Episode 8: Was YouTube the First? The Spirit of Innovation

Explore the episodes of the Spirit of Innovation and One Man's Journey of Lessons Learned in pursuing the American Dream.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, UNITED STATES, June 10, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 2023, home user's average Internet connections speeds are fast at 8.6Megabytes per second and we have YouTube as the most popular streaming video sharing portal. However, in the year 1996, Internet speeds were 14.4kilobytes pers second, 28.8kps and 56kps bandwidth speeds. So YouTube was not possible. Or was it?

In 1996 John F Cruz and ImageMind developed Video Express Album. Video Express Album was a digital content hosting web portal like YouTube that allowed people to create an account and upload either recorded or

ImageMind logo

imported personal voice or video files. These files could then stream over the Internet allowing friends and family to watch without downloading. Sounds like YouTube, doesn't it?
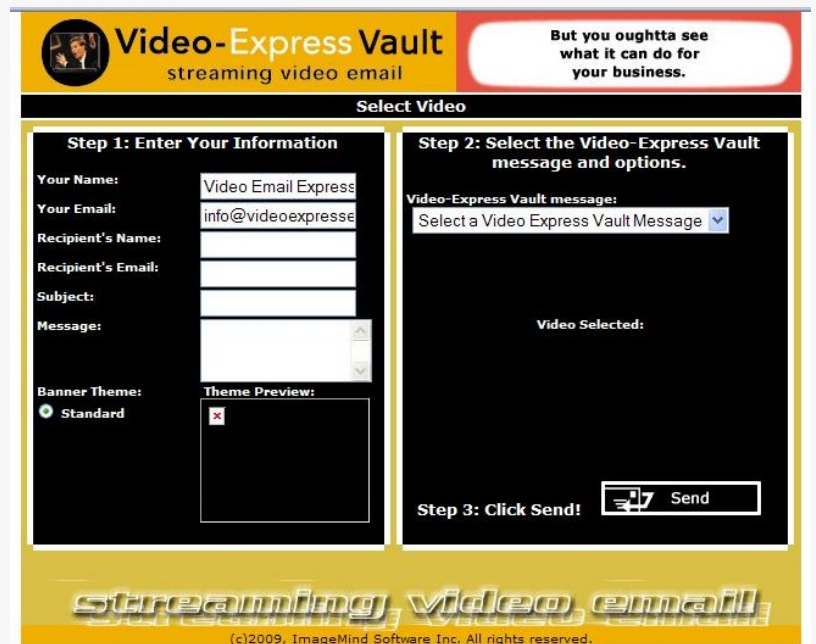
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You must be sure the market conditions are right for your innovation!"

John F Cruz

This was all due to the invention of the new streaming media. But the Internet was extremely unhospitable at that time. However, Cruz and his team made it work by automatically converting files at the ImageMind streaming server. Uploaded files displayed as a selectable item in the person's private online library. Customers would select from a dropdown list and share with a Vault graphical

email with an embedded video message that could expand to full screen. This type of formatted email was first used by ImageMind.

John F Cruz

The new gold rush was software and Internet services. New tech visionaries were pitching their product ideas to investors. Each product added to the valuation of the company. Cruz felt he had the next wave with a web portal offering sharable streaming videos. The number of customers using the software increased the value of the company.
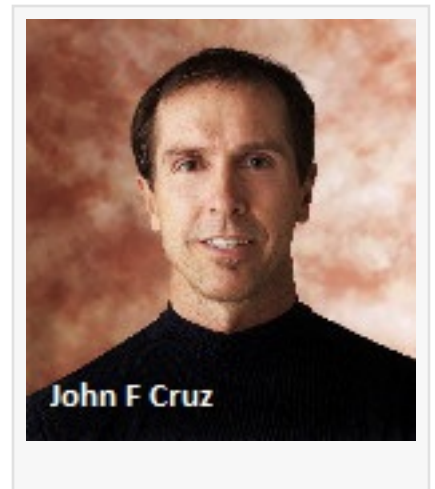
Many owners of tech stocks were millionaires on paper. People that were not part of a new tech startup were searching for ways to get DOT COM stock. Office space rentals in California required tech companies to give stock upon signing a rental lease. Companies like Hotmail rented apartments and converted it into their DOT COM office.

Many people believed John F Cruz was destined to hit a home run. ImageMind had successfully launched Video Express Viewer, an advanced software media player. Video Express Viewer was selling in EggHead stores. Cruz could have stopped innovating and focused on building his consumer base and revenue. The timing was perfect. People liked watching digital media on their PC as CD-ROMs were sold with libraries of pictures, audio and video files. Even the porn industry promoted CD-ROM content in booths at COMDEX.

Video Express Album was another first-to-market product and Cruz felt it would complete ImageMind's product line. But Video Express Album struggled as the market conditions were not right.

Streaming video would be a super home run in years to come. At the time, audio only streams required much less bandwidth than video. It was more practical. For example, the now billionaire Mark Cuban focused on streaming audio broadcasts of sports games. Cruz called Cuban to pitch incorporating ImageMind's streaming video servers into Cuban's broadcasting service. Cuban had interest and referred Cruz to his Business Development Manager Sam Bloom. But nothing came from the discussion. Did the focus Cruz put on streaming video prevent him from billionaire opportunities. Some believe it was.

Video Express Album was a brilliant product vision. But this product was at the mercy pending a faster Internet. User created content was still too much of an obstacle for most home users. Thus came another lesson for Cruz's journey. You must innovate to the market conditions.

YouTube launch years later when the Internet connection speeds were fast and PCs better supported digital media. As a result, YouTube grew to a huge success. Where did the idea for YouTube come from? One could speculate, from one of Video Express Album's customers.

Cruz still felt he needed another product to add to his product line. He asked himself what is the most popular software used on the market and how could he make it better. He found his answer and went to work on a new design for another first-to-market product that could has the potential to changed the way the world communicated online.

Look for details in the next episode of [Spirit of Innovation](), One Man's Journey. Send us your comments at [www.ImageMind.com]()

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