Jake   02:18
Thank you, Dan, for coming on. And joining me on the podcast. It's great to have you on today. And I'm very much looking forward to the conversation. You are the co founder and CEO of a cool company called rewind.ai. Just launched November 1 2022, I believe so little bit, one day more than a month before we're recording. And prior to that, you know, you had a great company started in 2009, I believe called Optimizely. And, you know, led that for around a decade. So lots of entrepreneurial experience before that you're actually on the Obama campaign. I believe him but Google before that. So long story past lots of success along the way. But the reason I reached out to talk was I saw the demo for your latest company rewind. And I just thought it was one of the coolest demos I've seen in a while. Basically, what it does is you know, we're going to the details. But it allows people to find anything that they've seen, said or heard on their computer. So whether it's like a Google Doc or a Zoom video, or whatever it might be. It's like a search for anything you've ever done on your computer, at least since you get the thing installed and whatnot. So super cool product, awesome download, encourage people to go check it out. But we'll get into it today. I'm sure. So anyway, Dan, thank you very much again, for coming on. And I think the best place to start would be to just talk through your story a little bit from you know, as early as you're willing to start to where you are today and some of the decisions you made along the way.

Dan Siroker   03:50
Thank you so much for having me and thrilled to share my story. I think probably the first formative experience on my journey was in college, I was always the kid. So I studied computer science. And I always was the kid that always try to get go well above and beyond on the homework assignments, to the point where I think I probably single handedly deterred most of my roommates or dorm mates from ever pursuing computer science because they saw how hardcore I was. And at Stanford, they have this great philosophy of like any homework assignment, you could get like a check check plus or a plus. And like the difference between a check plus and a plus was like 40 hours more effort. And ever since then, and I just would always go for it. So I've always had this like strong desire to build things. And in also, in many ways, just try to blow people's minds like to show them how

technology can do things they never imagined were possible. And so so that's driven me for quite a while, you know, I studied computer science. I started, you know, started a company actually that's not on my LinkedIn, but it's a company on my own that was inspired by my honors thesis and college really struggled with that and ultimately said, You know what I should do? I should go learn the skills that would make me say successful as an entrepreneur. And the best place I thought to do this, this was back in 2006 was Google at the time, Google was kind of the place to be. So I applied to join their Associate Product Management Program, and was lucky enough to get in. And this program was described by Larry Page at the time as engineers who know how to talk. So I took that I guess, as a compliment, maybe not. And the interesting thing is, I spent two years at Google really trying to learn the skills that would make me successful on my own as an entrepreneur, and actually didn't really learn that, you know, I learned about 80%, I learned is like how to be successful at Google. And then 20% was kind of like how to build a team how to, you know, you know, how to how to have engineers be inspired about what to work on. And, and ultimately, I left Google, actually, for a reason I never expected which was to go to a political campaign. Brock Obama came to Google in November 2007. I actually snuck in to see him speak, I actually had no clue that he was so popular, and like, there's huge line outside. And so I actually hate to admit it, but I snuck back around Charlie's cafe, the main auditorium where he was speaking, and secret service person stopped me, you know, the the time he was a senator, but he stopped me and said, sorry, you can't go past here. And I lied to the Secret Service. I'll admit that right now on your podcast. And I told him, I actually know I have a meeting back there. And I pointed to some conference room as far away. And he's like, All right, go ahead. Go ahead. So I snuck in, jumped the line. And I saw him speak. And it really transformed, transformed my life. You know, he talked about how he wanted to take what we're doing, and Google with evidence and science and feedback and data, and bring that to the government. And the last thing he said when he came to Google was, I want you to be involved. And this is like political euphemism for give me a bunch of donations. But I took them literally. And two weeks later, I flew to Chicago, I joined his campaign. Eventually, I quit my job. And and that turned into a job as the director of analytics where I learned the power of ABX testing. And out of that experience, I

started my first successful company, which was Optimizely, which is really trying to build a product I wish we had in the Obama campaign back in, in 2007 2008. had amazing journey, there was very lucky to, you know, team up with a co founder, Pete kumin, who also was an APM, at Google, and we built that company to from zero to $120 million in annual recurring revenue, 450 employees, and it was an amazing ride, we ultimately ended up selling the company. And, and part of my experience at Optimizely, while I was at the CEO, I had another one of these transformative experiences, where it very much I started to go deaf. You know, in my 20s, I started to go deaf, I have a genetic condition called otosclerosis, which causes me to go deaf at an early age. And this, you know, seemingly bad news turned into a pretty amazing experience. When I tried a hearing aid for the first time, I gradually gone deaf for many years. And so I didn't realize how bad my hearing had gotten, until the moment I tried hearing it for the first time. And it was magical, you know, to lose a sense and gain it back again, feels like gaining a superpower. And ever since that moment, I had been on a hunt for ways that technology can augment human capabilities and give us superpowers. That led me to memory, you know, memory, just like our hearing gradually gets worse as we get older. And studies show that about 90% of things are forgotten after just a week. And so I asked myself, you know, if there's a hearing aid for hearing and glasses for vision, what's the equivalent for memory. And that's what started our company here at rewind, you know, we I'm happy to go into depth on your journey, we had a big pivot. But ultimately, we're now at a product like you described rewind, it's a search engine for your life. It lets you search anything you've seen said or heard, to MacOS app that captures what you see stores all the data locally. So from a privacy perspective, it really respects your privacy. We never we can't see the data, you know, your employer can't see the data. Even if law enforcement US law enforcement compelled us to try to get your data we couldn't. And so it's a it's a really cool product that helps you hopefully have the same experience I had trying a hearing aid for the first time. You know, when I tried it on, I felt like I gained a superpower and, and our goal is to give you the same superpower but for memory instead.

