Chapter V

Breaking Through Barriers in New Technological Initiatives:
Entrepreneurs in the Context of Free Software

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Abstract

This work analyzes different factors in the entrepreneuring process in a company based in business opportunities advantages through the usage of free software in a technological context. Blobject connects opportunities for local development, usage of open source technologies, and new social trends in many consumers; tourists, in this case, as a example of respect for the environment and the desired “freedom and autonomy”. This company offers different products and services using ecologic vehicles (electric energy), ease-to-use, such as GEM Cars -equipped with a touch screen computer- and Tours in Segways. The studied case shows the integration process from different technologies that connect through digital infrastructure. In
this way, GEM cars use the GPS technology for location within a digital assistant, multimedia power (touch screen computer and audios and videos) to show the tourist opportunities in an specific place, and the needed adaptation for the language diversity.

An “Integral” Business Concept: Blobject

On April 28, 2005, the company known as Blobject, S.L. (www.blobject.es) was officially launched in the city of Córdoba (Spain). The initiative was the fruit of over 10 months of conceptualizing, designing, and developing on the part of three enthusiastic young entrepreneurs: Marco Antonio, Alfredo, and Laura, who, despite their youth and due to their wide spread experience, were already well versed in such varied fields as information and communication technologies and business consultation.

In its main business sector that competes with the traditional tourism sector, Blobject Tours offers a most original, practical, and fun way to visit a city of such monumental attractions as Córdoba, declared Heritage of Humanity by the UNESCO in 1984. This is achieved through its organization of various tourist routes visited in one of two different types of rented electrical vehicles (B1-Car y Segway). Furthermore, Blobject currently exploits two other business lines: consulting and distribution (as the distributor of electrical cars and Segways). Although this case focuses mainly on Blobject Tours, its connection and synergies for future development in other areas are evident, as will be seen in our final section.

From an entrepreneur’s point of view, the Blobject project’s foundations are based on three main organizational and contextual pillars (see Figure 1):

- First of all, the context has to be mentioned to explain two key elements that exploit opportunities at both macro and micro economic levels. On one hand, at a macro level, this initiative is part and parcel of emerging values in today’s society, like the value placed on one’s free time and the concern and respect for the environment in modern highly developed societies. On the other hand, at a microeconomic level, Blobject is an example of how to capitalize on the type of idiosyncratic opportunity associated with elements in space and time, where an unusual business model springs up and which, in this case, is closely related to the sightseeing potential of a city like Córdoba. In fact, social innovation can be just as important, or even more so, than actual technological innovation when it comes to uncovering business opportunities.1
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