

March 12, 2014 | By Paul K. Mueller

## UC San Diego Start-Up Emotient Shows the Face of New Technology

The start-up Emotient is a prime example of how industry, academia, and venture capital can combine to create a groundbreaking business.

The basic technology arose in UC San Diego's Machine Perception Laboratory, led by Javier R. Movellan, a research scientist in the Institute of Neural Computation. Movellan and his colleague Marian Bartlett pioneered the automation of facial coding using computer vision and machine learning.

Supported by entrepreneur Ken Denman and investor Seth Neiman of Crosspoint Venture Partners, the Emotient team led by Movellan has created the Emotient API, a sophisticated facial-recognition technology with applications in the health care, retail, and entertainment industries.

In retail, the Emotient API technology allows store owners to assess customer service and quickly enhance their customers' experience. In health care, the technology provides an opportunity for physicians to better engage patients through online video calls, and may help in diagnosing depression and other mental disorders. In video games, the Emotient API allows awareness of gamers' emotional and physical responses, so the content and pace of games can be changed to generate unique and personalized enhancements.

"Seth Neiman pointed me to the UC San Diego team," said Denman, now Emotient's chief executive officer. "He told me they were the most published, the most experienced, the most enthusiastic researchers doing this work."

Movellan credits the university for the smooth and efficient start-up process.

"There was a genuine will to help Emotient innovate," he said. "UC San Diego is amazing at working on interdisciplinary science. They were really innovative in helping computer scientists, psychologists, and entrepreneurs collaborate."

Denman also credits the university's Technical Transfer Office (TTO) and its associate director William Decker.

"I worked with William Decker, and I was very impressed with his knowledge, skill, and ability to get things done and to keep his commitments and be reasonable in his negotiations overall," Denman said. "I was very pleasantly surprised."

Emotient now joins the long list of start-ups – currently more than 180—that the TTO has helped to establish, Decker said.

"Ken Denman is an innovator, and a pleasure to work with. We hope he considers other technologies now under way at UC San Diego."

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