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Steve Kirsch

2nd

CEO at OneID::Serial entrepreneur::identity::bitcoin

[San Francisco Bay Area](#) | Internet

Current OneID
Previous Abaca Technology, Kirsch Foundation, Propel Software
Education Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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CEO at OneID::Serial entrepreneur::identity::bitcoin

Summary

Serial entrepreneur and philanthropist. I've started 6 companies with a combined market cap of over \$2 billion.

I started OneID in June 2011, to fix the identity problem on the Internet. A single digital identity that replaces old-style username/password. Security experts love it because it replaces shared secrets with asymmetric advanced elliptic curve cryptography. It is immune to security breaches and malware. So it is perfect for logging into secure sites, such as bitcoin accounts. Today if you have malware on your PC, kiss all your bitcoin (that you thought was secure at coinbase or bitstamp) goodbye. OneID fixes that. OneID secures websites from mass breaches, and individuals from malware.

Expert on bitcoin. I'm advising a stealth bitcoin startup at Stanford. Every bitcoin user should be using this product.

I started Abaca in early 2000 because I was getting over 1,500 spams a day. Using a new technique I invented, we achieved over 99.9% accuracy. It is filtering over 300 million mailboxes today, worldwide, at ISPs. Acquired by ProofPoint in 2013.

I'm a big proponent of fast nuclear reactors because of their potential to replace coal plants with a cheaper, zero carbon solution. These reactors use the waste from our existing reactors as fuel.

I have helped to rid the world of junk faxes through lawsuits and working with state and federal law enforcement.

Married 20 years; 3 daughters.

My charitable foundation:
www.kirschfoundation.org

In 2007, I was diagnosed with an incurable blood cancer, Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia. Fortunately, the cancer is slow moving and the experimental drug I'm on has been effective in reversing the disease.

The Kirsch Auditorium at MIT is named in my honor... although to be perfectly honest, a \$2M donation to MIT helped ;)

Specialties: bitcoin, user centric identity, startup companies, spam, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, waldenstrom's macroglobulinemia

Experience

CEO and Founder at OneID

June 2011 - Present (2 years 7 months)

OneID is a new startup in the identity management space focused on the next generation of identity. Security experts and CIOs say that secure identity is the #1 most important problem to be solved on the Internet today. OneID is unique because it is based on public key crypto, rather than shared secrets. Virtually every identity system in use today is built upon a foundation of shared secrets. But even if you add multi-factor authentication on top of traditional identity (which adds complexity), fraud rates have increased. There has to be a better way than having to keep track of hundreds of unique usernames and passwords. OneID is the best, by far, of those better ways. With OneID, you create a single identity and you can use it anywhere where a site has added OneID support. Unlike every other consumer-provisioned federated identity Facebook Connect, Google, etc., OneID was created with a trustable architecture. So even if there is a breach at OneID, your identity is completely safe. This is because the secrets of your identity are stored on your devices. So it is both easier to use and more secure at the same time! That is the key. This is a very unique architecture and a fundamental breakthrough in identity. It has won many awards including the 2013 Innovation Award for Identity from Frost & Sullivan.

2 recommendations available upon request

CEO at Abaca Technology

January 2006 - January 2012 (6 years 1 month)

I was tired of getting 1,500 spams a day, so I invented a new, award-winning approach to filtering spam with unprecedented accuracy. Independent reviews have validated that it has over 99.9% accuracy. I think it's the best anti-spam filter on the market today. We do the spam filtering for Yahoo and other large ISPs. The company was acquired by ProofPoint in July 2013.

2 recommendations available upon request

Chairman at Kirsch Foundation

1990 - 2010 (20 years)

For many years, the Kirsch Foundation provided funding for a wide variety of environmental, medical, local, and planet-safety causes. After I was diagnosed with Waldenstrom's, I refocused the foundation to devote its endowment to funding research into finding a cure for this cancer.

One of the initiatives I am most proud of is our innovative work in finding a cure for glaucoma. We picked glaucoma because it is the second leading cause of blindness and because there has been no real progress in treating the disease for decades. So it was a devastating disease with no breakthroughs. Our concept was to bring together researchers from outside the glaucoma field and provide incentives for them to collaborate. We pitched the idea to the Glaucoma Research Foundation and the Catalyst for a Cure program was born in 2002 with four researchers who have made fundamentally important contributions to the disease culminating with the identification of a drug that has been shown to halt progression of glaucoma in animal models. The program continues to this day. Ten years after I funded the program, I was diagnosed with glaucoma.

