



Of new ideas and continents

From the hard-scrabble farms of Mali to the high-tech labs of Stanford, Red Herring's five innovators are using technology to spark revolutions.

December 29, 2004 Issue

"Innovation" is an overused word. It turns up in speeches, book titles, conferences, even a British Airways commercial touting pre-flight suppers and quiet cabins.

The essence of innovation in technology is the way one person's idea and determination impacts the world. Innovators often have a vision that compels them to work hard, suffer failure, persevere, and push their ideas to completion. The great Irish writer Jonathan Swift said it nicely: "Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others."

Red Herring's five innovators have those qualities Mr. Swift admired. They have pursued their ideas with passion, overcoming hurdles and challenges that would discourage most. More importantly, these innovators are offering leaps of imagination that promise important benefits to the world.

In each of the following profiles, you'll recognize some of the cunning insights of Thomas Edison, who figured out problems by thinking about how they were similar to issues he already understood. What's more, he also recognized the importance of teamwork to success, and he never considered failure a bad thing.

We can see that common characteristic in all the people we have profiled: from England-based entrepreneur [Sonja Marjanovic](#), who realized a smart piece of software could help people afflicted with malaria, to U.S. scientist [Michele Calos](#) and her pursuit of a unique way to make gene therapy much safer, to Malian statistician [Moulaye Ely Diarra](#), who empowered African farmers with basic crop price information.

Each saw a problem, and then found a solution – take Korean engineer [Sokwoo Rhee](#), who invented a wireless sensor network to power his small invention, or Indian doctor [Ananth Natarajan](#), who helped invent an implantable device that can detect heart attacks before they prove fatal. All are testaments to the power of innovators armed with verve, intelligence, and drive.

Copyright © 1993-2004 Red Herring, Inc.

