

Apifier

7/24/2015

Company name::

Apifier

Email address we should contact you at::

<CENSORED>

Which of the following best describes your progress?:

prototype

What is your company going to make?:

Apifier will be a cloud service for developers to turn any website into an API, which will enable them to rapidly build new apps on top of existing third-party web apps and data sources.

Technically, we're going to deploy programmable web browsers to our web servers. Users will go to apifier.com, write a few lines of JavaScript code to perform some automated action on a specific website or to extract data from it, and apifier.com will give them back an API endpoint they can use directly from their new app to perform that action or fetch those data. Quick and simple, no need to setup your own servers, proxies, cron jobs, databases, and anybody can code JavaScript.

For each founder, please list: Hacker News id (if any); name; age; year of graduation, school, degree / subject for each degree; email address; github url (if any); facebook url (if any); twitter url (if any); employer / title (if any) at last job.:

jancurn; Jan Čurn; 32; 2014, Trinity College Dublin, Ph.D. / Artificial Intelligence // 2007, Charles University in Prague, MSc. / Computer Science; <CENSORED>; github.com/jancurn; www.facebook.com/jan.curn; twitter.com/JanCurn; www.virtualrig-studio.com / CTO

jakubbalada; Jakub Balada; 33; 2015, University of Economics in Prague, Ph.D. / Applied Informatics // 2007, Charles University in Prague, MSc. / Computer Science; <CENSORED>; ; www.facebook.com/jakub.balada; ; Siemens / Solution Architect

Has your startup received any prior investment?:

no

In two sentences, say the most impressive thing about this team / startup.:

Although we both were busy working on our PhDs, had many commitments and even lived in different countries at the time, we were able to start and retain a small software contracting company (www.dev-tank.com) with a vision that one day we'll fully dedicate to building of a new global software product. It took us some time but here we are, working together on Apifier, both

extremely passionate and committed.

Please tell us in one or two sentences about the most impressive thing that each founder has built or achieved.:

Jan: I've turned a small contracting work in 2008 into a professional software product that photographers and graphical studios around the world use to add realistic motion blur to car advertisement photos (www.virtualrig-studio.com). Although the app was cracked, copycatted by Adobe and others, it still sells and retains its market-leading position.

Jakub: I've turned my birthday party in 2002 with a few friends playing guitar into a well-known regional music festival that ran over the following 10 years, with a peak attendance of ~1500 people and attracting some major Czech bands (Studnice Fest).

Why did you pick this idea to work on? Do you have domain expertise in this area? How do you know people need what you're making?:

Jan led a team at college that built a semantic machine learning system to automatically aggregate offers of used cars from the web, similar to Carsabi (YC W12) only earlier. Although the system was too error-prone for production, people kept asking about it and wanted to use it to aggregate real estate offers, e-shops listings etc. and also to automate actions on the web, e.g. online shopping. We evaluated many existing products but couldn't find any that would reliably solve these tasks on every websites we wanted, so we built a new system. Now we talk about it with everyone we meet and realize many people face these kind of problems, which our system can actually solve.

What's new about what you're making? What substitutes do people resort to because it doesn't exist yet (or they don't know about it)?:

Many components of what we're building already exist, but it seems nobody put them together and provided them as a cloud service that is actually usable. Maybe it's because before PhantomJS 2.0 was released in January 2015, there was no good-enough headless browser with a sufficient JavaScript support. Or maybe they were afraid companies don't want to rely on third-party cloud solutions for their core business - we can address this by providing a hosted version.

We saw students aggregating data for companies using Ctrl-C in browser and Ctrl-V in Excel, people clicking "Refresh" all night to get a visa to New Zealand or developers spending days to build their own single-purpose crawler for one specific website. It wasn't nice.

