

STARTUPS & INNOVATIONS

Compiled by Sherry Hsieh

TrustaBit Raising Money for Flight-Voucher Offering

Plans to Use Blockchain To Fuel Instant Service

An Aliso Viejo company is among the first global crop of startups this year to raise funding through an initial coin offering.

TrustaBit's token presale, which included discounts and bonuses, was scheduled to end on Feb. 12. The main sale concludes March 14, with a minimum crowd sale cap of \$3 million and a \$49 million max.

Backers will be refunded if the minimum isn't raised.

The company, launched by **Saritta Hines** and her cousin **Blair White**, plans to use the proceeds to launch a software company that utilizes blockchain authentication technology designed to allow airlines to issue vouchers instantly and electronically to customers when flights are delayed or canceled.

"We actually want to start a company using the best parts of blockchain using smart contracts," Hines told the Business Journal.

Hines is an IT analytics platform lead at San Diego-based chipmaker **Cymer**, White a business consultant at **Verizon Wireless**, according to her LinkedIn profile.

The company said there's currently no streamlined process for passengers to get vouchers. Typically it involves a passenger explaining the situation to a call center or filling out forms, waiting for a decision on the voucher and amount, then waiting for the voucher to be mailed.

TrustaBit is negotiating partnerships with two airlines, Hines said. The blockchain enthusiast has been mining cryptocurrencies in her home with a central processor and



Mariam and Mehrdad Komeili: their company's new ERP software adds financial management.

motherboard since last summer.

Under the developing business model, users with expiring vouchers can trade the vouchers for TAB tokens, a proprietary currency TrustaBit created to be used in a similar way to an online gift card. Not all airlines offer transferable vouchers. The company intends to keep a running ledger of all airlines' flight voucher rules and publish them.

A billion TAB tokens will be created, valued at 5 cents or 10 cents depending on the time of purchase. Unsold tokens will be eliminated, and new tokens won't be created. The tokens will essentially be used as currency in the voucher business model and eventually traded on a board run by the likes of Bithump or Binance after being converted into an established digital currency.

Last year 425 startups raised \$5.6 billion through initial coin offerings, according to Fabric Ventures and cryptocurrency tracker TokenData. More companies, 478, failed to meet their minimum fundraising goals.

— *Chris Casacchia*

Office ERP

Last week Santa Ana-based **My Office Apps Inc.** introduced a new version of Kechie

ERP, a cloud-based inventory management and enterprise resource planning, or ERP software, adding financial management capabilities, including general ledger, accounts payable and accounts receivable.

"Kechie is designed to help manufacturers streamline and manage day-to-day operations, including inventory, warehouse, vendor and customer relationship management," said Chief Technology Officer **Mehrdad Komeili**, the brain behind the creation. He started the company with wife and Chief Executive **Mariam Komeili**, and launched the beta version of the application in 2015.

Mehrdad, a former chief information officer at Santa Ana-based **STEC Inc.**, said he experienced firsthand the challenges companies have in purchasing and implementing ERP software. "The big players in this industry are **SAP** and [**Oracle Corp.**], but not all companies can afford the big system, and the smaller players only offer one part of the solution."

Its ERP platform can integrate with other service providers, including **Salesforce** and e-commerce service provider **Shopify**.

My Office Apps plans to provide comprehensive ERP capabilities to companies and keep prices affordable. Mariam said monthly prices average \$100 to \$150 per user.

Mehrdad said that while its sweet spot is companies with about \$10 million to \$50 million in revenue, it will take on companies of all sizes. "I want to help out the small businesses and grow with them."

It employs 14 people at its Santa Ana headquarters and has an office in Malaysia. Customers include ice cream maker **WaHiki Ltd.** in New Zealand.

— *Sherry Hsieh*