

Springwise newsletter | 23 October 2008

Lots of entrepreneurial inspiration for you this week, from eco-forward lunch kits for kids to upgraded meeting rooms, and from people-friendly RFID tags to video games that improve seniors' driving skills. Don't forget to check out our daily postings on www.springwise.com.



Paying to break stuff at the smash shack

Demonstrating that it's possible to profit from any human desire, [Sarah's Smash Shack](#) was conceived to relieve people who are stressed-out. Customers in San Diego can choose fragile tableware from the Smash Shack Menu—for example a set of three glass flowers for USD 10, or the House Special, which consists of 15 plates at a cost of USD 45. They're also welcome to bring in their own breakables to pulverise for a 'corkage fee' that starts at USD 20. After donning protective gear, smashers are escorted to one of the break rooms, where they stand behind a waist-high barrier and hurl their arsenal at a stainless steel wall. To make the process more personalised, customers are encouraged to bring their own soundtrack on MP3, and to write messages on whatever they're about to throw. There's also the option of flinging objects at a photo or mantra of choice. A VIP room is available for group smashes.

Since August 2008, the shack has helped quite a few customers vent their frustration and release their tension. Or just plain enjoy the process of harmless destruction without having to clean up after themselves. It's hard to tell whether the credit crunch has benefited or hindered the business's success, making customers thrifter but also more stressed and up for smashing... Aware that it's not cool not to care about the environment, the shack donates its broken glass and ceramic to mosaic art programs throughout the United States.

While the whole concept might sound a bit nutty, this could be a lucrative small business to set up elsewhere, especially for entrepreneurs who can get their hands on cheap vacant retail space for a year or two. Entry costs are relatively low and, well, that human urge to smash stuff is universal ;-)

Website: www.smashshack.com

Contact: www.smashshack.com/Contact_Us.html

Spotted by: Colleen Ma

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Go to www.springwise.com for more smart new business concepts from around the world.



Selling product blueprints to crafty consumers

Tapping into the make-it-yourself trend, London-based SomeRightsReserved offers a range of downloadable blueprints for objects that consumers can build, adapt and personalise. Products on offer include everything from cardboard Tetris furniture to children's mittens. Some can be created using hand-cutting and home-printing, others may require laser cutting or rapid prototyping. Prices range from free to GBP 10, and physical objects tend to rely on affordable everyday materials such as cardboard, acrylics and fluorescent tubing. The estimated costs for materials are displayed before the purchase is made.

The concept should benefit designers who have more ideas than they know what to do with, providing them with a way to profit from their ideas without the stressful investment in production runs, if not letting them use the site as a live test before signing a run off. Whatever the final outcome, it's an interesting experiment in creating a marketplace for intellectual property. Meanwhile, if your brand already caters to crafty consumers, or sells products that your customers could make themselves, it's time to add something similar to your offerings. (Related: Shirt sold out? Make it yourself.)

Website: www.kith-kin.co.uk/shop

Contact: www.kith-kin.co.uk/shop/contact

Spotter: Matthew Cua

Using video games to make seniors safer drivers



We've written about [brain gyms for baby boomers](#) and [insurance discounts for drivers of cars with GPS devices](#). Combining a bit of both ideas, insurance provider [Allstate](#) recently announced a pilot program that could ultimately lead to reduced insurance rates for senior drivers who play brain-building video games.

Beginning in Pennsylvania—home to the fifth largest population of Allstate customers aged 50 to 75, the company says—Allstate is offering the program free to more than 100,000 drivers in that age group to test the impact of cognitive training on driving safety. The program uses InSight, a video software package from [Posit Science](#) that's designed to reverse age-related cognitive decline and improve the visual-processing skills needed for safe driving. Five games make up InSight, including Jewel Diver, which tests the ability to keep track of multiple moving objects at one time. Among the results of using the software, Posit says, are a reduction of dangerous driving manoeuvres by up to 40 percent, an improvement in stopping distance by an average of 22 feet when travelling at 55 miles per hour and a reduction in crash risk of up to 50 percent. In the Pennsylvania tests, which will run through March, Allstate will encourage participating older drivers to devote at least 10 hours to the training exercises. It will then track accident rates for the groups that did and didn't use the software. If the results validate Posit Science's claims, Allstate says it hopes to offer discounts to older drivers nationwide who use the software.

