

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/from-student-to-founder/>

Pilot CTO and founder Jessica McKellar tells the story of how she met her two co-founders as a student at MIT. She stresses the advantages of founding a startup straight out of school, when you have a modest lifestyle and little to lose by taking a chance on an idea.



Transcript

- I've had the great honor and pleasure 00:00:04,240 of working with my co-founders at Pilot, Jeff and Waseem for 15 years at this point.. We met in MIT's computer club, the student information processing board, SIPB MIT's computer club.. And our first company out of school was centered around Jeff's masters thesis.. He had worked on some very cool, very fun, kind of deep tech for rebootless kernel updates on Linux that we had built, totally bootstrapped into a profitable company called Case Wise that was ultimately acquired by Oracle.. But you know, it's incredible, honestly, to think about from where I sit today.. The fact that we happened to meet each other through the computer computer club and have just had such an incredibly productive relationship ever since.. It just, it seems so blessed and fortuitous.. but it, yeah, it just kind of happened.. Jeff's like, "I've got technology, we think we can productize it." We're like, "let's, do it." We have nothing to lose, you know, fresh outta school.. We have like no money..

Quick sidebar.. I was a technical advisor to the HBO show, "Silicon Valley," if anybody's seen it.. And a bunch of small narratives in the show actually come from our experience building Case Wise.. We were running the company out of this disgusting apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where everybody lived.. And it was very formative, wonderful initial startup experience.. Also just like the complete kind of wild west fresh outta school experience, too.. Yeah, so we just, we decided we were gonna do it and we did it and we've ever since..