

A. Final Report

Background information

The motivation to develop uugot.it dates back to 2003 when Philipp Etzlinger, the co-founder and initiator of uugot.it, studied in Paris. This was long before smartphones existed. At the time he arrived in France his French was of mediocre quality. Armed with a notebook, a dictionary book – yes, a book made of paper – and a pencil he sat in front of the TV to watch the news on France2 in order to improve his French. Those words he didn't understand he noted down on a notebook and, at the same time, he looked them up in the dictionary. Therefore he missed a lot of the broadcasts and content.

Talking with other people, Philipp found out that they faced these challenges as well and while digging more into this topic he stumbled upon a study from Kaplan International which stated that 82% of those learning English as a foreign language did that via watching TV. The success of using TV as a source for learning languages can be verified in Scandinavian countries international films and TV series are not dubbed as that happens, for instance, (eg) in German speaking countries. The outcome is that every Scandinavian citizen has a much better English proficiency than the average German native speaker.

As a next step we wanted to find a scientific study proving that subtitles are an effective tool to learn foreign languages. We addressed that question to the University of Vienna and its Department of German as a foreign and second language. Under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Boeckmann, a meta-study has been conducted including nearly 50 research studies concerning that topic. The result was that the majority of these studies found relevant language improvements and attested the personal experiences made by the people we have interviewed on that topic.

While doing the research another aspect popped up: uugot.it is an ideal tool for integration. Why? TV is a mirror of society and uugot.it makes regional content understandable for non-native speakers. Users will therefore get to know what moves the society of their host country. They will learn about the traditions, the values citizens share or the challenges the host society is facing. Therefore connecting points have started to arise: uugot.it is an effective tool that bridges the gap between migrants and the society of the host country. uugot.it is a tool that offers a low-threshold access to society and the language.

Although we received a lot of positive feedback from the discussions and talks with the people we have interviewed, we wanted to know in a further step whether people valued this idea that much so that they would donate their own money to allow us developing a prototype of uugot.it. The question we asked to ourselves was: do people really want to see this project hitting the market? This first prototype should also give us the feedback from users on what should be improved, what they are expecting.

The outcome of the crowdfunding campaign was beyond our expectations. Within the half of the runtime of the crowdfunding campaign we have reached our funding goal. Instead of 60 days we have reached the goal within 29 days. Besides, uugot.it has been awarded the 2nd place of the Austrian Refugees and Migration Award and has been honoured at the Call4Europe award. So these were the best premises for a bright future.

Description of the project realization

With the successful finalization of the crowdfunding campaign two new challenges arose. The project should be realized by the technical team that was in charge at that time. It turned out that the Software Developer didn't have the adequate skills in order to turn the project into reality, therefore we needed to search for a replacement for him as well as for the CTO position. Instead Scott Fertig, a very experienced CTO, could be the right person to join uugot.it. He has an impressive vita with positions in startups as well as in multinational corporate environment where he led a team of 330 software developers. The challenge was that, on one hand, the new CTO needed to get acquainted with the project and needed to set up a new architecture as well as to build a new technical team from scratch. Therefore it was necessary to find the right people, able to develop the uugot.it prototype with the limited financial resources we had. The resources we have claimed within the crowdfunding campaign were tailored to the negotiated amount quoted by the former software developer.

This might sound very negative, no, we felt a lot of tailwind when Wirtschaftsagentur Wien announced that uugot.it succeeded in the Social Entrepreneurship Call which gave us the opportunity to go beyond a probable prototype and what we have designed for the crowdfunding campaign. Furthermore, we had a lot of echo from the press when we announced the hiring of Scott Fertig. All these moments were important as they showed us that we were on the right track. There have been a lot of downturns in the past years so this was more like an affirmation and created a vital momentum.

The architecture was designed in June, from that time on the search for the developers started as the requirements were known by then. After sourcing the Eastern European market for an appropriate developer we decided to hire a distributed developer from India who proved to have the sufficient skills and could perform the work within the given budget. The runtime for hiring someone inhouse would have been too short.

The first version, which was still very buggy, we held in our hands for internal testings and it came out at the beginning of September. For that also Sarah Pötzelsberger, a UI/UX designer who donated some of her time during the crowdfunding campaign in order to give us feedback on the usability, crafted a first basic design of the application. On the basis of that version we continued building further versions and considered the feedbacks we got from the smaller groups of first test users in order to find better solutions. Our goal with uugot.it is to design a service that is actually used by our target group, a service they love.

The version that we have developed so far is still a closed version as we are still in the prototyping stage. From today's point of view, we expect a pilot version to be released by the end of February 2017. At that point, we will open uugot.it to a larger group of users.