As the aging of the baby boom generation leads to increased numbers of older drivers on the road, using brain exercises to improve safety makes good sense. Of course, the program could also help Allstate identify and reward its safest—and therefore most profitable—customers. Sounds like a win-win proposition for other insurers to watch—and emulate!

Website: media.allstate.com/releases/4461-allstate-examines-brain-fitness

Contact: kpose@allstate.com

Spotted by: [PSFK](#) via Matthew Cua



Connecting online & off with RFID for the masses

The online and offline worlds are becoming increasingly interconnected, as our sister site [trendwatching.com](#) recently [noted](#). Now, a new venture from Alcatel-Lucent is using a version of RFID to give consumers the ability to make such connections for themselves.

Released into beta earlier this month, [tikitag](#) uses short-range, high-frequency RFID to let consumers and third-party application developers connect everyday items to online content or applications. To tap the connection, users of the technology need only touch a compatible device such as a cell phone to an item tagged with a corresponding sticker. Parents, for example, can use tikitag to link their toddler's teddy bear to an online story about that same bear; museum visitors can wave an enabled mobile phone at a painting to call up the painter's Wikipedia profile. In a business/logistics setting, meanwhile, a cleaning company could use tikitag to record that a room has been successfully cleaned by touching an enabled mobile phone to a tikitag-linked sticker that has been placed in the room. Such connections are made possible by the tikitag Application Correlation Server, which directs enabled devices (computers or mobile phones) to access the appropriate online content and applications when they touch a tag.

Anthony Belpaire, general manager of Alcatel-Lucent's tikitag venture, explains: "Over the last few years there has been explosive growth in the range and types of online content—much of it related to real world objects, events or activities. But how do you connect this online content with a person's business card, for example, or a concert poster, or a work of art? Tikitag provides this missing link."

Tikitag uses technology known as Near Field Communications (NFC), which operates at 13.56MHz and covers distances less than 4 cm—as opposed to the longer-range, ultra high-frequency RFID used by many retail chains. NFC is already built into several cell phones from Nokia and others, and a tikitag starter kit, available from both tikitag and [Amazon.com](#) for USD 49.95, contains one USB-enabled RFID reader and 10 RFID tag smart stickers.

By supplying a constant stream of new ways to connect the online and offline worlds, tikitag may just be the ultimate [digital lifestyle lubricant](#). One to watch—and try out!

Website: www.tikitag.com

Contact: info@tikitag.com

Eco cheap: green shoes for under \$30



We've written about many eco-fashion initiatives in recent years, most of them undertaken by premium brands for distinctly guilt-assuaging prices. Like Wal-Mart's Love, Earth line of environmentally conscious jewelry, however, a new line of affordable eco-minded shoes from none other than Payless ShoeSource vividly illustrates how far—and how mainstream—green fashion has come.

Last week Payless announced a new line of green footwear due early next year that will feature prices less than USD 30 on average. Summer Rayne Oakes, green fashion and beauty expert, has signed on as eco consultant for the green footwear brand, which will use sustainable and eco-friendly materials such as organic cotton and linen, natural hemp, recycled outsoles and eco-smart packaging. Women's offerings will debut first, followed by styles for men and kids; all will be seasonally refreshed to reflect the latest trends. The shoes will be available online and in about 500 stores, with select styles appearing in 1,000 Payless stores, the company says.

Matt Rubel, CEO of Payless parent company Collective Brands, explains: "The sustainability movement is pervasive today and is touching so many elements of consumers' daily lives. But green items are often expensive and inaccessible to so many. With our mission to democratize the latest ideas in footwear and accessories, we are in the best position and proud to bring forward a green footwear line that is affordable and accessible to all."

Translation: the eco-iconic world has arrived, so now it's time to expand beyond the original core of affluent, green-minded consumers and give the eager masses some eco-credentials of their own. In other words—time to make it affordable to be green! (Related: Nike: made from scraps.)

Website: www.paylessinfo.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=74165&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=1208602

Contact: www.payless.com/contact/contactcustomer.aspx

Spotted by: Sarah Nill



Desktop manufacturing, minus the special software

We've already written about Ponoko on two separate occasions, including its release earlier this fall of a tool to help shoppers and designers collaborate. Now, just a few weeks later, the New Zealand company has come out with another innovation that aims to make it even easier for consumers to get their creative ideas turned into real-world products.

