



NEXT YEAR'S KIT
The latest innovations



TECH REVOLUTION Team USA, who won this year's Women's World Cup, wore performance-tracking devices between their shoulder blades – a first for match-based tracking.



SLEEP Swansea City uses 'sleep pods' to allow players to snooze between training sessions. Sleep is now seen as key in effective physiological recovery.

Left: Chelsea's Cesc Fàbregas in action in the Premier League. Chelsea are among a number of top clubs to do video tracking-based number-crunching during games, with analysis carried out after the match.



TRAINING TECH Leicester City players using the STATSports Viper, which slots into a compression vest and records impact, acceleration and more.



DATA The Adidas miCoach Smart Ball captures data about a host of factors including power and spin placed on shots, which is then displayed through a smartphone app.



PSYCHOLOGY Sports psychiatrists such as Dr Steve Peters, left, are increasingly being used by football clubs, having originally found favour in cycling and athletics.

This helps explain why psychology is gaining greater acceptance within football. Dr Steve Peters, for example, worked with cyclists, track and field athletes and snooker star Ronnie O'Sullivan before more recently helping Liverpool and England footballers. "It's certainly an expanding area, though I'd say it's still under-utilised in football compared with other sports," says Bradley Busch, of Inner Drive, a London-based performance psychology consultancy.

Busch, who has worked with players at Tottenham, Sunderland and Crystal Palace, teaches techniques including helpful "self-talk" methods for each player, emotional control, performing under pressure and concentration. "We teach them to focus on things you can influence and control, such as their roles on the pitch, movement and attitude," he says. "But in the 30th minute of a football match, your focus needs to be on the 30th minute of a football match."

Do the scientific inroads into football mean it's game over for those for whom the seemingly random and unquantifiable are central to the human dramas played out on the pitch? Despite being an eloquent advocate of the power of data in the game, Prozone's Paul Power thinks not. "There are always intangibles that are very difficult to capture. Anyone who thinks everything can be reduced to data is probably deluding themselves."



Start me up: the cafe at Campus London where tech entrepreneurs find inspiration.

Louise Chunn

Tech startups are usually seen as a young person's game, so what's it like being a 'grey entrepreneur'?



Pulling into Old Street underground station in London I can with great accuracy predict who will head for the doors of the train. Not that clean-shaven man in the three-piece business suit; nor that Armani-ed woman who's probably heading for a City skyscraper. No, Old Street (ironically, given the name) is a magnet for tech-oriented twentysomethings. So how does it feel to be a "grey entrepreneur" blinking in the light of Silicon Roundabout?

I'm a former magazine editor (*Psychologies*, *Good Housekeeping*, *In Style*) in my late 50s. When, a few years ago, I wanted to find a therapist to deal with some of life's harsher blows, I realised that most directories couldn't give me what I needed. Picking out a face from the hundreds listed was a stab in the dark. Couldn't you take the sort of algorithm that worked for dating sites, and find the right therapist much more accurately?

And so I became the founder of welldoing.org. It's been a gradual development, from reading *The Lean Startup* to a week's work experience on a teen site to get my head around Wordpress (which we no longer use anyway); from being hacked by Isis (I'm not kidding – but we fought them off within a day) to reaching 1,000 therapists enrolled, my small team and I have been demystifying therapy for more than 18 months from my home office. It was only winning a place on Google's pilot scheme "Founders over 50" that physically brought me into London's premier tech space.

And yes, it does feel strange. Everyone is casually dressed: tattoos/beards/piercings are almost de rigueur for the men; trainers are worn all day (not just during the commute) by the women, while conventional makeup and a blow-dry is almost non-existent. Everybody has a laptop under their arm and quite possibly a couple of million of Series A investment to play with. And I am old enough to be their mother.

But does that matter? According to one of my fellow Founders over 50, Suzanne Noble of Frugl, it can – older entrepreneurs, she says, are viewed less favourably if they're looking for investment. Having joined Ada's List (a women in tech support group), I'm also seeing evidence that investors can be pretty sexist too. But when we all pitched at the end of our Google six-week programme, plenty of investors turned up, and a number made contact.

It may be commonly believed that the big "disrupters" can only come from the super-young Mark Zuckerberg model – prominent US investor Vinod Khosla has said: "People under 35 make change happen; people over 45 basically die in terms of new ideas" – but actual research shows that startups earning more than \$1m have founders

with a median age of 39. Even better, twice as many were older than 50 as were younger than 25. As Krisztina Holly wrote in *Forbes* last year: "More experienced leaders tend to have deeper networks, experience managing teams, and better business savvy and skills for delivering on their vision."

Nonetheless, investors' ageist attitudes are bolstered by the digital native argument. The fact is that baby boomers like me haven't grown up with computers. But we can, and do, learn. And for what we might not immediately know about the technical side of things, we do have the benefit of experience with life. Our ideas of "problem-solving" go further than faster takeaway delivery or additional social networks. I knew that users of welldoing.org would stretch from late 20s to 50s, because I've spent the past few decades dealing with the reality of that life.

On the younger person's side is the fact that they can throw themselves into a startup, mind and body, working through the night, the weekend, whenever. Anyone over 40 is more likely to have a mortgage to pay, partner and family to tend, maybe even parents who need help. Encumbrances perhaps, but all doable.

Being around young people infects you with their energy, chutzpah, and taste for green juices

While wanting to stand up for my generation, I've also found it thrilling to be setting out in something new, especially as people in tech seem to be so open, and ready to help. Every week, every day – every conversation! – I may learn something I didn't know before. But then I still have to work out, is it something I need to know or will it be a distraction? It's all part of the challenge.

Being around younger people infects you with their energy, chutzpah, and taste for green juices. That's why, although the Google scheme has now finished, my tech director, Jamie, assistant Alice and I are now spending a day a week in the cafe at Campus London. It has some of the most uncomfortable chairs my body has ever encountered, and my ears ring with the loud music it plays, yet we scurry to get there by 9.15am to get a table. The buzz of working alongside other startups – overhearing their metrics-filled conversations, seeing the passion in their faces – psychologically fires us all up for the next week's projects.

Louise Chunn is the founder of welldoing.org, where users can find the right therapist for their needs, plus information and advice on therapy and wellbeing