Changes or delays during the development phase

As the complete tech team needed to be replaced it took some time to find appropriate successors. Therefore the initial start of the development delayed for nearly half a year. But finally we were able to push things forward, so that we were able to meet the deadline we had announced during the crowdfunding campaign.

Eventual problems

The problems we have been facing – major changes within the team – could be managed. The team is very experienced to tackle major challenges.

Goals we have reached

The aim of the crowdfunding campaign was twofold:

- 1) We wanted to find out whether people valued this idea and were willing to put in money to allow us develop a prototype.
- 2) Our mission is to find the easiest solution that combines language learning with an entertaining factor and therefore people who use uugot.it forget that they are in a learning context, because they have fun while they are learning¹.

Willingness to donate money

We were quite sure that with uugot.it we were building an amazing product. But this was only our point of view. We wanted to verify whether others shared our same vision and were willing to put money into uugot.it, to allow us go on with the development. On one hand, this was a market test, but on the other hand it was also a first step to share our vision with a broader audience, so the crowdfunding campaign had also the function to make us interact more with our core group and build relations with media.

Our second goal was to communicate our mission, which is to find the easiest solution making language learning fun, so much fun that the user forgets to be in a learning environment. We've learned that, according to scientists, people learn more easily if they do something they love doing. So why shouldn't we combine language learning and TV watching? The research the University of Vienna had conducted with us proved that we were on the right track, and the feedback we got from users was overwhelming: we have presented our solution in front of various groups of refugees and

¹ Rule of forgetting by Stephen Krashen.

they were so amazed that they asked where they could download the service. When we made clear that we were still in the developing phase, they told us that they wanted to be informed as soon as uugot.it was available and that they offered themselves as test users.

Acknowledgements

As the list of people we want to thank would be very long in case we mentioned everyone's name, we would like to address our acknowledgements to everyone of you who supported us one way or another, not just during this campaign but since uugot.it started. First of all I would like to thank my family: they have been standing by me since the beginning of the project and they understand that I have to do this, that I have to put uugot.it into action although life within the family was not always easy as I've been away for a very long time. But I have realized that uugot.it is my dream, I live for that as I see so many possibilities for uugot.it to do good for the society and this is the reason why it is worth working on it.

As next I want to thank our team, Francesca and Scott, who are amazing partners and who complement the co-founders team. I am thankful for having the opportunity to work with you and together we are pushing the project to the next step. A cooperation is not always easy especially as we all have jobs besides working on uugot.it and as we are still working remotely, but we are working hard on it so that we can reach our goal sooner: being able to fully dedicate ourselves to uugot.it.

We want to thank Wolfgang Freund, representing our partner Grama Schwaighofer Vondrak Rechtsanwälte GmbH, who did the complete legal due diligence as a pro bono which was more than a regular pro bono would be. As a result, Grama Schwaighofer Vondrak Rechtsanwälte GmbH came to the conclusion to take a share at uugot.it and to do the legal consultancy for the future as well as they see the positive impact we are creating for society..

We want to thank Pavan Malji and Klemens Zleptnig who are currently responsible for the developments at uugot.it and who developed the first versions as well Georg Adelman who helped on the translation side, and we are very thankful for the contribution of Sarah Pötzelsberger who donated time in order to advise us on usability issues and crafted a first design for the application.

In particular we also want to thank the Respekt.net team, especially Corinna Geißler. With the Respekt.net platform all the good things started, Respekt.net gave us the stage so that we could present our idea to a broader public, to people – like you - who want to change the world and make it a better place. We want to thank Respekt.net that allowed us to set up new connections. We are very thankful for winning the 2nd price at the Austrian Refugees & Migration Award in November 2015 and being awarded at the Call4Europe Award ALTHOUGH uugot.it just existed as a demo. We want to thank all of you for believing in us and our ability to make it happen, for allowing us to work on uugot.it and for sharing our vision. Of course this is possible only thanks to the many donators who believed and invested in us, although nobody knew us and we didn't have any reputation on the market. We want to name these persons one by one: Sarah Reisenbauer, Michael Lukasser, Astrid Buchmayer, Enikő Balint, Bernhard Etzlinger, Ulrich Etzlinger, Daniel Fuhry, Erika Hummer, Christa Herrmann, M Ho, Gerald Söllinger, Martin Fritsch, Elisabeth Kreisel, Daniel Fuhry, Georg Adelman, Fernando Sannazzaro, Wolfgang Gumpelmaier, der Verein Offenes Lernen, Josef Koppandi,

UrsulaEtzlinger & the Jury of the Respekt.net team – Heide Schmidt, Irmgard Griss, Franz Fischler, Johannes Voggenhuber, Wolfgang Petritsch, Franz Karl Prüller.

Thank you! You were those who allowed us to get into the development phase.

B) What is the socio-political purpose of the project?