Whereas Ponoko's original Designmake tool requires that consumers use vector art software (such as Adobe Illustrator CS, Macromedia Freehand MX, Inkscape or CorelDraw X3) or 3D modelling software to design their products, its new Photomake tool eliminates that requirement. Instead, users of the new tool can now simply draw their design using old-fashioned pen and paper and upload a digital photo or scan of it onto Ponoko's site. Then, as before, they can choose a material, get an instant price to have their product made and then send it into production.

Derek Elley, Ponoko's chief strategy officer, explains: "It's great for crafters, makers and artists. One of the cool things about Photomake is the quality of the result—it's truly hand-drawn. Because digital making is so very precise, every tiny bump in the hand-drawn creation is picked up and made for real. This gives a very natural and human feel to the things you make."

More than 10,000 consumers have already used Ponoko's original Designmake tool, the company says, and it's a safe bet that simplifying the process will expand those ranks further. Goodbye, barriers to entry—this is customer-made taken to a new level. That sound you hear is the global brain getting even bigger! (Related: More desktop manufacturing for consumers.)

Website: www.ponoko.com/photomake

Contact: www.ponoko.com/about/contact

Spotted by: Sven Ericksen



Being space for a microbrew

We've covered being spaces of many kinds, including examples for mobile warriors, mothers and seniors. Recently, Australian brewery Little Creatures added a twist of hops to the concept with two being spaces built around beer.

Little Creatures has been microbrewing for years, but last December it expanded its Fremantle brewery site to include the Creatures Loft, a cozy hideaway overlooking the water. Part supper club, part bar and part eclectic performance space, Creatures Loft offers customers an ample supply of comfy chairs from which to watch the old boats in Fishing Boat Harbour while staff serve up wines, classic cocktails and a wide variety of beers along with toasted sandwiches, oysters, prawns and cheeses. This summer the brewery furthered its expansion into being space terrain with a brand-new, 260-seat dining hall in a converted warehouse space in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Featuring long, communal wooden tables, large comfy booths and exposed pipes and beams, the barnlike Fitzroy Dining Hall offers all of Little Creatures' beers and Pipsqueak Cider fresh on tap as well as a selection of wines and beer-friendly foods. A bottle department at the front, meanwhile, sells beer, wine, coffee and a selection of t-shirts and merchandise.

Little Creatures has also begun building a new brewery in the Yarra Valley town of Healesville, the first brew from which will be a new national brand that's ready for sale early in 2009. In the meantime, both of its existing spots aim to provide community and entertainment in addition to beer and food. Restrooms are designed to be family-friendly, complete with baby changing stations. With a nod to the environment, the eateries even maintain a fleet of 20 bright red Kronan bicycles for the free use of staff and customers for short trips.

Dark, seedy bars may have their fans, but Little Creatures is a shining example of giving consumers a "third place" to hang out while also helping beer see the light of day once again. One to partner with in Australia, or emulate in other spots around the globe?

Website: www.littlecreatures.com.au
Contact: email@littlecreatures.com.au

Spotted by: Catarina Ng



Online market focuses on mid-century design

Bringing a sense of style to the Craigslist model, new online marketplace Lushpad aims to connect buyers and sellers of mid-century design. By taking users straight to what they're looking for rather than having them trawl through columns of irrelevant goods, the Canadian website hopes to capture a lucrative niche.

As the company's target customers are aesthetically sensitive types, they should feel more at home on Lushpad's well-designed site than looking through loud ads on eBay or perusing Craigslist's messageboards. Sellers have also commented on listing prices, which beat eBay by being free for items under USD 250, and USD 8–12 for more expensive items.

Described as part gallery, part auction house and part design magazine, the site aims to build a resource to draw customers to the site and keep them coming back, by generating content about design classics, profiling designers, architects and manufacturers and reviewing relevant books. Besides attracting enough buyers and sellers, the key challenge for Lushpad and other new marketplaces targeting niche audiences is to maintain a strong focus. Which means moderating and curating, and rejecting any items that won't appeal to the target audience.

