0:00

Alexey

**This week we'll talk about indie hacking. We have a special guest today, Pauline. Pauline is a data science manager and a consultant at IBM, where she has worked for eight years. She is also an indie hacker and is working on a few side hustles in crypto and generative AI. One of her latest projects allows uploading a few selfies and it generates a lot of cool and stylish pictures and I use this service too. So welcome, Pauline.**

0:28

Pauline

Hi. I'm glad to be invited here. I don't see anyone but I guess there are some people.

0:37

Alexey

**I'll open YouTube from my phone, so I make sure I don't miss any questions. Today, I didn't create a Slido link because we were late and I was struggling with Zoom. So today, if you have any questions during today's conversation, please put them in the live chat and I will be covering these questions. Also the questions for today's interview were prepared by Johanna Bayer. Thanks, Johanna, for your help. Now let's start.**

# Pauline’s background

1:12

Alexey

**Before we go into our main topic of indie hacking. Let's start with your background. Can you tell us about your career journey so far?**

1:20

Pauline

Yeah, sure. I started as an engineer – I studied engineering at school. But at this time, eight years ago, data science was very new. There weren't any courses about it – just one in France, actually. But I wasn't in this school. I applied to IBM because it was my dream to work there and it was a match. I was accepted. I studied as a junior data scientist, but I didn't learn it before because there weren't any schools for it. I learned by myself.

Then I became a senior consultant in data science two years later and it's been three or four years. I'm a manager now. Aside from this, I am an indie hacker. From the beginning of the year – it's been a year actually, more or less exactly one year. Yeah, but we will talk more about it in this interview.

2:30

Alexey

**So your first job after graduating was IBM and you're still at IBM.**

2:36

Pauline

I'm still at IBM. Yes.

2:37

Alexey

**That's pretty impressive. People usually don't stick around for that long at one company.**

2:44

Pauline

Yes, I know.

2:45

Alexey

**You must like your job a lot.**

2:49

Pauline

Yes, I like it a lot. Indeed.

2:53

Alexey

**So what do you do as a data consultant at IBM?**

2:58

Pauline

When you are a data consultant, it means I work in the data science area for various clients. I work from project to project. A project is a mission. It can last one month or four years, for example. I think my shortest mission lasted one month and the longer one was two years. So it really depends. I see various clients, various domains. I'm not specialized in a specific business – I work in banks, aerospace, automotive, and also in different data science contexts, which can be things like predicting sales or explainability models. So I'm not specialized. And it's my choice, actually.

4:02

Alexey

**So the way it works is a customer approaches IBM and says, “Hey, I have this kind of project. Give us some people to work on this project.” And then you, along with your team, join the client and you work with them on a particular project. Is that right?**

4:18

Pauline

Yes, exactly. Usually I'm working in a team and there are two or four data scientists that I'm working with. I’m more into the managing part now, but I can also do the models and help by coding, usually in Python.

# Pauline’s work as a manager at IBM

4:39

Alexey

**What do you do as a managing partner? What kind of responsibilities do you have?**

4:44

Pauline

Not a partner but a manager. [cross-talk]

4:48

Alexey

**As a manager/consultant, right?**

4:50

Pauline

Yes. As a manager, you ensure that the models are created. That it fits the client's needs. You are also the relation between the clients and the team. I can present the results of what we achieved, what is in the roadmap – those kinds of tasks.

5:18

Alexey

**Interesting. I don't know if you can discuss that, but if you can – what are some interesting projects that you worked on at IBM?**

5:31

Pauline

Yes. I won't name the clients, but I worked for two years to detect money laundering.

5:44

Alexey

Money laundering. Okay.

5:52

Pauline

Yeah, it was very interesting because I had to think as a person that can do money laundering. So I had to say, “Okay, I have this data. What can I do?” I was working on two years past data, so the team and I had to build a model – a system to detect “strange behavior,” let's say.

6:23

Alexey

**How can you think like a money launderer?**

6:29

Pauline

First there are some patterns that are famous like, let’s say you do some sports betting. It's a tennis match, for example, with Nadal vs Federer and you say, “Okay, Nadal will win.” And you also bet that Federer will win. In the end, you will have spent some money on both, so of course, you will lose money. But for someone who wants to launder money, he doesn't want to earn money, but lose as little as possible.

7:06

Alexey

**Okay, that's a nice strategy.**

7:09

Pauline

Yeah. And what was interesting is that I started to frame the project and I saw it through until the end – the deployment part.

