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Microsoft Startup of the Day
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Startup of the Day - Intuilab

The BizSpark startup of the day is Intuilab, based in France. They sell Surface Computing (sc) custom software design and development services. You will find below an interview with Vincent Encontre, CEO of Intuilab. All the best to them and congrats for being the startup of the day!



Website: www.intuilab.com.

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Who are you?

I am Vincent Encontre, CEO of IntuiLab. Founded in 2002 and headquartered in Toulouse, France, IntuiLab is a leader in the design and development of surface computing-based applications. Through IntuiFace, the company's portable, scalable and extensible software surface computing platform, IntuiLab delivers and deploys applications that bring tangible returns on investment to its clients by providing their customers and users with a more natural, immersive and memorable interactive experience.

How do you feel being the most promising 'company of the day' per Microsoft?

We feel very honored and proud to have been selected. This also validates our vision about Surface Computing as one of the most promising category of human machine interface in the future across all sorts of domains.

What did you do before creating your company?

I have been in the software business for the last 25 years, in a wide variety of position (from developer to product manager to executive) across various kinds of companies i.e. a few start-ups and a couple of large companies (incl. IBM). And with one passion: developing innovative and successful products.

How did you get the idea? What s the genesis?

Since its foundation, IntuiLab has been pioneering and fostering innovation in UI design. As early as in 2002, we were providing rich graphical design and touch-based interactions in the UIs we were designing for our customers. At that time we were relying on our own technology because we couldn't offer such richness with off-the-shelf's. And our design process was already including such roles as human factor specialists, graphic designer and interaction designer. We have always been averse to the WIMP (Windows, Icon, Mouse, Pointer) paradigm because we believe it excludes so many people from and is sub-optimized for the digital world. We have been embracing so-called Natural User Interfaces from day one (at that time we called these "post-WIMP" UI).

Rich UI and touch-based interactions led us to start in 2005 a R&D project around multitouch interactions. We built our own device and software stack for experimenting. Technology-wise, it was pretty successful, and face with the interest we've got, we decided to move forward and focus on that niche: delivering multitouch-based systems (software & hardware). With the announcement of Microsoft Surface in May 2008, the growing availability of other multitouch devices and the maturity and power of Microsoft Windows Presentation Foundation, we decided to really do what's in our ADN: building a multitouch device-agnostic , WPF-based software platform (that we have named IntuiFace) enabling us to deliver Surface Computing applications that bring tangible value to our clients.

What do you sell? What is your company's mission?

We are currently selling Surface Computing (sc-) custom software design and development services in four segments (www.intuilab.com/solutions):

1. sc-presentation: for building and delivering high-impact multitouch, multimedia interactive presentations.
2. sc-commerce: sc-based applications for in-store product browsing, recommendation, and sales that improve customer experience while boosting revenue for retailers.
3. sc-gis: sc-based Geographical Information System (GIS) client applications.
4. sc-collaboration: sc-based applications for team collaboration processes such as group analysis, creativity, or decision-making.

Applications in these four areas are built on top of IntuiFace, the IntuiLab's Surface Computing Software Platform (<http://www.intuilab.com/technology>).

Our mission is to accelerate the market penetration of surface computing by evangelizing its many benefits and delivering applications that make business sense for our customers. We are on our way to become one of the largest surface computing software pure players worldwide.

What is your market?

We have customers in a wide variety of industries such as retail, food and health, banking, aerospace and defense, telecoms and hospitality. The common point among our customers is an eagerness to disrupt the status-quo in their business, surface computing being part of their arsenal.

Any clients? References? Partners?

Some of our surface computing customers are Total, France Telecom, Crédit Agricole, EADS, NASA, Nestlé, and ...Microsoft itself!

Funding history? VCs? BA?

We have been lucky enough (or provided enough value to our customers – pick your favorite) to have been able to sustain a self-funded development model until now.

Growth? Internationalization?

In 2009 our revenues will be growing +25% over 2008 (not bad for that Great Recession period) after a 45% increase in 2008. We are very ambitious for 2010 and want to aggressively deploy our model internationally, although we already have customers in the US.

How many employees do you have? How many developers?

By year's end, IntuiLab will be a 34-people team. The team includes three human factors specialists, two graphic designers, six interaction designers and many developers.

Are you hiring? If yes, what? Where?

So far in 2009, we have hired six great personalities. And we continue to do so and we actively screen any creative person who has a passion for the digital world, in particular for these new human computer interaction ways.

Which platform are you building on? Why?

We mostly use Microsoft technologies (in addition to a bit of the Adobe platform): Microsoft Windows Presentation Foundation, the Microsoft Expression Suite and VisualStudio. We have also been an early adopter and experimenter of the multitouch features from Windows 7.

Do you have any Software IP? Is there something that you're the only one to do on the market?

Our overall IntuiFace Platform is our IP. Any application we build, say for Microsoft Surface, is instantaneously available on any Windows7-enable device or any other Surface Computer on the market. This provides our customers with the guarantee that their application will run on any Surface Computer now and in the future, which is pretty important given the acceleration of the technology in this area.

Part of the Platform is our Multitouch Gesture Recognition Engine technology which implements original gesture recognition algorithms (dedicated to large, multi-user surface computers) that are US patent-pending, allowing us to propose very innovative gestures.

Who's your role model?

I'm getting too old to look at somebody in particular ;-) I prefer to look inward, at the great IntuiLab team and coach this wonderful material to get to a market leadership position based on our passion and drive.

Where do you see opportunities today in the Software/internet areas?

Kill the WIMP paradigm and bring the digital world to humanity (and not the other way around) by providing better and richer natural user experience.

Looking for funding? If yes, how much?

Yes, looking for help and resources to boost our internationalization. We are talking about \$2M.

What about the BizSpark Program? What do you think? Are you going to join? Why?

IntuiLab is an early member of the Microsoft France's IDEES Startup Program which led to the establishment of the BizSpark program, which we naturally became a member of. This is a great program to increase the visibility of a start-up (this interview is a living proof) and also, let's be selfish, a great way to have all the Microsoft software we need for a very, very low price.

It's also nice to see BizSpark picking up start-ups from around the world. At last a program which truly reflects the innovation diversity.

Any advice to young Software entrepreneurs?

Be yourself, cultivate your passion and bring together the right team for the mission.

Posted at 11/16/2009 9:02 AM by Julien Codorniou | [Permalink](#) | [Email this Post](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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