Explaining diseases to kids – with comics

A brilliant idea takes flight
Medikidz is a global initiative set up by doctors to help children learn about medical information that’s relevant to their lives and feel empowered by it. It was founded when two New Zealand trainee doctors realised that children were often overlooked when it came to explaining diseases to families. They looked for a way to engage them, and decided that comic books were the way to go.

In the past five years, Medikidz has taken off around the globe. As of 2014 it has over sixty comic books that explain diseases from asthma to x-rays through superhero stories. And with digital content becoming increasingly popular, Medikidz has begun to move into online platforms.

Producing superheroes
Leanne Summers is the company’s Production director, having joined it initially as an intern. As the company moved into digital content, she joined the 12-week Mobile Academy course in order to get the skills she needed to stay ahead of the game.

The Mobile Academy is a collaboration between UCL (University College London) and Mobile Monday London. It is a rigorous course that addresses the challenges of teaching a rapidly changing subject.

“The course was intense, giving me lots of new perspectives that I’m feeding back into the business,” says Leanne. The Mobile Academy helped her understand that all content should be multi-platform, to make it as accessible to the widest possible range of people. “It was a penny-dropping moment to realise just how huge the mobile market is, and how quickly things are changing.”

Staying ahead of the curve
Leanne returned to MediKidz with a far deeper understanding of the mobile space. She’s now equipped to oversee production on three Android apps which will need ever-changing content. “The course answered questions such as what our apps needed to achieve and which smartphones they were for. It helped us to focus on what was important.”

Medikidz goes mobile
Now, Medikidz is fully adapting to mobile platforms. Its recently gained $50m in new funding, which is being channelled into digital and mobile expansion. And thanks to The Mobile Academy course, Leanne can work with the company’s new Digital Director to create content for mobiles that’s dynamic, engaging and personalised.

“From developers to marketers, corporates to start ups, The Mobile Academy brings together people with different backgrounds and levels of experience who learn as much from each other as they do from the experts.”
Julia Shalet, Course Director.

As mobile becomes the primary form for content engagement, The Mobile Academy is leading the way in giving people the skills they need to do their jobs more effectively and stay ahead of the digital curve.
About UCL
UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

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About UCL Advances
UCL Advances, UCL’s centre for entrepreneurship, helps anyone who wants to learn about, start or grow a business. Its primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries. It works to support start-ups and small businesses across London by helping them to access the technical and business expertise of UCL’s staff and students through a series of programmes to help support ambitious young companies.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

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About Business Support
UCL Advances provides direct business support for internal and external organisations through a variety of programmes and activities such as 1–1 advice, problem solving through student consultancy, student internships, training, mentoring and others.

- We help London-based businesses grow and develop by analyzing business needs and connecting them to relevant interventions such as industry mentors;
- Through pairing teams students with businesses we deliver short-term consultancy projects addressing specific organisation needs;
- We broker relationships and fund exchanges between new and aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs in another member state of the European Union;
- Individual angel investors connected to UCL provide seed investment to SMEs engaged with UCL Advances programmes;
- We offer fully funded SME Internships where UCL students spend eight to twelve weeks in a London SME working alongside the director(s) to deliver real results and lasting impact in the host organisation whilst learning about enterprise;
- We offer a variety of training courses and workshops are available to help you learn about, start or grow your business – Boost your business learning with challenging courses at UCL!
- We offer digital businesses user experience consultations, cross-device testing, and large-scale beta testing with detailed use analytics, enabling businesses to make decisions that are evidence based, customer focused and commercially rewarding.

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