We see that especially public broadcasters could play a much more important role within the integration process. Currently we are working with material from the public broadcasters and existing content as we are generating out of existing material educational content. People who come to a foreign country find it difficult to find their position in the host country. For some, this is already a challenge even though they are in the same language area, but in case one is forced to move to a country that is completely different in terms of culture etc. then people find it much harder to find their place. uugot.it can be a long term-companion as uugot.it enables to understand local TV and helps people via a low-threshold way to study how the society works, helping them improve existing language skills.

Functional chain

The following impacts have been identified when using uugot.it:

- Improvement of the language skills of the particular host country, including local dialects;
- Gaining an understanding of local traditions, practices, values as well as what moves the society of the host country, what people are laughing about as well as which virtues they have;
- Using uugot.it leads to a significant rise in motivation of learning. This leads to an improved absorption of learning content;
- Via the consumption of regional TV-broadcasts the integration process will be eased;
- Refugees and users of uugot.it are able to make daily routines faster on their own, as uugot.it prepares them indirectly on these situations and therefore they wouldn't depend so much on third parties anymore;
- The ability to communicate will be facilitated, as users receive background information about what's going on in the society and language barriers will be torn down. The fear of communicating with locals decreases and on both sides, local society & incoming people, the shyness and diffidence will be overcome.
- Immigrants will become more accepted by the broad public as they see that their language is being understood and local values and rules are being accepted.

As uugot.it streams TV broadcasts to the smartphone or tablet, it won't be mandatory to own a TV set. Therefore, we create a low-threshold access for everyone.

Improvement of integration, reduction of cultural barriers as local content will be made accessible and understandable via uugot.it refugees and migrants find it more easy to find it more easily to orient themselves and integrate themselves into the new environment. TV is a mirror of society and via uugot.it everyone can examine the peculiarities of the society of the host country. Thereby we create a better starting point for those who come here so that they can more easily integrate. But the best thing is: uugot.it can be used ubiquitous, in the tram, outside in a park or while one is in the waiting room of a doctor – as the service is portable and stored on the smartphone or tablet learning can take place everywhere.

Via the implementation of local TV broadcasts, users get in touch with vernacular, this is an aspect that traditional language courses normally do not consider. Along with that, an easier integration will be possible.

Which people could be reached via uugot.it

uugot.it is still in the prototyping phase, but based on that we are developing the next versions. As soon as we have reached the pilot phase, which will start in the second half of February 2017 - we will start testings with our core group. The people who will be in our core group are mainly people who want to learn German but have a high proficiency in English. The reason for that is that in our first version we will have implemented the language pair German-English. At a later stage we are planning the implementation of other languages as well.

Which impact did the project have on the people to whom we address uugot.it?

As we are still in development we cannot measure the impact that uugot.it has on the society, nor the users who will be using the service in the future. The aim of that crowdfunding campaign was to develop a first prototype in order to be able to make a technical proof.

What were the reactions of third parties?

The general feedback was amazing, more that we have dreamt about. Migrants and refugees were amazed about the possibilities uugot.it offers, politicians whom we presented uugot.it saw the long-term impact uugot.it could make as a companion who helps them finding their place in the society. We have conducted a survey in two schools and especially pupils were asking when uugot.it will be available in order to learn foreign languages. Teachers valued the concept of uugot.it as a highly motivational and effective tool for language learning in case the didactic concept and the gamification part will be implemented properly. Lifelong learners would use the tool in order to stay fit with their foreign language skills. Broadcasters we have been talking to found the concept interesting.

Is there a sustainable benefit of the project?

uugot.it follows a sustainable way, what we have now is a first version for further developments. As we were able to get subsidies we can now continue on improving the current version. Creating the prototype was essential as we already got valuable feedback from our test users.

What are our next steps? An outlook!

As already mentioned uugot.it will start its pilot phase in the second half of February 2017. We want to gain your feedback: So in case you are learning German and are fluent in English and are eager to get a hand on uugot.it please get in touch with us -> Send us an email to ask_uu@uugot.it with the subject “**pilot user**”. Groups are welcome too! We have limited the number of pilot users to a small number, so better be quick. In spring the next step will be to bring an investor on board in order to be able to make further developments and finally bringing uugot.it to market.

You want to work with us?

You like what we're doing? You are someone who wants to join and bring uugot.it to the next level? We have a vast variety of duties and fields where you can bring in your talent. This starts at supporting refugees, building relations to partners and users, analyzing test results, writing blog articles or taking care of Social Media channels... Just drop us a line and why you want to do that and support as a volunteer! Linguists and foreign native speakers are very much welcome too – you will be the ones who will assist us when we're implementing new languages! We appreciate your support! Our email address is: ask_uu@uugot.it



The core-team of uugot.it meets for the first time (Philipp, Scott, Francesca – left to right).



