

## Geek mentality 'needs support'

BY: [PIA AKERMAN](#) From: [The Australian](#) September 25, 2012 12:00AM

**ONE of Google's top technology wizards has warned that Australia is neglecting the intellectual capital which could create the next Facebook or Twitter.**

Michael Jones, chief technology advocate for the internet giant, said Australians seemed reluctant to invest in local tech start-ups, prompting valuable talent to flee to Silicon Valley.

"We bring them around the world to do things at Google," he said. "You've got the people; you shouldn't only have American technology companies appreciating them. You should be appreciating them, too."

Mr Jones, who regularly visits Google's Sydney office from its California headquarters, said the profits of the mining boom created an opportunity for greater technological investment.

"There is absolutely no reason why anybody anywhere in Australia, especially with your National Broadband Network, should not be the next Facebook or Twitter or whatever it is," he said. "I think you are under-represented by start-ups."

"There are more good things you could be doing, there are smart people wanting to do them and they are not being funded by somebody."

"As a customer, I would like to see your footprint on the world."

A computer programmer from an early age, Mr Jones was chief technological officer of Keyhole Corporation, which developed the technology behind Google Earth.

He now travels internationally on Google's behalf and will speak at the Creative Innovation conference in Melbourne in November about how traditional education models such as schools and universities need to change with new technology.

"This accelerating pace of change means education has to move from an episodic event in the lives of children to a continuing event in the lives of everyone," he said. "Ongoing success and prosperity and business growth is about learning to embrace and use new technology and new things."

Mr Jones said Australia's English-speaking heritage and "resilient" spirit gave it a natural entrepreneurial advantage.

"You see it in Texas and Montana in the US. It's totally different to what you see in the big cities and those are the kind of people who tend to start companies, who have ideas," he said.

"You've got smart people who would invent things that nobody else could invent because they're Australian and they know the world differently because of the Australian culture.

"You have a lot of those, and we hire them, we love them."