# Peter Eisenburger

# Samir Arora

# Software Entrepreneur

## Covering the years until 2010

Essays. Reviews.

# Samir Arora

## Founder of NetObjects Inc.
## A short biography by Peter Eisenburger
## Covering the years until 2010



Samir Arora in 2007.

Samir Arora, born November 5, 1965, is best known for being the founder, CEO and Chairman of the web design pioneering company NetObjects, Inc. from 1995–2001, and being the co-founder, CEO and Chairman of Glam Media, Inc. since 2003. Samir Arora holds several US software patents as co-inventor.[1][2][3][4][5]

### Education

Samir Arora grew up in New Delhi, India, as the eldest son of a wealthy family. His father ran a hotel-related business. Samir Arora attended a Jesuit high school at St. Xavier's School, Delhi, the executive management program at INSEAD Business School in France and executive education at Harvard Business School. He holds a diploma in sales and marketing from the London Business School and studied electrical and electronic engineering at Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS).[6]

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[1] Method and apparatus for implementing web pages having master borders - United States Patent 6311196.
URL: https://patents.google.com/patent/US6311196B1

[2] Hierarchical structure editor for web sites - United States Patent 5911145.
URL: https://patents.google.com/patent/US8935602B2

[3] Draw-based editor for web pages - United States Patent 5845299.
URL: https://patents.google.com/patent/US5845299A

[4] Hierarchical drag and drop structure editor for web sites - United States Patent 7246307.
URL: https://patents.google.com/patent/US8935602B2

[5] As of 2023, he holds a total of 18 patents as inventor or co-inventor, mostly related to web design.
URL: https://patents.google.com/?inventor=samir+arora&oq=samir+arora

[6] Andrew Davidson: Glam.com Samir Arora boss is in the pink.
URL: http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/movers_and_shakers/article4186873.ece
Samir Arora. URL: http://www.sbtv.com/channels/dotcommerce/06arora.htm

## Apple Computer

Samir Arora worked at Apple Computer[7] in Software and New Media from 1983 to 1992, and moved to Cupertino, California, in 1986.[8] Arora wrote a white paper called "Information Navigation: The Future of Computing" in late 1986, and worked on early Desktop Publishing, HyperCard and 4th Dimension systems.[9]

He is known for creating the first "External Objects" specification, coined the terms "MacNavigator" and "MacBrowser" and worked on the early prototypes that lead to the making of the "Knowledge Navigator" video in 1987. Arora worked for the Chairman and CEO of Apple Computer, John Sculley, from 1987 to 1991.[10]

In 1991 Samir Arora worked on the first tablet Apple called Pen Mac. The project later was cancelled by John Sculley in favor of the Newton PDA. The operating system of the Pen Mac had been created by Paul Mercer, who helped create the operating system that was used by Apple to launch iPod.[11]

## Rae Technology

From 1992 to 1995, Arora was Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Rae Technology (a spin-off from Apple Computer), which developed "information navigation applications", that can be seen as predecessors of Web sites. Rae Technology created Rae Assist, one of the first Personal Information Managers (PIM): Rae Assist.

## NetObjects

In 1995 Samir Arora co-founded NetObjects, Inc. and together with a design and development team including David Kleinberg, Clement Mok and Sal Arora, created NetObjects Fusion, one of the first Web design tools. NetObjects Fusion was revolutionary at the time of its introduction in 1996 and especially innovative in the way Web sites were designed and structured.[12]

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[7] Face to Face – Net Luminary. URL: http://www.vnunet.com/crn/features/2010314/face-face-net-luminary. Andrew Davidson: Glam.com Samir Arora boss is in the pink.
URL: http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/movers_and_shakers/article4186873.ece
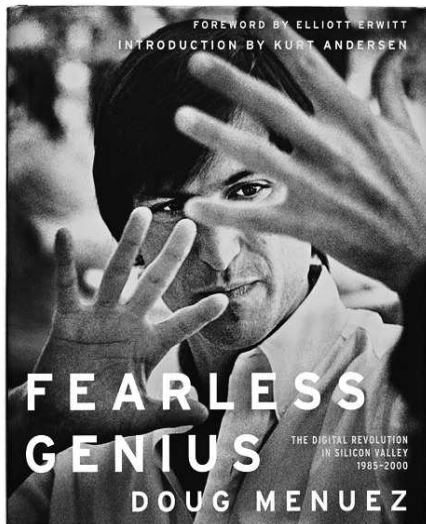Samir Arora. URL: http://www.sbtv.com/channels/dotcommerce/06arora.htm

[8] Andrew Davidson: Glam.com Samir Arora boss is in the pink.
URL: http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/movers_and_shakers/article4186873.ece

[9] Dan Shafer: Builder.com - Web Business - The 1st annual Web Innovator Awards - Samir Arora, NetObjects Fusion. URL: http://builder.cnet.com/webbuilding/pages/Business/Innovators97/ss03.html

[10] Samir Arora. URL: http://www.sbtv.com/channels/dotcommerce/06arora.htm

[11] Michael Arrington: Exclusive Picture Of Unlaunched Apple Tablet (circa 1990).
URL: http://www.techcrunch.com/2009/10/27/exclusive-picture-of-unlaunched-apple-tablet-circa-1990/

[12] Gold Industrial Design Excellence Award (IDEA) Winners 1995–1999. URL:
http://idsa.org/whatis/seewhat/idea98/winners/netobjects.htm

Doug Menuez: Fearless Genius. The Digital Revolution in Silicon Valley 1985—2000. Atria Books, New York 2014. The title illustration shows Steve Jobs.

