

A navigation belt to feel directions and routes



Key words: navigation device, visually impaired, inclusion



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Head of Sales and Co-founder of feelSpace GmbH | Main product: naviBelts

Aim

To give people, especially the blind and visually impaired, more freedom and independence by facilitating orientation with a navigation device that leaves hands, eyes and ears free

EIT Community connection

EIT Digital Doctoral programme

The project

The idea

My start-up developed a navigation belt that indicates direction via constant vibrational feedback, leaving hands, eyes, and ears free. Visually impaired (and other) users can develop a better sense of orientation and, through this, navigate more independently and comfortably.

Inspiration

I discovered the research on tactile belts through my sister who was involved in the work – I was fascinated by the results.

Unique selling points

The navigation belt provides a stress-free navigation experience that leaves hands, eyes and ears free. It is inclusive and can be used by everybody (not just the visually impaired, but also bikers, hikers, seniors, tourists...).

EIT Community support

I gained all my knowledge of entrepreneurship and running a successful start-up through my training in the EIT Digital Doctoral programme. Thanks to many valuable contacts within the EIT network, I now also know a lot of experts who support me.

The future

I hope that feelSpace naviBelts become commonly used as a navigation device, not just by visually impaired people, but by others as well.

The nominee

The beginning

I developed a business model for producing the tactile belts commercially in 2014 during the EIT Digital Business Model course, because research showed large potential for the blind and visually impaired. My work won a \$25K prize at VT KnowledgeWorks Global Student Entrepreneurship Challenge in the US. I then joined a team of researchers from Osnabruck and established feelSpace with them in 2015.

Joining the EIT Community

I saw a chance to learn more about being an entrepreneur and how to implement research results into actual products that would help people, so I joined the EIT Digital Doctoral programme.

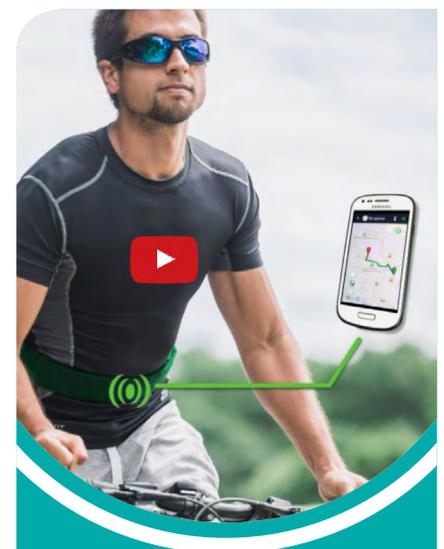
Entrepreneurial spirit

During my first internship at a start-up in San Francisco, I became aware of how much I enjoyed the start-up field myself, and that it is possible to

learn the necessary skills. I started to change my future plans accordingly.

An ideal world

I would like people to believe in the good nature and intent of others. In my experience, trusting people and supporting them to reach their full potential often leads to those people becoming trustworthy. They dare to reach for more and they excel in what they do.



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