Report on user testing with the prototypes of the 1st open call (1ST VERSION)

July 2015

This document briefly summarises the results of the user testing with the prototypes of the 1st open call of the EuropeanPioneers acceleration programme.

PP - Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)

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[Internal Reviewers]: Martin Weber, etventure
Cristina Luminea, ThoughtBox
# List of Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Etventure</td>
<td>Laura Kohler <a href="mailto:laura.kohler@etventure.com">laura.kohler@etventure.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etventure</td>
<td>Martin Weber <a href="mailto:martin.weber@etventure.com">martin.weber@etventure.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ThoughtBox</td>
<td>Cristina Luminea <a href="mailto:cristina@thoughtbox.co">cristina@thoughtbox.co</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Report on user testing with the prototypes of the 1st open call 1
   List of Authors 3
   Table of Contents 4
   1. Introduction 5
   2. Report on user testing with the prototypes of the 1st open call 6
   3. Summary 19
1. Introduction

It’s common knowledge that startups are building products and services based on many assumptions. It happens to be best practice, but brings several pitfalls along with it. Certainly, founders nowadays have a vast background in a certain field of expertise and tend to startup businesses in their respectively known industries. However, it’s too often the case that startups fail to validate the assumptions that they start building upon.

Having worked with a number of young startups and SMEs, the team of EuropeanPioneers knew that missing out on validating the business is one of the key reasons for failure in early stage startup creation. That’s why a particular security net has been implemented in the programme of EuropeanPioneers, which aims to quickly validate, iterate if necessary and rebuild together with the startups in order to secure their future.

Since the accelerator programme of EuropeanPioneers is a remote accelerator programme, it was to be anticipated, that the connection with the startup might be too loose at some times. That's no surprise given the distance, the number of startups to take care of as well as their “daily distraction”. In order to build a strong bond with the teams on one hand and have a particular shared project on the other, the user testing projects with all startups turned out to be a key success factor of the programme.

This deliverable report aims to provide a deep understanding of the diverse projects that had been executed with and for all startups in the EuropeanPioneers accelerator. The results have already been evaluated as very valuable for the startups. This approach secured major successes for the startups, which turned their business through carefully executed pivots already. Moreover, some startups were so pleased with the results that they kept engaging in a close relationship with EuropeanPioneers and etventure in order to continue the market validation.

The following chapter aims to go deeper into each startup in order to explain in greater detail what has been done or is currently being executed with the startups of the first open call. Clearly, all startups were at an early stage, which meant that they have been developing prototypes without FIWARE technology before starting the accelerator programme. However, once joining EuropeanPioneers they continued the development by integrating FIWARE enablers. Only that this time the result was further validated. The topics of the user testing projects were so diverse, that all 12 startups have been getting support with various setups. After all, the team at EuropeanPioneers was part of the questioning of the status quo, creation of topics to be evaluated, and turn-around based on the results. Often, the execution has been done by the startups, which was important, because it’s crucial to learn the feedback from users first hand.

In order to grasp the full potential of the following descriptions of all validation processes, it’s important to keep in mind that some startups needed particular support with only one key component (e.g. feature testing or UX improvement). That doesn’t mean that other factors didn’t need testing as well. Just to keep the process aligned and focused, it’s been decided to go for one major validation instead of several small ones.

What is also important is the business focus of the user tests described in this report. Although the integration of FIWARE technology is an important part of the acceleration programme, the user testing activities were carried out with the clear goal to test the overall acceptance of the new
products and services and were not limited on the pure technology aspect of the products. Therefore FIWARE technology was an implicit part of the testing activities.

2. Report on user testing with the prototypes of the 1st open call

Since all startups of the EuropeanPioneers programme have been entering the programme with more than a concept, it was interesting to see what product state they developed beforehand. Most startups couldn’t claim much traction, which makes it even more interesting to evaluate how they developed a product with getting clear and honest feedback from the market. It’s a given fact, that entrepreneurs and investors don’t have the necessary “full picture” of a product as part of a market, in order to make precise predictions on the “success-ability” of a startup. Hence, the startups have been developing a product blindly.