# What is indie hacking?

7:23

Alexey

**Okay, that's all quite interesting and I want to ask more. But that's not the main topic today. Right? The main topic today is what you started one year ago, as you said, which is indie hacking. Maybe, can you tell us what indie hacking actually is?**

7:40

Pauline

Indie hacking when you are building projects – I'm not sure if this is the exact definition but – it's to build projects and to monetize them without any funding. I think this is a new trend, but what was famous before is you have a project, you do a pitch deck, and you try to find investors to invest funds in your company. But I don't do this. I built it with another friend.

We are three, actually, but two of us build it and the other one helps us with administrative and legal. We built this in our free time so we don't have any pressure. We launch when we can. We wanted to launch something this week, but it will be delayed. But it's okay, we don't have any pressure. Nobody knows about it. So that's my definition of indie hacking.

8:58

Alexey

**So basically, during daytime, you work at IBM as a data science manager, but after work (after 5pm or 6pm) you start working on your side projects.**

9:12

Pauline

Yes, exactly. Also during the weekend (mostly during the weekend). It was great, because in December, I had a lot of holidays so I worked a lot on my projects. [chuckles]

9:25

Alexey

**I know in France, you get a lot of holidays – a lot of vacation days.**

9:29

Pauline

Yes. Quite a lot.

9:31

Alexey

**So that's a good country for indie hacking, right? [Pauline agrees] So “indie” I guess means “independent,” right? That's the part that means, as you said, that you don't get any funding from anyone. You just start working on a project and then you see what happens. And the goal that you have is monetizing this project, i.e. earning money with this project.**

9:51

Pauline

Yes, exactly. It doesn't cost a lot. It’s just servers. But we don't need funding.

9:58

Alexey

**Why “hacking” though? “Indie” is “independent” but why “hacking”? Why not just “indie projects” or “indie work” or something else? “Hacking” is more attractive?**

10:08

Pauline

Yeah. I'm not the one who invented this term. But, let's say, I “rebuilt” it. I don't know. Some people say “indie maker,” others say “bootstrappers”. There are different synonyms. I don't know, but I use “indie hacking”.

# Pauline initial indie hacking projects

10:30

Alexey

**Some time ago, I was into games. In games, there was also this concept of “indie developers”. Usually, when you have a game, you work with some sort of publisher who then promotes the game and distributes it. But there are some indie developers who don't rely on these publishers – on this network. They just create a game and they use their own channels for distribution. I guess it's kind of a similar idea. But here, instead of funding, you have independent channels, right? [Pauline agrees] Okay. Tell us about your projects that you do as a part of your indie hacking.**

11:14

Pauline

Yeah. Everything started with Cryptopy. That was my first project. Actually, for Cryptopy, at the very beginning, I did some trading of crypto and I noticed some patterns in the charts. And I was like, “Okay, that would be great to make some things that could tell me whenever crypto would react in some way.” I was trading with technical indicators. At this time, I think it was five years ago, I didn’t have very much development skills. Two years ago, during COVID, we were allowed to travel in France, but we had to be home at night – a curfew.

I visited some friends and one of them is a developer. I asked her, “Hey, do you want to work with me on this project?” Because it really took a lot of time to trade. She said yes, so we built our own solution to be alerted whenever a crypto matches our strategy. We used it and we also automated some parts to trade, but we used it for a year and it was very profitable. So I said, “Okay, it's great for us.” So maybe we can also offer it to others. We launched an offer of alerting in crypto. It was in September that we launched the offer.

13:21

Alexey

**Okay, so first, you used it only for yourself – you used it for trading crypto. And it wasn't public, it was just you and your friend who used it. [Pauline agrees] But then you thought it could be useful for others too and then you made it public. Is that right?**

13:39

Pauline

Exactly. We use it privately and the company was created in January of last year. But in September, we launched the offer. It wasn't a success at all. [chuckles]

13:56

Alexey

**It wasn’t?**

13:58

Pauline

No, no, no, no. It's very hard because this is not my audience. I don't know a lot of traders, so it's hard to be known in this domain. And it's okay. I mean, we built it for us, so we learn from it. That was the beginning and we said “Okay, we launched one offer, why not launch something else?”

14:26

Alexey

**But at least you made money with this tool anyway – for your own trading.**

14:31

Pauline

Yes.