Jake   09:15

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Yeah, that's a great story. And I appreciate you sharing it. I always think it's really cool when people have things happen to them that like you were talking about going deaf in your 20s. And, you know, a seemingly bad thing you described it as and like being able to turn that into something that's amazing. And you know, rewind AI, you guys are only a month or so in right now, but obviously huge demand so far. And you know, it might be a product that tons of people around the world love and who knows what else is to come you guys are just getting started. But to be able to take that sort of bad thing and turn it into a really interesting product that you know, can give people superpowers to some extent, like you said in terms of memory. It's just awesome. So really cool to hear that. Before we dive into rewind, maybe we could spend a little bit of time on on Optimizely. Because, you know, it certainly spent a decade of your life on it and certainly went very well. Overall. I mean, at the time, you were, I guess not a first time founder, but first time post leaving Google and working with Obama. And I think he joined YC in 2010, I think the year after you found it or something like that, and like you said, grew it to this, you know, very large company in terms of both revenue and employees voted Best Place to Work I saw and things like this. So lots of success there before the acquisition and in 2020. I guess one interesting thing to hear about maybe to start is, you know, founding the company, just getting it off the ground in the very beginning. And participating in yc. In 2010. It was very early for for yc. I forget when exactly it started. But that was one of the first years I think, how maybe that's wrong, you can correct me, but how was it early on in yc? First time, sort of, or second time, you know, trying to start a company first time maybe for real, you know, after having a couple of jobs under your belt. curious to hear how that sort of era was and what YC was like in the early days?

Dan Siroker 11:12
Yeah, great question. In fact, as you asked it, I realized like the best answer to trying to learn the skills necessary to be an entrepreneur, the best answer was not to join Google, but to do yc. I'm a huge fan of yc. We were in the winter 2010 batch. And I think they'd been around since about 2005. But it only got bigger and bigger. And so we were very lucky to be part of yc. Before it's gotten to the scale it is now you know, we had a lot of personal love and

attention from Jessica Livingston and Paul Graham, who are two of my idols. And yeah, it was incredible. And so I'll I'll share a couple of things. Maybe it's more interesting to your audience, which is the things that aren't on my LinkedIn, which is, you know, the two other failed startups before Optimizely. So I had one failed startup before Google. After the Obama campaign, if I'm really honest, the last thing I ever wanted to do was anything analytics related again, I had gained 50 pounds over a year, which is just what a political campaign does to you. I was so burnt out on anything to do with data AB testing analytics, I just like I gotta do something else. And so I after the campaign, the first thing we tried was I teamed up with Pete who, who I mentioned earlier, and we thought, you know, it'd be cool. This is like, the worst way to come up with startup ideas, you know, would be cool is like, let's just write up on the whiteboard, all the things were interested in all the cool ideas we have. And one of those ideas was a company called carrot sticks, which was a math game for kids. We've since I've since purchased this from my LinkedIn. But we started that as an idea. It was really a dumb idea. Because me and Pete, neither of us were parents at the time, neither of us were kids, and neither of us were teachers. So we weren't at all any of the constituents for whom we were building. And so like, we had no clue what we were doing. Like we we didn't, we had these endless debates on like, should the game be more peddled pedagogical, or more fun, you know. And so we struggled with this for about six months. And you know, one of the biggest things we struggled with was distribution. And this is the biggest mistake, or the biggest thing you don't learn at Google, because Google distribution is just like, build a cool product at the time I was working on Chrome, this is before I launched, you know, you build a cool product, put the word Google in front of it, and you got a couple 100,000 users, if they like it, you got a couple of million users, and it grows from there. Like that's not the case. For every startup, every startup requires a much more thoughtful plan toward distribution. So long story short, first idea after a carrot six was let's build a product to help us get distribution. And that was called spread Li. We did that for about a month. And with that idea, actually is what we applied to yc. You know, we applied to YC with a company spread Lee. They accepted us and me basically two weeks and Spradley, the short answer the goal there was how do we incentivize our users to spread the word to their

friends, and basically, we would incentivize them by giving them discounts or make donations to charity, launch research bad idea, because like, the social capital necessary to spam your friends is always more expensive than whatever discount we could give you. But the thing is, that got us into YC, about two weeks into yc. We're like wait, this thing's not working really well. But we this major insight, this is part of the Insight I'll share hopefully this helps others is like building for yourself is so much easier than building for someone else. You know, spread Lee with a product we wish we had that in care six to help us get distribution. Care six was for a bunch of people we didn't really understand. And then we had this insight. I mean, seems on hindsight, so crazy, was like, Oh, what are other products that we wish we had, and now sufficient time had come from the campaign whereas like willing to go back into that world as a boy, you know, it would be really great a product to make it easy to do a B testing. And so I whipped up a prototype over the weekend. I showed it to Paul Graham and one of the Tuesday lunch dinners, and immediately into his head he's like, forget that idea. Do this. This is a B testing for marketers. And to be honest, I probably never even met a marketer up until that point in my life but but he was right and we did it and we took off and even just in YC we like you know I think care six took six months to get a paying customer Spradley took one month to getting paying customer Optimizely took one day like we had just Immediate market pull from the very beginning. So long answer to a short question. But hopefully that's, that answers it.

