The dawn of visual authentication

PixelPin might be the future of online security authentication, with an innovative way of looking at security that might be a gamechanger for the industry. Its team has created a new visual method of security authentication that's secure, private and memorable, could replace passwords and also reduce phishing and hacking attempts.

Founders Brian Taylor and Geoff Anderson worked in military intelligence and defence companies before developing the PixelPin approach to online authentication of using personal pictures to replace passwords. One of Mashable’s Top 25 UK Start-Ups and a TechCrunch Runner-Up at the Mobile World Congress, PixelPin is a truly exciting start-up in the cybersecurity space.

A challenge and a confidence-builder

Karen Luong (MSci Theoretical Physics, UCL 2015) was looking for a summer internship that would give her a chance to try something new. At UCL, she attended the Enterprise Bootcamp, a free three-day introduction to the world of business, available to all UCL students. Karen found it very useful, saying that Tim Barnes, Director of UCL Advances, was an especially motivating speaker. “He showed how you can branch out and try different things, and that it’s okay to fail,” she says.

When she approached PixelPin through the UCL Advances Summer Internship Programme, part-funded by Santander Universities, they jumped at the chance to take her on. Karen’s main work was to look at business metrics for them.

Helping interns to be independent

Karen also got the chance to take on her own project. She wanted to learn programming, so PixelPin gave her solid support; for example, arranging a skype session with their CTO for her to learn about key programming issues. PixelPin also gave her a project to work on independently, in which she took an in-depth look at image processing and cybersecurity.

“SMEs are small and the student will be exposed to and involved in many of the business aspects of the work. Karen was treated as a full member of the team and sat in all the business development, technical and strategic meetings.”

Geoff Anderson, Co-Founder, PixelPin.

Having kept in touch with PixelPin, Karen is now keen to develop her skillset so she can explore the world of cybersecurity alongside her academic commitments. “I was given the opportunity to go out there and do what I want – the internship gave me confidence and made me much more independent. I’m also much more intrigued by working in start-ups and technology now,” she says.
About UCL

UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

www.ucl.ac.uk

About UCL Advances

UCL Advances, UCL’s centre for entrepreneurship, helps anyone who wants to learn about, start or grow a business. Its primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries. It works to support start-ups and small businesses across London by helping them to access the technical and business expertise of UCL’s staff and students through a series of programmes to help support ambitious young companies.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise

About Business Support

UCL Advances provides direct business support for internal and external organisations through a variety of programmes and activities such as 1-1 advice, problem solving through student consultancy, student internships, training, mentoring and others.

• We help London-based businesses grow and develop by analyzing business needs and connecting them to relevant interventions such as industry mentors;
• Through pairing teams students with businesses we deliver short-term consultancy projects addressing specific organisation needs;
• We broker relationships and fund exchanges between new and aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs in another member state of the European Union;
• Individual angel investors connected to UCL provide seed investment to SMEs engaged with UCL Advances programmes;
• We offer fully funded SME Internships where UCL students spend eight to twelve weeks in a London SME working alongside the director(s) to deliver real results and lasting impact in the host organisation whilst learning about enterprise;
• We offer a variety of training courses and workshops are available to help you learn about, start or grow your business – Boost your business learning with challenging courses at UCL!
• We offer digital businesses user experience consultations, cross-device testing, and large-scale beta testing with detailed use analytics, enabling businesses to make decisions that are evidence based, customer focused and commercially rewarding.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/business/support

About Student Engagement

UCL does more to help students learn about, start or grow a business than any other UK university, giving them the critical skills to get a job or start their own venture. UCL Advances offers a whole programme of support – taking them through their entrepreneurial journey. This includes access to training, mentoring, one-to-one business advice from our in-house advisors, access to loans and grant funding, placements and the use of our Hatchery space.

• The Summer Internship Programme (SIP) – aimed at supporting interns while they gain valuable hands-on work experience. The interns are based within a micro, small or medium sized enterprise to carry out a range of activities intended to help their host business to grow. This includes training, shadowing and work related tasks specified by the business. It is an 8–12 week full time programme for which the intern is paid a training allowance, by UCL Advances, for living costs. To apply, we ask small to medium enterprises to send us their internship opportunities and students to send us their CVs. We then match the students with the opportunities accordingly and monitor the internship until the end.

• UCL Enterprise Boot Camp teaches UCL students the fundamentals of the modern business world over the course of a rigorous and challenging three days. Open to all students – undergraduates and postgraduates the boot camps teach students basic business concepts, along with some of the hard and soft skills needed to make smart career progress.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/students