

# Motivation *In Pursuit of Disruption* 2017

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I want to apply for the In Pursuit of Disruption (IPOD) program in Silicon Valley in fall 2017. The program appealed to me immediately and my background and future plans are very much in line with the IPOD program.

My interest for both Computer Science and entrepreneurship started when I was in high school. When I was 14 years old, I started a one-man internet company, creating and selling software for modifying computer games. I used C++ and DirectX, an API for game programming, to extend existing games. Clients, players of online games, used these modifications with a monthly subscription. From then on I got more into programming as it allowed me to develop my own ideas. For example, during my bachelor, I created a tutoring platform for high school students, that enabled students to connect to other high school or university students who would help them with all kinds of subjects.

Currently, I am running a startup, together with four other grad students of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) program. Our startup provides AI solutions for companies or the public sector that intent to employ more advanced machine learning. We intentionally chose to consult other companies, rather than focus around a single product, because it allows us to explore the broad applications of AI. Moreover, exploring several applications gives me new ideas and areas that interest me.

The startup scene in the Netherlands is still small, especially compared to the United States. An important reason for this is the Dutch investment climate, that is relatively conservative. Within the United States there are multiple areas with comprehensive startup scenes. I visited New York and Seattle, where I visited Google, eBay and a few tech startups. I enjoyed meeting the people at these places and experience their creativity, skills and entrepreneurial spirit. This makes me very curious about Silicon Valley, which has an even higher concentration of large tech-companies and startups, compared to for example New York. In addition to getting a feeling of the unique startup culture in Silicon Valley, it would be amazing to visit some of the largest tech-companies in the world and meet and learn from the people working there. I will be both looking forward to see the more established tech-startups and some of the newer startups.

My personal plan for the near future is to finish my graduate studies in AI, and possibly pursue a PhD in the same field. More fundamentally, I want to develop my own idea or work together with others on an interesting project, over

the course of my Masters and/or PhD. Pursuing a PhD appeals to me, because it provides me with a very different approach towards AI (mainly research) that I can later apply for entrepreneurial projects. I think the combination of academia and business is very interesting as they are complementary.

I would really like to join the IPOD program, because I know there is very big chance that I will end up in the startup scene, and probably even in Silicon Valley. I have been planning to go to Silicon Valley for a long time by myself, however, the IPOD program with organized site visits and talks will be much more interesting and informative. Furthermore, I can meet people that will be valuable contacts for my future plans.

Thank you for considering my request, and I am looking forward to your reply.