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[Chicago-Based Startup Incubator Adds 10 New Companies to Its Roster](#)



April 27, 2011 by [Ben Parr](#) 2

Excelerate Labs, a startup incubator and accelerator in Chicago, has announced its newest batch of startups for the summer class.

This will be the incubator's second class. Its first one, in 2010, has raised \$7.2 million in venture funding and hired 65 employees since its demo day. Excelerate Labs is led by Sam Yagan, co-founder of OKCupid, and Troy Henikoff, co-founder of SurePayroll.

"In 2010 Excelerate itself was a startup," Excelerate Labs CEO's Henikoff told *Mashable*. "We had to figure a lot of it out as we were going. Now with a successful year under our belt, we can build on what we learned from last year and do an even better job this year."

Along with a \$25,000 seed investment, all 10 startups in this year's class also get office space, legal assistance and mentorship from Chicago entrepreneurs.

Thanks to the success of [Y Combinator](#), the startup accelerator that boasts Reddit, Justin.tv, Dropbox, Airbnb and Heroku among its alumni, other cities have been launching their own incubators to develop entrepreneurial talent. Chicago's tech scene has been booming in recent years with [the unprecedented growth of Groupon](#).

Here are the 10 startups in Excelerate Labs' newest class:

[A Space Apart](#): A mobile app attempting to create local experiences and communities around specific places or events.

[BabbaCo](#): Creates functional and "super cute" products for parents and their children.

[Beyond Credentials](#): Helps students create digital resumes ("pitch pages"). One of its unique factors: It only allows students and alumni from a top 300 U.S. university.

[Buzz Referrals](#): A server that creates custom referral programs based on social media.

[CookItFor.Us](#): A website for sharing recipes, CookItFor.Us is an attempt to connect fine diners ("cravers") with amateur and professional chefs ("makers").

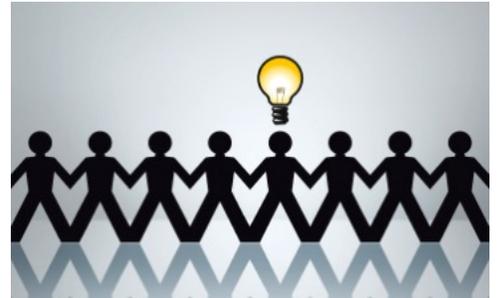
[Exchangery](#): Helps create regulator and technology-friendly commodities exchanges.

[Food Genius](#): A mobile app that provides dish suggestions and matching coupons.

[Joystickers](#): Focuses on creating products that help people interact with their touchscreens. Its big product is "Flow," a paintbrush for touchscreens that already has some momentum [on Kickstarter](#).

[MapDing](#): A location-based marketplace only for smartphones. Users can set notifications for when items they're looking for become available.

[Power2Switch](#): A portal and dashboard that helps people manage their energy costs. It also finds users cheaper



alternatives to their current electricity supplier by analyzing billing info and other data.

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