Of course, many startups have been conducting in-depth interviews with potential customers, experienced a problem themselves and solved it or saw satisfying results on their MVPs. Still, without getting first-hand feedback from real users, it’s hard to steer the product & business development into the right direction. No question that all startups were convincing with their applications and pitches. They made clear that they are great teams, aiming at large markets with a potentially scalable business model. Some even showed traction, but that was often not from a market perspective, but rather from partners, the team’s backgrounds, development stages, and more.

To be convinced that a product-market-fit has been found, it’s required to validate the assumptions upon which the product is being developed. Startup founders were fully aligned with this idea and jumped quickly on the “user testing” project opportunities with the team at EuropeanPioneers and their mothership company, etventure. These projects will now be elaborated in detail. This will include the pre-state as well as the problems/assumptions to be assessed. Thereafter, the implementations are being described in order to show the pivot that has or has not been done.

Note: This deliverable report aims to focus on the user testing projects. However these projects are at the intersection with business model validation, which has been described in another report. Since the business mode can be core in the validation process, overlaps can occur but will also allow painting a more colourful picture for the reader.
**Konneckid**

**Topic of user testing:** Finding out what business model works for location based offline learning

**Reasons of validation:** To date, many e-learning platforms failed to monetise their product

**Process executed:** In-depth interviews with 15 teachers (users of Konneckid and German “non”-users) and 50+ learners, competitive analysis of e-learning platforms that managed or failed to build solid business models around their services

**Feedback received:** Students tend to go “around” the platform once they met a teacher. At the same time, teachers are missing out on a “one-fits-all” platform that allows them to promote, meet, schedule and invoice, all in one place.

**Results & Impacts:** It became clear that students are the wrong target group to monetise a learning platform. Much rather, teachers are the ones willing to pay for a service that allows them to get all they need from one platform. Hence, it's been tested and validate that the right direction for monetising the services of Konneckid was to build a targeted platform for teachers, who need a place to advertise to students and manage the whole process from sign-ups to invoices. Moreover, learning meetings on Konneckid’s platform were mostly happening anonymously offline. With a Starbucks partnership, Konneckid was now able to guide the learning process even in the offline world through offering vouchers. Hence, the connection between the platform with the students and teachers was not over once the latter two met offline, but kept continuing.

Below are shown the various questions that had been answered by the different types of users:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User Story, action</th>
<th>Tech effort (0-10)</th>
<th>User value (0-10)</th>
<th>Commercial value (Engagement 5 + commercial 5)</th>
<th>Frequency of use/weekly (0-10)</th>
<th>Score tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a teacher I would like to reach groups of students to organize a class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young I would like to learn and save money on training/ed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a member I am looking for a specific skill proficiency level in teachers profiles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a teacher I want to acquire new students</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a student I would like to prepare for job market (skills, network, internships, practice skills)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a 35-55 I would like to continue socialising eg cooking themes after meeting new people</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a member I want to tap into the reputation of a teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a teacher I would like to charge for classes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a member I am looking for structured class</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young, I would like to improve specific skills that help me find work</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a student I want to show my learning experience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young I would like to continue socialising eg cooking themes after meeting new people</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a local venue/caffe I would like to to attract customers, people who use the space</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young, I would like to browse and discover learning skills in my city</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young I would like to be part of a learning community, focused on a topic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a young, I would like to explore skills for personal development</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a freelancer, I would like connect with similar people/potential collaborators</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
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**SmartDrive**

**Topic of user testing:** Validated the business model: corporate customers (B2B) or private (B2C)

**Reasons of validation:** The product of SmartDrive is very useful for several target user groups. However, for a startup it’s important to focus on one particular customer group. Since the B2B or B2C path seemed both very reasonable, it’s been decided to test both in order to find the right way.

**Process executed:** In-depth interviews with many SMEs on one hand and families on the other.

**Feedback received:** Families and friends are very likely to become users of SmartDrive. However, their willingness to pay for the service is difficult. The value provided is not yet enough to make them pay margins that would make the business case solid. Especially family fathers were keen to use the product for their families and pay for it, but the market of families with several cars doesn’t support a monetisation strategy. Much rather, managers of car fleets became the focus of the user testing projects. Apparently, there’s a need for tracking, scheduling, and incentivising their drivers.

**Results & Impacts:** The business case options were validate and it has been decided for the business to be B2B focused only. This allows for a better go-to-market strategy, monetisation, and focused business case for investors.

