My name's Chris Long and I studied Computer Science in Games Technology and I completed my honours degree in 2011. From there I started a business with a friend, Brad Moore, we worked on a lot of projects at La Trobe together and using a government incentive that was available, we started a company and, yeah, I've been building apps ever since. The company's called 4PiLabs and we build custom apps for any business, any concept, we'll build it and from there we've spawned into two other companies which are My Schools App and My Teams App and we build custom low-budget Apps for sports clubs and schools and they're proving quite popular.

When I was at uni I participated in IBL. I was fortunate enough to get a position and yeah I was doing some work with Pivot Maritime International. So that involved getting paid while I was at uni, counted towards my credit points and getting industry experience and it was just invaluable at the time. Coming into the industry it just removes this veil that exists while you're at university. You can see the inner workings of a business and interacting with clients which is pretty hard to demonstrate while you're at uni. Now that I'm in my own business those sort of skills are just as I said invaluable because interacting with clients when you've got a computer science background is pretty difficult so the experience I got during my IBL is yeah really really paying off now.

I guess one of the things that if I was to give any advice to current students is work on your communication skills you need to be able to talk you need to be able to explain complicated subjects not just to other people who have an education in the area but you've got to be able to put in layman's terms for the simple people who are going to be your boss or they're going to be a client and they want to be able to understand your complicated concept with a really simple explanation.

I've been involved in a lot of sports clubs throughout my life and there are a few activities at the uni you can get involved in and I was lucky enough to get involved in the Australian Football... ...what are we called… I was lucky enough to get involved in the La Trobe Footy Team at uni games and so we made some great networks there and consequently one of the guys who I played with is now a client of mine and we've been working on a project for him which has been great and so that's probably the the tip of the iceberg in terms of networking. Since then any time a client pitches a concept or I'm thinking about some sort of project I want to work on I'm constantly going back through the catalogue of network contacts I've made while I was at uni and participating in my degree. Now, even now, today I was networking earlier today, I was networking during the week, it's just a skill you need to hone and get used to and really, really use in the in the business world.

So we first started our company, Brad and I, 4PiLabs, we started that while we were still working and enrolled at uni and so we were able to build and feel out the market while it wasn't our main income. From there we realised that we were in an expanding area and we could make money from the venture we investigated what sort of grants and, you know, financing were available. We were fortunate enough to come across the government's New Enterprise Incentives Scheme and they provide funding for us for a year which was the equivalent to the centerlink minimum payments. That kept us going while we sorted out our target market and some of our projects and yeah, since then, that's dried up about six to eight months ago and these new entities we formed My Schools App and My Teams App have proven quite popular and, yeah, it's turning into quite a large business. We just took in an IBL student ourselves so it's a bit of a different perspective being from the student to now being the employer, it's pretty good, pretty cool.

Well we don't use billboards anymore it's all about social marketing, online presence, and to be honest it goes back to networking you know. Every time I'm at the footy club we play an opposition team afterwards I'll try and work out who the correct contact is there, and yeah, just begin networking. I mean, the online resources we have at the moment we do Facebook, LinkedIn, the ability to network is just so easy you don't need to advertise on billboards anymore it's all about social marketing and connecting via people from their contact pages, everyone's got a website now so you can just get in touch with them.