Who are your competitors, and what do you understand about your business that other companies in it just don't get?:

There are many products in this space:

- tools that prefer UI instead of coding (mozenda.com, import.io, kimonolabs.com, automationanywhere.com, scrapinghub.com)
- tools that enable scripting of your own web browser or desktop apps (webrobots.io, seleniumhq.org)
- tools that treat websites as a set of plain HTML documents (80legs.com,

scrapy.org)

- consulting companies that "do it for you" (connotate.com, grepsr.com, promptcloud.com)

None of them has ALL of the following qualities:

- 1) crawl websites with arbitrarily complex or irregular structure
- 2) is a cloud service interfaced from apps
- 3) can crawl or act on responsive websites (i.e. understand JavaScript)
- 4) be simple to use and affordable enough for small companies

How will you get users? How do or will you make money? How does this become a giant company?:

Currently only getting users through our network and word of mouth, in the future using guerilla marketing on dev events, PR stunts, online ads and possibly referrals. We want to charge users elastically based on computing and network resources their APIs or crawls actually consume on our servers, e.g. 300% of our AWS costs (TBH we don't know the costs yet). There will be a resource-limited freemium version.

There are millions of developers out there (and counting!), many want to build their own apps and services on top of existing services and data sources. There are millions of websites whose content can only be consumed by humans but is unusable by apps. We see a huge opportunity in there.

Company url, if any::

apifier.com

If you have an online demo, what's the url? (Please don't password protect it; just use an obscure url.):

[not online yet](#)

Please enter the url of a 1 minute unlisted (not private) YouTube video introducing the founders.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbAyfRtRSuI>

Is at least one founder a programmer? (or if your product isn't software, are the founders able to build the product without outside assistance?):

yes

Will all founders commit to working exclusively on this project for the next six months? (no school, no jobs):

yes

How long have the founders known one another and how did you meet? (one sentence max):

We met in college back in 2002 and are friends since then.

Have any of the founders not met in person?:

no

If you've already started working on it, how long have you been working

and how many lines of code (if applicable) have you written? (One sentence max):

5 months part-time, ~5 kLOC core system, ~3 kLOC configs for websites (all in JavaScript)

When will you have a prototype or beta? (5 words max):

beta in 4-8 weeks

How many users do you have? (just give the number):

5

How much revenue? (one sentence max, if zero just say 'none'):

none

What is your monthly growth rate? (in users or revenue or both):

below statistical error

Please list the breakdown of the equity ownership (or if unincorporated, planned breakdown) in percentages among the founders, employees and any other stockholders.:

Jan 50%

Jakub 50%

Are any of the founders covered by noncompetes or intellectual property agreements that overlap with your project? If so, please explain; if no, just say no.:

The first prototype was built as a contract for one company. We have an email agreement that forbids us to apply the technology to "online retail in Czech republic", under a fine of around \$10k (=what they paid us). The same agreement also states that we retain all intellectual property.

Was any of your code written by someone who is not one of your founders? If so, describe how can you legally use it. (Open source is ok of course.):

nope

If you have already participated or committed to an incubator, "accelerator" or "pre-accelerator" program, please say which:

none

What kind of corporate entity is your startup?:

not incorporated

Is there anything else we should know about your company? (Pending lawsuits, cofounders who have left, etc.):

This project is a spin-off from a small software contracting company (www.dev-tank.com), where Jan and Jakub have 1/3 share each. The third co-founder (Petr Kalina) wants to focus on his research career and will not participate. We are on (very) good terms.

Is your team willing to move to the Bay Area for this program? (It's

strongly encouraged, but it's really not required – for this experiment, we want to work with remote teams too):

yes

Can you come to the Bay Area for an interview, or if not, is your internet connection good enough for a clear, low-latency video chat interview? (We'd love to meet you in-person, but we're not providing travel reimbursement.):

yes

Primary contact's Skype username::

<CENSORED>

Where do you live now, and where would the company be based after YC Fellowship? (list as City A, Country A / City B, Country B.):

Prague, Czech Republic / Prague, Czech Republic

Phone numbers of Founders (one per each line)::

Jan <CENSORED>

Jakub <CENSORED>