs	Georges Harik, Noam Shazeer	
HealthVillage	Elan Dekel (US)	
Howcast	Sanjay Raman and others	
Hunter Walk	have worked at google since 2003	
Image Shack	Jack Levin	
J.cn	ZHOU Jie	J.cn
Keas	Adam Bosworth	
LightInTheBox.com	Alan Guo	LightInTheBox.com
Lil' Green Path	Social game company. David King (acquired by Playdom)	
Loomni	Nagi Salloum (AE)	
MapR Technologies	M. C. Srivas	
Mixer Labs	Makers of TownMe and GeoAPI. Elad Gil & Othman Laraki. (Acquired by Twitter.)	
MyLikes.com	Bindu Reddy	MyLikes.com
nextstop.com	Adrian Graham aand Carl Sjogreen (23 foudners) were formerly PMs at Google Social travel site. (Acquired by Facebook.)	nextstop.com
Nuggetize	Bharath Mohan	
Nutanix	Mohit Aron, a former engineer on GFS, recently left Aster Data and is the founder of a stealth mode startup building storage systems.	
Odeo Obvious Corp	Evan Williams Twitter	
Ooyala	Sean Knapp, Bismarck Lepe, Belsasar Lepe	
OpenMantra Srl	Kirstof Kaiser (IT)	
Optimizely	Pete Koomen, Dan Siroker	
PapayaMobile.com	SHEN Si	PapayaMobile.com
Pothi.com	Jaya Jha	Pothi.com
PrepMe	Avichal Garg	
Quadraforte	Franklin Naval	
QuBit Digital Ltd	Emre Baran (UK) & more	
raptr	Pat Li, founding engineer, was formerly at Google.	raptr.com
Redbeacon	Ethan Anderson, Yaron Binur, and Aaron Lee	
Rel8tion	(Acquired by Facebook) Peter Wilson, who helped launch the Google office in Kirkland, WA. left in May to do some kind of mystery startup that sounds like it involves cloud computing.	
Semetis	Gabriel Goldberg (BE) & more	
Seravia	Paperwork Explained Thomas Escobar (ex Google), Danny Yang (ex like.com (which is now Google))	www.seravia.com
Shiny Orb	Elizabeth Yin	www.shinyorb.com
Sincerial	recommendation engine. Knut O. Hellan (Acquired by zedge.net )	
Small Batch	Jeffrey Veen	
Smoopa.com	Mendel Chuang	
Snip.ly	Zal Bilimoria, Abhishek Amit	www.snip.ly
TapJoy	In game advertising. Ben Lewis. (Acquired by OfferPal Media.)	Ben Lewis
TellApart	Josh McFarland, Mark Ayzenshtat	
TMI - The Media Image	Peter Brooke Sumner (ZA)	
Townme		www.townme.com
Trakken	Timo Aden (DE) & more	
Twitter	Evan Williams, Biz Stone	
WeatherBill	David Friedberg, Siraj Khaliq	

1/16

**Aardvark was a Q&A startup that Google bought for \$50 million.**



Image: AP

A few former Google employees decided to take a chance on making a social search startup. A user could ask a question, which Aardvark would then route to the user's friends looking for an answer. Once it was answered it came back to the user. Google must have thought it was an interesting idea because it [bought the company for \\$50 million](#).

2/16

## Evan Williams left Google to build Twitter

Evan Williams sold his company Blogger to Google in 2003. In 2004 he cofounded Odeo, a podcasting company, which later became Twitter, which is now valued at \$4 billion by investors. Considering Google's many struggles with social, and its reported interest in buying Twitter, this must be the toughest of all the post-Google startups to swallow for Google's execs.



Image: [Biooffice](#) via Flickr

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## Foursquare was born from the ashes of Dodgeball, which Google shut down

Here's another tough one for Google management. Google acquired Dodgeball, a social startup based on telling your friends what you were up to, in 2005 for a small sum. It killed the service four years later. The founders of Dodgeball had already left the company, planning to relaunch it as Foursquare, a mobile application that does the same thing. Today Foursquare is valued at well over \$100 million, and ex-Google employee, and Foursquare cofounder Dennis Crowley was called "The New King of social media," by Wired.



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## FriendFeed was supposed to challenge Twitter, but ended up at Facebook



After Paul Buchheit, the man behind Gmail, and the one that came up with Google's "don't be evil" pitch, left Google, he cofounded FriendFeed with fellow Google alums, Jim Norris, Sanjeev Singh and Bret Taylor. FriendFeed was a rival to Twitter, but it never gained a huge audience. In 2009 Facebook [bought it for \\$50 million](#). It has been one of (if not the) best acquisitions for Facebook so far. Brett Taylor is now CTO at Facebook.

**5/16**

## **Asana's cofounder started at Google**



Image: Scott Beale / Laughing Squid

Here's a rarity, but we think it will become the norm soon enough. Justin Rosenstein left Google after being a product manager to join Facebook in 2007. At Facebook he must have become friendly with Dustin Moskovitz, because they left Facebook to launch Asana [a new enterprise collaboration company](#). With so many Google employees jumping to Facebook, we expect this to happen more and more.

