

Carnegie Mellon startup, Neon, named Edison Award finalist

February 25 2013

Carnegie Mellon University startup Neon has been named a 2013 finalist by the internationally renowned Edison Awards. The distinguished awards, which aim to inspire creativity, innovation and ingenuity, are named after Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931), whose extraordinary new product development methods and innovative achievements garnered him 1,093 U.S. patents and made him a household name around the world.

Neon, which uses [cognitive neuroscience](#) to improve online video clicks, is a finalist in Electronics and Computers, one of 12 categories honored by the Edison Awards. Neon is representative of Carnegie Mellon's well-known entrepreneurial culture. The university's Greenlighting Startups initiative, a portfolio of six business incubators, is designed to speed CMU faculty and student innovations from the research lab to the marketplace.

"More than any year, this year's slate of finalists demonstrate the enormous value of teamwork, experimentation, consumer focus, market awareness and game-changing success," said Frank Bonafilia, executive director of the Edison Awards. "It's exciting to see companies like Neon continuing Thomas Edison's legacy of challenging conventional thinking."

Founded on research conducted in the Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition, a joint program between CMU and the University of Pittsburgh, Neon is one of the first companies to use cognitive and [brain](#)

[science](#) to increase audience engagement for online video publishers. Using research that shows how [visual perception](#) unconsciously affects preferences, the Neon team is developing a Web-based software service that automatically selects the most visually appealing frame from a stream of video to be used as the thumbnail. Thumbnails—the entry point for a Web user to interact with a video—are becoming more important to video publishers as the number of online videos continue to increase.

"It's a huge honor for Neon to be considered for this award," said Sophie Lebrecht, Neon CEO and co-founder. "People can think it's pretty out there to link brain science with online video, but I am pleased that this type of approach is celebrated in the context of [Thomas Edison](#)."

[Neon](#) got its start with a grant from the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Innovation Corps (I-Corps), which allows scientists to assess the readiness of transitioning new scientific opportunities into valuable products through a public-private partnership, and NSF's Temporal Dynamics of Learning Center.

Finalists for Edison Awards are judged by more than 3,000 senior business executives and academics from across the nation whose votes acknowledge the finalists' success in meeting the award criteria of Concept, Value, Delivery and Impact. The panel includes members of the Marketing Executives Networking Group (MENG), the American Association Advertising Agencies (4As), the Chief Marketing Officer Council (CMO), the Design Management Institute (DMI), the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the Association of Technology Management & Applied Engineering (ATMAE). The panel also includes hundreds of past winners, marketing professionals, scientists, designers, engineers and academics.

Award winners will be announced April 25 at the Edison Awards Annual Gala, held in the Grand Ballroom at the historic Navy Pier in Chicago.

More information: www.neon-lab.com/

Provided by Carnegie Mellon University

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