Human Native.ai, enabling AI developers to responsibly acquire high quality data

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to James Smith and Jack Galilee, co-founders of Human Native.ai, about data rights, the AI economy and building a hybrid office culture.

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching Human Native?

[James] My interest in data for AI really sparked when helping ship the first DeepMind model on a mobile device via the Android operating system. Despite Android being a Google product with 3 billion users, the lack of high quality, safe and reliable data was holding us back and making it difficult to measure our impact. This experience taught me a crucial lesson: AI models are only as good as the data they're trained on. So when generative AI started to explode, I began asking myself: why wasn't there an easy way for AI companies to responsibly acquire high-quality data at scale?

[Jack] On the other side of the coin, we could see that data rights holders – be that publishers, record labels, news organisations etc. – were feeling increasingly frustrated at their data being used to train large AI models without getting any compensation. To be able to participate in the AI economy, they need to strike a bespoke deal with each AI developer, but

doing that at scale needed for GenAI is almost impossible for both parties.

Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

[James] _Human Native AI_ is an AI data marketplace that fairly benefits both rights holders and AI developers. We equip AI developers with the high quality, wide-ranging data needed to train powerful systems like Large Language Models, while ensuring rights holders are fairly paid for use of their work, and can take part in the AI economy.

[Jack] What this means in practice is that through our managed marketplace, AI developers can access a catalogue of licensed content spanning text, video, audio, music, and code - in a multitude of different languages. We help rights holders clean and prepare these datasets to get them ready for AI training, and provide recommendations on pricing based on our analysis of the data's quality and value. We also give them granular control over what use cases their work is licensed for.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

[James] We launched in April of this year and we're growing quickly. We got a minimum viable product into production in just 3 months, and we've hired an amazing team from places like Google, Figma and Bloomberg – including some real global experts in AI data licensing. Our product is in a limited access beta, and we're already in conversations with some of the world's biggest AI labs and publishers.

Tell us about the working culture at Human Native.ai

[James] Our company culture is built on a foundation of empathy for both sides of this debate. We're AI optimists who believe in the transformative power of technology, but we also deeply understand and value the work of professional creators. This balance allows us to build bridges between traditional creative industries and the emerging AI economy.

[Jack] We're excited to be building a hybrid office culture too. We have a physical office in London that serves as our hub for real-time collaboration, but also hire top talent globally, allowing us to access diverse perspectives and skills regardless of location. We regularly invite our remote employees to visit our London office to foster a cohesive team culture.

How are you funded?

[Jack] Only two months on from founding Human Native, we raised £2.8M in a seed funding round led by major investors LocalGlobe and Mercuri. This funding has been instrumental in helping us to build out our team, develop our product and secure partnerships.

[James] _LocalGlobe_ and Mercuri's deep knowledge of the technology and entertainment worlds has been invaluable. Their advice and connections have gone a long way in setting us up for success at this early stage.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

[James] We're taking on the challenge of building a true two-sided marketplace, one of the most complex products out there. Success

depends on gaining traction on both sides, but each side moves at its own pace. We're making great progress, but it requires flexibility and persistence.

How does Human Native.ai answer an unmet need?

[Jack] We answer two unmet needs. Firstly, for AI developers who are increasingly _struggling_ to access the wide-ranging, high-quality data they need to train their systems, especially in the volumes needed for GenAI. Many of the major web sources for AI training have _restricted_ the use of their data, making it increasingly difficult for developers to source data responsibly.

Secondly, for data rights holders, whose copyrighted work is used to train AI models. Up until this point, they've had minimal control over how their work has been used, and haven't been compensated either. Human Native provides a way for them to generate revenue from their content, frictionlessly and at scale, while giving them more control over how it is used.

What's in store for the future?

[Jack] In the short term, we're looking forward to announcing our first set of partnerships and continuing to refine our product. We're thinking about how we can source a wide variety of data not only in English, but in other languages from Europe, Asia and beyond.

[James] In the longer term, our ambition is to create a fairer data ecosystem, where creatives and publishers are empowered to participate in this new AI economy. We're optimistic about the future of AI - we're technologists by trade. But it's important that as these technologies develop, we bring the industries with us that are so important to the

development of these tools and to society more generally.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

[James] Cultivate great mentors - especially those who have experience founding and building companies - and learn from their advice.

[Jack] But you're going to be given a lot of advice – some good, some bad. At the end of the day, you've got to stand by what you think is right for you, your team, and your business, making sure it aligns with your personal values and goals.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

[James] I've got a 3 year old, so my rules for living are pretty much whatever she decides they're going to be today!

[Jack] I've never had a routine and even less since the arrival of my 10 month daughter. The closest thing to a rule is the Australian saying: "she'll be right".

James Smith and Jack Galilee are the cofounders of _Human Native.ai._

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