# Getting ready for launch

14:32

Alexey

**So that was useful. [Pauline agrees] You said it wasn't successful in the end, but I'm still curious – between the time you realized that it's useful for others and the time when you actually launched it, what happened?**

14:49

Pauline

What happened? Umm…

14:52

Alexey

**What did you do exactly from that moment in January when you opened the company? You were doing something in the other months – between January and September – right? So what did you do then?**

15:09

Pauline

In January, we created the company because it was better for us to have money in common. We used our system on our side – so we had to maintain two systems, which was a bit time consuming. We decided to create one company in order to join our investing money and maintain only one solution. That's why. Then, I think it was in August that we said, “Okay, we can launch an offer.” It was very quick to transform it to an offer, because everything was coded, so we just had to make a landing page, and do a bit of legal things like licenses and things like that. But it didn't take much time.

16:06

Alexey

**What did you use for the landing page?**

16:10

Pauline

What did I use?

16:12

Alexey

**Can you tell us what the landing page is? Why do you need a landing page? Isn't it enough to just create an app and expect people to join?**

16:24

Pauline

Well, by landing page I mean our website. It's not a mobile app or something like that. People had to know about it, so we created a landing page. I created it from scratch. I was the one to do it because I already built some websites. I reused a lot and changed, of course, the content, images, etc.

16:57

Alexey

**So you just used something like Bootstrap, I guess, and then put some text there and a button that says “sign up here,” right? That's what the landing page is?**

17:04

Pauline

Right. Yes. Exactly.

17:07

Alexey

**Okay, so you did this and then you also said that you needed to take care of some legal parts. What was that? What did you need to take care of?**

17:18

Pauline

Yeah. It was a product to monetize, so you have to take care of privacy, terms of use, and things like that. Also, you have to think about, “If I want to monetize, I'll also need a payment system.” So we had to find it and integrate it to our app – those kinds of things. But you don't have to think about this if you build it for yourself.

17:57

Alexey

**Okay, so the privacy policy and all these things. I guess you don't want to get sued if somebody loses money?**

18:05

Pauline

Yes. No, I don't. [chuckles] We are not advisors. At first, we wanted to let people automate their trade. But it's legally very complicated, so we don't. We just let people say their strategy and they are alerted when the crypto matches their strategy.

18:31

Alexey

**And what does your friend do? Is she also in data science, or is she a developer?**

18:37

Pauline

No, she's a Java developer.

18:41

Alexey

**Java developer, okay. Is this what you used for Cryptopy? Java?**

18:45

Pauline

No, we used Python, [chuckles] because I wanted to be able to modify the code. Also, with Python, there is a framework that you can use for web development. It's called Flask and we used it. But we could have also used Java and do some frontend with this better. This is not a technology I know, so we used Python. There is one feature that she did in Java.

# Responsibilities and challenges in indie hacking

19:24

Alexey

**I see. So you both work on everything? How do you split responsibilities between the two of you?**

19:33

Pauline

For Cryptopy, at first it was equally split for the development and then when we thought about launching an offer for people, we split it. She did the development, and I'm more in the marketing part – trying to find relationships, etc.

20:02

Alexey

**What do you do in marketing? I guess it’s mainly promoting and letting people know that this thing exists, right? You said that you had problems with this. So how did you try to approach that?**

20:13

Pauline

For Cryptopy, it was very difficult i. It was also my very first experience, because as you know, my “real” job, my day job, is in data science. It's not related to marketing. It can be by exploring some marketing models, but it's not the same as doing marketing. I tried to join some Facebook groups or Reddit, but I was banned very quickly. [chuckles] I said, “Okay, this is not a good approach.” So I started Twitter this summer. I thought, “Okay, I could use Twitter to speak to people.” And so I did this.

Very quickly, we noticed that it was very difficult to reach an audience of crypto traders. I also contacted a lot of people from crypto – influencers, etc. But influencers are very difficult to reach. You have to get money to get them to do anything. So we couldn't afford it. Very quickly we said, “Okay, it will be very difficult to monetize this offer.” So we left it like that and we started building other projects. And so we started UnrealMe.

21:46

Alexey

**Before we go into your second project – I'm really curious about that, too – maybe you can mention how much it costs you to maintain this thing. You said you're not actively working on this right now. It’s just there. But I guess you have to pay for hosting and for other things. I’m wondering how expensive is it to just let it run in the background?**

22:06

Pauline

Yeah, it costs about 10 euros a month. [chuckles]

22:11

Alexey

**Oh, not that expensive. [Pauline agrees] I guess if more people start using it, it will become more expensive, right?**

22:21

Pauline

Yeah, probably. But not that much. I'm not sure that it will be very much more costly, because it doesn't use many databases. So I don't know.

