

# 'TiECon has once again become relevant to entrepreneurs'

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The TiECon Disruptive Entrepreneurship Conference on May 15-16 saw a record turnout of 4800 people.

**Ritu Jha/ [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com) reports from California on the largest TieCon ever.**

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Every few steps at the TiECon Disruptive Entrepreneurship Conference, one heard, "We have a start -up"... "I have a start-up company"... "We have a product..."

This year's two-day conference of The Indus Entrepreneurs at the Santa Clara Convention Center, May 15-16, attracted 4,800 people -- of which at least 1,000 were entrepreneurs and 300 travelled from overseas -- the most number of attendees in TiE history.

"We are still completing our analysis of these numbers," Raj Desai, executive director, TiE Silicon Valley, told [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com). "Our Youth Track attracted 400 attendees."

Even a legendary figure like Jack Welch, *image, left*, couldn't stop being amazed during his grand keynote speech at how surprised he was when he casually asked a man backstage if he had his own company. And the man replied, 'Oh, I have already sold three.'

"It's in the genes. They are smart, aggressive and



courteous. Always searching,” Welch noted about Indians, the race.

The 22nd TiECon featured over 200 speakers and the energy was so high that the speakers’ series went an hour over schedule on the concluding day.

TiE President Venkatesh Shukla, who has been hosting the event these past three years, told

[Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com), “I am very proud of re-energizing TiE and TiECon. For 20 years, TiECon did not change. The change in format at TiECon, where Friday is dedicated to the three hottest technology areas, and Saturday covers emerging areas like online education and entrepreneurs from other walks of life, has transformed TiECon.

“It has once again become relevant to entrepreneurs from all over the world. This year, we had entrepreneurs from 22 countries at TiECon.

“The next year will see the transformation in the mainstream consciousness on the role of TiE in nurturing entrepreneurship,” Shukla promised. “It will be a greater celebration of entrepreneurship with TiECon being the platform of choice for global entrepreneurs.”

**W**ith the theme ‘Disruptive Entrepreneurship: Break-In. Break Out, Break Away,’ TiECon featured sessions on The Data Economy, Cloud ,Infrastructure, the Internet of Things, Entrepreneurship, TiE Youth, Healthcare, Oil & Gas Technology, Online Education and data security, e-commerce and even Bitcoins in India.

Shalini Pai, Director and Global Head, YouTube, said, “Online learning enables not only classroom (K-12) access and interactivity, but also access to anyone anywhere to learn at their own pace and the subject matter of interest to them . It’s no longer just a teacher student relationship, but a relationship with knowledge that is life-long, based on passions and interest.”

“Owing to the one to one nature of this type of learning that only the Internet can enable, the focus of the industry is moving from MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) to SPOCs (A Small Private Online Course). It is known that the biggest drop off in online learning happens owing to lack of physical interaction. SPOCs try and manage this by blending the best of both worlds -- physical presence as well as online self paced targeted learning,” Pai added.

“At YouTube,” she said, “we launched the Creator Academy targeted at people interested in creating videos. The site is now frequented by millions of users globally who are seeking to express them via online video.”

“We do everything globally, and emerging markets like India are definitely a focus for us,” Pai told [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com).

“Analogous to what the Khan Academy is trying with the flipped classroom style approach, we

host many of them at our creator spaces across the world to ensure that learning is 'sticky'," she added.

Pai felt there was a lot of scope for thinking about how one educates more niche demographics and sectors, especially the senior citizens demographic, how they can get back to being productive in society and continue to share their wisdom and experience.

"Interestingly, the most popular videos are created by people in their homes, videos on how to tie your shoelaces. Who knows what kinds of interesting educational material will come from our next generation of creators, both young and old," Pai said.

Ritika Suri, Global Head of Corporate Development, Infosys, said the Infosys Innovation Fund offers \$250,000 which is dedicated to India and \$250,000 for the rest of the world.

"Infosys will be spending in India, on start-ups," Suri told [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com). "There's enough money in the Bay Area. What matter to us is helping these companies grow if they need engineering services. We have people with different kinds of skill sets. We are willing to help incubate and coach, mentor and help the companies. We are an Indian company, we are bell weathers of India and we want to continue to be the bell weather."



"We look at transactions, both from the Indian perspective and also the likely consequences in the US and try to work around that," Nishith Desai, founder, *image, left*, Nishith Desai Associates, an India-centric global law firm, told [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com).

"There are number of issues and tax, of course, is one of them. On the regulatory side there are several issues," Desai said, "India is evolving under Narendra Modi. We will see some changes, not yet much. This government at least hears and listens to technology issues."

Vaibhav Parikh, an associate at Desai's law firm, told [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com), "There are Bitcoins alliances in India. It has become a source of payment and we accept it as payment. It's like how people once accepted gold coins. This has become the new gold. There a lot of people buying Bitcoins in India in the hope that they can sell it later. We hope one day it will get regulated."