Below is a selection of the results of the hypothesis that had been tested for SmartDrive:

**Hypothesis 1**

"Customers to be taken into consideration are the ones who make the procurement decisions for the companies. In most of the cases, those are the company owners, who are between 35-54 years old."

- In most of the cases the head of the company makes the decision if a fleet management solution is to be installed
- In some cases the controlling and finance department is involved in the decision process
- Companies with large fleets have a dedicated fleet manager, department or a head manager who is in charge of the decision
- Average age of the interviewees (most of them in charge for fleet management): 42 years

**Hypothesis 2**

"The value delivered to the ones in charge of the procurement decision is more relevant than the value delivered to the drivers. Therefore the dashboard is of higher importance than the app"

- For most of the companies the management function (i.e. reports or tracking features are very important
- Tracking is regarded with criticism in some instances, there is more interest in reporting
- Some have own databases (e.g. MS Access)
- Some do not have any experience with (automatic) reports and never thought about it

**Hypothesis 3**

"The value for the driver is seen as an upselling point, i.e. the app should be sold as an upgrade."

- About half of the respondents would be willing to pay extra for useful functions for their drivers
- Willingness is especially high for effective driving/ saving fuel/ finding cheap gas stations

**Hypothesis 4**

"Target customers are more interested in a comprehensive and simple fleet management solution than in savings from fleet maintenance."

- How are costs currently forecasted?
  - Most of the companies forecast operational expenditures for the fleet based on experience
  - Few look for online benchmarks
  - Few look for advice from repair shop or external fleet managers
  - Some do not forecast their costs at all
- Using logsbooks to differentiate between private and business usage is a topic for most of the respondents
- Some have already automated this
**PeopleGraph**

**Topic of user testing:** Finding out the real & business use case (market & customers)

**Reasons of validation:** The “Google for people” can be a very powerful engine, but without the right use case it won’t be marketable. Hence, the important question to answer is: Who to sell to.

**Process executed:** Design thinking workshop to come up with ideas of practical use cases followed by questionnaires for potential users. Afterwards, the product has been mocked up in order to “fake” the experience. The technology works and there were plenty use cases. Aiming the validation towards accelerators was valuable since those institutions have plenty of startups in their portfolio or cohort. Hence, the feedback was coming from over a hundred startups.

**Feedback received:** One of the main learnings was that startups need to create their own “knowledge base” on investors they are pitching to. First, it's been thought that an HR and headhunting approach is most useful to people because “finding people online” is still a hard exercise. However, compiling all valuable and most relevant information about an investor is one of the biggest pain points startups face. The approach of targeting startups within accelerators may have been a misleading path, however, the results were quantifiable enough to be pursued.

**Results & Impacts:** After several “platforms” that used the technology of PeopleGraph, the “investor” insights tool was most valuable and the biggest pain point that startups would pay for. The information on investors is available online and therefore easily compiled through the engine.

Below is a screenshot of the landing page that has been tested to illustrate the people finder:
**Avuxi**

**Topic of user testing:** How to build a B2B go-to-market strategy for online booking websites. 

**Reasons of validation:** Avuxi is able to increase the conversion of visitors on an (accommodation) booking platform by over 12%, however the easy to integrate technology into any booking site’s map is hard to sell to the potential customers. Gaining visibility was crucial to “show” the KPIs through real data.

**Process executed:** Landing page testing of several websites, of which some had the heat maps integrated and other didn’t. All this was to build a numerical case when selling the technology because booking websites needed to see the “real” value first before integrating. In order to decrease the risk, proper A/B testing has been executed and numbers built.

**Feedback received:** Business development in a B2B space is difficult. Booking websites were fully aware of the low conversion based on their users not knowing enough about the places their dream accommodation is located at. Hence, anything that helps convert uncertain users is valuable to them. However, the integration is easy to implement but brings along some risks. Therefore, they needed numbers.

**Results & Impacts:** After the A/B testing, the team of Avuxi was able to show the real conversion they were able to get based on their technology. Once it became clear what’s been missing in the sales pitch, the results of converting a business development contact (opportunity) into a paying customer have increased.

Below is a screenshot of the landing page test that has been built to illustrate the use case:


**TobyRich**

**Topic of user testing:** Evaluating the Dog Fight App for the Drone fight on UX/UI.

**Reasons of validation:** TobyRich needed to build a solid app that users would love. However features and the “usability” weren’t validated and had only been built based on assumptions.

