

# RITTENHOUSE BUILDING SIGNS FIRST TENANT

Looker, fast-growing tech startup in big data, aims to move in by Oct. 1



DAN COYRO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Frank Bien, who founded Looker in Santa Cruz with Lloyd Tabb, will be moving the successful startup's 60 employees to the Rittenhouse Building. Looker will be the 6-year-old, downtown building's first tenant.

By Jondi Gumz

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**SANTA CRUZ »** Tech startup Looker has become the first tenant at the E.C. Rittenhouse Building, which has sat empty for six years in downtown Santa Cruz after the economic crash.

"We'll be able to grow nicely there," said Frank Bien, Looker's chief executive officer, interviewed Monday with Looker co-founder Lloyd Tabb in their office at 877 Cedar St., a block from their new digs, a four-story edifice comprising 62,000 square feet. "Our goal is to build a long-standing tech company in Santa Cruz."

Building owner Louis Rittenhouse was not available to comment Monday.

"This is a big win for downtown," said Bonnie Lipscomb, economic development director for the city, calling office use "a vital component" for downtown sustainability.

"The Rittenhouse Building is a beautiful part of the Pacific Avenue landscape and we are so pleased to welcome Looker to their new home."

Bien expects the move will take place by Oct. 1.

Tenant improvement plans were submitted last week, and Lipscomb expects the project to move forward smoothly.

The 3-year-old startup in the Cruzio-Ecology Action building, formerly home to the Santa Cruz Sentinel, has run out of space.

The new location will offer the same high-speed connectivity as Cruzio. Cruzio, which has a high-speed, fiber optic line, is working on an installation to the Rittenhouse Building using an underground conduit across the street.

Bien said the lease for the fourth floor is for five years with an option for the third floor. He did not disclose the lease rate.



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Completed in 2008, the Rittenhouse Building will have its first tenant when Santa Cruz startup Looker moves in with 60 employees.

**"The level of talent we've been able to pull here is amazing."**

— Lloyd Tabb



## Tech

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Looker, a software company, specializes in helping businesses quickly answer data questions. One example: Hotel Tonight saw many people refer but never book despite their eligibility for a discount and wondered if the system was being gamed; Looker discovered they were taxi drivers, flight attendants and airport staff, a valuable driver of business for Hotel Tonight. Another example: SmugMug, a photo-sharing service, wondered if a vendor paid to generate new subscribers was delivering; Looker found data contradicting that claim.

Tabb, a former Netscape engineer, started with a team of six and landed \$18 million in venture funding last year.

Looker's client list has over 100 customers including Gilt, an online shopping site for designer brands, Frank & Oak, an online clothing shop for men, SimplyHired, a website aggregating job listings from thousands of sites, and Hotel Tonight, which helps

fill unbooked rooms at the last minute via smartphone apps.

Brick-and-mortar stores are looking to big data for insights, too.

Kroger chief David Dillon partnered with Dunnhumby, a British firm, to analyze data from shopper loyalty cards to pinpoint habits and trends to boost sales. Dunnhumby has grown from four employees in 2003 to almost 650 today and is building a U.S. headquarters in Cincinnati where Kroger is based.

In Santa Cruz, Looker staffing has grown along with its client list.

Looker has about 60 people, and Bien expects to reach 90 by year end, saying it's "one of the fastest growing in the big data space."

Looker is hiring in software development, sales and marketing support.

"The level of talent we've been able to pull here is amazing," said Tabb, declining to name hires.

Bien said recruits have come from Google in Mountain View, and from companies in Palo Alto, such as VMware, which virtualizes computing, and Cloudera, which simplifies data pro-

### LOOKER

**What:** Software company with a new platform to quickly analyze data for better business decision-making.

**Headquarters:** Santa Cruz.

**Founded:** 2011.

**Leadership:** Lloyd Tabb, co-founder; Frank Bien, chief executive officer.

**Staffing:** 60; currently recruiting.

**Information:** [www.looker.com](http://www.looker.com).

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Some eliminated their commute while others do a 45-minute reverse commute.

"For people south of Palo Alto, it's faster to come to Santa Cruz (than to San Francisco)," Tabb said.

Tech successes will attract talent to Santa Cruz, he said, noting PrivacyChoice, which built a privacy rating system in Santa Cruz, acquired by AVG, and LightSpeed, a system for retail transactions and inventory tracking, where UC Santa Cruz alum Justin Laing directs LightSpeed Cloud development.

Bien noted video game guru Graeme Devine heads



DAN COYRO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL FILE

Frank Bien and Lloyd Tabb tell the Santa Cruz New Tech Meetup crowd about their startup Looker last September at the Cruzio offices. Looker has grown to 60 employees and will move into the Rittenhouse Building.

up a Santa Cruz studio for Magic Leap, a startup working on wearable technology known as "cinematic reality," and Zero Motorcycles, "the Tesla of motorcycles," started in Santa Cruz.

UCSC provided Looker with interns, and Tabb helped Cruzio co-founder Chris Neklason teach a coding class for teens under the

auspices of the Santa Cruz County Office of Education Regional Occupational Program.

The Rittenhouse Building filled a hole in the ground resulting from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, which led to demolition of the original Rittenhouse Building. The fourth floor, known as "Top of the

### ON THE NET

To view a video at Looker, visit [santacruzsentinel.com](http://santacruzsentinel.com) and click on this story.

Ritt," has been booked for fundraisers with the street-floor windows used for the "We Are Santa Cruz" film and for exhibits such as the one by the Santa Cruz Woodworkers Association.