

Sonect is white-hot: fintech start-up wins 2019 Digital Economy Award

Winners also included: Bank Vontobel, Veriset, SVA Aargau, Seervision and VSHN. digitalswitzerland founder and CEO of Ringier, Marc Walder, receives honorary award.

1. Press release / second profile on the Digital Economy Award

A total of 600 guests from digital industry, research, business and politics attended the Digital Economy Award Night to celebrate this year's crowning digital achievements. The awards ceremony was held at the Hallenstadion in Zurich and attended by Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin. The highlight of the evening was the fintech start-up Sonect, winner in the category of Next Global Hot Thing.

Zurich, 28 November 2019 --- Sonect was named the winner in the category of Next Global Hot Thing, in front of a crowd of 600 at the Hallenstadion in Zurich. Sonect converts any shop into an ATM. The platform makes it easy for customers to withdraw cash in shops while allowing banks to save on running their existing ATMs, which can be extremely costly. Sonect has been the largest cash withdrawal network in Switzerland and Portugal since 2018 and is growing exponentially. Expansion into Europe and the US is already underway, and the company is about to start a major round of financing.

Pascal Kaufmann, jury president and founder of StarMind, paid tribute to the winner: "Sandipan Chakraborty and his team and, in particular, the extremely impressive growth figures and positive customer feedback, were able to effectively convince us that Sonect is a global Uber for ATMs."

Marc Walder is Switzerland's first Digital Economy Ambassador

For the first time ever in the history of the Digital Economy Awards and their predecessors (Swiss ICT Award, Digital Transformation Award), the government was represented at the most important awards ceremony of the Swiss ICT industry. The Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, delivered the opening. The Digital Economy Awards were also honoured to welcome Daniel Risch, Minister for Economic Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Liechtenstein, to Zurich.

Another highlight was the presentation of the honorary Digital Economy Ambassador award to Marc Walder, CEO of Ringier and founder of the digitalswitzerland initiative. He was honoured for his efforts to promote and develop Switzerland as a business centre and, in particular, the ICT industry.

And the winners are

The Digital Economy Awards in the categories Digital Innovation Of The Year, Digital Transformation Award with the sub-categories Large Enterprises, SMEs, and NPO & Government, and Highest Digital Quality were awarded to the following companies:

Digital Innovation of the Year: Seervision

Jury president Lukas Bär: "Seervision is set to spark a revolution in the field of TV broadcasting of major sporting events, similar to the switch from photography to film. Using artificial intelligence, they are able to identify the players and objects that need to be the focus of the broadcast and follow their movements, all in real time. However, Seervision technology can also be applied in other areas such as conferences, security cameras and traditional film production. The developers behind Seervision also impressed us when we met them in

person. They aim to take the production of live events to a totally new level, in terms of professionalism, quality, logistics required and expenses.”

Digital transformation SME: Veriset

Jury president Samy Liechti: “Veriset convinced the jury that, with a clear vision, it’s possible to take a strategic and consistent approach to digitalisation. The focus is on customers and employees. The entire manufacturing process is up to 99% electronic, with data recorded centrally. In addition to manufacturing, sales is also being digitalised and the company is shifting its focus to direct sales. Digitalisation doesn’t stop with their kitchens, either: Having presented a working prototype at Swissbau 2018, their most important concepts will be introduced to the market as early as next year.”

Digital Transformation NPO & Government: SVA Aargau

Deputy jury president Marc Uricher: “The Aargau social insurance company (SVA Aargau) has completed all aspects of its digital transformation with a clear use case. By moving the entire application process for premium reductions online, SVA has introduced a digital, fully automated solution. This solution is a perfect example of how to seamlessly connect a variety of different interfaces. The platform is extremely user-friendly, which not only creates demonstrable added value for everyone involved, but has also allowed the platform to be widely accepted. In a complex and challenging environment, SVA was able to implement a seamless user experience. This will not only speed up processes and reduce costs, but also users of the platform to better maintain their dignity in difficult situations.”

Digital Transformation Large Enterprises: Bank Vontobel

Jury president Bramwell Kaltenrieder: “Digital transformation in the finance industry is not only apparent through the emergence of fintech, but also in the strategic development of traditional players. Fierce competition and threats to its market share led the top management at Bank Vontobel to take a completely new approach. With ‘Volt’, they now have a digital asset management solution that they can use to target a new customer segment. Moreover, Vontobel is sharing its digital asset management app with the competition, with a view to gauging potential economies of scale created by sharing technology. All of this is pursued within an interdisciplinary setup in which technology is the common denominator behind this corporate transformation.»

Highest Digital Quality: VSHN

Jury president Marcus Dauck: "In a clearly defined service segment, VSHN is setting a new benchmark with premium quality and strong global growth, for both SMEs and larger companies, in Switzerland and beyond. As a young company, focussing on sustainable but flexible services, in an environment in which the technology is rapidly evolving, is not necessarily a given and requires a great deal of tenacity. VSHN offers exceptional speed, focus and quality, all of which impressed the jury.”

Certificate recipients

At the Digital Economy Award Night on 28 November, companies and organisations also received certificates in five specialised disciplines:

- **Security:** First Security Technology
- **Industry 4.0:** Side Effects
- **Lean, Agile & Scrum:** SBB Informatik, VSHN, Netcetera, Five Up Community
- **Open Source:** Zammad
- **User Experience:** ti&m, Netcetera, interactive friends

Sonect wins the fintech award

During the awards ceremony, attendees had the opportunity to vote for the winner of the fintech award from the fintech incubator F10 and from SIX. The start-ups Advaisor, Sonect and Vereign, all companies within the fintech segment, each had two minutes to present compelling pitches to the audience.

Each table could give one vote: In the end, Sonect won 32 out of 68 votes cast and received investment coaching from F10 FinTech Incubator & Accelerator and the opportunity for an equity investment of CHF 150,000 from Six FinTech Ventures.

About the Digital Economy Award

The Digital Economy Award event is hosted by swissICT, the professional association for ICT and trade press publisher Netzmedien AG. The award came about through a consolidation of the Swiss ICT Award and Swiss Digital Transformation Award. The next awards ceremony will be held on 25 November 2020 at the Hallenstadion in Zurich.

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