

## Fresh Faces Debut at Tech Showcase

**By Jonathan Sidener**  
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

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[Phreesia Highlights \(full article below\):](#)

Business plans to convert cool ideas into profitable operations can be a challenge. One interesting strategy comes from Phreesia, the company developing the waiting room intake device, Shipley said.

The New York company plans to have pharmaceutical firms underwrite the service. Doctors would no longer have to pay someone to type patient information into the system because the patient answers questions directly onto a pad that transmits to a database. The drug companies can present targeted medical information to patients who are a captive audience.

Phreesia Chief Technology Officer Evan Roberts said the device eventually could read credit or debit cards for patient co-pays, easing the intake process for everyone.

"It's an interesting technology as well as an interesting business model," Shipley said. "They had to make the device bacteria-resistant because it's used in a doctor's office."

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Chances are you've heard of social networks MySpace and Facebook as well as computer games "Bejeweled" and "FreeCell."

Carlsbad-based Ncursion hopes to build a business merging the two areas, creating what might be called social casual gaming.

The company showed off its first game yesterday as one of about 70 companies that paid to debut tech products at the selective DEMOfall 2007 at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina.

The tech conference puts new products in front of venture capitalists and the media. In past years it has launched such successful companies as Palm, E-Trade, Handspring and Skype.



This year's new offerings featured a broad range of consumer and business products, including:

**\* A bacteria-resistant touch-screen device to replace pen-and-paper doctor office check-ins and eliminate the need to key patient data into the system.**

**\* A conference call system that initiates the calls to participants, ensuring that meetings start on time.**



**\* Technology to turn a group of cell phones into a multichannel music system.**

**\* A 3-D world with free virtual furnishings, along with links to buy real-world versions at eBay, Amazon and other retailers.**



For Ncursion, DEMO was a chance to introduce its first game without traveling as far as did tech executives from Russia, Switzerland, Australia and other far-flung corners of the world.

The company's MyGladiator game is built to work with Facebook technology. The game is a simple gladiator strategy fighting game that lets two members arrange a fight from their Facebook pages. The duel itself takes place on MyGladiator servers.

"It's a new, emerging category of social casual gaming," Ncursion founder Michael Witz said. "You invite your friends to fight and then play in real time. Our goal is to make this the first of many games published for Facebook users."

As a touchstone for emerging tech products, DEMO provides an update on what engineers and their funders see as hot and innovative.

Chris Shipley, DEMO's executive producer, said consumer products remain key to the technology industry. But this year's demonstrators also show significant, if less sexy, advances in business applications and in the underlying infrastructure.

"The consumer market is still wagging the dog," Shipley said. "But when you have petabytes (1 million gigabytes) of user-generated content, you have to store it somewhere. Developments in infrastructure are important. All this consumer stuff has to run on something."

She said the changes leading to the "social Web" are spilling over to business software.

"You can't have developers who spend the night on Facebook and other really



dynamic Web sites go to work on really boring business applications,” Shipley said.

Business plans to convert cool ideas into profitable operations can be a challenge. MyGladiator, for example, plans to offer the introductory level for free and charge a one-time fee of \$20 for access to other levels and premium content.

One interesting strategy comes from Phreesia, the company developing the waiting room intake device, Shipley said.

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“It’s an interesting technology as well as an interesting business model,” Shipley said. “They had to make the device bacteria-resistant because it’s used in a doctor’s office.”

While Shipley has seen a number of DEMO technologies blossom into big-name products, she declined to pick any favorites from the current crop.

“My mother had five children and loved them all equally,” Shipley said.

