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By Brad Spirrison

## **New military-focused iPhone application not just fun and games**

With more than 70,000 applications available for download at Apple's iTunes Store, it is not an overstatement to say that there is an app for everything.

Whether it is the iPhone Bump developed at the University of Chicago that syncs contact information or Charmin's SitOrSquat application that searches for nearby restrooms, the marketplace is now flush with an array of mobile media properties.

TransLumen, a defense and homeland security industry contractor headquartered in the John Hancock Center, is among the local companies to enter the fray with the release of its UAV Fighter video game. The application, which was co-developed by Entertaining Games Inc. and can be downloaded to an iPhone or iPod Touch for 99 cents, lets players pretend to operate unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in various military settings.

TransLumen hopes the application will appeal to gamers and military strategists.

"The capabilities of using the iPhone and iPod Touch for military purposes is exploding," explained TransLumen President Carol Sherman. "Because we have experience as a defense contractor, we are trying to apply that knowledge base and also make it exciting for the consumer."

Over the last decade, TransLumen has contracted with the likes of Boeing, Motorola and Lockheed to develop sensory awareness technology for soldiers in combat. Although the company is self-funded, it has received grants from NASA, the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Naval Research. TransLumen founder and chief technology officer Doug Siefken served as a combat photographer for the Navy during the Vietnam War and owns several patents related to software-enabled combat imaging.

As TransLumen figures out how to generate awareness for its application, the company will host a live demo of UAV Fighter at the Michigan Avenue Apple Store next month and is actively marketing the game on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

"It's difficult to push your game with so many different applications out there," Sherman said.

**Positive Inc.**

According to Inc. Magazine, Oak Brook-based software developer vAuto was the fastest-growing privately held company in Illinois between 2005 and 2008 with \$15.6 million in revenue last year.

The Chicago area more than held its own in the annual iconic list for entrepreneurs and small businesses with 23 (mostly technology-oriented) companies among the top 500. Online logistics and transportation procurement service Echo Global Logistics, satellite radio retailer TSS-Radio and online caregiver community **Sittercity** were among the Chicago-based companies that made the list.

### **Next Big Sound launches after moving away**

Among the more interesting Internet business ideas to emerge from the Chicago area in recent years is Next Big Sound. Founded by Northwestern graduate Alex White, the company tracks the various ways music fans relate to and interact with their favorite bands online.

Earlier this month, the company launched its site, found at [www.nextbigsound.com](http://www.nextbigsound.com), after graduating from the elite TechStars' incubator in Boulder, Colo. While there could be many big things to come for Next Big Sound, it is unclear whether the company's operations will return to Chicago.

It sounds like a broken record, but another tech talent has left us for greener pastures.