

QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **FALL 2016**

INNOVATION

**2016 Yearbook of
Design Excellence**

INTERNATIONAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARDS

IDSA



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QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

FALL 2016

INNOVATION®



Bronze winner Oculus Rift. See page 98.

IDSA®

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The quarterly publication of the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), *Innovation* provides in-depth coverage of design issues and long-term trends while communicating the value of design to business and society at large.

2016 YEARBOOK OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6 From the Editor
Mark Dziarsk, FIDSA | 23 The Evolution that Will Create a Better Future
Cameron Campbell, IDSA |
| 8 IDSAHQ
Daniel A. Martinage, CAE | 24 IDEA 2016 Jury |
| 10 IDSA Honors | 152 2016 Featured Finalists |
| 17 2016 Student Merit Award Winners
Introduction by Scott Shim, IDSA | 159 2016 Finalists |
| | 164 2016 Index of Winners |

2016 IDEA Winners

- 32 Best in Show 2016, Equality Award and Gold IDEA – Sports, Recreation & Leisure**
The Access Strength™
Full Circle
- 35 Curator's Choice and Gold IDEA – Student Designs**
BoneAid
Adaptable Design
- 36 IDEA Chair's Award and Gold IDEA – Entertainment**
Vive Virtual Reality System
Making the Imagined Real
- 38 Considered Award and Gold IDEA – Home & Bath**
Nascent Objects
An Electronics Revolution
- 40 Beauty Award and Gold IDEA – Entertainment**
SERIF TV
An Object of Space
- 41 People's Choice and Silver IDEA – Personal Accessories**
Pebble Time Round

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Cover photo: Nokia's OZO Virtual Reality Camera. See page 94.

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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 2-LA | 67 IDSA Membership |
| 49 BRP | c4 LUNAR |
| 56 IDSA Ambassadors | c2 Mixer |
| 87 IDSA DDCs | 135 National Industrial Design Day |
| 89 IDSA Forums | 61 Panasonic |
| 81 IDSA/IDEA 2017 | c3 Pip Tompkin |
| 168 IDSA/IDEA 2017 | 9 Samsung |
| 95 IDSA International Conference 2017 | 31 The Henry Ford |
| 113 IDSA Medical Conference 2017 | |

Automotive & Transportation

- 42 **HUBB Lifetime Oil Filter**
Smart Lubrication
- 44 **Rolls-Royce Dawn**
The Pinnacle of Style
- 46 **VARD Offshore Subsea Construction Vessel (OSCV)**
Comfort on the High Seas
- 48 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Children's Products

- 52 **mCookie**
Imaginations Soar
- 54 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Commercial & Industrial Products

- 57 **Swater**
Smarter Water
- 58 **TC8000 Mobile Computer**
Well-Rounded Responsiveness
- 60 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Communication Tools

- 64 **goTenna**
Off-Grid Communications
- 66 **Robin**
Room to Grow
- 68 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Computer Equipment

- 75 **Google OnHub**
Elegantly Connected
- 76 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Design Strategy

- 84 **Dolby HQ Environmental Design Strategy**
A Celebration of Past, Present & Future
- 86 **Silver/Bronze Winners**



Digital Design

- 88 **Hammerhead One**
Eyes on the Road
- 90 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Entertainment

- 94 **OZO Virtual Reality Camera**
360 Degrees of the World
- 96 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Environments

- 99 **TetraPOT**
A Greener Sea Barrier
- 100 **Silver/Bronze Winners**



Home & Bath

- 106 **Fade Task Light**
The Ideal Desk Mate
- 108 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Kitchen

- 116 **Kelvin Coffee Bean Roaster Concept**
Bringing the Coffeehouse to Your Countertop
- 118 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Medical & Scientific Products

- 121 **Moyo Fetal Heart Rate Monitor**
And the Beat Goes On
- 122 **Treo | Advanced Mobile Imaging**
On-the-Go Flexibility
- 124 **Silver Winners**

Office & Productivity

- 126 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Outdoor & Garden

- 127 **Silver Winner**

Packaging & Graphics

- 128 **Silver Winner**

Personal Accessories

- 129 **OneBlade**
A Singular Experience
- 130 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Research

- 134 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Service Design

- 136 **Audi on demand**
Experience Over Ownership

Social Impact Design

- 138 **Suncubator Concept**
Cradling Babies in Warmth
- 140 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Sports, Leisure & Recreation

- 142 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Student Designs

- 147 **Emergency Medical System**
Saving More Lives
- 148 **Silver/Bronze Winners**

Above: Hive Active Heating Thermostat 2. See page 114.

