

FABulous: Helping startups to innovate in 3D printing

FABulous, the EU-supported 3D Printing Accelerator, has helped more than 100 European companies to innovate and grow.

New digital technologies have the potential to disrupt many sectors of our economy. That is the case of 3D printing, which allows creating physical objects from a digital model, just by joining materials layer upon layer. This is already used nowadays to print personalised implants, shoes insoles, components of airplanes and cars, or even food.

However, investing in such a ground-breaking technology is not always easy for small companies, startups and entrepreneurs. That is why the European Commission launched the FABulous project, one of the 16 FIWARE Accelerators in the framework of the EU Public-Private Partnership on the Future Internet.

Building a European 3D printing ecosystem

During two years, FABulous has created and supported an ecosystem for 3D printing technologies. The accelerator has brought innovators and entrepreneurs together with the relevant technology and infrastructure, investors, and coaches in the field of design, manufacturing, logistics and content-based services.

More than 100 web-entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs from 20 different countries have taken part in the programme. The FABulous accelerator has offered them technical training and support, mentoring, access to funding, pitching events, and more.

As a result of the acceleration programme, 15 new companies have been created, generating 131 new jobs. 26 of the startups have also raised additional funds and many of them have won relevant awards or accomplished partnerships with companies such as Siemens, Thales, Audi or Fujitsu.

Success stories from participating startups

3YOURMIND

One of the companies that took part in FABulous was the German startup 3YOURMIND. Their intelligent software solutions offer an easy way for innovative businesses and 3D printing services to optimise their workflows. Companies can get instant analysis of printability, pricing and delivery time, while 3D printing providers get secure and error-free access to their industrial 3D printers.

Participating in FABulous has helped 3YOURMIND in the start-up phase, especially to get in touch with a big network of potential customers and investors. That's how they met one of their key investors, who helped closing a €10 million series A round with venture capitalists. The funds raised will allow the startup to expand into the US market and make a first entry into the Asian market.

During their participation in FABulous they created 20 new jobs, reaching nowadays a total of 42 employees. The company keeps growing and it was also recognised with the German Innovation Award and the Formnext Startup Challenge in 2016.

When we took part in FABulous we were 5 people with only pre-seed funding, without a marketable product. Today 3YOURMIND is a leading provider of software solutions for industrial 3D printing.

- Stephan Kühr, CEO 3YOURMIND

Dimension4

The Belgian startup Dimension4 developed a web platform to give e-retail businesses seamless access to a global network of 3D printing companies that can print their orders in high volumes. In this way, Dimension4 helps e-commerce companies that want to offer 3D personalised products to their customers without having to buy and operate a 3D printer of their own.

Dimension4 is one of the companies who participated in the FABulous accelerator program. Being part of this EU-supported accelerator has translated for them into 4 new jobs and access to a big network of potential customers and investors. In addition, they are using many of the FIWARE enablers, which allow them to run functionalities such as cloud hosting and identification of users in their web platform.

In addition to the grant, the most important value of the FABulous programme was the access to a network of start-ups, companies and investors in the same field. This enabled the creation of valuable partnerships and long-term collaborations.

-Nikolas Taillieu, Founder Dimension4

To learn about how other companies benefitted from FABulous and the overall success of this EU-supported 3D accelerator, visit the FABulous website.

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