Wuala: Story + Lessons Learned

2010-04-22
Venture Ideas at EPFL
Dominik Grolimund
Overview
Summary

Wuala is an online storage, based on a novel grid technology.

Started research and development at ETH Zurich in 2004/2005.
Company founded in 2007 by Dominik Grolimund and Luzius Meisser.
13 people today, mainly engineers, expanding.

Launched in 2008, now hundreds of thousands of users and millions of files.

Completely self-funded.

Wuala has recently been acquired by LaCie, world-wide manufacturer of external storage devices.
Team

Team of 14 people, mainly software engineers, expanding
11 have a M.Sc./Ph.D. in computer science from ETH Zurich/EPF Lausanne

Dominik Grolimund, co-founder and CEO
Master’s degree in computer science ETH Zurich
Unitech Exchange programme, business and management
Founded Caleido in 1998, sold more than 35’000 licenses of a CRM software

Luzius Meisser, co-founder and CTO
Master’s degree in computer science ETH Zurich
Unitech Exchange programme, business and management
Product

Wuala is a secure online storage

- Backup
- Store files securely in the cloud
- Access from anywhere
- Share with friends and groups

Customers:

- Private users
- Digital content creators
- Small companies
- Universities
Wuala is based on a novel technology that reduces our costs.

Wuala can harness idle resources provided by the users (grid storage).

**Traditional solution (centralized)**

**Our solution (hybrid)**
Awards

swiss made software
A mathematical trick may allow people to scatter their computer files across the world’s hard disks.
Product
Store Files Online

wuala by LACIE
Any File, Any Size
Backup: PC to Cloud
Stream

Wuala Beta - My Files: 2004 USA Landscapes

Public: The folder '2004 USA Landscapes' is public and also accessible through this webpage. Change

oktapodi.mp4

Arches
Flag
Monument Valley
Rocky Mountains
Times Square
Features

Start with 1 GB of storage

Get more storage by

- trading local disk space storage for online storage
- buying additional storage

Secure online storage: All files encrypted on your computer

No file size limits
No traffic limits
Fast downloads
Streaming
Network drive
Differentiation
1. Distributed Cloud

- low-cost infrastructure (sustainable)
- users/organizations can trade storage
Differentiation

1. Distributed Cloud
   - low-cost infrastructure (sustainable)
   - users/organizations can trade storage

2. Security and Privacy
   - all data encrypted on your computer
   - your password never leaves your computer
   - hence, not even we can access your data

   - in stark contrast to Gmail, Dropbox, Box.net, etc.
Innovative Technology

On the users’ computer:

- Roadshow.mpg (60 MB)
  1. Encrypt (AES)
  2. Erasure code (Reed Solomon)
  3. Upload meta data to our servers
  4. Upload fragments to:
     - Fragment servers (ex: 140)
     - Grid network (ex: 300)

Our data center:

- Meta servers
- Content servers
- Fragment servers

On another computer:

- Roadshow.mpg (60 MB)
  1. Download fragments from:
     - Grid network (ex: 97)
     - Fragment servers (ex: 3)
  2. Decode
  3. Decrypt (AES)

Distributed network
Overview of Architecture

**On your computer**
Win, Mac, Linux

1. Drag and drop a file to Wuala

**In the Wuala client**

2. Encryption (AES)

3. Split into redundant data fragments (Reed Solomon codes)

4. Upload of encrypted data fragments to Wuala’s servers (and optionally to the cloud)

**Data centers**
Redundancy in Wuala’s data centers in Europe

- **Switzerland** (Zurich)
- **Germany** (Nuremberg)
- **France** (Paris)

**Distributed cloud**
High-redundancy and good bandwidth in the world-wide grid network

5. Sign in to Wuala on any computer to access and download your files.

**On any other computer**

6. Download of encrypted fragments from Wuala’s servers (optionally from the cloud)
Business Model
Business Model

**Trade** local storage for online storage
- Individuals
- Organizations (e.g., universities)

**Buy** additional online storage

**Premium Features**

Bundling with LaCie products

_Much more to come :-)_
Trading Storage

Turn local storage into secure and reliable online storage

Example: Trade 100GB on your computer to get up to 100GB online on Wuala
Wuala Campus

Online storage for students
Mix and match trading and buying storage

1. Go to wuala.com/ethz
2. Enter code:
3. Start using Wuala!
Buying Storage

10GB for 25$ per year
50GB for 95$ per year
100GB for 160$ per year
500GB for 630$ per year
1TB for 1000$ per year
Premium Features

Traders/buyers get premium features such as:

- **Automatic backup**
- **File versioning**
- **Time travel**
Bundling: LaCie Key/DAS

Online storage bundled with physical devices to provide the full range of storage solutions.

LaCie CooKey, WhizKey, and iamaKey

DESIGN BY 5.5 DESIGNERS

Open Up the Possibilities

Hi-Speed USB 2.0
Up to 32GB

+4GB ONLINE STORAGE
2 YEARS INCLUDED
Bundling: LaCie Key/DAS

Online storage bundled with physical devices to provide the full range of storage solutions.
Much more to come :-) 

Combine intelligent hardware and software
5 Lessons Learned
1 Be Different
1 Be Different

Privacy
Technology
P2P
Positioning
PR
Fundraising
Exit
2 Get out of the Building
2 Get out of the Building

Customer Development
2 Get out of the Building

Customer Development

Agile
Reality Check
Lean Startup
Measuring
3 Making Decisions
3 Making Decisions

Quickly (reversible ones)
4 Fund Raising
All at once, not sequential

4 Fund Raising

Get 2-3 term sheets

Keep them warm
5 Exit
Negotiation

5 Exit

Naïve

Authentic

Use Momentum

Push

Have Alternatives
Thank You! Questions?

dominik@wuala.com