

Young Scottsdale-raised Entrepreneurs Find Internet Niche

Written by Elizabeth Dobbins



Siblings Scott and Stacey Ferreira founded MySocialCloud.com, a startup that offers services from secure password storage to more intuitive social media organization. The venture has drawn interest from users and investors alike, including Virgin Group founder, Richard Branson.



She signs her emails "Socially, Stacey Ferreira." The 19-year-old Arizona-raised cofounder of the website, MySocialCloud.com, eschews the normal "Sincerely" or "Regards," in favor of "Socially," a surprising choice. However, this single word effectively captures both Stacey's vision for the future of technology's interaction with information and the driving force behind her and her brother, Scott Ferreira's, website.

"The Internet has given us a great way to spread knowledge and information," begins Stacey. "In the future, I'd love to see this knowledge being spread to every country and town so that all people can be much more informed and educated as well as interact with others from all around the world. I certainly think that startups such as MySocialCloud are on the path to making this a reality."

MySocialCloud hopes to move toward this goal by essentially streamlining users' internet experience to make communicating and accessing information simpler. Offering secure password storage, one click logins, the ability to view multiple social media streams on one page, accessible information memory, and a quick way to share content with friends and others, MySocialCloud is designed, as Stacey puts it, "so that people [can] spend less time trying to access information and more time learning from it."

MySocialCloud may have ambitious goals but this young startup has more than just ideas backing it. Most notable is the interest the website has received from investors, Jerry Murdock and Richard Branson, who have invested close to one million dollars in the venture. How did two siblings not even old enough to rent a car go from kids growing up in Scottsdale to young entrepreneurs receiving investments in the seven figures?

MySocialCloud may have officially started at the University of Southern California but its origins are very much connected to Arizona. Stacey jokingly credits the hot Arizona summers for keeping them inside, forcing them to build their computer savvy, but it was the influences of their piano instructor and various teachers at the schools they attended, North Ranch Elementary School, Desert Shadows Middle School, Xavier College Preparatory, and Brophy College Preparatory, that truly set the foundation for where they are now. In a more concrete sense, however, MySocialCloud started with a crash—a computer crash to be exact.

During Scott's first year of college, his computer failed wiping out all his documents including an excel spread sheet containing his usernames and passwords. In its absence Scott discovered the extent to which he depended on the spread sheet and from that realization came an idea for a website: a cloud based format for saving usernames, passwords and internet content that would strike a balance between convenience and security while remaining completely computer crash immune. From that idea, MySocialCloud was officially founded in May 2011 by then 20-year-old Scott and 18-year-old Stacey.



Not long after they started, they secured investors using the very tool their site hopes to become an important part of: social media. "Sir Richard Branson's investment is a fascinating story that still amazes me at times," says Stacey. In a tweet, British business magnate Branson asked people to donate 2,000 dollars to charity and in return, he promised to meet donors for cocktails in Miami. Stacey and Scott borrowed 4,000 dollars from their parents on the condition they would pay it back before summer's end and flew to the Miami meeting to pitch their idea. Afterwards they kept in contact, updating Branson on MySocialCloud's progress. Branson introduced them to Murdock who flew out to meet the MySocialCloud team, where he announced that he and Branson would invest in their website.

They've used that money to hire more people bringing the MySocialCloud team up to ten. With the help of this larger staff they launched the "Explore" stream in June 2012, which Stacey states is the team's favorite moment with MySocialCloud so far. This feature highlights public information such as user posted photos, articles and videos along with user created lists.

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"It was really the beginning point of interaction between users on MySocialCloud. Since its launch we've seen a huge increase of people subscribing to one another's lists, sharing information and commenting on different content that's brought onto MySocialCloud by our users," says Stacey.

As for the future of MySocialCloud, within the next year they hope to further perfect the mechanics of the website, gain more users to increase both the amount and breadth of information sharing and launch a MySocialCloud mobile app. In order to make these goals a reality, both Stacey and Scott have decided not to continue at their respective colleges.

"While I definitely see the value in the traditional college education" starts Stacey, "there is also definitely a value in building a business and 'learning by doing'. My brother and I were both placed in a circumstance where we had the opportunity to take time off from school to pursue a passion full time, and opportunities don't happen every day. You can always go back to college and complete a degree."

Though she has left her formal schooling for now, even beyond "learning by doing" Stacey sees social media as full of educational opportunities and hopes in the future these possibilities will be more fully realized. Holding social media back from reaching its full potential is the sheer amount of information available. "Everyone who uses the Internet is bombarded with loads of information each day. This overflow of information oftentimes bogs us down and makes it difficult to experience the rest of our life."

MySocialCloud is Stacey, Scott and the rest of the team's answer to this dilemma and Stacey sees a bright future for both her and her brother's website and social media in general, "My hope for social media is that more meaningful products are built that make it easier to create personal connections around real life information and events." mysocialcloud.com