Jake   15:06
Oh, yeah, that's really interesting. And I have, I think one more question on Optimizely, at least before we jumped through one, but I do want to come back to what it was, what was the difference between, you know, you said you had like that market pull right away, on, on Optimizely, when you pivoted during yc. And, you know, there's, you can definitely say, a market pull for rewind, die right now. So I'm curious to hear how those two experiences, you know, 10 or 12 years apart have compared but um, before we get to that, you know, like you said, you scaled this thing from you and your co founder to, I think, 400 500 employees, great culture. And that's just, you know, even just scaling with success, regardless of cultures, obviously, very difficult. For people who are listening today who might just be

starting a company or joining an early one, or something like that, what were some of the keys along the way from, you know, going from zero to one? And then, you know, way beyond that to a very successful very large company with a great culture? What are some of like, the core principles, I guess, that are core, you know, things that you kept in mind as you sort of scaled that company over the course of a decade?

Dan Siroker 16:16
Yeah, you know, from zero to one, the biggest lesson we learned was build something people want. This is a very YC mine, there's like the core YC mantra is I can't hold our shirts. It seems really simple. But it's like the most important thing, just build something people want. And that's the difference between market poll and not having market poll, you can easily delude yourself into thinking you're building something people want. And many people will lie to you. And they'll say they'll want it but they'll never pay for it until they say that they want it because they want to appease your ego. And the best book on how to cut through that is called the Mom Test, short book, you can listen to it in one go. If you're listening audiobook, it's great. Anyway, so that's 01 biggest lesson build something if you want one to n, you know, if I had to look back at that time, I would say I got more lucky than I got, then I was good. A couple of things we got really lucky on where the the initial team we hired were amazing cultural foundation, you know, in some ways, kind of the DNA, the stem cells that like grew into the rest of the company. You know, I was not very purposeful about culture in the very, very early days. You know, we started really thinking about culture and values around 30 People at Optimizely. And, and it turned out just the people we hired were really great embodiments of the culture, we wanted to culture and ownership and passion and trust and integrity and fearlessness and transparency. In fact, everything I just spelled out, spells out an acronym called octopi, which was our cultural acronym at Optimizely. And so that was a really important part of our success was like living our values. I had seen so many companies talk the talk, but when it pushed him to shove, would they really walk the walk around their values? And I think that's the thing I did, I really tried to focus on because I knew, you know, in the people who join me were there because of the mission, they're there about the values. And if if I wanted to

keep them, and I wanted to keep them engaged, like they needed to see me as a leader who really embodied our values better than anyone. And so anytime I had an important decision, you know, between anywhere from zero to 450 people, anytime I had an important decision, like we did layoffs, it was really hard. We, you know, we had lots of situations where like, you know, we were potentially close to the brink. And every one of those decisions, I always went back to our values, I always went back to our cultural values, and I tried to make sure are we living up to our values? And so that's probably the biggest lesson I learned along the journey. Again, in hindsight, it's obvious, it was a good idea. Maybe in the moment, it was, it wasn't. You know, I guess the last thing I'll say is on, on people, you know, at the end of the day, it's a people business, even though we were a software company, and, you know, some of the mistakes I made were, we're hiring the wrong people, hiring people, and being in denial about whether they're fit, you know, and not firing them quickly enough. And in fact, you really have to really deep down to my inner biggest lesson I learned from Optimizely is the biggest regrets I have fall into this, this this class, it's my gut says we should do a, somebody else thinks we should do B, you know, board member, executive, somebody really smart, compelling interest, they want to do B, I end up kind of going against my gut, we end up doing b and it turns out poorly. You know, there's plenty of times we went by a my gut and it turned out poorly. I don't remember any of them all. I remember all the times that I went against my gut feeling as a founder and did something that I didn't think was the right thing for the business. And it turned out poorly. Those were the classic regrets I have the most and so, you know, the lesson I've taken for today is I don't make those mistakes. You know, I go with my gut, if I'm wrong, so be it. I can live with that I can sleep at night with that. And so far, we've been more right than wrong. So you know, I think that's, it's maybe a lesson to share.

Jake   19:37
Yeah, that's interesting. I think about sometimes, you know, the things that you might regret. I think like when you know why you want to do something and maybe the gut doesn't always know why but at least it sort of knows and like going against sort of knowing that you want to do a certain thing and going with the other one that's like very

regrettable, whereas at least if you follow your gut or Whatever you're, you know, maybe it is more of a mental thing, but at least it's sort of your own thing rather than imposed by others, if you sort of follow that, and you know, like, despite all these other people saying otherwise, like, I made this decision at this time for these reasons, and like God was telling me to make that decision, I think that's like, an even if that doesn't turn out, right, or well, or whatever, like, I think that's a much easier thing to get over than being like, I knew I should have done this other thing, but I listen to these other people, or whatever it is, I tried to think about that, like not going against myself, I can still be wrong, and that's fine. But like, you know, just just trusting sort of the information you have at time is all you can have and make the best decision and go with it. When it comes to, you know, what you're doing now, obviously, you had to step away from Optimizely, to free up some time to figure out what you wanted to do next. How did you know when it was time to move on?

