

Ethichronics, reliable hardware assurance for critical applications

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Franck Courbon, Chief Executive Officer about Winning the 2024 FBBA Small Business of the Year, the challenge of counterfeit and compromised electronic hardware and getting investment ready.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Ethichronics was born out of a need to address the growing challenge of counterfeit and compromised electronic hardware in critical sectors like defence, transport, telecoms and consumer electronics. Founder, Dr. Franck Courbon, recognised the inadequacies of traditional assurance methods and envisioned a scalable, software-driven solution to deliver unprecedented transparency and security in electronics.

What does your recent award from the FBBA mean to you and your team?

Winning the 2024 FBBA Small Business of the Year is a testament to our innovation and resilience. It's an honour to be recognised for our dual-use innovative technology and our vision for better electronics at scale. The award reinforces our belief in our mission and energizes our team to continue driving positive impact. Personally, it means a lot to me, as Franco-British now and fully committed for impact with Ethichronics.



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Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers, and so on?

Ethicronics is a central Cambridge-based company developing software solutions for better electronics hardware. See it as local software development for global impact. We first develop a software solution to eradicate counterfeit and compromised electronics, hardware assurance at scale. Across the Channel and beyond, we collaborate with leading industry players for value co-creation and fabless companies (segment agnostic) would benefit from our final product – with a turnkey offering.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

Incorporated in 2022, Ethicronics has grown from a concept to a thriving venture with two major grants and a robust roadmap. Starting with

foundational software, we've reached TRL5 with ambitions to reach complete product in 2025, securing recognition through awards and industry collaborations.

Tell us about the working culture at Ethicronics?

Ethicronics fosters a culture of innovation, collaboration, and inclusion. Based right in the center of Cambridge (UK), our large private office is designed for creativity and teamwork, offering amenities like a kitchen (with a bread machine of course) and a private meeting room. Our values - Leadership, Impact, Collaboration, Humility, and Vision -drive everything we do.

How are you funded?

We're funded through competitive grants such as the UK Defence Technology Exploitation Program (DTEP, supported by Thales UK with an in-kind contribution) and an InnovateUK bilateral (UK-APAC) collaboration. To complement the team, we will secure additional funding with 'smart money' in 2025.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Our biggest challenge has been bridging the gap between development and commercialization. We've overcome this by aligning technical milestones with industry partnerships, securing critical funding, and engaging with accelerators that bring us closer to our customers.

How does Ethicronics answer an unmet need?

Ethicronics addresses the critical need for scalable hardware assurance. Current methods are manual, costly, and fragmented. Our software integrates seamlessly into supply chains, providing certification for hardware authenticity and integrity, serving industries where trust is paramount.

What's in store for the future?

We are expanding the team, getting investment ready, developing the tech, being internationally present and recognised. There are team, tech, funding, and partners/customers targets.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

After understanding the market gap and opportunity, de-risk your project, stay resilient and surround yourself by people that can make you grow. At some point, you will see Entrepreneurship as an opportunity and not a risk. Also note it is never too early to start.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

My daily routine starts early with a ~10min bike ride to the office. Then, after checking if any new urgency has appeared (☐), I work on the next deadline/piece of work/discussion needed. My rule: Stay humble, curious, and always focus on impact.

Franck Courbon

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