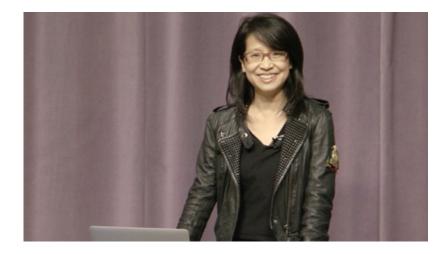**Stanford eCorner**

Commercializing Cutting-Edge Research

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Entrepreneur and Stanford Professor Monica Lam answers a question on the challenges of commercializing research coming out of universities. According to Lam, when focusing on larger trends in computing, the fruits of disruptive research frequently require longer windows for uptake by industry and consumers.

Transcript

The kind of spin out that I do are not the ones that I necessarily recommend it to everybody here.. Because we started these projects as computer science research projects and they are usually very disruptive.. And so the first company tries to create - what we did is that we let people have custom processer cores and ASIC chips.. So it's a great idea, but it takes a while, because it is so disruptive.. And by the way this is Tensilica, they just sold the company to Cadence and it's successful, but it takes a while.. And the second company was a company called MokaFive where we look at - where we use virtual machine technology for computer management.. And it's a huge problem again.. And it is very disruptive and it also takes time.. And if I look at what happened in those two times, it's like in research.. we tried to solve the problem in the optimal way..

But the minute you leave the university you will find that nobody is ready to absorb what you are trying to reach.. So you have this go-to-market issue and that is that the first thing you have to do is to tick where you're going and reduce it down to these bitesized pieces, something that they can possibly absorb.. And then you built your way back up.. So the work that we did kind of in the university is kind of like research for the next 7, 15 years, depending on how you look at it and then you kind of work your way back up.. And we were lucky because I think the problems we solve are real, serious ones.. They don't - they're not the fickle ones, they don't change.. And even though we take such a heavy handed approach to them, it stood the test of time.. We have the time to keep working and then it will come in after a while, because we were focusing on the trends.. So for example, in this one, we're focusing on the trends, that there will be a lot of distributed computing and this will be the right architecture as a result of that.. I don't know when this is going to come in, but it is true that in the last three experiences it's getting faster and faster...