

Diary of a student entrepreneur 2021: Part 4

In the fourth part of our Diary of a Student Entrepreneur 2021 series, our young founders talk about the task and purpose of creating a minimum viable product (MVP).

Every summer [LaunchBox](#), Trinity's student accelerator, offers 10 start-ups €10,000 in equity-free funding and a place on the three-month programme. Follow how these start-ups get on here.

LaunchBox, in partnership with [Bank of Ireland](#), and managed by experts in [Tangent](#), [Trinity's Ideas Workspace](#), provides mentorship, funding, access to alumni and investors, and the ideal collaborative environment to launch new start-up ventures.

Diarmuid McGonagle, co-founder of [Fonz Music](#)

“It’s on the app store, it’s finally on the app store!” I yelled in the basement of a residential home in Ohio. I was visiting my close friend Joe and was partying with his friends. I grabbed the host Andre, who was playing music on Spotify, and asked if he would try my new product, Fonz Music. Fonz Music allows guests to make song requests to the host’s Spotify, just like a jukebox.

He said no.

I pleaded back and forth with him but he was unrelenting. I finally accepted his decision and retreated to the makeshift dance floor.

I quickly learned, “If I build it, they will not come.”

From that day on, properly explaining Fonz Music became a priority. Being a developer by trade, LaunchBox has helped me refine and perfect my elevator pitch due the sheer number of interactions I have through the programme. Almost daily I need to explain the company to a new entrepreneur, consultant, or potential investor. It has been a tremendous help in crafting the most efficient explanation of our concept.

One particular conversation through LaunchBox was with Niall Murphy of Paddy Power. Niall explained that start-ups need to be daring. To take risks. To be authentic in order to build their audience. Hearing this was a breath of fresh air, having often been told to “play it safe” and “follow what others are doing” in the realm of marketing.

With gatherings slowly but surely starting to re-emerge out of hibernation, Fonz Music is preparing its first proper marketing campaign. We’re gathering all the best pieces of advice from our LaunchBox experts and are ready to leverage our new network.

Andre might regret not being a trend-setter.

Heather Bruton, co-founder of [UniPeer](#)

Before LaunchBox, I was under the impression that being an entrepreneur was a solitary journey. I thought that it was just myself and my co-founders against the world. I couldn't have been more wrong.

Our team has been fortunate to receive advice and mentorship from some incredible people. By no means is this start-up journey one we are undertaking alone. Knowing UniPeer has that kind of support is what keeps me going on the more challenging days.

In particular, Aimée-Louise Carton, co-founder of KeepAppy, has been a great support for us. Aimée has advised us to 'say yes to as many opportunities as possible', which I think is key to success as a start-up. Taking this advice on board, my co-founders and I recently had a busy week of back-to-back meetings with experts in a broad range of fields. It was definitely a week of Zoom fatigue, but it was also one of the most beneficial weeks of LaunchBox.

These calls helped me to realise that as a small team, our focus has to be on the essentials. Right now, this means concentrating on developing our MVP and validating our idea through customer research. By mid-August, the aim is to have an early iteration of the UniPeer platform developed in order to receive some initial feedback on our user interface and platform features before we launch in September for the upcoming academic year.

Consistently asking users for feedback is key to creating a user-centric platform that can provide the connection and support students are looking for. I want students to feel a sense of belonging at their university, regardless if teaching is remote or in person, and the best way to do this is to talk to as many students as possible every step of the way.

Evan Mgloughlin, co-founder, [Diglot](#)

Unlike most start-ups, we knew very early on what our MVP would look like and our barrier to producing it was very low.

The infrastructure already existed on Amazon to self-publish and we had the greatest collection of copyright-free classical literary works at our disposal. The feeling I experienced from our first sale was an indescribable euphoria, I've never been so happy to make €3 from 300 hours of work.

What we greatly underestimated was the incredible nuance and complexity in weaving foreign languages into English texts, a problem that still occupies most of our time today.

I have heard from countless entrepreneurs that if you aren't embarrassed by your MVP you didn't move fast enough. This is not a problem for us; typos, alongside countless formatting and translation errors still plague my conscience to this day. The ego-sacrificing act of releasing a product you know to be inferior to receive feedback directly from customers is one of the most difficult things I have had to do as an entrepreneur. Though challenging, I have little doubt that this decision was instrumental in the learning experience and is the reason we can produce the high-quality books we can today.

LaunchBox has provided an incredible opportunity to talk candidly 1:1 with business experts and mentors. These private conversations allow for vulnerable and honest dialogues about the troubles we are facing with our product and how we might overcome them. Eugene Theodore founder of Saga Squared is helping us bring the Diglot brand to life through storytelling.

Eric Risser fellow LaunchBox alumni and founder of Artomatix is looking long-term at Diglot's technological infrastructure and how we can scale. Shane Kerins at PwC has been giving us invaluable insight regarding tax and incorporation. I feel immensely privileged to have access to such an all-star menagerie of business experts and speaking to them has given me the confidence that with a lot of hard work I can achieve what they have.

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