Our foundation also funded Ben Barres at Stanford on his work on the brain and glial cells. Ben has made some very interesting discoveries of the complement cascade which can be fundamentally important in treating glaucoma (and other neurodegenerative diseases including glaucoma, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's). Ben's research may ironically turn into the most effective way to actually visualize glaucoma in the brain before it shows up in the optic nerve, as well as stop progression of this very debilitating disease. When we funded Ben, he was a lowly researcher at Stanford, but we thought he had great potential. Today, Ben is Chairman of the Neurobiology Department at Stanford Medical School, and was just accepted into the National Academy of Science.

2 recommendations available upon request

CEO at Propel Software

November 1999 - January 2006 (6 years 3 months)

Founder and CEO. Propel was originally creating "Amazon in a box" software for businesses wanting a commercial presence on the web. We changed the business model to Internet acceleration and focused on the dial-up market. The company's asset were sold to a larger company in 2013.

2 recommendations available upon request

Founder at Infoseek

November 1993 - November 1999 (6 years 1 month)

Infoseek was the original search engine on the Netscape Net Search page. I started the company and invented the search engine used. Robin Li, now CEO of Baidu, was an engineer we hired. Little did we know! And the founders of Google approach us offering to license their technology for \$1 million dollars. I thought their technology was very clever, but was too pricey at the time. I was wrong.

3 recommendations available upon request

Founder at Frame Technology Corporation

April 1986 - November 1993 (7 years 8 months)

Interleaf was the standard for WYSIWYG publishing software in those days. It was a bit pricey, so after meeting Charles Corfield, we founded Frame Technology in 1986 to produce a competitive product that ran on Sun workstations. Frame is probably the best software available for producing long documents and is a favorite of tech pub groups worldwide. Frame went public and Adobe acquired the company after I left for \$500M.

2 recommendations available upon request

Founder at Mouse Systems Corporation

July 1982 - April 1986 (3 years 10 months)

While I was a student at MIT, I invented a computer mouse with no moving parts. Mouse Systems was the first company to commercially market a pure optical mouse. Of course, today, optical mice are everywhere.

Bill Gates was an early customer for us when he stopped by our booth at the West Coast Computer Fair to buy one.

Our biggest customer was Sun Microsystems.

Mouse Systems was acquired by KYE a few years after I left and is now out of business.

1 recommendation available upon request

Software engineer at ROLM

1980 - 1982 (2 years)

I wrote office automation software for Convergent Technologies workstations. I left ROLM to start Mouse Systems because I wanted to commercialize my optical mouse invention. ROLM was a great place to work and my boss, Jeff Rulifson, was a great guy. I was, however, a lousy employee because I was always working on visionary things rather than what I was supposed to work on.

Skills & Expertise

Start-ups

Entrepreneurship

SaaS

Philanthropy

Cloud Computing

Product Management

Mobile Devices

Messaging

Enterprise Software

Scalability

Distributed Systems

Python

Software Engineering

Strategic Partnerships

Software Development

Security

Mobile Applications

Go-to-market Strategy

Unix

Linux

Agile Methodologies

Perl

Scrum

Architecture

Enterprise Architecture

Software Design

Java

Open Source

TCP/IP

Identity Management

XML

System Architecture

Computer Security

Hadoop

Virtualization
REST
MySQL
JavaScript
Encryption
Big Data
Web Applications
Network Security
Cryptography
PostgreSQL
Databases
Git
Apache
Web Services
High Availability
PHP

Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

SB/SM, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, 1974 - 1980

Activities and Societies: Lecture Series Committee (Projection Director), Freshman Crew, Varsity Gymnastics, The Tech (newspaper)