By **Sudha Kamath**, INNOVATION staff writer

The Access Strength™ **FULL CIRCLE**

What began as a student concept that captured worldwide attention when it won Best in Show, Gold and People's Choice in IDSA's International Design Excellence Awards 2007 has come full circle almost 10 years later as it once again wins three major IDEAs in 2016. The Access Strength™ was designed by Ryan Eder, IDSA, founder and CEO of IncludeFitness (IF) and engineered by Priority Designs, Inc. with software developed by AWH—all based in Ohio.

"The initial recognition provided the springboard to turn our observation and idea into a reality," says Eder. "After nearly a decade—and millions of dollars in additional research and development—our original vision has evolved into an inclusive digital health platform that pairs HIPAA-compliant cloud software with inclusive fitness equipment to lower the barriers in maintaining physical health while optimizing the delivery of care. The evolution of our technology was recognized, once again, with an unprecedented Gold, Best in Show and, this time, Design for Equality in IDEA 2016."

The IDEA spotlight first shone on Eder when he was an industrial design student in the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP). In August 2016, he shared his challenges from thesis to CEO when he took the stage in Detroit as a keynote at IDSA's International Conference 2016: Making Things Happen. "The journey started in my third year at UC," he told the rapt audience of fellow designers—keen on learning his secrets to success. "I noticed a man in a wheelchair relentlessly struggling to exercise at a gym," recalls Eder. "I thought there had to be a better way and sought to make fitness and rehabilitation easier for people of all abilities, and redefine the delivery of both."



"Winning IDEA fundamentally changed everything—everything," Eder emphasizes. "That recognition opened doors to pursue the concept. Otherwise, it most likely would've just stayed a senior thesis. I used that validation to connect with others and build IF. As we continued to have success, the education I received with the opportunity to launch IF also has been career changing."

Eder says it was intimidating to win IDEA 2007 Best in Show and then try to rethink everything to expand the vision and push further. "To be recognized with that, once again, is validation for all the hard work everyone has put into IF. What's most exciting for us—this is just the beginning."

“Designers speak of form and function, but very few designs do both in a beautiful way that is driven by empathy. The Access Strength™ took a platform that most dismiss as just a piece of equipment and challenged the industry to reframe its approach. Each touchpoint and moment left me saying ‘well done.’”

—Owen Foster, IDSA, SHIFT and Aether Global Learning

Eder says he’s gained a tremendous depth of knowledge in operating and building companies that he otherwise would not have had. “When I won in IDEA 2007, I had 10 weeks of work into the project. This year, winning it again, I had 10 years of work into it. The platform that evolved from that first recognition is extremely powerful and has the ability to transform industries. But to get there, it took a tremendous amount of hard work, perseverance and trusting your gut.”

Eder worked at Priority Designs from 2006 to 2013, while burning the midnight oil to start his own company, eventually hiring Priority to handle mechanical and electrical engineering for IF. “The Priority Designs team is thrilled to see Ryan and The Access Strength win more IDEAs. Having front row seats to the decade-long journey—we can’t imagine a more deserving project that weaves problem solving, empathy, humanity, perseverance, determination and strong design values into a single effort. Ryan’s work has been an inspiration to us all,” attests Paul Kolada, IDSA, principal of Priority Designs.

He adds that IDEA is “a strong validation to a design-centric story that started with Ryan as an aspiring student—and now finds him ready to deliver a state-of-the-art fitness system to a universe of users.”

After all, fitness platforms are hard to use, often excluding the populations that need them the most, such as seniors, those with disabilities, children and others. Rehabilitation is siloed and reactionary with outcomes dependent on subjective manual assessment and documentation. Fitness data is aerobic-centric and missing key data sets while quality is suspect and lacks integration with the medical sector. Eder also found there are multiple organizations responsible for

delivering care—yet very little communication or collaboration among them—leading to inefficiencies.

IF worked with end users, practitioners, administrators, technicians and more to meet the needs of customers. “Every element was analyzed and reimaged to lower barriers and deliver care more efficiently and effectively than ever before,” he explains.

The Access Strength features two independent arms rotating 180 degrees while patented carts travel along the arms, catering to individual body sizes, reaches and comfort for an unprecedented number of upper and lower body exercises; an electronic dial that rotates to the desired weight, providing a centrally located high-contrast display that’s easy to read and reach at all times; dexterity-free operation with areas of adjustment highlighted in bright green for instant recognition; handles that require almost no effort to adjust; and a versatile back, lap or chest pad that can provide additional support for standing or seated exercises or be used to secure a wheelchair.