Website: www.lushpad.com

Contact: www.lushpad.com/contact.php

Spotted by: Bjarke Svendsen



Design competition seeks alternative to museum mug

Looking to move away from the ubiquitous coffee mugs and provide museum shops with more innovative products to sell, [Release 1.0](#) is a design competition that offers winning contestants a fair deal. Unlike most other design competitions, winners are promised a percentage of sales revenue, as well as the traditional good publicity and international exposure. Not limited to a single museum, the winning designs will be stocked by spaces such as the ICA in London and Berlin's Deutsche Guggenheim as well as being sold online at [culturelabel.com](#). Those lucky enough to be picked will receive 7% of the product's wholesale price, which compares well with the industry standard of 3–10% for commissioned designs.

Submissions are made via Release 1.0's website, with entries displayed on the website to whet the appetites of potential buyers. Entries currently range from a knuckle duster that measures spaghetti—Godfather-style—to a football scarf that can be turned into a soft sports ball.

It's a fine example of how to tap into the talents of [Generation C\(ash\)](#)—those gifted members of the public who want to be rewarded for their creative output—and a reminder to other retailers that it's never too late to get your customers involved in your production process.

Website: www.releaseonedotzero.com

Contact: www.releaseonedotzero.com/contact.php

Spotter: Mark Wilson



Safety controls for parents of teen drivers

Teen drivers are more likely to speed and less likely to wear seat belts than older drivers are, according to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), causing their parents no end of concern. Last year we wrote about [Safeco's Teensurance](#) solution, combining auto insurance with GPS-enabled parental monitoring, and now auto giant Ford is adding another control option to give parents some peace of mind.

Ford's new [MyKey](#) system allows parents to limit speed and audio volume, improve safety-belt usage and provide early low-fuel warnings on the cars their teens drive. Using the vehicle message center, which updates Ford's SecuriLock passive anti-theft system, parents begin by programming the transponder chip on their teen's key. When that key is inserted into the ignition, the system then identifies the MyKey code and enables the selected driving modes. Among the programmable options is persistent Ford Beltminder with audio mute, which not only sounds a six-second reminder chime every minute but also mutes the stereo system until the safety belt is buckled. Audio volume in general can be limited to 44 percent of the total possible, and parents can set an 80-mph limit on the car's top speed, with speed alert chimes at 45, 55 or 65 mph. Rather than a warning at 50 miles to empty, MyKey also provides a low-fuel warning when there are still 75 miles to go. And when the MyKey is in the ignition, safety features including Ford's Park Aid, BLISTM (Blind Spot Information System) with Cross Traffic Alert, and traction control systems cannot be deactivated. MyKey will debut next year as standard equipment on the 2010 Ford Focus and be added soon afterwards to many other Ford, Lincoln and Mercury models.

Of course, as most parents know, anything that gives adults peace of mind is likely to meet with resistance in their teens. On the other hand, many parents surveyed for Ford by Harris Interactive said they'd let their kids drive more often if they were using MyKey—a fact that caused the proportion of teens who said they dislike the feature to drop from 67 to 36 percent. Proving once again that a spoonful of sugar can help any medicine go down—help that happen, and you'll get some spoonfuls yourself! ;-)

Website: media.ford.com/article_display.cfm?article_id=29172

Contact: <http://www.ford.com/owner-services/customer-support/contact-ford>

Spotted by: Zena Hockley



Reusable lunch kit for kids

There are many statistics out there to inspire and motivate the eco-minded consumer, but one that should be particularly shocking for parents of school-aged kids is the fact that the average elementary student generates between 45 and 90 pounds of plastic, foil and other garbage in school lunch programs each year. That sobering fact comes from the Center for Ecoliteracy; hoping to do something about it, Kids Konserve recently launched a reusable, waste-free lunch kit that does away with paper, plastic and foil altogether.

Priced at USD 40, the waste-free lunch kit includes a recycled cotton sack, cloth napkin, 16 oz. stainless steel beverage bottle, "food kozy" sandwich wrapper and two stainless steel food containers. Each component is also available separately from San Francisco-based Kids Konserve, as are a selection of products including reusable cloth gift bags, drink lids and stainless steel food savers. Kids Konserve also offers its lunch kits as a fundraising opportunity for schools, enlisting parent representatives across the country to help educate schools and build its "Fundraising Through a Waste-free Lunch Program" nationwide.

"With waste from snack and lunch breaks at an all time high and recycling knowledge and budgets still too low, Kids Konserve is empowering parents and kids with information and a reusable product that will help participating schools make the grade when it comes to decreasing waste in community landfills," explains company cofounder Chance Claxton.