University High School

1970 - 1973

Honors and Awards

Duveneck Humanitarian Award (9th annual Hidden Villa), 2004
Legacy Award (San Jose Magazine), 2003
National Caring Award (Caring Institute), 2003
Top 10 Givers By Dollars, Worth Magazine, 2002
Leadership in Action award (Santa Clara PACT), 2002
Forbes Midas List (ranked #2 in profit), 2002
Power 100 of Silicon Valley (San Jose Magazine), 2001
Junior Achievement Hall of Fame, 2001
Top 10 Entrepreneurs of 2000 (Red Herring magazine), 2000
100 Most Generous Americans (Worth Magazine), 2000
Outstanding Leadership Award (American Lung Association), 2000
Visionary Award (Software Development Forum), 2000
Heart of Silicon Valley Award (City of Sunnyvale), 1999
Forbes ASAP list of High Tech's Wealthiest 100 (#100), 1999
The 60 largest American charitable contributions of 1999 (Slate Magazine, rated #8), 1999
Forbes ASAP list of High Tech's Wealthiest 100 (#63), 1998
Aspen Institute Henry Crown Fellow, 1997
Suck NetMogul Card #16, 1996
50 most influential people in cyberspace (Newsweek), 1995

Interests

Getting Congress to fund the construction of an Integral Fast Reactor (IFR), eliminating spam

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14 people have recommended Steve

"Steve is a brilliant technologist and visionary entrepreneur. He invents valuable new technologies because he sees a much larger picture than most of us while at the same time mastering the details. His serial successes are well earned. Steve creates true technical innovations and passionately drives them to successes. Steve and a handful others are the reason that the Silicon Valley is the origin of so much technical innovation."

— **John Jefferies**, *General Manager and CMO, Abaca Technology Corporation*, reported to Steve at OneID

"Steve is an innovator, and a genius, in our industry. Without him, things would be very different: You like your optical mouse? Thank Steve! You like your search engine? Long before Google and Bing, Steve revolutionized the internet with the Infoseek search engine. You hate spam? Abaca helps rid the world of billions and billions of spam. That much said, Steve is just a regular, down to earth guy. I have had the good fortune to work for Steve at several startups, and I always felt that my contributions and input mattered. He would regularly visit my cube talking "tech stuff", even though his day were filled with other important CEO stuff. Thank you Steve, and please keep innovating."

— **Leif Hedstrom**, *Principal Software engineer, Propel Inc*, worked indirectly for Steve at OneID

"Steve was the founding CEO at Abaca, moving to Chairman when I joined as CEO in 2012. It was a pleasure working with him. Steve had tremendous strategic insights into the business, products, and market landscape. When it came time for our exit, he provided critical support for the company and valuable help in a successful exit."

— **Matthew Powell**, *CEO & President, Abaca Technology Corporation*, reported to Steve at Abaca Technology Corporation

"Although Steve is known best as a technical innovator, some of his best achievements are in his style of venture philanthropy, which he demonstrates with innovation and passion on a consistent basis to create real change in key areas. He has shown himself to be accessible as a mentor to those that want to truly make an effective difference."

— **Sherri Douville**, *Operating Board, Ballet San Jose*, was with another company when working with Steve at Community Foundation Silicon Valley

"Steve is a true combination of a passionate visionary and a well-grounded executive. He sets very high standards for any team working for/with him, but inspires that team by virtue of his personal "all-in" commitment. (Steve has been known to work through week-ends, and pull all-nighters, regularly, to push his

ideas and cover all bases.) When a new venture, such as the Kirsch Foundation, gets launched, Steve has the vision and goals in his mind. He is extremely strong in sharing his vision and goals with others, whether employees, his peers or the public/customers/donors. He finds highly capable professionals who "get" the vision, hires them and then lets them deliver. He is quick to be very supportive of team members; he appreciates great work publicly. The Kirsch Foundation, starting with a new Board and \$50 Million in assets, created a comprehensive strategic plan that guided the Foundation's next several years over the course of less than two months of intense effort. Several initiatives, ranging from major medical research fellowships, to clean air initiatives in California, to asteroid impact research and funding of nuclear non-proliferation efforts were viable programs with grants allocated within four months of the Foundation's start-up. Steve moves very quickly - and seizes every opportunity! While Steve can generate dozens of ideas each day - many of which are quite reasonable, implementable and/or consistent with the stated goals - there are times when others disagree. He is able to listen to forceful opposition and, if persuaded, change his direction based on the new/different input. But he is so smart and quick-thinking that it is not often that someone changes his views. Working for and with Steve was a tremendously challenging and rewarding opportunity. He gave me his full support to develop the Foundation to its fullest capacity. His gratitude for my work and the work of the rest of the staff was always genuine and greatly appreciated. He was the best executive/leader with whom I worked over a thirty-year career."

