

# Video file-transfer company receives investment from UT fund

BY MIKE W. THOMAS

Latakoo, a software-as-a-service company that is working to commercialize high-definition video transfer technology developed at the University of Texas at San Antonio, has received a \$200,000 investment from the UT Horizon Fund.

The funds will up the UT System's stake in the Austin-based startup company which already has a licensing agreement with UTSA that provided the school with about a 2 percent equity stake in the company.

Earlier this year, Latakoo provided a \$30,000 grant to Sos Agaian, the Peter T. Flawn Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at UTSA, whose lab is conducting research related to advanced data and image processing, transcoding, compression, and uploading technologies.

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**Cory Hallam**

UTSA Center for Innovation and Technology Entrepreneurship

Agaian says his lab, led by Ph.D. student Richard Metzler, has made significant breakthroughs recently with regards to encryption and compression technologies. Traditionally, encrypting data for security purposes and compressing it for faster transport has been treated as two separate steps requiring different programs and software. But now Agaian and Metzler have designed a system that compresses and encrypts data in one step, and achieves better compression rates at the same time while still meeting the best encryption standards.

Agaian says the new technology will help to save memory,

## Latakoo

**What:** Software-as-a-service company providing high-definition video transfer services  
**Founded:** 2010  
**Employees:** 10  
**Tel. No.:** 1-877-882-5666  
**Web site:** www.latakoo.com

transmission time and cost.

## Strong partnership

Latakoo CEO Paul Adrian says the Horizon Fund money will be used to further develop this technology so that it too can be patented and licensed for commercial use.

"We are enthusiastic about their technology and look forward to strengthening our partnership with the university," Adrian says.

Currently, most of Latakoo's technical staff is based in San Antonio where they have been provided with office and lab space at UTSA. Latakoo is one of the startup companies that are part of the university's New Venture Incubator which serves as a mechanism to connect research in the school's labs with business partners that will take the innovations forward toward commercialization.

"Ultimately, we want tech entrepreneurs to look at San Antonio the same way they look at Austin or Silicon Valley," says Cory Hallam, director of the UTSA Center for Innovation and Technology Entrepreneurship. "We want them to know they are welcome here, and we have strong partners who can help them grow their businesses."

Hallam says the university's partnership with Latakoo is one of the most promising to come out of the new incubator facility so far.

Latakoo currently offers a tiered subscription service for



LYNDEY JOHNSON / SAN ANTONIO BUSINESS JOURNAL  
 Ben Werdmuller, chief technology officer for Latakoo, says the company's video-file technology is filling a gap in the market.

its video compression technology. Clients are able to compress and transmit large digital files much more quickly than before saving them time and money, says Ben Werdmuller, chief technology officer for Latakoo.

"Our goal is to make it easier to send video files wherever our customers want it to go," Werdmuller says. "People are having problems now with limited bandwidth and too large of files. We want to fill that gap."

The cost of the service varies greatly depending on the type of usage. The average consumer can use the service on the company's website for as little as \$8 a month. A professional may pay a little more — about \$25 a month — to access more services. A company that wants a more integrated service that can be used by all its employ-

ees may pay upwards of \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month.

## Bright future

Latakoo currently employs about 10 people. Adrian declined to reveal revenues for the company's first year in operation, but says he expects that next year will be much better.

"We are just a startup right now, but we believe we have a very promising future," he says. This past summer the company landed its biggest customer to date when NBC Universal signed on to use a beta version

of its product.

"We see that as the ultimate validation of our technology," Adrian says of their work with NBC. "They are one of the largest video producers in the world and the fact that they sought out a small company in Texas to be the front door to their system is very exciting."

Adrian says he foresees unlimited growth in the future as nearly everyone with a cell phone today has the capability to produce high-definition video that they have trouble moving around.

"We have realized an underserved niche in the market that is going to continue to grow," he says.

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