**Process executed:** Over 50 target users got the first drone fight app (Dog Fight) and were asked to use it with the 2nd version of the drones. Feedback was compiled and had a great impact on the UX & UI of the new version of the app.

**Feedback received:** Users were quite pleased with the app’s features. Some bugs were identified on the go, which was great to improve early on. All in all, users have given great feedback on how to improve the app. Especially the steering of missiles to attack a drone had to be changed since the gamification “didn’t feel right”.

**Results & Impacts:** The TobyRich team has changed the “realness” of the online-offline fight in order to put the attacker (done through the app) into a more real-time situation. Also the in app purchase of new weapons was crucial to better understand, because improved “teasing” of the users will increase their keenness to purchase more weapons and extra missiles.

Below are pictures taken from the app testing of the DogFight app:
**Topic of user testing:** Growth hacking of open source technology into developers’ community.

**Reasons of validation:** The product made a major pivot. The result was an open source software for developers to ease the integration with APIs they’re calling. But in order to improve on open source technology, it’s important for it to be used. Therefore, the user testing was meant to increase the visibility of the software.

**Process executed:** Working with very active developers in the programming community in order to “hack” the technology into it. Spreading the word of a useful technology isn’t easy. Therefore, the FIWARE community (of the 1st and 2nd cohort of EuropeanPioneers) and active CTO from platforms such as ProductHunt, Hacker News, Quora and Reddit were asked to up-vote the listing. Only then, other developers will see the technology.

**Feedback received:** The results were still gathered during this reporting, but the community liked the product and was able to overcome the hesitation of working with “unknown” technologies.

**Results & impacts:** The first results were shown during the Demo Day and got amazing feedback. Moreover, the results brought the team into the prestigious AngelPad accelerator program in NYC.

Below is a screenshot of the new open source product-landing page as a result of the testing with a clear call to action:
**eLoptico**

**Topic of user testing:** How to get the technology used by dentists?

**Reasons of validation:** The product of eLoptico received great feedback from dentists already. There were many in-depth interviews being held, which led to the conclusion that dentists are craving to get the software on Google glass. However, the go-to-market strategy was still unclear.

**Process executed:** etventure conducted interviews with dentists and asked specifically about their willingness to acquire the technology. It’s been very clear that dentists would stick to their long-term vendors and buy new technologies only from them. Hence, eLoptico needed to talk with leading vendors in order to validate the assumption that a sales process would be based on piggy backing on their sales cycles.

**Feedback received:** Vendors loved the product as much as the dentists did. Therefore, several vendors have been approached in order to start conversations on an integration of eLoptico’s technology in their product portfolio.

**Results & Impacts:** Vendors have signed Letters of intent that stated a willingness to be a sales channel for eLoptico. Since the product is not yet marketable, it was important to find vendors that are willing to integrate eLoptico with their own APIs, which was crucial in order to pull data from the system and make it accessible to the dentist on the Google glass. The process is very long and full of legal discussions, but the first vendors have become sales partners.

The following slides are showing what results have been developed with eLoptico:
**Topic of user testing:** Setting up technical & continuous QA of the new platform.

**Reasons of validation:** The real-time bidding platform that has been created for advertisers is a software-only platform that allows advertisers and publishers to buy and sell the right targeted ads for indie games. Since the product must always be checked automatically for bugs, etventure was asked to write and implement the “test scenarios” that are running in the background.

**Process executed:** Test scenarios were written based on the learnings from current interactions between the advertiser and the publisher. The user experience needed to be better understood in order to see the click-path of a particular process. Based on that, test scenarios were built and implemented on behalf of GameGenetics.

**Feedback received:** GameGenetics was gaining a strong reliability with their users based on outrunning many potential bugs that could happen throughout the process.

**Results & Impacts:** QA was implemented and is running several test scenarios in the background. etventure created the writing and integration of those test cases.

The screenshots below illustrate how the users are interacting with GameGenetics and the respective partners:
Livecoding.tv

**Topic of user testing:** Learning exactly the needs that coders and streamers have.

**Reasons of validation:** The platform was based on the assumption that twitch.tv (streaming gamers live) would work also for the programming world. However, the habits of coders are very different, because coding can be perceived as art and is not that easily shareable.

