# istari

Dr. Chris Benson is co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of technology startup Istari, Inc. Backed by former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, Istari is building the world's first engineering metaverse, where all technology - from software to satellites - is created and certified completely digitally. Istari's mission is to make innovation lightyears faster, cheaper, and greener.

Chris has devoted his career to building better systems, organizations, and technologies. A serial entrepreneur, Chris has founded multiple companies, worked in venture capital, taught at universities on three continents, and served at a U.S. Embassy and the Pentagon.

Prior to his current role, Chris led mergers, acquisitions and technology partnerships as the Vice President of Corporate Strategy for Volansi, a billion-dollar company deploying drone-logistics networks around the globe.

During his time as a U.S. Air Force Officer, Chris developed the digital engineering framework behind the 'Digital Air Force', producing the first $100 billion 'Digital First' Air and Space system in the Department of Defense. He also ran Air Force Ventures, the world's largest source of early stage technology funding supporting the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force with over $1 billion of non-dilutive financing going to more than 2,000 startups each year.

Additionally, he served as a lead engineer on a $60B nuclear missile system, accelerated deployment of supersonic passenger jets and flying taxis, tested the first metal 3D Printed parts for an F-16 fighter jet and negotiated the first ever multi-national space technology accelerator.

Prior to this, Chris started multiple companies, including a last-mile delivery hardware company which was acquired.

He holds a bachelors, masters, and doctorate in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Originally from Boulder, Colorado, Chris now lives outside Washington D.C.