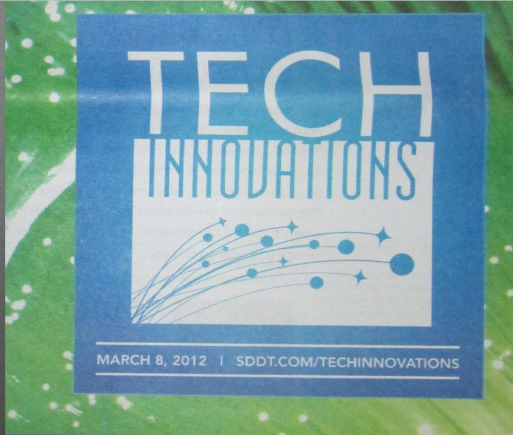
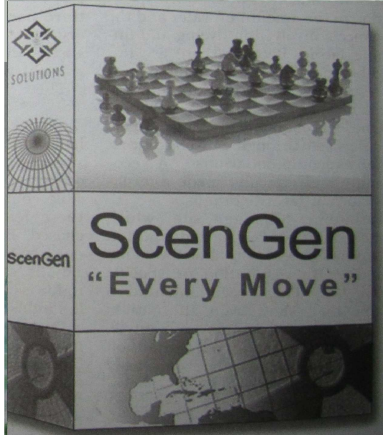


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ScenGen wins most innovative technology "again" for 2012



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Roundtable discussion

Tech firms navigate a challenging funding environment

By TIERNEY PLUMB
The Daily Transcript

San Diego is a tough place to secure funding, but is a great place to find high-tech employees.

That was the consensus at a roundtable hosted by *The Daily Transcript* and sponsored by Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo PC on Feb. 24. Eight locally based technology firms — ranging from startups to well-established companies with spinoffs — shared the pulse of their industry.

The youngest company present was **Barc**, a chat tool launching this month that lets people communicate with others on the same website or WiFi network. So far, its cash flow has come from friends and family.

"It's hard to get funding. Luckily, our technology doesn't cost a lot to get it up and running," said Grant Farwell, CEO and president of **Barc**. "I am worried for those that do because it's not cheap to start a company."

One of the older companies at the discussion, 12-year-old **TechnoCom Corp.**, is also encountering a difficult financing environment in San Diego. The company, which links up wireless providers with location-based services, is working on a spin-off called **Location Smart** that lets businesses incorporate location and



Farwell



Hererra

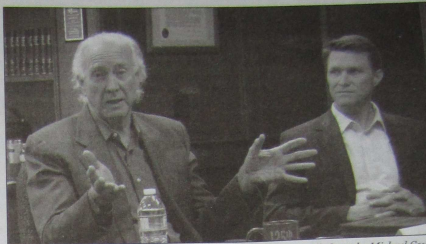
messaging into their existing functions.

"We talked to venture capitalists in the area and didn't get a lot of traction," said Mario Proietti, CEO of **TechnoCom**.

For startup **Fashioning Change**, it's about waiting for the right kind of money. The website, which helps online shoppers find socially responsible alternatives to their favorite brands, has even turned down some local funds because the interested VCs weren't good fits.

"That sounds odd for a startup to say, but we are looking to build an enduring company that is a competitor to Amazon, and if we are not bringing the right money on board with us to grow our team, then we are shooting ourselves in the foot," said Adriana Hererra, founder and CEO.

She admits her company has been bootstrapped for cash over the past



Carl Murphy (left), pictured with Jim Cleary.

All photos by Michael Courtis



Marsh



O'Brien



Sandrew



Suarez

two years, so turning down funding opportunities hasn't been easy.

But startups like hers have a leg up over those that take root in the Bay Area and have ample access to truckloads of cash in their early stages, according to Jim Cleary, a member in Mintz Levin's San Diego

office in the intellectual property section.

"They seem to be hungrier down here, a little more nimble and that way a little more creative," Cleary said. "They didn't get showered with

See **Roundtable** on 10

Roundtable Participants

Jim Cleary, Member
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo PC (sponsor)

Thomas Del Monte, CEO/General Counsel
Interra Energy, Inc.

Grant Farwell, Founder, CEO & President
Barc

Adriana Hererra, Founder & CEO
Fashioning Change

Thomas Marsh, President
ai-one inc.

Carl Murphy, Vice President
Accord Solutions, Inc.

Walter O'Brien, Chief Scientist
Mario Proietti, CEO

