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UA students' cell phone can project images

By Dan Sullivan

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For everyone who ever wished they could fit a big-screen TV, camera and the Internet into their pocket — the dream is about to come true.

At least that's the goal of a group of University of Arizona students who formed Logic Wireless — a Tucson-based company that's selling a cell phone with a built-in projector that can cast images the size of a movie screen on a wall.

The phone — dubbed the Logic Bolt — made its debut at the Consumer Electronics Show Jan. 8 in Las Vegas.

The company started when co-founders Aasim Saied, 24, and Miran Maric, 20, met at the Eller College of Management's Stocks and Securities Investment Club in August.

Since then, the company has grown to 19 employees and has sold around 11,000 phones in Africa, where it first started marketing efforts, Miran said. The company has deals pending in the United States, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt, he said.

Students make hundreds of presentations, and that's where the idea of putting a projector into a cell phone came from, Miran said.

"We wanted to target people who do a lot of presentations like business professionals, but also people who are into multimedia," he said.

Saied, who is the company's chief executive officer, did some research and found that during the economic downturn, communications are still doing well, and he wanted to get into the market.

But balancing school and the needs of a corporation can be challenging, Miran said. He said he's gotten used to getting only a few hours of sleep a night.

"It's hard until you're sitting in a meeting a someone mentions six figures," he said.

Miran and Saied have been traveling around the country to promote their phone, and they said the phone has stirred a lot of interest. Saied said he invested his own money in the company and raised a further \$70,000 from private investors.

Jim Jindrick, a mentor in residence at the Eller College of Management and former vice president of wireless antenna maker Galtronics, said the phone is an interesting concept, but Logic Wireless has a long way to go and a lot of competition.

"The projector feature is not something that I can envision on every cell phone, but the company has a niche with business people," Jindrick said. "I greatly admire their ambition."

Logic Wireless does have some competition. Samsung released its own projector phone — the Show — this month.

The Logic Bolt is made in China and uses the Global System for Mobile communication (GSM). It is also a quad-band phone, which means it can be used with different GSM systems around the world.

The phone features a three-megapixel camera, Web browser, eight-gigabyte hard drive, stylus pen and has a touch screen similar to the iPhone. The phone retails for \$600.

For more info

Go to Logic Wireless' Web site at www.logicwireless.com

Its interface was designed completely by Logic Wireless using Java software.

The projector in the Bolt can beam an image from 36 to 64 inches in 640 x 480 resolution. Picture quality and size improve in dark conditions.

Drew Jackson, a junior at the UA majoring in wildlife conservation, has been testing the phone for two weeks. He took it to a meeting and showed it off to classmates.

"They thought it was crazy," Jackson said. "I like it a lot more than I thought."

But, in a time when cell phones are getting smaller, the size of the phone may pose problems for the company.

The Logic Bolt weighs more than twice as much as a conventional cell phone and is prone to overheating, but the company is working on another version that will debut around June.

The new phone will be smaller and may be equipped with Windows Mobile — the current model has PowerPoint, Excel and Microsoft Word.

"We're working to make projectors as popular as cameras are on phones," said Jon Sullivan, the company's chief design officer.

For more info

Go to Logic Wireless' Web site at www.logicwireless.com

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