

# **‘Digital humans’, lightsabers and ‘Airbnb for EVs’: Tech entrepreneurs take to the stage for Baltic Ventures accelerator day**

Never mind Dragons’ Den – business pitching is much more fun when it’s short, snappy, and part of a party closed by an AI-powered “digital human” DJ.

Tech accelerator Baltic Ventures took over Liverpool warehouse venue Camp & Furnace for this year’s Accelerator 2024 Demo Day, where entrepreneurs from 10 companies in its annual accelerator scheme got to pitch to investors and key players in the North West tech scene.

There was a party atmosphere under the multi-coloured lights, with hundreds of guests enjoying the free bar and the sweet counter handing out popcorn and Blue Riband chocolate bars.

And to make sure things kept moving, each founder got just three minutes to pitch. That meant those of us lucky enough to be invited got to hear 10 focused pitches from inspirational entrepreneurs covering everything from “digital humans” to an “Airbnb for electric vehicle charging”.

Opening the event, Mo Aldalou, programme director at Baltic Ventures, said he wanted to “showcase and celebrate our cohort of founders”. He thanked everyone for coming along – and joked: “There’s a whole load of other things you could be doing right now... posting on LinkedIn about your 5am cold plunges...”

But there was no time for posting as the pitches came thick

and fast.

The first pitcher was Sam Royle, founder of influencer marketing platform SoSquared. Demand for influencer content is soaring globally, but influencer marketing can be hard to analyse and measure. Sam said: “Our platform automates the most challenging parts of influencer marketing” and said he had already helped to facilitate thousands of collaborations, working with companies including consumer goods giant Kimberly-Clark.

Ana Betancourt launched her presentation with one of the most famous sounds in film history – the lightsaber sound from Star Wars. She asked: “Did you know it took hundreds of hours to get to that particular sound?”

## The Baltic Ventures Accelerator 2024 Demo Day at Camp & Furnace

(Image: Alistair Houghton)

Ana co-founded sound technology firm Black Goblin, which uses AI to help speed up sound design. She said the company wants to help people “craft iconic moments through sound” – and grow their profitability.

Martin Woolley told the crowd about MyOpNotes, which aims to digitise medical notes to make healthcare more efficient and more cost effective. Its system has already had trials at NHS trusts – now it is looking for more investment to grow in the UK and beyond.

Dr Grace Olugbodi founded BeGenio to develop games to help children learn maths. She admitted that she had been one of the one in three children who suffered from mathematical anxiety – and so developed the Race to Infinity game, She said the game’s players were “learning without realising they were learning, while improving their maths confidence and their grades”.

The game has been sold into schools across the UK and Grace is now working with eight edtech companies, with BeGenio also seeing ongoing interest in Saudi Arabia.



DJ Dex, the AI 'digital human' DJ who closed the Baltic Ventures Accelerator 2024 Demo Day

(Image: Alistair Houghton)

Rob Sims from Liverpool's Sum Vivas explained his company's mission simply: "We produce AI-integrated digital humans".

Sum Vivas's avatars are realistic-looking onscreen humans who can talk and answer questions just like any real-world member of staff. They include the giant DJ onscreen at the end of the event, [DJ Dex](#). Or it could, for example, include a digital assistant in a supermarket, who shoppers can chat to to help them find the products they need.

Rob said the company wanted to bring in a "new era of customer experience" using digital humans, who can allow companies to effectively automate repetitive tasks while freeing up staff for other work. And he said: "The market for digital humans is set to explode in the next few years."

Liverpool's Emma Jarvis closed the first pitching session by talking about her app DearBump, which supports women through pregnancy. Emma says she realised there was a "huge gap" in maternity care provision, and said: "I founded DearBump because I believe we can and must do better". Now she aims to connect 1m women to "trusted and reliable maternal health support", and is talking to employers about how they can better support their pregnant staff.



Samson Opaleye, co-founder of Applatch Kids  
(Image: Alistair Houghton)

Many of us worry we spend too much time on our phones – and parents also worry about their children spending too much time online. Samson Opaleye, co-founder of ApplatchKids, launched the final pitching round by talking about his firm's solution – an app that means children have to solve educational quizzes

before they can access their entertainment apps. He said he wanted to create a world “where children learn before they play”.

James Burch, co-founder of Decently, talked about how his firm developed the Melo platform to support patients with brain injuries “to build gold-standard behavioural assessments”.



Maebh Reynolds, CEO & co-founder of GoPlugable  
(Image: Alistair Houghton)

Maebh Reynolds, CEO and co-founder of GoPlugable, talked about her Irish start-up’s mission to connect electric vehicle drivers with public and private chargepoints, allowing people to make money from their underused charging points. She said: “think about us almost as an Airbnb for private EV charging”.

Tom Reynolds, founder of EdenFiftyOne, talked about how he went from being an English teacher to launching his business aimed at using tech to “demystify English education” and improve students’ 51 key English language skills.

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