

Interview

François-Xavier Beillon. HumanRoads. 11 November 2019. 13:12 pm.

- What is your role in Human Roads?

François-Xavier is one of the two co-founders of HumanRoads, founded in 2015. Most of the time he tries to sell the Human Roads solutions in the French market. He is also doing project deployment, when a solution is sold he works with the customer to make sure the solution is used in his or her organization.

- How long have you been working with the company?

He has been with HumanRoads since the beginning in 2015, however, he has worked with his co-founder since 2005. The current HumanRoads team is formed by ten people. 80% of the company focuses on the technical side of HumanRoads, whereas, the other areas include research, cooperation with different labs, and language process. The most important technology in the creation of HumanRoads is the natural processing of language; in other words, making a computer understand what human writing is. Besides, HumanRoads works with different institutions specialised in this type of technology. Some of these institutions include the Laboratoire Informatique D'Avignon and, for the last few months, they have been working with the National Institute for Research in Artificial Intelligence (by its French acronym: INRIA)

- What is the purpose of Human Roads?

HumanRoads specialises in studying data in professional and educational pathways. They work with higher education institutions to analyse their data, in order to help them make better decisions with the Power Business Intelligence. When studying the data, they help customers in two different ways: To create a business intelligence application, and to create a "GPS", which allows students to create their own career path; they are able to see what every other student has done in their area of interest, as well as they can simulate their own career path.

- Why did you decide to design Human Roads?

It all started with a little idea. It has always been very difficult to understand why some people don't know what to do in their career, but now thousands of millions of people have careers. HumanRoads was designed to help people struggling with career choices to make a decision, by giving them access to all the

information who've had similar experiences. HumanRoads is a simulation where you can analyse all the choices by the people before you and step back.

- What kinds of information did you need to create Human Roads?

HumanRoads manages the data, but what does the client do with the data? Nowadays, it is crucial to identify what the client expects from this process. "You need a very clear goal and audience to make sure the right data gives the right results. For this reason, meeting ISP students was the chance to challenge of HumanRoads, to see if the product is right for the product."

"ISP public is too young to use Human Roads, what we see today is that schools are not in a hurry to pay the orientation of their students. Many schools are happy to spend money on student recruitment, but do not spend money on getting the kids out of school; leaving some schools, 98% insertion rate for school, but they are not worried about whether or not the job is the right job for the person."

- What obstacles/challenges did you encounter when creating Human Roads?

The biggest problem they encountered when creating HumanRoads was the fundraising, "it is a very technical project and we need a lot of money to research". They needed to find this money from business angels, banks, and other companies. "When you go and see these people and tell them, you are working with educational institutions they do not think there is a market, and if there is no market there is no money. HumanRoads needed funds to pay for employees working on the innovation side of the project. When you find money is much easier".

"We are based in Avignon and it is a bit difficult to find talented and specialised engineers in Avignon, there is no dedicated training centre." HumanRoads also encounters a problem with the time needed by their customers to take a decision; they take approximately 6 to 12 months from the initial contact to a closed deal. 80% of the customers are higher education institutions, and 20% other institutions. Some of these higher education institutions include some of the best business schools in France, such as EM Lyon and NEOMA.