

Innovative Tech Startups Primed to Pitch Live at the AFRL Commercialization Academy's 2018 Spring Demo Day Event in Rome, New York

Five startup teams will pitch live for the chance to win up to \$15,000 in prize money at the AFRL Commercialization Academy Spring Cohort's Demo Day on May 31, 2018

Rome, NY – The [Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate \(AFRL/RI\)](#), along with [Griffiss Institute](#) and [Wasabi Ventures](#), will hold the [AFRL Commercialization Academy](#) Spring Cohort's Demo Day on **Thursday, May 31, 2018, at 5:00 pm** EDT, at Griffiss Institute, 725 Daedalian Drive in Rome, New York.

Five innovative, tech startup teams from the [Fall 2017 AFRL Commercialization Academy Cohort](#), two of which, are local to the Utica-Rome area, have been selected to take the stage to compete in a live pitch competition in front of a live audience and a judges' panel. The panel will consist of Commercialization Academy alum, the Upstate New York investor community, and event sponsors. A judges' vote and a live audience vote will be held, with \$15,000 and \$5,000 cash prizes, respectively, to be given to the two best pitches of the day.

The judges' panel will evaluate each startup based on such factors as: the ability of the business to affect Upstate New York's start-up ecosystem and high-tech economy, the culture of innovation that has been created within the startup due to incorporating AFRL technology, the sustainability of the solution beyond the initial startup period, and marketing strategy.

The startups were incubated by early-stage venture capital firm, Wasabi Ventures, while embarking on an acceleration process to either build a sustainable startup, or enhance technology from an already existing startup, with Department of Defense intellectual property from the Information Directorate.

The AFRL Commercialization Academy is an entrepreneurial education program sponsored by the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate and run by Griffiss Institute. Griffiss Institute has partnered with Wasabi Ventures, a successful venture capital firm, to run the academy since 2015. The program is designed to develop entrepreneurial leaders through the commercialization of federal intellectual property to facilitate the growth of Upstate New York's economy through tech startups, and potentially speed technology products back into the hands of the Department of Defense.

"We continue to grow the Commercialization Academy to have a greater impact on the local and state economy and technical ecosystem. Our expectations are that this effort will continue to be recognized by the Department of Defense and New York State, with increased positive support by each entity for future growth," says Griffiss Institute Technical Director, [Frank Hoke](#).

The Spring 2018 AFRL Commercialization Academy Cohort began in January, led by Program Director of [Wasabi Ventures Academy](#), [Michele Pesula Kuegler](#), and began with five startup teams commencing a 4-month commercial viability process. Each entrepreneur sought to develop and test strategies to build sustainable startups eligible for licensing, investing, and partnership opportunities.

The five startups competing at Demo Day are:

AudioStaq – Baltimore, MD – AudioStaq is a publishing and monetization platform that allows podcasters to host, distribute, and monetize content by connecting them with relevant advertisers through their programmatic marketplace.

Go Figure – Utica, NY – The Contractor's Mobile Office. Tape measures, ladders, and note pads. This is how contractors get measurements, build estimates, and create proposals for remodeling jobs – inaccurate and inefficient. A 3+ hour process. Go Figure knows this because they, themselves, are contractors. Also, over-ordering materials cuts into margins and creates other hidden costs. Go Figure wanted technology for their residential contracting business that would dramatically reduce the time to provide a proposal to a customer, from 3+ hours to just minutes, and to accurately order materials for a job. They couldn't find that technology, so they built Go Figure.

idoolocal – Clinton, NY – idoolocal, the local adventure company, wants you to do local! idoolocal works with local businesses only, (no chains!), to create out-of-the-ordinary experiences, like learning how to make sushi from the chefs at The Lotus Garden, or gourmet chocolates alongside the chocolatiers at Sweet Escape, to learning the art of making fresh pasta at The Savoy. idoolocal creates these unique experiences for you and your friends and family, so you can create a local adventure and memories that will last forever.