An admirable goal that will no doubt appeal to green consumers around the globe. Kids Konserve currently sells its products only within the United States—one to partner with in other parts of the world....? (Related: Happy healthy meals.)

Website: www.kidskonserve.com
Contact: reuse@kidskonserve.com

Spotted by: Claudia Allwood



Meeting rooms, upgraded

Conference and meeting rooms around the globe are typically bland and uninspiring affairs, contributing little to participants' creativity or the quality of the results. A new series of meeting facilities gearing up for launch, however, aims to redefine the concept with a creative and upgraded approach to conference spaces.

New York-based Meet at the Apartment is a two-story, 2,500-square-foot, open loft that has been outfitted with idea-generating amenities not found in typical hotel meeting spaces: a library stocked with art, design and photography reference books; a kitchen pantry filled with snacks; and lavishly furnished breakout rooms. An upstairs area spans 1,300 square feet with windows on three sides and curtains to divide the space into four sections. Breakout rooms feature lounge furniture, phone chargers, iMacs and high-definition presentation screens; the open loft kitchen includes a "kitchen table" large enough to accommodate 10 people. Overall, the space can accommodate 35 for sit-down presentations or 100 for product launches and premiere events.

Downstairs, meanwhile, is a 1,000-square-foot conference room featuring a Vitra conference table accommodating 18 in Vitra Worknest chairs, a mobile presentation screen, whiteboard walls and a computer, TV and telephone. There's also a Green Room offering added space for privacy. Mornings at Meet typically begin with fresh fruit smoothie shots; at mid-day, fresh fruit and fresh-baked cookies keep the creative juices flowing, followed by wine and cheese at day's end. Eschewing the a-la-carte pricing used by most hotel meeting spaces, Meet at the Apartment employs a flat-rate scheme that ranges from USD 5,000 to USD 10,000 per day including staffing (concierge, server and on-call A/V tech), audio-visual components, meeting facilitation supplies and unlimited beverages and snacks.

Sara Schiller, Meet cofounder, explains: "If ever there was an industry in need of a groundbreaking idea, it is meetings. Most meeting spaces are mind-numbingly boring. They're the ugly stepsister of event planning. With Meet at the Apartment, we entirely reinvented the concept of meetings and infused it with energy and creativity that currently doesn't exist anywhere in the world." Meet will officially launch next month in New York; after that, work will begin on similar facilities in London and Dubai, Schiller says. One to launch in other cities? And how about a chic & cheap version, for style-loving brainstormers on a budget?

Website: www.welcometomeet.com

Contact: hello@welcometomeet.com



Connecting designers and developers

For independent application designers and developers, collaboration is often the key to getting work done quickly and well. Finding people to collaborate with, however, can be a challenge. As an alternative to navigating through the masses listed on generalized networks like LinkedIn, a new site from the founders of Rumplo—the T-shirt portal we featured earlier this year—aims to facilitate the process with a professional networking site specific to application development.

New York-based CollabFinder bills itself as a place for designers and developers to meet in order to find collaborators for personal projects. Designers and developers around the globe can post profiles of themselves, including their skills, projects they've worked on and what type of collaboration they seek at the moment. A built-in ranking system uses a set of web tools to judge how popular and meaningful each individual's projects are and to create a star-based rank for that person based on the popularity of those projects. Members of CollabFinder can exchange messages with each other on the site; they can also follow each other's profiles for updates in status. Ad-supported CollabFinder was launched earlier this month.

With collaboration at the heart of so much work today, it's easy to imagine something like CollabFinder helping match up professionals in a wide variety of areas, beyond application development. The near ubiquity (and overwhelming size) of so many of the generalized networking sites, meanwhile, could mean it's time for the industry-specific contenders to come in. One to emulate in the niche of your choice!

Website: www.collabfinder.com

Contact: talk@collabfinder.com

Spotted by: [swissmiss](#)



Using phones to track carbon footprint

Calculating one's carbon footprint can be a painstaking process that tests the commitment of even the most eco-minded consumer, requiring the regular input of data to achieve any kind of precise results. A new technology from UK startup Carbon Hero, however, aims to provide an effortless way for consumers to keep tabs on their environmental impact by simply carrying a GPS-enabled cell phone.

