

THE BIG IDEA BANG: *Blix* SOLVES FOR VISION NOT IDEAS

On the first day of orientation, I met Bill Gross, serial entrepreneur and founder of Idea Lab in Pasadena, CA. We were in the former supersonic wind tunnel Art Center College of Design had acquired for its graduate programs.

Bill was holding an umbrella that looked like it had barely survived being sucked through a turbine engine. *"Was it an actual prototype of a handheld solar-powered teleporter that was still in alpha? Or just his lucky umbrella?"*

Needless to say, I was bemused. My brain had spiraled, *"Has Pasadena's venture guru harnessed the power of photons? Was his umbrella about to make history?"* As I proceeded to the front arc of people passionately testing his curiosity about their startups, I confessed I didn't have a startup: *I had an idea.*

Immediately he uttered that ideas are worth nothing, that instead passion, execution, and team matter - *but perhaps not as much as market timing.*

"Obviously, the real value of an idea cannot equal zero," I thought, being a writer by education. But after I reasoned: *"He's an engineer, clearly language rooted in the alphabet must be a second class citizen to any hybrid coding system."* To be fair, empirically, is not The Constitution a written document - *rather than an algorithm, or an oil painting?*

I walked away with his personal email and the understanding that startup ideas (like screenplays in Hollywood) are mere potential energy. But also that my rough idea, inflected across a narrow 30 second pitch, into the wind tunnel of a seasoned brain, had gained enough feedback to reconfigure my thesis: my idea got stronger.

Inspired, I crafted the first Blix schematic, in UML, working out the process flow for computational creativity across America's kitchens, the Fridgmo recipe app. *(In my research, I discovered Watson AI had already tested a similar thesis with top chefs: cognitive cuisine, i.e. computer-assisted human creativity.)*

After Steve Jobs fractured software development into tiny little apps, portal ecosystems devalued. After Eric Reis declared that you can have a successful company even if your initial idea is (in my opinion) way off the mark, as long as you iterate and pivot, lean became sexy. After I watched moonshots by tech founders have small conversion rates into success (both uber secret skunkworks and post-exit founder labs), I realized that vision is not an abundant commodity, that technical founders are rarely also creative founders, and that large tech companies lack a reliable innovation model that doesn't default to outsized acquisitions.

Because of my training in media studies, entertainment technology and filmmaking, the specific frontier of my focus is new media

technology - that elusive intersection where IT and media collide, sometimes creating rich media user experiences which currently drive growth on social platforms.

Shaping inspiration into "big ideas" - or rather visualizing platform ecologies using research, UML workflows, rapid prototyping, and proof of concept stages - the possibility of solving large problems and creating new market spaces and tech brands, and/or market-ready products for established tech brands, is fueled by a development workflow partly grafted from Hollywood's script development and previz models. (*A16Z famously borrowed from Michael Ovitz and CAA's packaging model.*)

Blix, conceived as a product startup system for incumbent market players (like Google, Meta, X, Apple, Microsoft, U.S. Post Office,...), leverages market share pain points by outsourcing (and organizing) disruptive innovation.

Though policy and enforcement shifts on antitrust regulation for horizontal and vertical sector consolidations by the current executive, legislative and judicial branches may be less aggressive, Blix creative IP offers an alternative for market innovation that may effectively circumscribe countervailing winds.

Because ideas are not yet companies, or coveted market shares, Blix IP offers products within a bespoke B2B service that promotes optimization of existing product ecologies, therefore amplifying market differentiation, and more so rendering moot growth tactics rooted in monopolist homology.

With Blix, creative disruptive can come from within, augmenting strategic forces already in play by entrenched stakeholders, in consumer-facing, new media, and social/graph-driven tech markets.

Across the span of my MFA pursuits, at Art Center, a design thinking school, and more recently MSMU, where the Gina Davis Institute is based, I have interrogated the value and deficits of mass media culture and its technologies. Perhaps emblematic of media convergence, I recall a rather profound question Michael Arrington asked Marissa Mayer: "*Is Yahoo a media or a technology company?*" Indeed, Michael's question provoked the essence of the broadband shift occurring from information to media technologies, directly influenced by the convergence of Silicon Valley and Hollywood industries. But what an entire generation of engineers did not apprehend (excluding perhaps Jack Dorsey) was that media technology and information technology were inherently different frontiers -- and that new media could actually be new, not just analog technology transposed to digital.

Ideation applied to large problems can be leveraged by classic user-centric processes, defined by design thinking. But more intractable cultural paradigms, like online election integrity, or hate speech, require profound problem space interrogation, reframed by ethics, policy, leadership and vision. The Big Idea, a platform thinking method, can bridge founder and market space deficits by offering VAAP (vision as a product), IP assets shaped into market-ready IT and MT, a frontier now at the intersection of AI and spatial computing.