Off the Cuff – Baltimore, MD – Off the Cuff is a refreshing look at many of the financial issues facing this country. The United States of America will face major financial implications in the coming years, and many people only look to major news outlets for the interpretation of these financial issues. Oftentimes these outlets become boring and unwatchable; Off the Cuff aims to change that! Their channel's goal and intent is to simplify and communicate in a truthful, and semi-funny way, many of these issues. Off the Cuff will cover finance, current events, and much more on this channel.

Pulse – Hanover, NH – Pulse is a survey platform on a mission to provide a reliable source of student opinion on college campuses. Launched at Dartmouth College in the October of 2016, Pulse has an active user base of 92% of the student body and regularly achieves response rates 10-15X higher than competitor survey platforms. Since expanding into the rest of the Ivy League in January of 2018, 12K students have signed up and nine universities have requested to use the platform, including Stanford and MIT. After cornering the college market, Pulse plans to welcome all types of communities onto the platform, including high school, geographic, and even interest-based communities.

These entrepreneurs have received an abundance of tools and resources, including a [startup educational platform](#) that teaches the logistics of building a startup.

Attendees at Demo Day will also receive updates on progress from Spring 2017 team, [Intake](#), as well as Fall 2017 alum and Judges' Choice winner, [Good People Energy Technologies](#). Intake is a digital health company developing next-generation diet-tracking technologies. Using advanced biosensors and wireless technologies, Intake has developed a tool that eliminates the need for food diaries and journaling. Good People manufactures an energy-saving product, an adaptive fan controller for small HVAC systems. It typically saves 15-30% of the energy used by HVAC systems and pays for itself in 3-5 years.

The Spring Cohort Demo Day is a free event and open to anyone interested in startups, entrepreneurship, technology, and interesting intellectual property. RSVP at <https://demodayspring2018.eventbrite.com>

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About the AFRL Commercialization Academy

The AFRL Commercialization Academy is a Griffiss Institute entrepreneurial education program sponsored by the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate (AFRL/RI) in Rome, NY. The Academy pairs students with high-potential AFRL technologies with the goals of developing entrepreneurial leaders and launching new technology ventures.

To learn more about the AFRL Commercialization Academy, please visit www.commercializationacademy.org.

About Griffiss Institute

Established in 2002 by the State of New York, the Griffiss Institute is an independent 501(c)(3) entity governed by a board of directors. By partnering the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate (AFRL/RI) and its technologies with private industry and academia, the Griffiss Institute is able to facilitate and grow the technology base of the Upstate New York region. Since 2014, the Griffiss Institute has successfully enabled the AFRL Commercialization Academy to create over 20 Startups using intellectual property developed in the Information Directorate. The institute has created a collaborative teaming environment accessible to AFRL/RI that provides an environment conducive to the growth of technology and ideas, while creating new business opportunities.

To learn more about Griffiss Institute, please visit www.griffissinstitute.org.

About Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate

With headquarters at Rome, NY, the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate (AFRL/RI)

research vector develops novel and affordable Command, Control, Communications, Computing, Cyber, and Intelligence (C4I) technologies. RI is recognized as a national asset and leader in C4I. Refining data into information and knowledge for decision makers to command and control forces is what we do. This knowledge gives our air, space, and cyberspace forces the competitive advantage needed to protect and defend this great nation.

To learn more about AFRL/RI, please visit: www.wpafb.af.mil/afrl/ri.

About Wasabi Ventures

Founded by Chris Yeh and TK Kuegler in 2003, Wasabi Ventures is an early-stage venture capital firm specializing in cofounding, investing in, incubating, building, and advising early-stage technology companies. Its approach allows early-stage startups to gain traction quickly through interaction with its founders. The firm is also involved in entrepreneurial education programs that move cutting-edge technologies out from leading federal, corporate, and university research labs around the world and into the market through the formation of startup ventures.

To learn more about Wasabi Ventures, please visit our website www.wasabiventures.com.