In addition, an integrated seat slides out when needed and disappears when not, with height adjustment and a transfer handle so exercises can be performed facing the equipment or facing away from the equipment.

“Early on our platform was hardware-centric, and we decided there was a big opportunity to expand with a software platform that really opened opportunities for us,” says Eder. “We needed a software platform that was HIPAA compliant, went in and out of the healthcare sector, but it needed to be intuitive enough to use for individuals who are not familiar with tech—but powerful enough for practitioners, doctors, trainers, therapists to really give them the tools they need.”





The IFCloud™, developed by AWH, is a web app that does just this. It allows patients or providers to download routines and build protocols, drag and drop scheduling, and pull down the information from any of the equipment. Users can login with an RFID clip through the machine, and they are guided through the routine with details on exercises, machine setup and how much weight to use. The weight is automatically selected for them. In the background, the platform is collecting high-fidelity objective data from the session, such as velocity, force, power, tempo, range of motion and symmetry. All this data is sent back to the cloud and becomes available to analyze on a micro or macro scale. This data also can be shared across users and providers to uncover best practices, track compliance enable a previously unobtainable continuum of care.

This year, Eder expects to fulfill orders for The Access Strength from healthcare networks, the Veterans Administration, community centers, universities and active aging facilities.

The story also came full circle in 2015 when IF moved its headquarters to Eder's hometown—Cincinnati. The company received grants in 2009 and seed investments in 2015 from CincyTech, a regional leader in high potential technology investments in southwest Ohio. "We were impressed with Ryan's original vision for a machine that gives an underserved population access to fitness," says CincyTech Managing Director Mike Venerable. "Ryan didn't stop there. What's perhaps even more impressive is the digital health platform he developed around the equipment."

Eder's creative interest was sparked early on. "I've loved to draw ever since I can remember," he reveals. "I was banned from drawing in second grade because I would do that over my school work. I always thought it would be amazing to get paid to draw."

Eder also explored animation and computer graphics. He also excelled at math, so his parents—not being artistic—

“Winning IDEA fundamentally changed everything—
EVERYTHING.”

—Ryan Eder, IDSA, IncludeFitness

thought he may like engineering when it came time for higher education. "But that wasn't resonating as much," he admits.

He was tipped off to check out industrial design. ID was not well known as a profession in his high school. "But I just happened to live in a city with a world-renowned program in my backyard," says Eder. "So being in Cincinnati, I toured DAAP. In the hall, I saw a drawing of an iron and then a model sitting next to it. Instantaneously, I saw the opportunity to draw and then have those drawings come to life. I was hooked and never looked back."

Eder says one of the key drivers behind UC's success is its co-op program. He spent a total of 18 months in four different companies learning directly from the field and getting hands-on with projects. "The faculty and curriculum at UC is amazing, but to add the real-world experience from co-op is simply unmatched. Not only do you get the direct experience of working, but also the competitive culture it breeds in the classroom to fight for those prime co-ops to constantly improve and experience the interviewing process before graduating; it was a no-brainer."

"I've had the opportunity to observe and support Ryan's commitment to take The Access Strength from a great student capstone as an ID student at UC into a product system and a new company. During the last decade he has evolved from a talented and thoughtful product designer to becoming a strategic leader and CEO of a company," says former IDSA President Craig Vogel, FIDSA, associate dean for graduate studies and research at UC-DAAP.

Another IDSA Fellow also served as a mentor—Patricia Moore, FIDSA. "She came up to me after IDEA 2007 and shared her sphere of contacts and experience in physical medicine, rehabilitation and gerontology, helping enhance the development and efficacy of IF," says Eder. "She's been a tremendous supporter throughout the years and extremely generous—helping us get to this point."

Eder has found his true north. "My main motivation behind IF is to help others. It provides a deeper purpose and meaning that simply can't be replaced. The belief of impact we could make on not just individuals but on institutions and markets as well keeps driving me."

"This is the tip of the iceberg," says Eder. "Our systems will start shipping in early 2017, but we already have a family of products in the pipeline, as well as version 2.0 and 3.0 planned for The IFCloud, which has evolved into the true nucleus of our offering. We're here to transform the way we deliver care—higher quality with lower costs while making it easier for people of all abilities to pursue physical health. I'm very excited for the future and what we have to bring to the table." ■

Designed by **Priority Designs, Inc.;** AWH;
and Ryan Eder, IDSA, of **IncludeFitness**



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