Conference at Ecole Nationale Polytechnique on:

"Technology Startup Ecosystems: Retrospects, Prospects and Zoom in on the Venture Capital Dimension"

By Dr Riad Hartani

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Abstract: Building successful technology startups is a very hard challenge. Yet, as societies fully immerse into the information age era, there is little hope for a sustained economic development without mastering the art of nurturing technology ideas and growing them into sustainable businesses. Achieving this lofty goal is the key question we attempt to address. A number of fundamental conditions have to line up for a thrilling startup ecosystem to emerge and develop. Building on our experience working with a variety of technology startup ecosystems around the world, we revisit the most critical ones, with a specific emphasis on the aspects that relate to incubating, accelerating and funding the nascent high risk technology ideas, all the way to engineering and business validation, and growth. A brief retrospect of the lifetime of venture capital models, anchored in the Silicon Valley hotbed first, then spreading to other regions of the world over time, is presented. Its progressive evolution over time is synthesized. Insight into how such models, and adaptations thereof, could potentially apply to the local context is debated, as a way to bring in reflections and decisions on how to best evolve the entrepreneurialstartup environment. Finally, and taking our learning into pragmatic actions, recent ongoing initiatives we are diligently working on are introduced. Work in progress, yet, long road ahead.

Speaker Biography

Dr. Riad Hartani has spent the last two decades contributing to the development of Internet, Mobile and Artificial Intelligence technologies, mostly out of the Silicon Valley as a hub, building multiple leading technology startups, advising on strategic investments and rolling out innovative technologies all over the world. He led many industry firsts in the areas of Internet infrastructure design, cloud architectures and Artificial Intelligence. He is well versed in the technology startups, innovation and investment eco-systems globally. He has lived and worked in very diverse regions of the world, gaining a broad understanding of cross-cultural technology management and business development.

Most recently, he jumpstarted "Padovani Ventures", a multi-disciplinary advanced technology initiative in stealth mode. He co-founded a global technology and investments advisory firm, "Xona Partners" (Silicon Valley, Singapore, Vancouver, Tokyo), with a novel startup incubation and spin-in model as a way to foster disruptive technology innovation. He co-founded "iValley.co", a technology startup co-creation studio in the Silicon Valley with a Fintech, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence (AI) focus. He has been in the leadership team of various Silicon Valley technology startups, including: Wichorus, Inc. as head of Global Systems Engineering (acquired by Tellabs), Anagran, Inc. as Head of Technology (acquired by Saisei) and Caspian, Inc. as Chief Architect (acquired by Sable Networks). Focus has been on the development of Internet infrastructure, Web Scale cloud platformsand AI applications. He worked closely with lead Silicon Valley Venture Capital firms, contributing to raising significant venture capital funding, in the ventures he was involved with, leading to various successful acquisitions. He lead and contributed to advanced research teams in prestigious R&D labs in the USA (University California at Berkeley), Canada (National Research Council), France (Scientific National Research Center), Korea (Telecommunications Research Institute) and Japan (Hitachi Central Research Labs & AI Labs). He advised some of the top 10 technologycompanies on their business and investment strategies in the USA, Japan, Korea and China, among others. He engineered many industry firsts, including: AI based autonomous subway control systems (France), AI based facial expressions recognition (Japan), ultra-low latency stock exchange data center design (Hong Kong) and 4G mobile networks rollouts (USA). Riad's Ph. D. thesis was one of the first Machine Learning dissertation combining Neural Networks (numerical AI) and Fuzzy Systems (symbolic AI) with successful industrial applications. He has been a founding member of various technology ventures, on the advisory board of various startups in over 15 countries, been on the judging committee of global investment and technology awards events over 20 times, published/presented over 200 research, industry and Internet standards papers, lectured at over 10 lead global universities and R&D labs, advised various government and regulators on technology matters, performed investment due diligence to some of the top 10private equity firms and has been on the advisory boards of several startups accelerators around the globe. He is on the advisory board of various Smart Cities related initiatives (e.g. Omega, a NASA spin-off) and an Angel Investor (Member of the Angel Capital Association). He holds two Engineering degrees and a Master degree (applied mathematics, systems and computer engineering, from Ecole Polytechnique, Algeria and Ecole des Mines, France) with the highest distinctions. He earned a Doctorate in Computer Science (AI) with highest honors from the University of Paris, was a doctoral and post-doctoral fellow at University of California at Berkeley - all awarded by age 25. Later on, completed the Executive Education in Business at Stanford Graduate School of Business. Riad won various prestigious academic and industry awards, including the best Engineering and best Ph. D. thesis distinctions, along with various inventions/patents. Riad was born and grew up in Algiers. He lived and lead R&D teams in about 8 countries across North America, Europe, Middle East, North Africa, China, South East Asia and the Far East, conducted business and deployed technology solutions in well over 50 countries and travelled to about 100 countries on 5 continents, gaining a valuable understanding of diversity across cultures and societies. Riad can be promptly reached at riad@padovaniventures.com