The developer team discuss the architecture.



Yes, we've made it! We're in the news. Among other newspapers the weekly magazine trend covered us.



At a convention we've met Dr. Wrabetz, the general director of ORF. We've showed him our prototype and he liked it. Yes. 😊



The team is having lunch, and yes, there's also Sarah who volunteered us and helped us with some design issues.



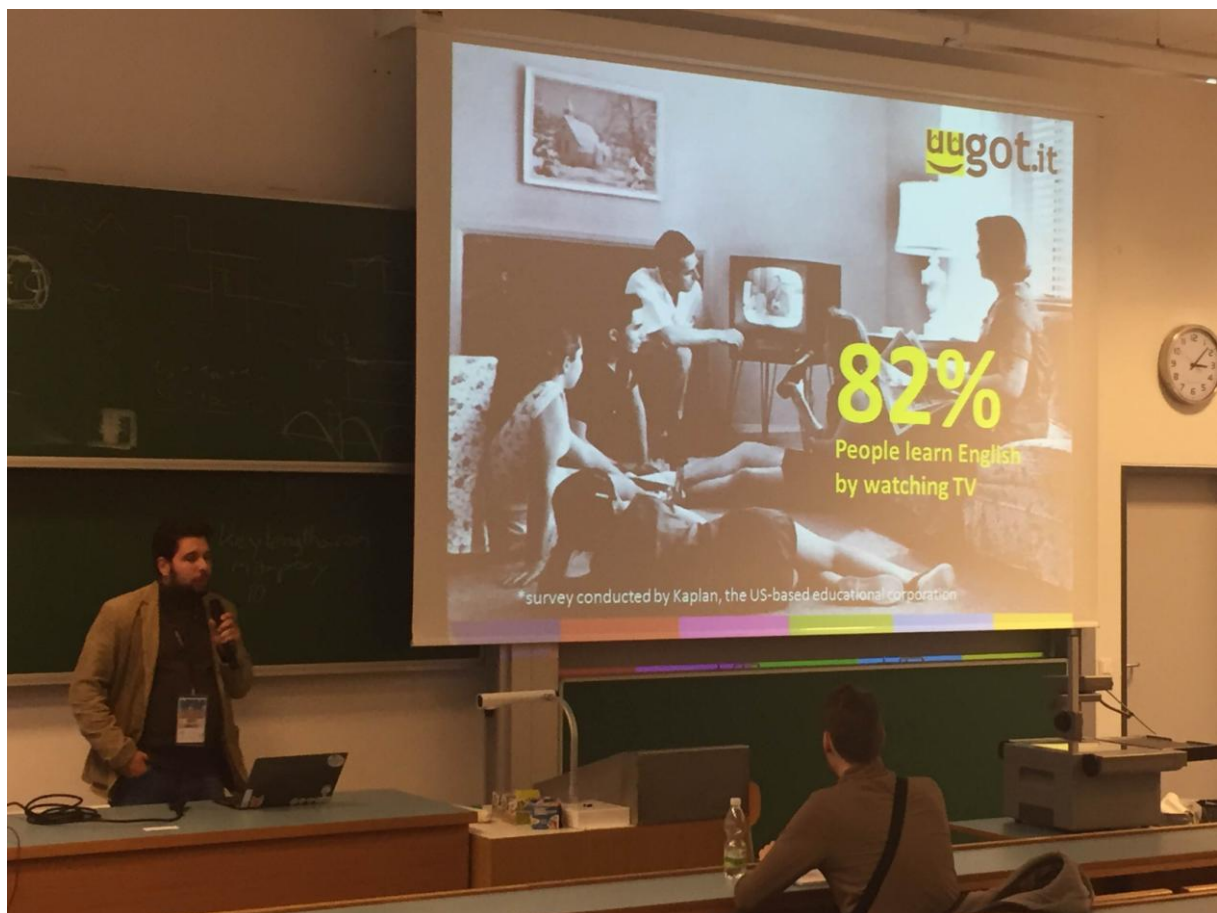
Again we're having a discussion about the design. We really want that uugot.it will becomes easy to use.



We're not only working – at the Austrian Startups Kart race also TEAM uugot.it participated. Unfortunately we only made the 9th place – out of 10 teams. ☺



This was our first version of our demo – we used this one for pitching. Thanks to Hristo Hristov who developed that version.



Philipp, our CEO at uugot.it, is giving a talk at TU Wien (technical university of Vienna) about uugot.it



Yes, we're at ORF, the public broadcaster of Austria, and we got insight of how news reports are being generated there.



Big team discussion at uugot.it – including Francesca who came directly from Italy.



Philipp presenting uugot.it at the edtech fair at WU Wien (economic university of Vienna)



And that's how the current version looks like. 😊 You'll get it with uugot.it!