Summarized File

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16-year-old Tejas Ravishankar is hoping to harness (and celebrate) the magic of coding through his software developer experience platform, Dimension b y   A A L I A   M E H R E E N   A H M E D

The surprise that

comes with

nding out that

Tejas Ravishankar,

founder of

UAE-based developer

productivity and experience

platform Dimension, is only

16 years old, is a reaction that

very quickly wears off- simply

because it is much easier to be

enthralled by the teenagers

business vision instead. My

journey as a developer began

[in 2020] when I was 13 and in the eighth grade, Ravishankar recalls. The lockdown [during the COVID-19 crisis] meant no interactions with friends, and it gave me ample time to explore coding. I found it magical that you could create whatever you imagined by keying in a few commands.

 Soon, I was spending most of my time developing software.

 However, as a coder working on building my own tools and contributing towards other open-source projects, I faced several issues. And I realized that other developers faced similar hurdles as well.

 Dimension was, therefore, born out of the desire to bring the magic back into building software.

 Now, to understand

Dimension, it is important to rst understand why it targets open source projects in particular. You see, unlike proprietary software, the very nature of open source software entails that a given projects code can be accessed and modied by anyone in the public domain. From the complexities of not knowing which source has modied a code, to the difculties in ensuring a shared vision across a developer team, open source projects come with their own particular sets of challenges. Lack of proper

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Cracking the Code

THE REFINED PITCH, COMBINED WITH INVESTMENT FROM NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE DEVELOPED TOOLING SPACE, HELPED IN RAISING FROM A VC FUND.

integrations also result in sub-par developer experience, Ravishankar adds. Too many tools, hundreds of tabs and switching through numerous sites results in a slow, fragmented, and painful development process. And it is precisely to address these issues that Ravishankar started building Dimension in 2022. It aims at being the unied interface for software development- where the worlds best developer tools are integrated along with excellent project management capabilities, chat facilities for real time collaboration, and easy deployment that will enable engineering teams to develop and deploy software at record speed. It thus brings a whole new dimension to developer experience end-to-end, from building, managing, communicating, tracking and

deploying, all in one place. Dimension can be used by individuals, as well as engineering teams of all sizes.

As a platform that can be built on and

easily integrated into hundreds of software development tools such as GitHub, Linear, Cloudare, and Vercel, Dimension thus helps developers manage their codes, domains, software deployments, and projects on a single platform.   Were currently in the process of developing our core platform, Ravishankar reveals. We expect to launch the minimum viable product (MVP) private beta in a couple of months. Several companies and open-source projects -such as SolidJS, a Javascript platform that helps build user interfaces, Tabler, a web application development platform, and Astro, an all-in-one web framework designed for speed- are already on the waitlist to use our private beta. We also have more than 600 developers

waitlisted for Dimension. Currently, there are three full-time and four part-time employees in our team.

Now, one might think that the zeal and relentless energy of youth may be seen as assets in the world of entrepreneurship. But as it turns out, it was Ravishankars age -or rather, the perception of the level of maturity at such an age- that proved to be the biggest thorn in his journey. You see, in February 2023, Dimension raised a pre-seed funding of US$150,000 in a round led by Antler India, the Indian arm of Singapore-headquartered early-stage global venture capital (VC) rm, Antler. But that milestone came after a series of rejections from investors. Being a minor adds to the disadvantage in certain situations, Ravishankar says. People dont take you seriously, and it can get frustrating at times, and so, I have a lot of gratitude towards all those who have

put their faith, time, and capital in Dimension. I have been regularly asked how I can pursue Dimension alongside school, and I have been turned down by many venture capitalists for the same reason. However, talking to many of them helped me continuously evolve my pitch. The rened pitch, combined with investment from notable individuals from the developed tooling space, helped in raising from a VC fund.

Im sure many of you might now be intrigued to know exactly how Ravishankar manages to allocate time to both his academic and entrepreneurial responsibilities. He is, after all, a Grade 11 student pursuing his A-levels with maths, physics, economics and business studies as his core subjects. Juggling company work with academics is challenging, Ravishankar admits. But besides going to school, I invest around

60-65% of my time on Dimension. I also managed reasonable grades in my General Certicate of Secondary Education (GCSE) 10th exams by getting a 4.0 grade point average

(GPA), with an A* grade in computer science, business, mathematics and physics. The time I spend at school helps me in connecting with my friends. But besides that, I hardly have time for anything else. A key driving force behind Ravishankars ability to balance school work with running a startup is, unsurprisingly, his parents. My parents have always been supportive of my dreams, Ravishankar says. However, they have been insistent on having a strong academic foundation. As Dimension started getting serious interests from angel investors and venture capital funds, I had to convince my parents to allow me to accept investment offers.

