

## Q&A with Kit Macgillivray



### Life in the interstitial zone

Kit Macgillivray majored in Plant Ecology at Otago, and since then he has gone on to success with his Sydney-based company **Lucity Studio** – working in digital product strategy, with special attention to mobile media. Most recently, he has begun to work with the Seattle-based Sovern Group – creating digital health platforms and products for diabetics, and for other chronic diseases. Far from the world of plants, but nonetheless immersed in the world of ‘network ecology’, Kit has created location-based products and services for web and mobile across several continents – and he credits his Otago degree with giving him some essential skills for success.

## Q & A

**Tell us about what you’ve been doing since you graduated.**

After taking a year off in Asia, I started working as a product manager in a London-based tech startup. We built one of the first online maps with city guides and a social network. It was very much ahead of its time and ended up closing down after a few years. I then got into creating mapping and navigation apps for mobile phones, right at the beginning, long before the iPhone. After a number of years and dramatic change in the importance of mobile to people’s lives, I started a strategy and innovation consulting company focused on how mobile tech and culture were interacting. After some time in New York, I’ve moved to

Sydney where I'm currently working with several clients helping with insights and digital strategy and building a new business in digital health.

**How has your Otago degree prepared you for what you're doing now?**

Many times in the last 10 years I've realised that the skills I learned from my Ecology degree have been a crucial baseline ability for my career. In particular, a balance between analytical and creative approaches to problems, clarity in communications and experiences of presenting in front of a room. All were key components to my science degree.

**What are the most exciting milestones you've experienced since graduating?**

Releasing new products that a whole team have been sweating over for many months is a fantastic feeling. Mostly elation but a bit of terror as well. I've been lucky enough to create many. Also, closing the deal on the first project for my business felt like everything was kicking off.

**What did you enjoy most about your studies?**

The breadth of experiences from different disciplines. The almost overwhelming feeling that there was so much to learn and figure out and that you were encouraged to get an idea and run with it.

**Did you have any particularly favourite places in Dunedin during your studies?**

Otago Peninsula, in particular Sandfly Bay with the penguins. I still make sure to take a leisurely drive up there whenever I'm back.

**What piece of advice would you like to share with new undergraduates?**

Take advantage of the opportunity to connect different fields and disciplines. Once you are out working and hustling you'll need to specialise but if you can also be cross disciplinary, you'll be able to solve problems in creative ways. Nothing is more valuable.

**What does Otago mean to you now?**

It is the place where I learned how to think, and of course it was great fun.