

The BRIDGE project is an initiative to develop small business, entrepreneurship and employment of young professionals in the Barents region. Project involves 5 universities, which within their walls conduct the selection of participants of the project. Further, all participants form international teams of two to five people each is assigned a case-task from the company in the host country, which changes each round.

In the first round, which was held in Tornio, Finland, I was assigned to the team with a Finnish student from Lapin AMK University. The assignment for our team was provided by an IT firm called “Datadrivers Oy”. This company was founded in 1994 in Tornio, where it is still based. The main direction of its work is the development of software for course and student management (mainly of driving schools). The company employs 11 people, and the annual turnover of the company is about 1.2 million euros per year.

The main products of the company are 2 programs. The first one is “Netreeni” — a training program for learning driving theory that includes various tasks related to situations on the road, as well as tests on driving theory and road signs. This program is part of the second (more complex) product of the company called “Webauto”, which performs the functions student administration not only in driving schools, but also in professional colleges, training and retraining centers. But still the widest application of the system found among driving schools, which allows to:

- register cadets of driving schools in the system and continue to provide access to their progress at any stage of training;
- set up communication between students, driving school and government agencies;
- plan classes, pay for the course online, etc.

This product is used by about 600 organizations in Finland and Sweden, which is equivalent to 300 thousand users per month. It is worth noting that the company has no competitors (according to the Director) and therefore the company is looking for ways to enter other markets.

After studying the task, a team understood that a company wants to develop an application based on its “Webauto” product, because now it is easier for users to interact and work with applications (which are optimized for mobile devices and provide the best user experience), rather than web services (for interaction with which a full-fledged PC is needed, and it is inconvenient to use them with mobile gadgets). The main team of “Datadrivers” employees went to the optimization of the service and its improvement, so the main task for us was just the design and development of a mobile application on the basis of “Webauto” web-service.

The work in a project was divided into 3 stages:

1. Before the meeting with a representative of the company.
2. After a meeting with a representative while working in Tornio.
3. After work in Tornio.

At the first stage, our team conducted a study of a company and its products. A company has given us

the opportunity to work with their products to get acquainted with the set of functions and evaluate the work of services. Within a team were assigned responsibilities for working with the case, in accordance with the competencies of the participants, as well as the main directions of future work. Also, at a first stage Android OS was chosen for the development of our product, a draft version of the list of functions of the future application was planned and an interview plan with the representative of the company was drawn up.

During the meeting with the representative in Tornio, it became clear that a company needed the simplest possible application that allows users (students of driving schools) to book classes, view information about their courses and pay incoming bills. Any preference on the design of the application hasn't been received, so work on this case began immediately.

At the second stage, an intelligence map of the application screens was developed to simplify the orientation among them and to streamline their communication with each other. Also, a short list of functions was created, which included: booking classes, viewing information about the course and its statistics, notifications about receiving new accounts, as well as viewing the contact data of the driving school. In addition, the team got acquainted with the software used, it was a LAMP system, which includes: Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP. As possible ways of their integration into the application were studied, team have created draft versions of layout of the elements of an application, which are presented in figure 1.

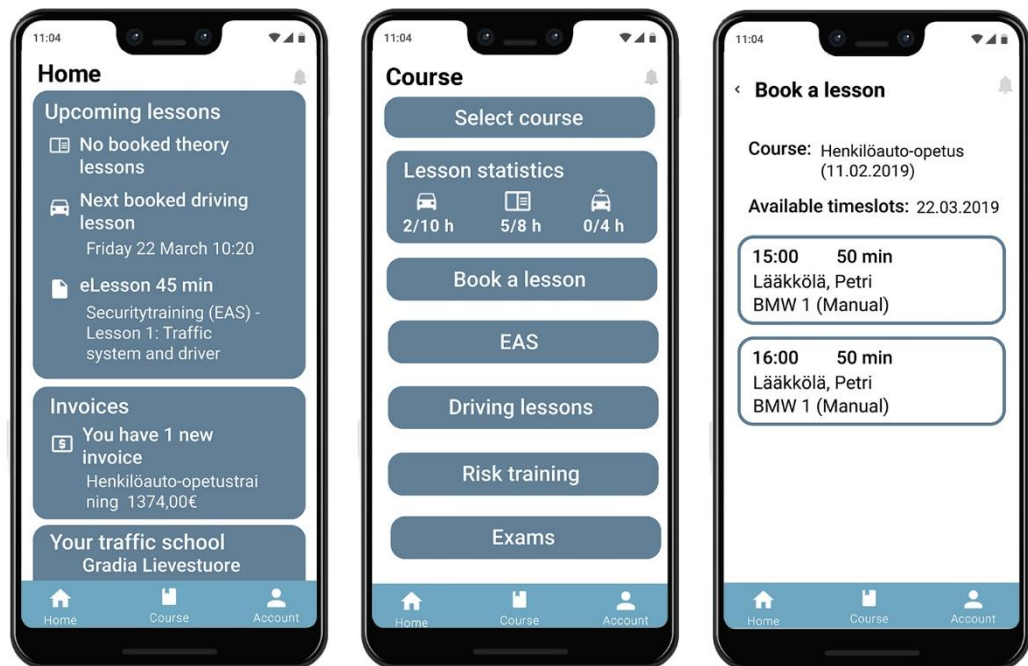


Figure 1. The layout arrangement of elements on the screens of the application.

At the third stage of a project in terms of design there was also a cosmetic revision: the choice of fonts and color palette of an application, drawing of graphics and icons for the main screen, and further design: a separate projection of the reservation screen in an application, improving the visual

component of each screen. In technical terms, a lot of work has been done. A LAMP server with a test database was set up, interfaces for data collection from the server were created, and the main functions of the shortlist were adjusted.

To protect a project, team came up with a ready-made prototype of an application, the screenshots of the prototype are shown in figure 2. The application had the opportunity to book a lesson and view information about the already assigned, it was also possible to receive notifications about new accounts and view statistics of the user's activities, contact data of the driving school.

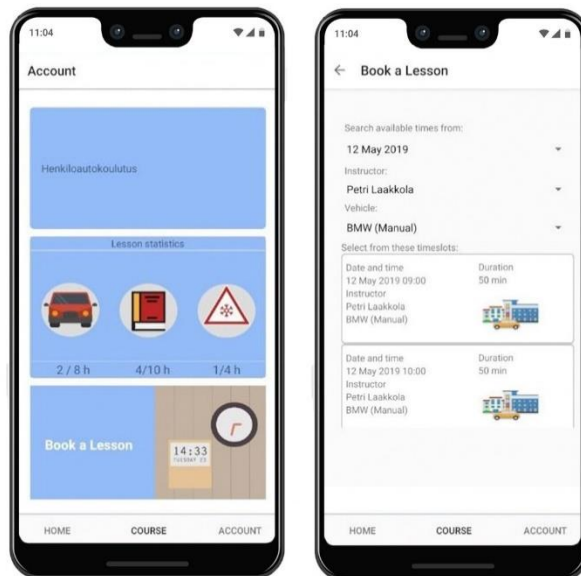


Figure 2. Screenshots of the running prototype application.

In General, our team has implemented all the functions outlined in the shortlist. The representative of the organization was satisfied with the result of our work, he requested a prototype of an application for further acquaintance with his work.

For our team, this case was a real challenge, to create even a primitive prototype of the application with such functionality for a team of two people in such a period is quite a difficult task. However, it was an unforgettable experience of working with people who have completely different working traditions. This exchange of experience and communication facilitate the establishment of international contacts and inter regional economic integration.