Development Software for Online Education and Authoring Tools for Creating eLearning Content

Yury Uskov
CEO & Founder

CEOCFO: *Mr. Uskov, iSpring Solutions has a long history. What is your focus today?*
Mr. Uskov: Our focus is mostly software for eLearning or online education. We create tools to help people to produce content for eLearning, and we also create solutions to help them to distribute the content, as well as manage online learning.

CEOCFO: *What do you understand about eLearning and online education that others miss?*
Mr. Uskov: If we are talking about companies, there are companies that produce content and companies that produce software. We create software. In the software, there are about a couple of dozen companies that create tools for creating content, and there are several thousand, that create learning management systems (LMS). We focus on creating authoring tools and we also have an LMS. The reason why there are only a few companies that creates authoring is the complexity. It is very difficult to create authoring tools that are good enough. We started as an authoring tools company and still our strongest position is creating authoring software. Our idea is to help every subject matter expert to create an online course fast and easy, as well as to distribute it online.

CEOCFO: *Why is it so challenging to create in the learning space?*
Mr. Uskov: Creating software is always challenging, because software engineers deal with complexity. The main thing that is difficult about software is complexity. When you create an engine for a car, you will deal with a couple of physical laws. In software, you create your own laws in your own world. Then you manage all of it. Authoring tools for eLearning have high interactivity and deal with a variety of formats, which requires more thought from the software engineer. Therefore, authoring tools are more difficult to develop.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about your approach?*
Mr. Uskov: We create software for ordinary people, who have no technical skills, who are able to operate basic programs such as Microsoft Office. Our software is integrated with PowerPoint, which allows us to use existing content: presentations and slides. We have a great many things that are accessible for PowerPoint: QuizMaker, TalkMaster, Screen Recorder, etc. All our tools are easy to use as PowerPoint. Therefore, anyone who can use PowerPoint can use iSpring software. We provide some new features that are not available in other eLearning packages from other vendors. One such feature is TalkMaster, a conversation simulator, which allows you to create conversation simulations and then train people to communicate better and serve clients better. We also continuously polish existing functionality. For example, one of the most important cases in creating online learning is adding audio or video to presentations. In this feature you will have slides with a narrator who gives a lecture explaining the slides. In latest version all of these scenarios we are substantially updated to make course development even smoother.

CEOCFO: *Your site shows a stellar group of users. How did you reach them and why do they continue to use your products?*
Mr. Uskov: Most of our customers found us through the internet. We have been getting a great deal of positive feedback from our clients. It is easy to find us through the search engines if you look for an authoring tool. When people try iSpring, they see that it works, it's easy to use, they do not need special training, is not expensive, so that they end up buying a license. Mostly with online marketing, we got big deployment at very big companies, including major leaders in the IT industry.

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CEOCFO: *What are some of the SEO or keyword terms that people would search for to find iSpring?*
Mr. Uskov: They may be searching for authoring tools, authoring tools for eLearning, or eLearning with PowerPoint. Search engine helps to find our website, download the software and try to use it. Since iSpring is fairly easy to use, you will not need to get any special training to start. The new user can find it, try it, and then buy it and these all can take a half of an hour.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about some of your different product choices?*
Mr. Uskov: Our flagship product is the iSpring Suite. It is a full package of what we have for creating rich media online content. The greatest demand for tools like iSpring Suite is creating eLearning courses. We also have iSpring Presenter, which is a different segment, mostly for sales and marketing, which allows them to create online presentations. iSpring Presenter is complemented with iSpring Cloud, which is an online solution that helps people to generate and qualify leads and do online presentations. For example, they can create an online copy of the presentation and send it to a list of prospects, then after they view the slides, measure their interests. They can then follow up with the prospects according to their interest. These are our two major products. We also have some smaller products that help people to convert PowerPoint to online formats, or to video. They can also create video in PowerPoint and upload it to YouTube.

CEOCFO: *Is your system available in different languages?*
Mr. Uskov: Yes! We have several translations. Our major language is English, and about 70% of our clients purchase the English version. We also have French, German and Russian versions, because we are from Russia, and our development team is based in Russia. We also have a Chinese version and Japanese version. We collaborate with our partners in a country to create a local version. For example our customers in Japan, respect our software very much because they value quality. Eventually we found a partner who helped us to translate iSpring to Japan.

> **"Our idea is to help every subject matter expert to create an online course fast and easy, as well as to distribute it online." - Yury Uskov**

CEOCFO: *How is business?*
Mr. Uskov: Business is pretty well. The eLearning industry by itself is growing probably more than 20% a year and we expect to grow at least as the market grows, but some years have been very successful for us. By the end of 2015, we are growing about 70% and I expect that next year will be the same. We have introduced our iSpring Version 8, which is really new in what we do, and we have some marketing ideas that will be very good for us.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you as iSpring has grown and developed as a company?*
Mr. Uskov: When a business is growing you will have a great many surprises, because you create things that you never thought about at first. I have a background in engineering, and since my youth I was involved in creating software, but product development and marketing were pretty new for me. That is why we have a very strong engineering team, but our main surprise is in the way people think, how they consume, what do they care about and not care at all. There is also the international aspect as well, because we have clients all over the world in different countries, so we have to deal with cultural differences.

CEOCFO: *Put it all together for our readers. Why choose iSpring Solutions?*
Mr. Uskov: iSpring is a quality software at a very reasonable price. If you like to do a project with a predictable time, you will need reliable tools, and that is iSpring. You can compare us to Japanese cars. They give a great deal for the money that they cost.

For more information visit: www.ispringsolutions.com

Contact: Rumyantsev Dmitriy + 1 844 347 7764 dmitry.rumyancev@ispringsolutions.com

iSpring Solutions, Inc.