Dan Siroker 20:57
You know, I had been itching for this idea for many years while at Optimizely, and actually made it harder to be at Optimizely. Because I had this kind of grass is greener feeling. Because, you know, in my, when I turned 30, I basically I had a hearing aid and, and so that was many, many years before we ended up selling the company. So in that sense, I've always wanted to do what we're doing today just took me a long time to get there. And, you know, it's a hard decision and many ways, also, I felt a huge obligation to stick it out at Optimizely. You know, I felt if I'm really honest, I felt kind of trapped, you know, I didn't I really wanted to do is what we're doing today. And it's a tough place to be where like, my job as the founder and CEO of the company was to inspire people hire great people retain them, but if deep down, I really wanted to do something else, you know, it's almost impossible. I felt like an imposter. You know, like, so, you know, I knew I wanted to do this for a while, mostly because they're just so damn exciting, you know, to be able to give humans perfect memory, it's just such a more exciting problem. You know, nothing gets optimized. But it's such a more exciting problem than like helping people get clicks on their website, you know, or like, you know, just slightly improve a conversion rate. And so, you know, that's part of

the problem is like, these ideas become like infections, they become these like, things in your mind, you can't think you can't think about anything else. So I was much more pulled to this idea. In fact, I honestly, you know, I probably should have given myself more of a break between optimizing and realigned. But I was just so excited to pursue this idea that I just, I couldn't not do it, you know, a lot of a lot of investors or other founders, like, what did you What do you think you want? Right, from one huge, you know, multi decade long journey as a founder to doing it again, like, what were you thinking? It's like, I needed to do it, you know, that's what motivates me.

Jake 22:35
I was gonna say, I, it sounds like, you know, maybe you purged a couple of things from your LinkedIn. But as far as I could tell, there was like, no break in between. I was like, wow, this guy really, you know, we just went from a decades, you know, marathon on one thing and just picked up around what rent went right to the next one, excuse me. So it's, you know, I guess some of your friends might be asking why, but sounds like you, you really wanted to work on this for a long time before he decided to leave. And, you know, there's sort of a breadcrumb or a clue on that. I think you started a nonprofit maybe, or a foundation of some sort, for the mission to fund and conduct scientific research to accelerate the path towards human mind emulation. I think you did that a few years before you left. But what did you have in mind with that organization, and I don't know if it still exists, or whatnot, obviously, what you're working on now is very closely related to that in terms of, you know, helping people basically improve their memory for anything that they've seen on their computer, which we'll get to with rewind. But um, what was the initial sort of inception of, of that idea? And that foundation?

Dan Siroker 23:41
Yeah, so they I did start that foundation, I was at Optimizely. And I had this idea that, again, I couldn't get out of my head, which is, it's pretty, probably Nonconformist, like, probably most people don't think this is true, but I thought it and I have to go back to figure out where the seed first came from. But I came to the decision that basically, your body will fail you at least your biological body will fail you and you know, actually think what was the inspiration was, I

saw, I was really into like, oh, like, Wouldn't it be nice to like, live longer and healthier. And I looked at the data, and like, human longevity is going down. It's not going up. And especially the last few years, like the average life mortality rate for humans is going in the wrong direction. And people are talking about exponential improvements and in biology and biotechnology, like it's not turning into data, like it's people are dying younger than they were before. And so I had this insight, okay, your biological body will tell you, but what makes you you is not your body, it's your mind. And so mind emulation enables your mind to continue to live on after your body has died. That's the theory and it's your mission is to fund and conduct scientific research to accelerate that path toward human mind emulation. And, you know, happy to go into depth on any of this. But you know, I believe that you know, you what makes you you is an emergent property of your physical structure. And if you can take that physical structure of your nervous system, not just your brain, but you probably your entire nervous system, emulated Non biologically. And then in theory, you could actually emulate what makes you you in a digital substrate. You know, it's kind of a crazy idea. But that's, I think I read a paper by Jeff Lichtman at Harvard where they were, they were essentially taking mouse brains and slicing them into 10 nanometer slices scanning electron microscope and doing connect omics connecting all up together. And, you know, so I just had this crazy idea. So I started this foundation. And in fact, YC funded it, they gave us some money. And it's still active yet. We're funding research today. And we're not doing it ourselves. But we fund research from others to pursue this mission, this long term, it's, you know, more of a basic science stage right now. And actually, during this journey, one of the sort of sparks that that got lit, that inspired rewind, I was talking to a neuroscientist at Stanford, and I sort of pitched them on I just told you, you know, neuroscientists actually fall into two camps, one can be like a completely believers of what I just described, another camp would be like, You're crazy, this will never happen. There's not even possible. It's not true, like what makes you anyway, so anyway, this neuroscientist was a skeptic. And one of the things he asked me was, well, even if you could do this, even if this was possible, which he didn't think was possible, even if it was like, how would you be sufficiently satisfied, it was enough you that the emulation, you know, wasn't just a, you know, psychological zombie, it

was just actually you. And that got me started thinking, Well, what if we could actually capture what makes you you while you're alive? Everything you hear, say and see, for example, and so, you know, that was kind of the spark that also created rewind, which is like, yeah, it would be great to have a couple decades of everything I've seen said or heard us that at least maybe to do error correction, on on emulation. If that emulation were possible. Maybe in a few decades. Now, you've got a lot of this data, you can ask, you know, the emulation, certain things that only you what makes you you would have seen, and so yeah, those are kind of how those type two ideas are connected.