In his book Doug Menuez portrayed several companies and their founders that formed the digital revolution, including Apple, Adobe, Microsoft and NetObjects. The picture on p. 152/153, taken in Redwood City, California, shows Samir Arora (middle) talking to his staff in 1998.

For introducing NetObjects Fusion Samir Arora was elected as Web Innovator of the Year 1997 by CNET, as someone who helped "shape the Web",[13] and also was named Entrepreneur of the Year 1997 by the Emerging Business Council of the Information Industry Association (now Software and Information Industry Association).[14] In 1998 Samir Arora was named as one of the "Web Innovators of the Year" by CNET.[15]

After the very successful launch of NetObjects Fusion, IBM invested approximately $100 million in a share exchange to buy 80% of NetObjects, corresponding to a valuation of around $150 million. "Big Blue" bought 80% of the company by exchanging shares. IBM's subsequent support did not provide equity financing but approximately $40 million in debt and advances against royalties.[16] NetObjects, Inc. went public on NASDAQ in 1999 with

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[13] Builder.com Debuts First Annual Web Innovator Awards.
URL: http://news.com/html/aboutcnet/press/1998_99/041598.html
NetObjects CEO Receives Web Innovator Award From CNET's Builder.com.
URL: http://www.netobjects.com/company/html/ceoinnovator.html

[14] IIA's Entrepreneur of the Year: Samir Arora—Chairman CEO and Founder.
URL: http://www.netobjects.com/company/html/ceoentrepeneur.html

[15] Builder.com - Web Business - The 1st annual Web Innovator Awards - Samir Arora, NetObjects Fusion.
URL:  http://builder.cnet.com/webbuilding/pages/Business/Innovators97/ss03.html
NetObjects Chief Wins Web Innovator Award. URL: http://www.macobserver.com/archive/1998/april.shtml

[16] Securities and exchange commission (SEC).
URL:  http://edgar.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1009386/0001047469-99-003575.txt
I. Satya Sreenivas: NetObjects chooses Big Blue fusion.
URL: http://sanjose.bizjournals.com/sanjose/stories/1997/05/19smallb4.html
IBM Archives 1997. URL: http://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/history/year_1997.html

IBM staying the majority shareholder. Dependencies on IBM were high as the registration statement pointed out.[17]

Not yet having turned a profit as a start-up company, tough competition and fast changing markets made NetObjects, Inc. introduce a shift in its business model from packaged software to a subscription model. Decreasing revenues and the decline in public markets heavily affected share prices, and following a de-listing notice from the NASDAQ, its majority shareholder IBM made the decision to sell the company in 2001. Its assets including NetObjects Fusion were sold to Website Pros (now named Web.com), a web services company, based in Jacksonville, Florida, USA. A portfolio of seven patents was acquired by Macromedia (now Adobe), the distributor of Dreamweaver.

From his Rae Technology and NetObjects Inc. time Samir Arora holds eleven US patents, including eight design patents that were co-invented with Clement Mok, Vic Zauderer, and Susan Kare, and one utility patent that was co-invented with Sal Arora, Raj Lakshminarayan, Greg Brown and Martin Fried-Nielsen.

## After NetObjects

Since 1997, Samir Arora has been the Chairman of Information Capital LLC, a venture capital fund based in Woodside, California, USA, which invests in consumer publishing, media & technology companies.

From June 2003 to February 2004 Arora served as Chairman of the Board of Emode: Tickle, Inc.[18] Tickle, one of the first social networking sites, was founded in 1999 in Boston as Emode.com, and moved to San Francisco in 2000. When Arora joined the company's board, it had been profitable for six quarters.[19] Tickle was acquired by Monster.com in May 2004.

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[17] Securities and exchange commission (SEC).
URL: http://edgar.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1009386/0001047469-99-003575.txt

[18] Emode Names Samir Arora Chairman of the Board, Enters Media Metrix Top 50. URL:
http://www.advfn.com/news_Emode-Names-Samir-Arora-Chairman-of-the-Board-Enters-Media-Metrix-Top-50_6672268.html

[19] Juan Carlos Perez: Social networking site Emode tickles Ringo.
URL: http://www.infoworld.com/article/03/11/14/HNringo_1.html

**Glam Media**

In 2003 Arora helped found and invested in Glam Media – a privately held company that publishes Glam.com and other sites focusing on life-style and fashion.[20] Glam developed into one of the fastest growing websites of the U.S. in 2007.[21] Industry observers discuss whether Glam can be seen as a new type of "distributed media company",[22] since it works as a platform for own as well as third-party produced content and advertisements.