This, of course, would be the perfect

time to introduce who the teenagers parents are. My moms name is Roopa Hariharan, Ravishankar says.

Hariharan, you will nd, is the founder of PureCult, an India-based eco-friendly home cleaning products company. But it is when he has to disclose his fathers name, that there is the slightest hint of trepidation -evident even through our email conversations- from Ravishankar. You see, Ravishankars father is G. V. Ravishankar, the Managing Director of the Indian arm of American VC rm, Sequoia Capital. And, as his son, Ravishankar remains acutely aware of the business optics of such a dynamic.

My father is indeed Sequoia Indias G. V. Ravi Shankar, but I just want to note that he didnt help me at all with the fundraising process- many people tend to assume that, Ravishankar claries.

My dad did invest an amount from the family, but I was the one who found introductions, and pitched to the right

investors.

It becomes clear at this point that this young man is adamant on making it on his own, without falling back on his parents laurels. I started working on Dimension about six months back, with a few of my friends contributing towards it, Ravishankar says. I was funding it by working part time on paid internships, while working on Dimension and balancing my academic commitments in parallel. At one point I was working three internships just

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to fund Dimension. I have been involved in all aspects of Dimension- from company formation, talking to several

investors for fundraising, engineering certain parts of the software, designing the overall user experience and front-end, hiring talent for the company, and managing the deliverables of employ-ees. Since I am a minor, however, my mother helps with some of the banking and accounting work.

Ravishankars inclination towards solving matters on his own appears to be something of an innate quality- that would perhaps explain why his entrepre-neurial air was showcased a long time before he launched Dimension. When I was eight years old, alongside my friends, I started baking and selling food within the community, Ravishankar reveals. It helped me

understand how to collaborate with others, and to understand customer needs and feedback. But I have also had to move between multiple schools. When I moved in the fth grade to a new school, I was bullied. It was mentally stressful for me, and I was struggling to make friends. It took me a whole academic year to settle in. It was then that I learnt to ignore toxic people, and to stand my ground around bullies. I refused to take my parents help on this issue, and I wanted to deal with it myself. I am glad I went through the experience, as it made me stronger. Ravishankars decision to remain undeterred in the face of negativity has helped him ourish in other elds too.

Until seventh grade, I was

into music, Ravishankar says. I pursued Hindustani

classical vocals from the age of four, for about six years, and then switched to western vocals. I was really into creating music too. As a kid, I also enjoyed biology and thought I could pursue music or medicine as a career. Eventually, however, Ravishankars interests forayed into software programming, which he rst got acquainted with by enrolling for courses at Udemy, a US-based online learning and teaching marketplace. Learning on my own through Udemy courses gave me the exibility to learn what I wanted, he says. I partici-pated in a couple of hack-athons and won them, which

boosted my condence, and I felt encouraged to dive deeper and take on more complex challenges. I picked up programming languages such as Dart, Python, and Rust along the way, and started working on building software tools. This path of self-study is also what led Ravishankar towards the software-led venture he built before he launched Dimension. Like I mentioned earlier, I nd the world of programming magical, he says. Code turns our imaginations into reality.

Programming also gave me the opportunity to individually contribute to solving real world problems. When the Ukraine war started, I was disturbed by the number of people displaced. So, I built an app called Kyiv, with the

intent to securely connect help seekers and providers. As an app that was built in two weeks, during the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Kyiv offered users with a map to nd the closest help locations, and also provided

LEARNING ON MY OWN THROUGH UDEMY COURSES GAVE ME THE FLEXIBILITY TO LEARN WHAT I WANTED.

updated listings on food, shelter, healthcare, transport. The lessons Ravishankar derived from creating Kyiv have certianly played a role in how he has gone about creating Dimension. And when it comes to the road ahead, Ravishankar displays the same laser-focused vision that has been evident

throughout his entrepreneurial journey so far. But hes also not getting too far ahead of himself, the teenager assures me. Right now, we are focused on the minimum viable product and beta

testing, which should happen over the next two to three months, Ravishankar says. This is a crucial step that will help us in validating our product, and in receiving inputs for improvement. It is difcult to say where I see myself in, say, the next 5-10 years. However, the journey so far with Dimension has given me invaluable experience. I hope to continue learning in all aspects, and hope Dimension takes off and becomes the go to platform for all developers and engineering teams.