



# Innovation tips from techies - the next web

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BY SIGNE WANDLER 19 MAY 2015 3 min read

It might seem like a waste of time to go to a conference that focuses on entrepreneurship, technology and startups when you work in marketing and media. However, it's my deep conviction that great ideas and inspiration comes from unexpected places - after all we share a common goal in that we are all looking for innovation.

Innovation is the holy grail of all business today in the era of disruption. Every business (and marketing campaign) is in danger of being Uber-ed or Instagrammed if we look for competition and advantage in the wrong places.

Even Uber and Instagram can't be sure anymore.

As one of 3,500 entrepreneurs, coders and makers at **The Next Web Conference in Amsterdam** last month my three highlights were: Amazon, Adobe and Andrew Keen.

The opening speaker was **Werner Vogels, CTO for Amazon**. Amazon have a few rules of thumb that I think more companies could apply. There is the two pizza team rule, a rule that says that teams should never be so big they require more than two pizzas to eat. Then there is the rule to never use PowerPoint presentations at meetings. Instead, they ask that every idea proposal is shaped as a properly written, detailed press release including answers to FAQ.

Another speaker with a clear focus on company innovation was **Mark Randall, Chief Strategist of Creativity at Adobe**. He presented the brilliant, digitally relevant idea of a physical idea box called Kickbox or Red box. And Red box is also the accurate description of the red colored cardboard box equipped with a six-step innovation process including a book of failed ideas, a prepaid credit card with \$1,000 in seed capital and a mandate of trust for the owner of the box to be the CEO of the idea, with no senior management involvement until there is proper customer data to prove its value.

Randall demonstrated a great case where a team of Adobe employees had created a tool where people could get pictures photoshopped quickly - and at different price points. All resulting in a powerful case for product, price and consumer demand that could be used to take informed decisions from.

Kickbox is now open to use by every company at <https://kickbox.adobe.com/>

And if you also believe in ideas and innovation can come from unexpected places may I introduce **Andrew Keen** to you. He was without a doubt the biggest surprise of Next Web. Keen is a CNN columnist, author of several books including "The Cult of The Amateur" and "The Internet is Not the Answer" and Executive Director of FutureCast salons in Silicon Valley.

Andrew Keen spoke on the topic of his latest book "The Internet is not the answer" which was more than just an annoying juxtapose to the talk of entrepreneurs and innovation on the stage. Keen expressed his concern that the internet that promised long tail, democratization and empowerment has ended up with a winner-takes-all structure.

His innovation was more regulation to help the internet change direction, a controversial idea that became a trending topic on Twitter in The Netherlands during his talk.

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