

((browsable audio language learning))

ENPRO 350 – Fall 2006

Mission

To develop a language learning tool on portable devices for intermediate and advanced learners using audio books aligned with text and linked to a dictionary.

Opportunity

Language learning is a huge and growing industry with an estimated 2 billion people learning English by 2010. The growth can be especially noticeable amongst ESL students in the USA and English learners in Japan. Despite many companies offering classes or software tools, there are almost no options available for learners who want to surpass upper intermediate and advanced levels. The only option at this level is using an audio book and a dictionary and this method is extremely time consuming and tedious. Frustrated learners at this level represent a huge market for a product that can automatically link audio books and dictionaries on a portable device.

Objectives

Technology

- Develop a functional prototype of AudioDoc, suitable for proof-of-concept demonstrations on a laptop computer and handheld device
- Create an operational/project plan for the future development of the actual product

Business

- Determine target market and demonstrate that AudioDoc is an effective and attractive tool
- Consider legal issues associated with this technology such as copyright acquisition and management of digital rights
- Explore possible partnerships with language schools
- Develop a business model and financial projections

Accomplishments

Technology

- Completed design and testing of a functional prototype for portable devices using Flash Lite 2 platform
- Developed a framework for future development of AudioDoc and the automatic text-audio alignment process using an open-source speech recognition engine

Business

- Completed focus groups testing to establish a market interest
- Initiated discussions with the Aspect International Language School and obtained a commitment to beta-test our product in the coming semester
- Developed a strong business model and determined the channels for content acquisition, product distribution and revenue generation.
- Conducted time-trials to establish the advantages of AudioDoc as a learning tool
- Met with intellectual property lawyers and contacted publishing firms to discuss the copyright issues involved in acquiring audio books.

The Path Ahead

- Complete the product development and create a process for automatic generation of content using a text to speech alignment engine
- Conduct beta-testing at the Aspect International Language
- Further explore the dynamics of the Japanese language learning market
- Raise first round of capital and hire programming and marketing personnel

The Team

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The Device – Listen, Lookup, Learn



The Business Model

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