

Entrepreneurial ID «venture leaders» 2007



Herbert Bay

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kooaba: Users have easy access to contextual information for any object by just taking a picture of the latter with their cell phone camera.

Industry: ICT

Biography

I received my PhD from ETH Zurich in 2006. My career is rather unusual: as a machine mechanic apprentice, I won in 1994 an innovation contest with a speedometer for surfboards. After an adventurous two-year period of traveling, jobbing, windsurfing and further education, I entered the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) with best grades. My Master studies in Micro-engineering got enriched by an exchange year in Montreal, Canada where I first discovered my interest for Computer Vision. After numerous projects in the field of Computer Graphics and Image Processing, I graduated in 2002.

Already a month before the final examinations, I started a graduate program for high-potentials at IBM Switzerland in Zurich, where I enjoyed best training in Project Management, Sales and Communication. Shortly after, I was helping customers to address their critical business challenges for e-learning projects as a Junior Engagement Manager. Moreover, I was teaching Communication courses for IBM internals in Zurich and Geneva.

Day after day, an increasing desire to realize some of my long ignored ideas pushed me further to undertake a PhD at the Computer Vision Lab of ETH Zurich in 2003. I am fond of sailing, arts and archeology, among many other things.

Company / project

kooaba creates products and services connecting real-world objects with digital content via a picture taken with a mobile phone camera. Think of a mouse click in the real world! Our technology does not rely on artificial identifiers or tags attached to the objects, but recognizes the object itself. This is possible with the latest image recognition technology developed at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland, and the K.U. Leuven, Belgium in 2006. This technology is filed at the European patent office in Munich since April 2006.

The product ooLink allows our customers to benefit from this new possibility to link their content to representative real-world objects. Our service can be used for cross media advertising campaigns, interactive city and museum guides, visual voting, etc. Our target customers are typically manufacturers and providers of consumer goods and services as well as any content provider for specific objects (tourist offices, price comparison offices, ebay, etc.). We are aiming at penetrating the worldwide market next year and generate total revenue of \$25 million in five years from now.

kooaba was founded in late 2006 by Herbert Bay and Till Quack. In the mean time, Prof. Dr. Luc Van Gool has joined the team. Prof. Van Gool is a reference in the world of Computer Vision and chair of numerous leading conferences worldwide. Additionally, our team includes four external consultants to support us in marketing related questions. We are planning to hire a sales director and an IT developer in July this year.

During the “venture leaders” event, I am looking for potential investors for a second round investment and for partners to penetrate the US market.