**6/16**

## **Factual is a database company that should have come from inside Google**

The story of Gil Elbaz is a good one for Google. Elbaz joined Google after it acquired his company Applied Semantics in 2003. (Applied Semantics was the basis for AdSense.) He stayed with Google for about 3.5 years, learning many things along the way. When he had an idea for another company, he chose not to pitch it as a project for Google. Instead, he struck out on his own.

His new company, Factual, organizes data, which is something Google does as well. He says he'd never have thought to do it inside Google, because he wanted the freedom that came from working on his own.



Image: Flickr/Esther Dyson



7/16

## Howcast is working on making how-to videos



New York startup Howcast was started by two ex-Googlers, Jason Liebman and Daniel Blackman. Howcast, unlike many other startups on this list, wouldn't have fit at Google. It's a company that [makes how-to videos](#).

**8/16**

**A threesome of ex-Googlers launched Weatherbill, a weather insurance company**



Image: First Round Capital

Weatherbill is a startup that provides insurance against bad weather for homes and companies. (A pretty odd business to attack in comparison to the other startups on this list.) It was started by 3 ex-Googlers.

**9/16**

## **The ex-Googlers at Cuil tried to out-Google Google**



Cuil was a search engine founded by a few ex-Googlers. They hoped to build a search engine that would vanquish their former employer. It didn't work out so well. The company is dead now.

10/16

## Instagram is getting popular fast, and its founder was once at Google

Kevin Systrom has an interesting resume. He started as an intern at Odeo, which went on to launch Twitter. He then worked at Google for three years, before launching his own company Brbn which morphed into Instagram. Instagram is a fast growing photo sharing application, and it wouldn't shock us if Google ended up trying to buy it someday.

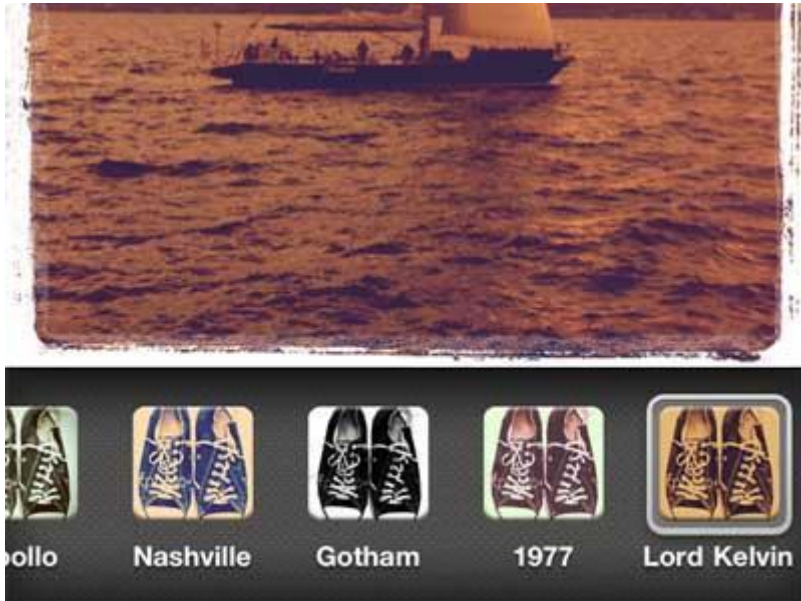


Image: Instagram for iPhone

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**Dasient is an anti-malware company that just picked up an investment from Google Ventures**



Two of the three people that founded anti-malware startup Dasient were once at Google. Ironically enough, Dasient just picked up an investment from Google Ventures.

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**After five years at Google, Jack Levin left to do his photo startup Image Shack**



Image Shack is the parent company of popular twitter photo company yFrog. When we spoke with founder Jack Levin [last year](#) the company was serving hundreds of millions of pageviews and doing millions in revenue.

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**Ooyala is a video platform where you can host and share videos**



A trio of ex-Googlers decided to launch Ooyala, a professional video platform. Pretty interesting that they left Google only to try and compete with a Google product -- YouTube.

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**Brizzly, which is now fixing AIM for AOL, was started by some Googlers**



Brizzly was a startup from a few ex-Google employees that was working on social software. It was purchased by AOL in September and is now working on making AIM a better experience.



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**Chai Labs is another startup that came from Googlers, but is now at Facebook**



Image: *Zazzle*

We warned you this was going to happen! AdSense exec Gokul Rajaram decided to do his own company, Chai Labs. We're not exactly sure what it was going to do, but after just a year or so Facebook decided to buy the company for around \$10 million. The acquisition was mostly about getting Rajaram into the company, though, it seems.

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## MoPub is the next startup to come from people that were at Google

After drinking a cup of coffee at Google, a few of the AdMob people are working on [a new mobile ad startup](#) called MoPub. Also, AdMob founder Omar Hamoui is [hard at work on his next startup](#) after being at Google for a minute.



That's the FTC on the phone? I'm in a meeting.

Image: [delirium.com](http://delirium.com)