Jake   26:46
Yeah, that's really interesting. And I like that you brought up the longevity point, I've had a bunch of people on the podcast previously, who are working on sort of radical life extension, taking all sorts of different angles, you know, how to approach the problem, but more of like an engineering mindset than, you know, traditional medicine and things like this. And, you know, I know that there's a bunch of people working sort of on the, the angle that as you've described it, that the foundations out there, funding and supporting, I haven't had anyone working on that, in particular, I don't I don't think on the podcast today. But it's a really interesting angle, and brings up a lot of questions. And for some people, it's really scary. And for some people, it's really hopeful. And I don't know, from my perspective, like, so long as people have sort of the freedom to, you know, choose whether or not to do certain things, I'd like to see the possibility for sort of human life extension, you know, healthy human life extension to become available and the years to come. And if you zoom out on that chart, which, you know, maybe us life expectancy, or maybe even globally, I haven't really looked at it, but maybe it's down in the last few years or something like this. But if you zoom out, it's to me, it's always been really encouraging. If you look at the last, you know, 100 years or so, you know, the human average human lifespan has gone up quite a lot. And granted, some of it was due to, you know, solving issues with, you know, child mortality and various things and vaccines and whatnot. But I don't think the jury's totally out that we can, you know, start to extend the maximum a little bit and certainly continue to extend the average. And I just hope that, you know, some

of this stuff comes comes along in my lifetime, and the lifetime people that I know and love. So anyway, you know, coming back to three why now, we're finally there. You guys launched on November 1, I understand. As of some tweet that I saw, which I think was like three weeks after launch, you guys already had 300,000 signups. It's like 14,000 a day. And I think you're only taking like 1000 a week off the waitlist. So tons of people banging down the door, trying to get a hold of this product. Can you introduce it to people who have never heard of it or seen the demo? Or have no idea what we're talking about here?

Dan Siroker 29:00
I sure can. But I do want to correct you on one thing. Life expectancy has increased since 1880, from 39 years to I think 78. But it has petered out. It's plateaued. And not only that, but if you look at health care spending over that period of time, and certainly in the last decade, the you know, if you look at the sort of compound growth rate of healthcare spending, and sort of the things we do to spend money to live longer, the spending per capita versus the life expectancy for capital, it's, it's astronomically went from 1960 $146 per capita to, you know, 2019 $11,000. And in the same period of time that all that money we're spending on health care, life expand has only improved from 70 years to 78 years. So I'm a skeptic on biology. I think our bodies are going to fail. And the best way to extend life is to move from a biological substrate which is flawed to a non biological substrate. If you compare what I just said to something like the durability of an AWS s3 bucket, which over a specific year is, you know, 99 with like, I think 10 nines after that, you know, the years, the amount of loss you're gonna get from emulating you, biologically is anyway much but anyway, that's not. That's not you don't have to dive into it. But I'm a skeptic on the ability to live, extend life, biologically, given the data.

Jake 30:18
Sorry, just No, no, no worries, I just want to ask, because I don't think I sent anything that disputed what you just said, I didn't intend to. I think it certainly like it makes sense to me. I haven't seen the data, but that the spending has gone way up without any impact and maybe even negative impact. But I would ask you, you know,

obviously, you're focused on on this one angle, but do you think it's worth funding? You know, not that you have to do it personally, or anything like that. But my sort of sense is that people haven't tried to address aging directly that we've gone after various diseases, and it's like, you know, what do you call the, it's like whack a mole, right? Like, you sort of like, hit one of the things and the other one pops up over here. And so if you, you know, even if you beat cancer, or cure cancer, or there's some stat that it's like, you know, you might live three or five more years on average, but probably heart disease or Alzheimer's, or something's gonna get you. We haven't really tried to attack Adrian, do you think it's worth just sort of before giving up on on the body? Going after some, you know, angles that haven't been tried before? Or are you, you know, sort of substantially convinced that we have to sort of move on, and that there's sort of a max there, and that the sort of human mind emulation path is really the only way to go? Well, I think

Dan Siroker 31:41
both are hard and partly both worth pursuing. But I think there's an overflight in incense, that technologists gets better on itself. It doesn't, it takes people to get better, we, in fact, technology gets worse over time, if you look at just rockets and SpaceX like, and so I think Everyone just assumes Oh, exponentially, things are gonna get better, it's gonna be great. But like, the data shows that even though we do spend a lot of money trying to live longer, and tackle aging, there's a lot of great companies out there, you know, Loyola is one of them, that is tackling this for the dogs first. But you know, it's, it's just kind of a choice of like, where you want to invest your money. And like, if you think of your life today as like a floppy disk, and all of the efforts around aging is like to try to make the edges of your floppy disk, less likely to demagnetize, like, great, or you could figure out a way to copy the contents of your floppy disk into something like Amazon s3. And that ultimately is much more durable, because there's much better foundation on which to build. So I just think that, you know, I'm personally I just, I mean, if the data were showing that we were getting returns from all of these investments and helping live longer, I would be totally have a different mind. And maybe that happens, and maybe there's some big breakthrough, but I don't think I just think it's like a common

misconception that people don't spend money trying to live longer. There's there's just huge industry around medicine around longevity, I don't believe there's a whack a mole approach. I think that's that's kind of a useful thing for people to say, to help justify getting funded for a longevity company. I also think there's a lot of rich billionaires out there who just frankly, want to live a lot longer. And so they fund these people. So I don't know, I just I haven't seen it yet. And I think it's probably worth investing more in ways to take what makes you you and make it non biological, where I think the funding is abysmal. Like, there's so many neuroscientists who would love to do basic science on this topic. But in neuroscience is kind of verboten topic, like the idea that like, you know, even that what makes you you is non can be emulated non biologically is like kind of a third rail, like people can't really talk about it. So I think that there's a disproportionate funding on the biology side. And compared to on the emulation side,

Jake   33:34
that makes sense. And I guess my view is just sort of grow the pie. But I totally understand I think at least I understand your perspective. And and I'm glad that someone's out there funding that because I think it's you know, like I said, I'm sort of all hands on deck as far as what I would like to see. Yeah. But anyway,

Dan Siroker   33:50
I'd love to. I'd love to be proven wrong. I'd love to be proven wrong.