In February 2008, Glam Media closed a 4th round of financing indicating a valuation of $500 million.[23]

In an effort to diversify its fashion and life-style oriented business, Glam launched Tinker, a service based on Twitter. Tinker "allows users to quickly browse through different real-time Twitter and Facebook searches relevant to various current events, trends and breaking news".[24]

As of 2008, Samir Arora serves as Chairman and CEO of Glam Media. In November 2008, he was included by min Magazine in The Digital Hot List 2008,[25] and received one of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year award for Northern California in the category "Media, entertainment and communications" in 2009.[26]

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[20] Claire Cain Miller: Pretty in Pink. URL: http://www.forbes.com/free_forbes/2007/0917/056.html

[21] comScore Media Metrix Releases Top 50 Web Ranking for August.
URL: http://www.comscore.com/press/release.asp?press=1731
Matt Marshall: Glam buys U.K. ad company, surpasses Facebook in "reach".
URL: http://www.thestandard.com/news/2008/06/17/glam-buys-u-k-ad-company-surpasses-facebook-reach

[22] The Glam-orous Life. URL: http://mediabiz.blogs.cnnmoney.cnn.com/2007/08/16/the-glam-orous-life/
Bill Mickey Miller: Glamorizing Brands. URL: http://www.foliomag.com/2008/glamorizing-brands

[23] Matt Marshall: Woman's network Glam raises $84.6 million at half a billion valuation. URL: http://venturebeat.com/2008/02/24/womans-network-glam-raises-846-million-at-half-a-billion-valuation-adconi an-raises-80m/

[24] Leena Rao: Tinker Becomes A More Powerful Twitter Trends Discovery Engine. URL: http://www.techcrunch.com/2009/06/17/tinker-becomes-a-more-powerful-twitter-trends-discovery-engine/

[25] The Digital Hot List: Samir Arora. URL: http://www.minonline.com/features/9127.html

[26] Northern California program – 2009 Award recipients. URL: http://www.ey.com/US/en/About-us/Entrepreneur-Of-The-Year/PNW_NCAL_Article_2009_Award_recipients

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Following hard pressure from German investor Burda, Samir Arora stepped down as CEO of Glam Media, meanwhile running as Mode Media. Mode USA was shut down a half year later, while Mode Japan continued to work with Arora as chairman of the board.[27]

Arora founded Sage Digital in 2016, and Kyro in 2021, "one of the first Web 3.0 AI applications".

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**Interests in the arts and entertainment**

Besides his media and software activities, multi-talented Samir Arora has had numerous activities in the entertainment industry. In Delhi from 1975 to 1983, he was trained by Sir Barry John, the leader of the Theatre Action Group (TAG), and took part in over 30 theatre and TV productions, including Jesus Christ Superstar (1975–76), Tommy (1978), Kidstuff (1979), Death of an Anarchist (1980), and The Day of Atonement (1981). Samir Arora studied theatre and music composition and wrote as well as produced several plays and musicals during this time, amongst them the plays: The Pinnacle (1982) and The Vulture Stooped Low (1984), and two musicals: The Wall (1981) and Stronger than Superman (1984)[28] Arora was one of the few members of the TAG team to leave theatre, TV and movies, and went on to join Apple Computer.

Arora serves on the board of trustees of TheatreWorks of San Francisco Bay Area in year 2004/05[29] and is an associate producer of that institution.[30]

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[27] Mode Media: An IPO that never happened and a company that won't die. URL: https://venturebeat.com/media/mode-media-an-ipo-that-never-happened-and-a-company-that-wont-die/

[28] Andrew Davidson: Glam.com Samir Arora boss is in the pink.
URL: http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/movers_and_shakers/article4186873.ece

[29] Theatre Works Annual Report 2004-05, p. 14, 23.
URL: http://www.theatreworks.org/images/Annual-Report.pdf

[30] Theatre Works Annual Report 2006/07, p. 16, 26.
URL: http://www.theatreworks.org/images/dev_AnnualReport06_07.pdf

**Personal life**

Samir Arora studied several forms of alternative health therapies. He is a certified Body Therapist (AISI) and has studied Body Work, Ida Rolf's Structural Integration, Moshé Feldenkrais' Functional Integration, Zen Trigger Point, Berry Method, Trager Work, and Dub Leigh's Zentherapy. Samir Arora practices Zazen, and said in a Times-Interview from 2008: "The last time I had any traditional medicine was 18 years ago."[31]

Samir Arora divides his time between his home in Woodside, California and Soho, New York, and is married to Rebecca Arora, née Bogle, who is one of the eight members of the founding team of Glam. They met in 2002 at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California.

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**External links and references**

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Forbes feature from 2007: http://www.forbes.com/free_forbes/2007/0917/056.html

Times Interview from 2008:
http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/movers_and_shakers/article4186873.ece

Personal e-mails from Samir Arora to the author of this essay with biographical details.

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[31] Andrew Davidson: Glam.com Samir Arora boss is in the pink.
URL: http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/movers_and_shakers/article4186873.ece