This private school next to Hollywood has produced some of the brightest minds in tech

By Eugene Kim

USC may be best known for its Trojans football team, but it has a surprisingly deep list of graduates who left a strong footprint in the overall tech industry.

The school’s proximity to Hollywood could have played a role in nurturing their creativity, because these are some of the brightest minds in tech.

Take a look at the 9 most famous tech leaders from USC:

**MARC BENIOFF**
Founder and CEO of Salesforce

Marc Benioff is the founder and CEO of Salesforce, the business software company worth over $50 billion. Many credit him for creating the “cloud” software industry, where software is delivered through the web, instead of having to be installed on each computer.

Benioff started his career at Oracle, where he was a star executive and the most trusted disciple of Oracle founder Larry Ellison. He has a net worth of around $4.2 billion.

**AARON LEVIE**
Founder and CEO of Box

Aaron Levie is the CEO of Box, an online storage platform that helps companies save documents and collaborate in different ways. What started as a scrappy startup is now a public company worth around $1.6 billion.

Levie was a business major at USC, but dropped out after he came up with the idea for Box. He was also once an aspiring movie director, and interned at Miramax and Paramount Pictures during college.

**MIKE MARKKULA**
Early investor and employee #3 of Apple

Mike Markkula is best known for his role as one of the earliest angel investors in Apple, when he invested $250,000 in the company cofounded by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. That gave him a third of a stake in Apple, and he was the company’s third employee. He left the company in 1997.

Most people remember Markkula as an investor, but that was only possible because of his engineering background. He made a ton of money with the stock options he got from working at Intel in their early days. He has a bachelor’s and master’s in electrical engineering.
GEORGE LUCAS
Creator of Star Wars

George Lucas is best known for creating *Star Wars*, one of the most popular films among techies (and everyone).

But his company Lucasfilm is a massive business that spans across movie sound and graphics technology, as well as games and animation. THX, the audio quality assurance system provider, was also spun out of Lucasfilm.

Lucas went to USC’s School of Cinematic Arts, which was one of the few schools to offer a film major at the time. He’s made over $170 million in donations to his alma mater, where he has a building named after him too.

ANDREW VITERBI
Cofounder of Qualcomm

Andrew Viterbi is one of the cofounders of Qualcomm, the $75 billion giant chip maker. He got his PhD in digital communications at USC.

In fact, USC named its engineering school after him, called Viterbi School of Engineering, after he made a $52 million donation. He’s the Presidential Chair Professor of the engineering school, too.

DAVID BOHNETT
Founder of Geocities

Geocities was one of the earliest social networking sites in the world. Founded in 1994 and went public in 1998, it let anybody make a personal home page on the web. At one point, it was the third-most-visited website in the world, which made Yahoo pay over $3.5 billion to acquire it in 1999.

David Bohnett was one of the cofounders of Geocities and served as its CEO too. He’s got a degree in business administration at USC, and is now an active investor in tech.

SCOTT COOK
Cofounder and chairman of Intuit

Scott Cook is the cofounder and chairman of Intuit, the $30 billion software company that helps companies manage their finances. Some of its leading products include TurboTax and QuickBooks.

Before launching Intuit in 1983, Cook was at Procter & Gamble and the consulting firm Bain and Company. He has a net worth of around $2 billion.

WILLIAM WANG
Founder and CEO of Vizio

William Wang is the founder and CEO of Vizio, one of the largest LCD HDTV makers in the world. The company’s best known for producing low-end TVs, but it’s annual sales is estimated to be around $3.1 billion.

Before launching Vizio in 2002, Wang worked for the computer maker Gateway, where he got the idea to start his own TV manufacturing business. He graduated USC in 1986 with an electrical engineering degree.

CHRIS DEWOLFE
Cofounder of MySpace

Before Facebook, there was MySpace, the social network service acquired by News Corp. for $580 million.

DeWolfe played a major role in growing the service, which at one point had more than 135 million unique visitors per month. He also served as MySpace’s CEO before stepping down in 2009. Now, he’s the CEO of SGN Games, a mobile game publisher.

DeWolfe got his MBA from USC and was named the school’s Alumni Entrepreneur of the Year in 2006.

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