**Process executed:** Hackathons have been organised in several cities in order to “watch” the process live: when coders and streamers interact. Hackathons were aiming at those who want to learn and those that want to teach. The process was “learning by watching” similar to what live coding.tv is based on as well.

**Feedback received:** Coders are willing to share their process. That was a major learning, since it’s been assumed that streamers want to learn but might not find enough people that are willing to share their work in real time.

**Results & Impacts:** The hackathons created another big buzz and built further traction for the livecoding.tv team. Especially the understanding about the languages people program in and want to learn about was very valuable. Regarding the business model, the freemium approach was identified to be the most valuable because people might miss a session but would love to re-watch it.

Below is the experience illustrated that happens during the “Live-cathon” which is a hackathon in real time streaming mode:
**Muuselabs**

**Topic of user testing:** Validation was conducted to decide if the product built around the technology is a book or a toy.

**Reasons of validation:** The RFID technology of Muuselabs can be used to build real toys for kids that have a centre stage and figurines as well as to create books that come to life. However, the go-to-market strategy, the legal pitfalls and the costs required are very different for both products. Hence, the team needed to find out which direction to focus on.

**Process executed:** The toy part has been done by the Muuselabs team themselves through experts in the field and expert interviews with key decision makers in the toy industry. The EuropeanPioneers team has executed the “book direction” because the venture has a lot of connections in the book publishing industry, especially children’s books.

**Feedback received:** The toy industry is a bigger market (given the decline of print) but has already a lot of high-tech players competing with each other. On the other hand the book industry needs to make books digital and more fun, which is a slow process because of small budgets. The margins are also very low on books as opposed to high margin toys.

**Results & Impacts:** The book path is still being validated as the report is written, but the toy industry is already quick enough to jump on the technology that Muuselabs has built. But the stand-alone toy is still hard to sell. The solution was for the toy distributors and manufacturers to licence the RFID technology of the team. Hence, the “technology supplier” path has been found as one of the most promising for the startup.

The picture below shows how the evaluation process of the toy vs. the book approach has been developed and illustrated:
**ushelu**

**Topic of user testing:** Go-To-Market strategy and target user identification for German market.

**Reasons of validation:** The team at ushelu has built a strong reputation in the UK cinema market through well-connected business development partners. Hence, the integration is happening already and learnings are being made. But the UK market seemed to be a very different beast to the German market which is why EuropeanPioneers was conducting an analysis on who the users in Germany would be and how to advertise to them.

**Process executed:** Questionnaires with about 100 people, market research, in-depth interviews with cinemas (large chains and indie theatres) and expert interviews.

**Feedback received:** Cinemas are very reluctant to integrate an app-technology that has not build a critical mass yet. However the chicken and egg problem becomes apparent when understanding that users wouldn’t sign up with the app without the right incentives. Those incentives were identified as: ticket price reduction or best deals, discounts on refreshments in the cinema, last-minute reminders based on preference and location of the user etc. Also, the German cinema-goer is very reluctant to last-minute offers since they see going to the cinema as something that needs planning upfront. Cinemas also need insights on their visitors, which they fail to get.

**Results & Impacts:** The German market needs a sales rep that is well plugged into the cinema ecosystem (similar to the UK). The features that are being sold to users are slightly different since prices and time matter more than in the UK (where the movie is more important). The go-to-market strategy is a bigger issue that needs further validation, however, social media is a solid channel to rely on. Still, cinemas are having physical OOH advertising and inlays in magazines which might be a way to market the app.

Below are screenshots of the presentation for ushelu to understand the German market in detail:
**Zylia**

