

Meet Impact VC, a new firm from Accel and DCM founder Dixon Doll

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One of the co-founders of Accel Partners and DCM, [Dixon Doll](#), recently formed a new venture firm called [Impact Venture Capital](#), along with [Jack Crawford](#) and [Eric Ball](#).

Ball previously served as Oracle's treasurer, where he helped manage \$50 billion in assets. And Crawford was previously an investor and founded Velocity Venture Capital. Both are also former Kauffman fellows.

The firm is hosting their first annual Impact Global Venture Summit in Sacramento tonight to connect fundraising companies to angel investors, venture capital firms and corporate venture groups.

Impact VC has already quietly backed a couple of companies, [Nightingale Security](#) and [Cornami](#).

According to Nightingale Security [CEO and co-founder Jack Wu](#), his startup's technology includes drones and software that can "replace security guards" and protect the perimeter of any large venue or corporate campus.

Its robotic, aerial security systems are installed “on-prem,” or behind the firewall of any given company’s network. Therefore, they can be used in highly sensitive settings like at a high-security prison, film studio or large industrial operation such as a factory, solar farm or data center.

Wu will be speaking at the [Drone World Expo](#) in San Jose on Tuesday as part of a panel examining how robotics and drones specifically are transforming the physical security industry.

Cornami, formerly known as Sviral, has developed technology that reduces latency and power consumption in high-performance computing, employing multi-core processors used in parallel.

While the partners at Impact Venture Capital declined to reveal any fund-specific details, they were able to speak to their investment philosophy broadly.

Doll told TechCrunch that Impact Venture Capital seeks to back early-stage companies, strictly. Why? The veteran of venture capital said:

“With early stage, seed and Series A rounds you have the most uncertainty and risk there. But if you actively manage the companies and the portfolio itself, you will realize the greatest returns. All the data from Cambridge, and others, bears this out... When you look back over the decades, the top performing returns come from early-stage firms by and large. This stage is also where you can provide the real business development part of venture, as opposed to just writing checks and staying largely on the sidelines.”

Eric Ball added that Impact VC has an interest in startups developing new technology that can “cut across multiple customer verticals.” Areas of interest include: the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, data analytics, robotics and telecommunications media technology (TMT). Ball said:

“Some investors want to specialize and create silos around their space. But many technologies don’t respect silos. Nightingale is a good example of this. They can use drones to replace human security guards, but the same drones could be sent to inspect a solar panel or be sent to measure moisture levels in crops.”

Impact VC has offices in Burlingame and Sacramento, but extensive international connections, with limited partners and prior co-investors based around the world, especially in Israel, Germany, Japan, China and the U.K.

Why start an early-stage firm in 2016; it seems like there are so many?

“There’s a dynamic going on where in the last several quarters, VCs have raised more money than at any point in history, yet have been deploying less capital than at any point in the last 10 years. Firms are hoarding dollars because they assume it will take a very long time for a startup to exit. So they’re doing fewer deals and reserving more money for follow-on rounds. Self-inflicted scarcity can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. But this creates opportunity for folks who are willing to deploy capital now,” Ball explained.

Dixon Doll added that VC investors need to remain patient, and keep an open mind about where to find liquidity in this next cycle.

“For the VC industry to be healthy we’ve got to have a wide set of exit opportunities, including IPOs as well as mergers and acquisitions. One of the new factors that’s helping solve at least part of this problem is that a lot of VC-backed companies are exiting by selling out to PE firms that specialize in target sectors. We expect that trend to continue. But it’s important not to be impatient just because we are weathering an IPO drought,” he said.

Oh, and by the way, when the firm says “impact,” it’s not about a double or triple-bottom line, but pure financial returns.

That said, Impact VC does want to help foundations, including philanthropic ones, to invest and grow their wealth wisely, Ball said.