

## Shane Curran: The 19-year-old who raised \$3.2m

**DUBLINER Shane Curran at just 19 has raised \$3.2m from some of the biggest investors in Silicon Valley to seed his new start-up [Evervault](#). He talks to John Kennedy about scaling a future tech giant from Dublin.**

When I [first spoke](#) to Shane Curran he was an 11-year-old who was able to wax lyrical about how he taught himself to program in multiple languages such as PHP, C, C++, Java, Python, Ruby, Perl and Bash. He confessed at the time that he had done his first Linux install at the age of six, and learned basic programming at age 7. In 2017 he stole the show at the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition as overall winner when his encryption project using quantum, secure storage, wowed the judges.

It was no surprise to me therefore that yesterday (16 October) Curran was once again in the headlines after it emerged that his new start-up Evervault had raised \$3.2m in seed funding led by venerable Silicon Valley venture capital firm Sequoia Capital along with Kleiner Perkins, Frontline, and SV angel along with some unnamed tech innovators and investors.

“24 hours before my Leaving Cert I was flying back from San Francisco where I met investors,” Curran laughed as we discussed his career so far.

Curran is working on creating a data privacy toolkit that developers can “bake in” into new products.

He describes the present availability of such toolkits as “lacklustre” and said that he has a number of private enterprises that are willing to pay good money for something more robust.

“I’ve always had this belief that the best way to get disruptive tech into people’s hands who need it is to build a business. And if that business is not solving a real-world problem, then why bother?”

Bolstered by the courage of his convictions, Curran decided to follow in the footsteps of other Irish tech founders such as the Collison Brothers whose Stripe is now worth an estimated \$35bn and take a chance on Silicon Valley. His first port of call was Sand Hill Road, the main street of venture capital in Silicon Valley.

“I suppose I read all the books, heard all the podcasts and set my sights on Sequoia and decided it would be cool to just hop on a plane and go to the Bay Area.”

**Made in Dublin**

Curran said he intends to use the seed funding to hire talent locally in Dublin. “Dublin is still a great place to build a product.”

He described visiting the boardrooms of companies like Sequoia who had invested in some of the biggest tech success stories as something of a “surreal experience.”

Sounding just as driven as he was eight years ago when I first spoke to him, he has no illusions that Evervault is going to be a long road. “At first it will be just me. I’ll be signing on two new employees and we will be growing as quick as we can find the people.”

Curran said that cryptography – at the heart of security – is still his core passion. “I have a lot of diverse interests but cryptography is the space I have spent more years building stuff around.”

After winning the BT Young Scientist, he woke up the next day to a mountain of email from companies asking him to turn his qCrypt platform – “a secure, encrypted, data storage solution with multijurisdictional quorum sharing”- into a product.

Curran is currently on a “leave of absence” from UCD where he has so far attended just three lectures in order to focus on growing Evervault.

“My belief is that privacy is shifting away from compliance to products that people are building and I want to develop a toolkit so developers can build privacy into new products like apps and services. It is disappointing that those tools aren’t there yet. Evervault is about building the tools and infrastructure that developers can deploy securely into the network to take care of privacy.

“Evervault will prove to be a long-term winner, provided we get the buy-in from developers building products. We want to be the essential part of the fabric when you are building applications and we are focused on developers at all levels.”

Curran has no problem taking on the mantle of building and scaling a global security company from scratch. “The idea of using the size of a company as a metric is flawed. The real indicator is the calibre of talent that we will be looking for. We think it is there in Dublin, but time will tell.”

Reflecting on his experience meeting the most powerful investors in Silicon Valley, Curran admitted: “I did experience a little bit of imposter syndrome, but at the end of the day they are no different than anybody else. But there is definitely a different dynamic in the United States than here. I do feel very lucky. Sequoia is working off a \$6bn fund and to get a shot is amazing.”

He acknowledges that building a global software company from Ireland won’t be easy and that local firms struggle due to the size of the local market. The need to think global from day-one. “You can still build a nice nine-figure business in Ireland.”

Raising money from Silicon Valley investors to back a Dublin-based company also flies in the face of the established wisdom that you need to live in Silicon Valley to win over investors there.

That said, he hasn't ruled out eventually moving to San Francisco as Evervault scales. "The Valley is undeniably the best place to start a company. If you want to build a \$1bn company you have to go there. There will be a time when Evervault goes there, perhaps to locate operations there.

"Dublin is, however, a great place to start a company, it is just harder to scale in Dublin. However, we are still at the stage where we are focused on building the core team. But I would love to prove that Dublin is a place you can start and scale a world-class business.

"We are still at the early stage and are focused on attracting the right individuals. We are really looking to build for long-term success."

***Main image: Shane Curran, founder, Evervault. Photo credit: Conor McCabe Photography***

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