Jake   33:54
Yep. So anyway, coming back to the focus of rewind that ai 300,000 signups last time I checked probably more since then, what's it been like, you know, just going from, from launch just a month ago to where you guys are now bring us up to speed and, and, you know, explain if you could please explain, like sort of what the product is. For people who aren't familiar. That'd be great.

Dan Siroker   34:16
Sure, yeah. Rewind is a search engine for your life. Our vision is to give humans perfect memory. And what that means today, what we launched a month and a day ago, is a Mac OS app, that you can install

it, once you install it, it starts capturing your screen, starts storing that locally, and compresses the data that it captures, you know, 3000 times smaller than the raw data. So effectively, you know, the data that you're capturing can be stored, your many years of local data can be stored on your on your hard drive. And the big benefit of that is it doesn't go to the cloud all of the data so it stays local to your machine, which is great from a privacy perspective. It also makes the product really fast and search really fast. But mostly from a privacy perspective. We store all the data locally and just Just three or two days ago, we actually also just launched the ability to store capture, transcribe anything that you hear and say. So that's our product today. Again, it's a Mac OS app, we're starting there. And I can go into why, but there's a lot of technological reasons why Mac OS is the right place to start. But ultimately, our vision is to give humans perfect memory. So we expect that to expand to you know, your your mobile devices, eventually to your watch. And when Apple launches, they're much rumored Apple glasses will be a killer app on that platform. And, and to catch up to speed. It's been crazy. You know, I got about a year ago, we were thinking about pivoting to what is now rewind, and I got advice from a lot, Gil, one of our investors, I think he was on your program in the past. And he offered this really amazing piece of advice. And at the time, I didn't believe him. But now in hindsight, he's totally right. He said this, he said, things that work, tend to work really fast. And at the time, we were struggling, we're struggling struggling with another approach to this problem called scribe. And you know, and we had grown, we had users, but it wasn't like taking off, it wasn't like lightning in a bottle. And I compare that to rewind, where like, the first day, we were, like, just completely overwhelmed with the response. And, yeah, we've we've got, you know, hundreds of 1000s of signups. We just actually doubled the amount of people we're putting off the waitlist, we're doing 2000 a week now, not just 1000. So, and I hope, you know, I don't want you know, if you do the math on that, that means somebody who signed up just this week is gonna have to wait over a year, I don't want that to be the case, you know, I hope we'll be able to massively accelerate the rate at which we onboard people. But right now, we don't have anybody on the team that does customer support. So we're just like, we need people, you know, we that's our limiting factor. As soon as we have that we actually just closed a candidate

who's starting soon, that will actually help us think dramatically ramp up our ability to onboard.

Jake   36:47
It's really interesting, there's, you know, this concept of being able to search for anything you've ever done, you know, seen set or heard on your computer. And as you sort of alluded to maybe other devices as well, whether it's phone or glasses or otherwise. One thing that sort of was interesting for me to see, like, first of all, like I said, I watched the demo, and I was like, wow, like this is just, I just didn't know that something like that, really, the concept just didn't really hadn't really occurred to me. And as I'm seeing you go through, and you search for a certain term, and it's like, alright, well, here's a Google Doc, where you had it. And here's an email where this term came up, and then text and you know, zoom, and the Zoom was like a screenshare. And it's capturing the audio from the screenshare from the zoom, and like transcribing it and finding the word that you searched in there. So it's just like a super comprehensive search for anything you've ever done, whether it's, you know, visual, or audio on your computer, and being able to just sort of search your memory. And, you know, you just need like a little keyword or whatever, and then you can go find whatever it is that you're sort of searching for that you obviously don't remember. And that's like sort of a unique thing. It's like the concept of, you know, Google wouldn't have really made sense, like 10 years before Google or something like this. Or maybe that's a bad example. But there's all sorts of new things that just sort of are hard to envision before they come to be. And then they're, like, so obvious, and you want to use them all the time. And just since watching the demo, I've had like several times where I'm like, I want to, you know, this is like a use case for rewind, like, I want to go back and find this thing that I was just looking at, like, even in preparing for this podcast, I like, was reading some article about I don't know what it was, I think the acquisition of Optimizely, or something like this. And I was having trouble finding, like the exact article I was reading, I was like, I need rewind for this. So it's really interesting, I could see it just becoming like, you know, your guy's whole goal is to like, augment, you know, human capabilities. And I could see it just becoming really second nature. For people what have been some of like, the early pieces of feedback, or even from

your own experience, or people in the team's experience? What are people saying about, you know, the way that they're using the product? Have there been surprises, or things that you think are really cool, or, you know, things that aren't working as well as you'd like them to that, that, you know, you want to improve upon? I'm just curious sort of some of the early feedback. And obviously, the the, you know, eruption in demand has been, you know, I don't think he could have expected that. So that's been great. But I'm just curious sort of how people have liked it thus far.