**Topic of user testing:** Use case validation: targeting amateur bands or 360 virtual reality makers.  
**Reasons of validation:** The technology of Zylia has several use cases that need to be assessed before going to market fully. The market of amateur bands is large but might not be large enough to build a solid business based on it. Still, the feedback from music artists was great and even got support from known musicians. The 360 degree recording is a great solution for rehearsing bands. However, to become the Go-Pro for musicians, it’s important to also educate the market with new technologies. Here, the software seems to be the bigger asset, which makes the use case better for other areas, such as 3D virtual reality.  
**Process executed:** Conducting interviews with amateur and professional musicians as well as running trials with 3D & virtual reality film makers that have a 360 visual experience but not changing the sound when moving the head (which would feel more natural). Focus was on interviews first and real life tests after. Landing page testing was used to further “test” both options.  
**Feedback received:** Musicians love the product a lot. It allows them to record their music as a band simultaneously, but slice the different sound streams (instruments) into single sound pieces. The technology helps musicians cut out a stream that allows band members to practice at home “without their own instrument” being played from record. Still, the market seems to be a niche and the willingness to pay is very low since amateur musicians tend to work on low budgets. The bigger opportunity was found when getting in touch with 3D film makers that needed to have more realistic sound when creating 360 degree virtual reality spaces. Moving the head to watch and listen into different directions is a huge problem for the new industry that’s currently being built. Movie makers are jumping on the opportunity and even showed a higher willingness to pay.  
**Results & Impacts:** The product has gotten more traction with the virtual reality space which is why this is the business case that Zylia will build on. But since the product is easily adapted in the amateur music space, the decision has been made to rely on 2 business models for now, until the bigger market will request the full attention of the team. So far, the sales for both sectors are very low because the product is still in its infancy. However, the 360 visual reality space is a bigger market with higher margins (technology campaign wise) as opposed to a margin on the single product (which includes more hardware).

Below it’s shown how the website sold the product before the user testing and after the change:
ABOUT AUDIOIMMERSION

Audioimmersion is a system capable of 360 degrees live audio recording. The system consists of a microphone array and a cloud-based audio processing service. Sound recorded by this system can be processed as a group of independent audio sources (guitar, snare, trumpet, vocal, etc.) with associated information about their position in space. Audioimmersion is suitable for musicians, bands, recording studios, and all music enthusiasts who like to record and process audio.

GREAT QUALITY AND POST-PROCESSING CAPABILITIES

Audioimmersion uses high-quality microphones to record the surrounding audio scene. Thanks to advanced cloud-based processing techniques, it is possible to filter and reassess individual sound sources from the audio mix.

SAVE MONEY & TIME

With Audioimmersion, you can save time on the microphone setup by using a single device to record all your instruments simultaneously. Single microphone devices can also significantly reduce the cost compared to traditional microphone setups.
3. Summary

After joining EuropeanPioneers, it became clear, that most of the startups needed support with the validation of their development issues. It's interesting to see how often startups are building products based on their own ideas and principles. Market feedback is known to be crucial, but surprisingly enough, most startups just keep going without testing if the direction is right. The team at EuropeanPioneers was happy to see the great feedback on their approach and can claim to have successfully helped to pivot startups into the right direction. That is a major differentiator, as other accelerators are not necessarily focusing on this component of startup creation.

Most of the products are still under validation since the product development is always bringing out more features and opens up opportunities. A continuous product-market-fit validation process has been integrated in all startups so that their teams can do “user testing” internally. All startups have been learning from the process and will use it for further stages as well.

The feedback loops between startups and their users became so strong, that it was always used as business development at the same time. Especially for early adopters, that’s a great necessity to develop in order to spread the visibility of new products. Testers tend to grow with the product and circle back their perception. That’s a relationship startups need.

All the projects had various time frames. Some longer, while others much shorter. Besides time, budget was the second scarce resource. User testing is requiring budget to incentivise users and to conduct the validation process. Further more, this process can reveal that certain features and product development cycles had been implemented without creating value for the end user. That’s an ongoing learning curve that startups will continue to use.

All in all, it’s safe to conclude that the user testing projects of the EuropeanPioneers accelerator represent successful use cases that validate the approach itself. Therefore the team will continue to focus on working with the startups on this matter. In fact, some of the startups in the second call were showing interesting activities during the application phase that could benefit from our learnings during the first open call. In order to show continued success, the user testing was already included in the online application as well as the selection days. Here, the teams didn’t only need to show strength but also identify the areas of their business that need validation.

We are already getting very positive feedback from the startups in the second call since the teams are very senior and have the experience to understand that certain parts of a business need validation. In order to strengthen the bond between the two open calls and also to pass on the learnings from one batch to another, the teams from the first open call have been involved in the selection process of the startups in the second open call as well as the mentoring during the welcome days. This will allow us to kick off the user testing activities as early as possible.