Carbon Diem, a new software package that's planned for launch next spring, runs on users' GPS-enabled mobile phones to determine how they're getting around at any given moment—on foot, by car, or on a bus, train or airplane. As an algorithm tracks the transportation mode used and distance covered, the software uses that information to keep an up-to-the-minute record of the user's carbon emissions, displaying the results in both daily and weekly terms. That, in turn, can help consumers gain new awareness of their impact on the environment and—the ultimate goal—learn to opt for lower-emissions alternatives. Companies, meanwhile, can use Carbon Diem across the organization to track and manage their employees' travel-related emissions. (Alleviating privacy concerns, the software cannot be used to record users' actual routes—only their emissions, *The Guardian* reported.) In tests over the past year, Carbon Diem's accuracy ranged from 100 percent when people are on planes or trains to between 65 and 75 percent when they travel by bus, company founder Andreas Zachariah told *The Guardian*.

Carbon Hero participates in the European Space Agency Business Incubation initiative. Its software is already Nokia N-series compliant, and currently the company seeks funding to speed its development cycle for the BlackBerry platform. One to get in on early....? (Related: [Visualising energy use.](#))

Website: www.carbondiem.com

Contact: info@carbondiem.com

Spotted by: [Guardian](#) via Maria Dahl Jørgensen

More intention-based shipping



We've written about sites that facilitate intention-based shipping in the [US](#), [France](#) and the [United Arab Emirates](#). Now, we're happy to report that the concept continues to spread, as evidenced by a new, like-minded site based in Houston.

Like those we've covered before, [Citizenshipper](#) enables peer-to-peer shipping by matching up people who have something to send with those intending to make a trip in the same direction. Designed for shipping anything ranging from a letter to a fridge, Citizenshipper is free for use by both CitizenSenders and those willing to do the shipping—known on the site as CitizenShippers. CitizenSenders simply post what they need delivered, the starting and destination ZIP codes, and how much they are willing to pay. When a shipper is interested, the CitizenSender receives an email, and can also log in to view the information on their Contract Bids page. CitizenShippers, meanwhile, post the routes they plan on taking, and are notified by e-mail of packages that need to be sent in the same direction. Payments can be handled through PayPal or offline, and Citizenshipper currently charges nothing for facilitating the transaction. The site does, however, incorporate a feedback system to ensure trustworthy participation.

Citizenshipper just launched in August, and you can bet more such sites are on the way. Which will emerge as the FedEx of P2P shipping? Time will tell. In the meantime, keep the localized versions coming!

Website: www.citizenshipper.com

Contact: support@citizenshipper.com

Spotted by: Bonnie Larner



Crowdsourced fabric design

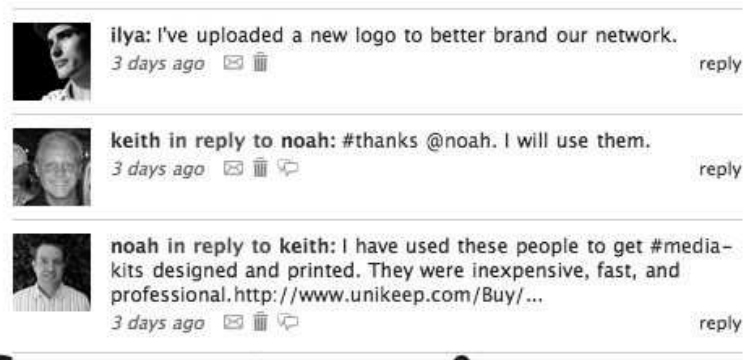
Crowdsourced innovations have already claimed many pages here at Springwise.com, including everything from sneakers to customer service to restaurants. The latest spotting? A Finnish site that lets consumers submit and vote on new home-interior fabric designs.

Bon Bon Kakku, recently launched by Helsinki fabric and interior manufacturer Vallila Interior, lets creative consumers design their own fabrics and offer them to the crowds for voting, comments and—ultimately—purchase. Users begin by registering on the site and submitting their design, including metadata, thumbnail and preview images. Visitors to the site can then rate and make comments on new designs, helping to decide which will go into production. Based on voting results, Bon Bon Kakku chooses new fabrics to produce and sell; creators of selected designs win 6m of the fabric they designed. Other visitors, meanwhile, can buy fabrics from Bon Bon Kakku for EUR 25 per meter, plus taxes and shipping, in units 150 cm wide. Bon Bon Kakku's winter design competition, which kicked off last month, will be open for voting through Nov. 10.