Dan Siroker 39:17
Yeah. Boy, have we learned so much. And so surprised by some of the feedback? I think the biggest thing that we're surprised by is that we kind of hit a nerve. You know, we hit something with this that I didn't expect, because it's kind of a new behavior, you know, and you never know what the new behavior is this gonna take off or not. And it really did. And I think part of the reason it did is, you know, people never thought through people accepted that they will just have bad memories. They would accept that like, I guess that was a tweet, I'm never gonna go back to I remember, somebody said something cool, but like, I can't find it. Twitter sucks. Or I swear, somebody told me this thing, but it turns out it was like a text message instead of an email and they thought it was an email or searching their email. They couldn't find it. And I think just people have just come to accept that their memory is flawed, and they don't know how bad Have they just know that they're gonna live their life in a world where they can't find anything they've you know, everything they've seen said or heard in the past, you know, and then maybe there's some good analog says like before the Imagine a world before Mapquest and Google Maps, like your entire brain had to think about things like cross streets and like how to get from point A to point B. And now we just completely outsource that power brain to a machine that does a way better job of it, it looks at traffic, live traffic, it tells you to distraction ago avoids obstacles, and you just don't think about it, you just go from point A to point B and like you get to where you want to be better, faster, cheaper, than you did before. And that's the kind of thing we want to do with rewind, we want to take a whole part of your brain that is associated with recall, and trying to go back to that detail that you're trying to find, and have the machine do it way

better than you could ever do it. And so that was kind of the biggest, I guess, surprise is that that's the problem that people immediately resonate with. And, you know, in particular, there's a lot of neurodivergent folks, people have ADHD, who really were desperate for this. I mean, I got in the last month, just inundated with emails of people just begging to get higher up on the waitlist, because they're just a daily struggle around this challenge of even going back just a few minutes, you know, I'm in a meeting, somebody said something to me, and I just didn't hear what they said or didn't process and they wanted to just go back a few seconds. You know, that's a key use case, like very common use case, we thought actually, search would be the big thing people really want. But it's even just jogging your memory via this list, why the name of the company is rewind, you can just rewind just a few seconds, see what the person just said. And, you know, and you're able to just be more present. You know, this is the other thing is rice is sort of taking over no taking, you know, like note taking in and of itself, if you think about is a very crazy thing to do. Like, especially people who take notes on paper, they're taking a tree, chopping it down, turning it into little stick, taking into the pencil into the paper, and then scribbling things down. But like how possibly could that be the best possible way to like, capture what you might want, you know, you need foresight to know what you want to take notes on. It distracts you from being present. And so this is like just a better way to do it. You don't need to have foresight, you don't need to take notes, you can be present, you can listen, and if you needed to. And occasionally you do occasionally don't you can go back to those moments to recall them. So I can go on and on. We've learned so much it's like is this also a great example of why launching early is a good idea. You know, we had internally not everyone was like, is the product ready enough? You know, like, there was definitely some debate. But, you know, that's why learning and launching, you know, launching lets you learn them gives you sort of a sense of, you know, the things that that maybe you thought were true, but aren't but vice versa. And that's been, it's been a great journey. So far, we're really we feel really lucky that we kind of hit on something that that really matters to people.

Jake 42:25

Yeah, it's, uh, you mentioned the notetaking thing. And I'm like thinking, like, I'm just for whatever reason, I'm just like, not good at taking notes. I like maybe I have short, you know, bad attention, or whatever it is, I just can't I can take notes for like 10 minutes. And then after that, I'm like, they're just not going to be good notes, just like not something that I'm great at. And so the thought that I'll never have to take notes again, on a call. It's like, pretty, pretty intriguing. And I'm sure for a lot of people as well. It's just such a such an interesting tool. And, you know, transparently, I appreciate I got off the waitlist. And so I'm good to go. But I actually don't have a Mac with the no one. So I need to get a new computer in order to use rewind that AI and I understand why you guys are reserving it for that it sounds like it's just really wasn't even possible, which is actually really, you know, people always ask the question of like, why now for a startup? You guys actually have like a super legit one. Like this basically wasn't possible before Apple came out of Babylon m two, is that understanding? Pretty Correct?

Dan Siroker 43:23
Yeah, that's, I mean, that's exactly it, we're standing on the shoulders of giants, we utilize basically every part of what Apple calls their system on a chip or so see, which basically means running, rewind, doesn't tax system resources. You know, you're obviously most than ones, I think all of them don't have fans anyway. But like you don't hear your fan flying. You know, we don't have your CPU spiking. You know, and not only that, but we can store the data, you know, we can compress it and store it so well that you don't even notice your hard drive filling up. And it actually does work on Intel Macs like we started off with like, oh, we'll just launch for Intel and an apple silicon. But it's so much better on Apple silicon that we're like, well, let's just not even set people up to fail, or have a sub optimal experience. And so sorry, we just put in a feature, we just put in a condition like if Intel don't let them finish the installation, even though it would work, it just is not going to be nearly as delightful. And interestingly, we didn't expect this but well, after we made that change. We've had more than one person email me a receipt of the new Apple silicone machine they bought just to use rewind, which I also totally did not expect that somebody would love our product so much

they would go out of the way and buy a multi $1,000 machine just for this one piece of software.

