# Teen entrepreneur's AI calorie-tracking app wins millions despite Ivy League rejections



An 18-year-old Long Island teenager, Zach Yadegari, has developed an innovative calorie-tracking app powered by artificial intelligence that is gaining widespread attention and substantial financial success. Despite his remarkable achievements, including high academic scores and entrepreneurship milestones, Yadegari has faced multiple rejections from top-tier universities, including several Ivy League schools.

Zach Yadegari, CEO of Cal AI, has been engaged in coding since the age of seven, cultivating his skills through online resources. Reflecting on his early interest in technology, he shared, "I would binge-watch YouTube videos." By age 16, he had already sold his first website to an international gaming company for a six-figure amount.

His newest project, Cal AI, was born out of frustration with existing nutrition apps. The app utilises artificial intelligence to scan food items in photos, providing users with detailed nutritional information such as calorie count, protein, carbohydrates, and fats. "It will be much more accurate than you estimating by yourself just visually," Yadegari explained. He believes the future lies in the collaboration between humans and AI, saying, "I think this balance between a human and AI interaction is really where the future is headed."

The app’s success has been spectacular. With over five million downloads, Cal AI is projected to generate $30 million in revenue this year. Managing a team of 17 full-time employees, many older than himself, Yadegari is completing his senior year at Roslyn High School while maintaining an impressive 4.0 GPA.

Despite scoring 34 on the ACT and demonstrating exceptional entrepreneurial skills, Yadegari was rejected by 15 of the 18 universities he applied to, including multiple Ivy League institutions. His experience has sparked a broader conversation about whether elite colleges adequately value entrepreneurial accomplishments. After posting about his rejections on the social media platform X, his story went viral, accumulating over 28 million views.

Addressing the situation, Yadegari stated, "I wanted to cultivate a community. I guess it is their loss. I'll find somewhere else to do it." Offering encouragement to aspiring coders, he advised, "My advice is always to get started now."

Yadegari’s journey highlights the complexities of college admissions processes in the context of contemporary achievements outside traditional academic metrics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/03/teen-with-4-0-gpa-who-built-the-viral-cal-ai-app-was-rejected-by-15-top-universities/> - Documents Yadegari's 4.0 GPA and rejections from 15 top universities despite Cal AI's success.
2. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/03/16/photo-calorie-app-cal-ai-downloaded-over-a-million-times-was-built-by-two-teenagers/> - Confirms Cal AI's 5+ million downloads, 4.8-star ratings across app stores, and AI-driven nutritional scanning.
3. <https://www.longislandpress.com/2025/04/07/zachary-yadegari-cal-ai/> - Details Yadegari's entrepreneurial growth, $30M annual revenue claim, and planned body-scanning AI feature.
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0U3UREdjmo> - Features Yadegari discussing Cal AI's development and revenue milestones as a teenage founder.
5. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/teen-builds-30-million-app-gets-rejected-by-15-colleges/489644> - Corroborates $30M annual revenue projection, ACT score (34), and viral social media reaction to college rejections.
6. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/03/16/photo-calorie-app-cal-ai-downloaded-over-a-million-times-was-built-by-two-teenagers/> - Reiterates Cal AI's technical approach and competitive positioning against apps like MyFitnessPal.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiswFBVV95cUxQb2VtVUdqS0NKS1E1ekgxWm5jeGFWclE1VjNtVTNLT2lIb2RnNVV4Mnd0TU9ibENCTEp3bmU3aWdBVmJkTzhRaUdUc0Nacm5yS2ZQNW0yeEM0OHRyYnM4WWQzejQ3X1RkeERMbzltMDJ6OUhVeEpGaWNLUDlaOGNPOC00Ymk1dUtXSjlMUWVwVU5YM1hwVHIzWUpLdzQwVjBnSXJXZjNEWmNGbmJBZzJ0aUIxd9IBuAFBVV95cUxPLWlfMVdwOWxNVXpzX3U4UFN5QUlMcjhydVpiMHBXWHUtOFNBRDk1bFZRSlhJT3QtWEdWem9sQXl2NzBHbGFCcXVoM0Rod0VRUE5KVWZxZEdTM0FOLXk2c214VTJQZWQyVmdCRmtBQlNHS3pmaC1iYnBtbVpEbVRPbTUzRU5QYTZaUUs3NlJWMGRyaVd3SGxkRlBpbXBycnJVRnZWN2xwOGJyRnZqbDRYOHpmNTFLSEUz?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data