— **Kathi Gwynn**, *President & CEO, Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation*, reported to Steve at Kirsch Foundation

"I had the pleasure of working at the Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation for nearly eight years (from 1999 to 2007), working closely for and with Steve Kirsch. The various positions I held at the foundation, including my tenure as President & CEO, were highlights of my career due in large part to Steve's visionary and passionate commitment to critical state, national and global issues. His foresight allowed the foundation to tackle environmental, medical, and political issues at early stages, providing us opportunities for great success. His fervor for pushing the boundaries allowed the foundation to become known for its cutting-edge approach to solving problems. And his fearlessness motivated me to do my best every day. Steve Kirsch is a unique, deeply principled and compelling person. I count my years with the Kirsch Foundation as among my most relevant and treasured."

— **Susan Frank**, *President & CEO, Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation*, reported to Steve at Kirsch Foundation

"I was on the receiving end of numerous junk faxes, and came in contact with Steve. In a word, Steve is relentless. He proved to be honest and open in his dealings with me. I was involved in a lawsuit in which we were co-defendants, because of Steve's integrity he added myself and numerous other co-defendants to his attorney's bill. I know Steve is better known as a serial entrepreneur, as well as a philanthropist, but I know him as someone who covered my back in a stressful situation."

— **Steve L.**, *Area Manager, Media Recovery*, was with another company when working with Steve at Propel Software

"Steve was a dedicated and passionate advocate of antispam. I worked with Steve to assist him with his

crusade against junkfaxes and want to say that he is probably the most dedicated and knowledgeable person in this subject which has come around in a long time."

— **Andre Barde**, *Program Manager, EMC Corporation*, worked directly with Steve at Propel Software

"Steve an engineer, manager, promoter, evangelist and all the other attributes that makeup a great entrepreneur would call me on my cell at all times and places to query me about something I was searching for with Infoseek to ask how I liked the new feature...a little like god calling from the blue. What it was; he cared and wanted to make the world better...thank god he is now working on Bitcoin...go Steve!"

— **Don Hamilton**, *Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, WWWiz Magazine*, was with another company when working with Steve at Infoseek

"Steve is the ultimate Energizer Bunny - brilliant, creative, funny, and sincerely dedicated to his companies. Working with Steve is always a worthwhile learning experience."

— **Stacey Ashlund**, *Usability, Infoseek*, worked indirectly for Steve at Infoseek

"Steve is a Thomas Edison of our time. He consistently identifies and then applies the most innovative solutions to some of the biggest technical hurdles we face. It leaves you scratching your head saying, "Why didn't I think of that?" And then, on top of that, he turns around and generously donates the money to a great deal of charities. He serves as an inspiration to us all."

— **Matt Wells**, *Software Engineer, Infoseek*, worked indirectly for Steve at Infoseek

"Steve Kirsch may be the closest thing we have in high tech to a Thomas Edison; an inventive genius. Free of many of Edison's flaws, he is a technical innovator of the highest order, and has finely tuned instincts for what customers need and the "next big thing" that can be realistically brought to market. The string of successful companies he's founded and sold are testament enough to this ability. He was the driving force in creating the "pizza democracy" at Frame Technology that lead to so much innovation (the product is still ahead of its time in many areas.) Steve was highly focused in producing huge amounts of clean code, but still found time to run the company. He was always accessible, listened to any idea to see if there was a kernel of worth in it. He also inspired all employees to produce their best work as part of a democratic team. He is my model for the ideal in executive corporate ethics and integrity. I can't recommend him highly enough; it would be a privilege to work with him again."

— **Maxwell Hoffmann**, *Product Marketing Manager, FRAME TECHNOLOGY*, worked indirectly for Steve at Frame Technology Corporation

"Steve is a brilliant visionary. A successful, serial, software entrepreneur, he is approachable, funny and passionate about his projects. My VAR business benefitted from the fruits of his creativity for over a decade."

— **Martin Kossman**, was Steve's client

"Not many people know that the optical mouse (the kind we all use today) was invented by Steve and was

running on Steve's jeans as a surface -- way back in 1984. Steve is ahead of his time and a true inventor."

— **Sid Mehta**, *Founder & CEO, Foremost Systems*, reported to Steve at Mouse Systems Corporation

[Contact Steve on LinkedIn](#)