

At TechCrunch Disrupt 2022, hiring, education, greentech, and space startups took center stage

Article

The startup scene has a strong pulse: TechCrunch held its **Disrupt 2022** event this week, bringing bodies to San Francisco's **Moscone Center** in contrast to its virtual format in 2021. Doves of startups clamored for attention, showcasing their platforms for hiring and workplace solutions, education, [greentech](#), spacetech, healthtech, and more. Here are a few notable players:

Anthill: The HR platform provides two-way communication between companies and frontline workers who don't sit at a desk. Managers can relay information and workers can get answers through an [automated text messaging](#) system for functions like onboarding, emergency response, software adoption, operational changes, and employee engagement.

Rejoule: Instead of recycling used EV batteries, this startup is [reusing](#) them, finding some with up to 90% capacity suited for home and business applications like powering machines and appliances. The company provides battery health check-ups, and connects them with repurposers for a second life.

VirtualGurus: Although the business of hiring international remote workers is booming, this startup is connecting US and Canada-based remote workers who are historically underrepresented with a [virtual assistant](#) gig work platform. Companies can buy packages starting at \$350 per month for trained virtual workers.

Digest.ai: This startup is trying to make learning [addictive](#) using natural language processing (NLP). Students use their smartphones to scan a subject matter text sample and an AI will generate study tools like flashcards and practice questions. Learners can converse with Eve, a virtual learning assistant, who's like "a tutor in everyone's pocket."

New Frontier Aerospace: Founded in 2020, this company is building 3D-printed mini-space shuttles to replace long-duration, high-emission international flights with [hypersonic, vertical landing aircraft](#) that they say can transport people and cargo from New York to Tokyo in two hours.

Investor dollars raised and spent: The robust turnout of startups illustrates that founders are still [raising money](#) despite the economic downturn. Those fundraised dollars are in turn getting spent elsewhere in the tech sector like the cloud, communications, and on-demand manufacturing.

- According to Fiveable CEO Amanda Doamaral, the best time to fundraise is when there are investors interested in a given marketable idea, regardless of market conditions.

- **One surprising wellspring of investors is Twitter.** During a fundraising best practices discussion, **Parthean CEO Arman Hezarkhani** said that his startup has found most of its investors via Twitter.
- Meanwhile, **Alloy Automation CEO Sara Du** said she's been able to fundraise on Twitter anonymously.
- Some major tech companies like **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** also had a presence at the event, marketing their services to startups.
- **AT&T CTO Jeffrey Legg** spoke about how telecoms haven't done enough to market 5G solutions to startups. It's something the company aims to change partly by powering the cloud with **5G**.

The big takeaway: The fingerprints of the pandemic were clearly visible at Disrupt. The rise of remote work and remote learning have presented new challenges for hiring, workplace collaboration, and educational engagement, fueling the emergence of a multitude of startups with solutions.

- Given a persistent skilled labor shortage for the tech industry amid the proliferation of remote work, more **platforms** are emerging to link rural and offshore talent with employers.
- In a post-pandemic world more at ease with digital communications, we'll likely continue to see deals, transactions, and strategic connections initiated through social media.

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