Free fabric for winning designers is nice, but the next step for a business like this? Let consumers earn some cold, hard cash for their efforts in the form of a percentage of sales of the fabrics they design. This is Generation C(ontent) we're talking about, and it's filled with minipreneurs yearning to be part of Generation C(ash). Yes, we know—that's too much trend jargon for one sentence ;-). In plain English: thanks to the internet, talented consumers can share their creative efforts with the rest of the world, and increasingly expect to be rewarded for those efforts, or even to be able to make a living off their creative output. The sites that help that happen are the sites that last! (Related: Customer-made wallpaper — Sticky car art with a crowdsourcing twist.)

Website: www.bonbonkakku.com

Spotted by: Julia Valle



Twitter for enterprises

Breaking down barriers and fostering cross-company communication has long been one of enterprises' most persistent challenges. A tool that was launched last month at [TechCrunch50](#)—and then went on to win the conference's Best in Show award—offers a new solution, however, in the form of a sort of [Twitter](#) for the enterprise.

[Yammer](#) aims to make organizations more productive through the exchange of short, frequent answers to the question, “What are you working on?” Employees' responses to that question get aggregated into a private, central feed, enabling coworkers to discuss ideas, post news, ask questions and share information. Anyone in a company can start a Yammer network and begin inviting colleagues—the basic service is free, and access is limited to those with a valid company email address. (Yammer is also careful to stress that information is never shared with third parties.) Every employee can maintain a profile on Yammer, allowing it to serve as a company directory, and all messages are tagged, giving participants the ability to follow feeds specific to both the tags and the people they find most interesting. Content, meanwhile, is searchable by anyone within the organization, effectively making Yammer a knowledge base in which past conversations can be easily accessed and referenced. In addition to the Yammer.com website, users can interact with their network via a desktop client, iPhone, Blackberry, IM, SMS and even email. Companies that want to claim and manage their Yammer networks can pay USD 1 per month per member of the network for administration privileges; special pricing is available for large networks.

Founded by former executives and early employees of PayPal, eGroups, eBay and Tribe, Los Angeles-based Yammer is backed by venture capital firms Founders Fund and Charles River Ventures. One to watch—and try out! (Related: [User-generated video for the corporate crowd.](#))

Website: www.yammer.com

Contact: help.yammer.com/index.php? m=tickets& a=submit

GPS navigation for disabled drivers



Myriad challenges face disabled drivers and their caretakers as they navigate the streets in their daily lives, not the least of which is finding destinations and parking accommodations that are handicapped-accessible. A new GPS navigation system from UK-based Navevo, however, focuses squarely on helping such drivers find the locations and parking they need.

Launched just a few weeks ago, BBNav includes many of the features found on standard satellite navigation systems, but it also adds information tailored to support holders of the UK's Blue Badge for handicapped drivers. Through a partnership with PIE (Public Information Exchange), the UK's leading publisher of disabled parking guides, BBNav offers comprehensive data about disabled-accessible parking and local council Blue Badge concessions, as well as more than 20,000 points of interest suitable for people with disabilities. Featuring a 4.3-inch-wide touch screen and Bluetooth hands-free calling, BBNav includes a database of 3,500 disabled-accessible car parks and more than 10,000 Blue Badge parking spaces that can reduce the time and uncertainty involved in searching for a place to park the car. Colour-coded and numbered icons are displayed on the map while en route, making it easy to identify parking lots as well as any waiting times or restrictions, and most spots are graded from 1 to 3, indicating the degree of accessibility to those with varying degrees of impairment. BBNav's mapping has also been colour-coded to reflect local rules for Blue Badge holders, so users can easily determine whether they can park legally on yellow lines, for example. The result? On a visit to an unfamiliar town, BBNav can tell drivers where to park, where the public toilets with disabled facilities are and which accommodations offer support for the disabled, among other key pieces of information. Due to be available next month, BBNav will come complete with street-level mapping for 150 major cities and towns in the UK, seven-digit postcode lookup and a six-month free trial of safety camera alerts. Pricing will be GBP 199.99.

Some 650 million people around the globe—or about 10 percent of the world's population—live with a disability, constituting the world's largest minority, according to 2006 data from the United Nations. As populations age, those numbers—and their collective spending power—will only increase. How can your brand better serve this segment of the population...? (Related: Network for people with disabilities.)

Website: www.bbnav.co.uk
Contact: sales@navevo.com

Spotted by: Zena Hockley