Jake 44:30
Yeah, I was gonna say I wasn't even joking. Like I will I need I sort of do anyway. So it's a little bit of a you know, an excuse but this might be like sort of the, the straw on the camel's back or whatever that actually pushes me to like go to the Apple store and get the new computer and, you know, transfer everything and everything like that. I'm very excited to use it obviously. How do you guys think about you know, you talk about you know, like, find anything you've ever seen, said or heard this sort of ask risk on it, I guess is like, you know, within for now, you know, within basically something that's, that's been on your computer. But you mentioned like the Apple glasses that might be coming out? I don't know, I don't really know the details of that. But just in general, how do you think of like, you know, the the thing is like people talk about like the metaverse. And then some people are like, well, we've sort of already in it, like we're spending several hours, sort of, at a minimum, most people on their computer on a given day, or at least on their computer plus their phone. And for some people, it's like, almost every waking hour. And then you can imagine this would just be sort of furthered with AR glasses or VR starts to get more prevalent and things like this, how do you think about like expanding from, you know, where you are today with rewind to actually potentially, like fulfilling that vision of like, not just anything on your computer, but like anything?

Dan Siroker 45:53
Well, I've thought a lot about it. And one thing I realized, I'll go back to the very first thing I mentioned, of just like my desire to, like, you know, blow people's minds and and, you know, back in college, like, you know, I realized that sometimes I can get way ahead of where like most normal people are when it comes to like, these kinds of things. And so in this case, I really wanted to crawl, walk run around this concept of augmenting your memory. You know, I think, you know, there's still people today think what we're doing is kind of weird and creepy and different. And, you know, at the end of the day, you know, I'm not losing sleep over that, you know, we have kind of this philosophy that, you know, you know, at the end of the day, there

are going to be people who are detractors on this kind of vision, they're kind of creep, you know, creeped out about it, but I think it was Gary, now the head of YC, who said that your haters will always hate you. The only real battle is over all the people who haven't decided yet. And so we like we're trying to kind of change people's hearts and minds about this idea, inserted to normalize the idea of capturing what you see, say and hear and, and the utility and value of that even just on your own machine will be so great that it immediately flips a bit in people's minds thinking like, How can I live life without this? Like, can you imagine going back to a world without Google Maps? Now obviously, you have to remember, like cross streets and how to get to places like, No, you don't, your computer does it for you. And you'd much rather do that for the rest of your life. And so we want to get to that state for as many people as we can. And that's why we started with a Mac, because I think that's a much easier sell. And from a privacy perspective, the data is all local, we can't access it, you know, your employer can't access it. And so we thought, okay, we'll start there as the foundation, let's make that the place where and not only that, but the technology to do that is even easier, you know, with Apple, silicon, you know, the API's that are available, like it's just it makes total sense to start there. But again, our vision is to give humans perfect memory, and you do a lot of things that aren't on your machine, and certainly not a lot of things that aren't on a Mac. So we are definitely going to pursue going beyond the Mac, I alluded to some of the devices, you know, we're kind of constrained also by like, what the technology enables, we don't know what the apple glasses if there's ever going to launch will do or be able to keep up. But you know, we want to be on the forefront of that movement of capturing what you hear you say and see, make it searchable. And over time, we think we can sort of make it more and more comfortable for people to say, Yeah, this is a no brainer, how can I not live life? This, you know, why would I live life where, you know, if my four year old says something adorable and cute, I don't want to remember for the rest of my life. But I know as soon as they stop saying it's gonna leave my mind, why not capture it and be able to go back to that moment over and over again. You know, that's something we want to be able to do. And you know, technology is is the means the end of being able to do that.

Jake   48:25
Yeah, it's super interesting. And I just think it's one of those things where like, I again, I started at the top of the episode, but I would really encourage people to go and check out the demo on YouTube, you probably just search rewind.ai/youtube or, you know, demo on YouTube and, and find it there. But it was like really pretty mind blowing for me. And again, can't wait to try the product. But anyway, Dan, I know you're super busy and trying to get all these, these signups on board and everything like that, and you know, advance the product and have some time to do some other things as well. So I really appreciate you taking the time today. And, and spending time with me and recording this podcast, and very much looking forward to try and rewind and, you know, following its progress for years to come. Where do you want to point people to go and, you know, I guess to the wait list or to your Twitter, what's the best place for people to sort of get involved?

Dan Siroker   49:16
Yeah, well, first of all, thank you for having me. It's been a great conversation. I really enjoyed it. And I hope it was interesting to folks listening. If you're interested in trying rewind, go to rewind.ai I hope you today you can sign up. But hopefully if you're listening to this in the not too distant future, you can just use it right away. Again, all the data stored locally on your own machine. So as soon as we've got the people on our team to support you and answer your questions, we will be making it as accessible as possible. And yeah, the demos on there as well. If you go to rewind.ai the YouTube videos there, so that's the best place to go is rewind.ai. Sign up for early access. If you happen to be a software engineer who is a expert at either Swift or any kind of it doesn't have to Mac OS. If you're an iOS developer, that's great too. or a software engineer who has interest and our experience in large language models. Spoiler, we're gonna do some really cool things there. Please do apply as well. You know, we're definitely very actively hiring we have a long roadmap of exciting things we want to do. And only a very small team of 11 people today doing it. So go to rewind.ai and check us out.

Jake   50:21

Awesome. And I love that teaser at the end. I'm now sort of left thinking of like a GPT that's trained on your memory or something like this, but we'll leave it at that as a spoiler. I don't know what it is and I don't need you to you know, spoil anything for anyone but again, you know, very excited to see where this all adds and thank you again for the time.

Dan Siroker 50:42
Thank you really appreciate i