22:35

Alexey

**From what I see, I saw some other ideas or some other projects in this space of indie hacking. Most of the projects in the indie hacking space are pretty small and focus on a specific problem. They don't do much except for solving this particular problem. Is this a correct observation?**

23:05

Pauline

Yes. It's all niche markets. Exactly. You try to validate an idea, so you start with a small project. If it works, then you invest more time in trying to improve it. And if it doesn't, you have to say “Okay, I’m leaving,” and you start another one.

# Pauline’s latest indie hacking project

23:33

Alexey

**So tell us about the other one you had.**

23:37

Pauline

Yeah. I was actually on holiday, and I saw DreamBooth. Also someone called Levelsio on Twitter explained that he built a system where you can send pictures of yourself and transform them into new pictures. I was wondering how he did this, so I did some research. Finally, I told my friends about it to start this and said, “Yes, let's do the same.” We didn't reinvent the wheel, but we wanted to try it.

We learned very quickly because we had most of the development done. I think we launched in a few weeks after the idea. It was kind of a side of a side project, because first we have our work and also because we were actually working on a Twitter tool that I hope we will launch very soon.

25:03

Alexey

**Okay. You said that this project is called UnrealMe.io. For this project, you send a few pictures of yourself and then what it does is use DreamBooth (it uses something) to create new pictures from the pictures you send? [Pauline agrees] You said you first saw a tweet, and you thought, “Okay, I can do this.” Then you contacted your friends who liked the idea, and you released it in a couple of weeks.**

25:36

Pauline

Exactly.

25:37

Alexey

**Can you walk us through how you did it? What exactly did you do between seeing this tweet and actually releasing it? What did you need to do?**

25:48

Pauline

First we studied. We were wondering, “Should we start from scratch with DreamBooth (DreamBooth is a model)? Should we use it with our own GPU?” Because it's fine tuning images, it uses GPU, and it's very expensive. We had this choice or we could use an API to do the fine tuning. We chose the second solution because we wanted it to be fast. What happened is – we had this idea, so we had to build a system to do the API calls and to store images of the people to send it and to get the result. When the result is done, we have to store it and send the picture to the users. We had this to do and also to launch it – talk about it on Twitter, mainly. But what is funny about it, our first sales weren’t on Twitter and we didn't launch yet. I subscribed to a Black Friday list and someone saw it. I don't know how. So yeah, that's fun.

27:33

Alexey

**I just want to summarize. First, you saw the idea, which was that there is this algorithm called DreamBooth that takes pictures in and then creates new pictures. You liked the results and you wanted to make a project – a small software as a service project – that other people can use. Then, correct me if I'm wrong, you found an API that uses this algorithm and then you built your project around this API. Right?**

28:08

Pauline

Exactly, yes.

28:09

Alexey

**Okay. I guess this is another service that you used, right? So you needed to pay them? [Pauline agrees] This is an API, but it doesn't take care of storing images and all that, so what you needed to build was all these things – getting images from the API, saving them somewhere, and then sending them to the customers, right?**

28:38

Pauline

Yes, exactly.

# Going live and marketing

28:41

Alexey

**Okay. You said your first sale came even before you went live. You put the link somewhere?**

28:47

Pauline

Yes, there was a list of Black Friday deals. It was this week that we launched. I just subscribed but I didn't imagine someone would see it, to be honest. And wow, yeah. Someone saw it.

29:04

Alexey

How did you do the launch?

29:07

Pauline

I talked about it on Twitter. I also use some personal media – on my personal Instagram or Facebook. But I think mainly all sales came from Twitter and also the Black Friday sites, because there were other sales from this website.

29:32

Alexey

**Okay. So what did you do? How did you announce this on Twitter? Did you just say “Okay, this is our new cool project – go check it out?”**

29:41

Pauline

Yeah, something like that. [chuckles] I also displayed some pictures of myself saying “This was done using UnrealMe.” Yes, that's pretty much it. Maybe there is some better way, but I'm still learning for this job. [chuckles]

30:07

Alexey

**Yeah, I cannot think of a better way, probably. That's good. I guess you also rely on other people sharing their pictures, right?**

30:20

Pauline

Yes, exactly. Some people shared the results. You were one of them. Thank you. [chuckles] Yeah, I also saw it displayed on the website. Other people can have some examples in order to see the result. Also, if they want, they can ask the user, “Does it really work?”

30:47

Alexey

**Your results were pretty impressive. From my pictures, it didn't work well. But the reason for that is, because when I saw that you launched this, I just took my phone, took a few selfies from different backgrounds and from different angles and that was it. But I guess you used a lot of different images, right? So it wasn't from one day.**

31:10

Pauline

Yes. I remember when you tried, I think you had a green shirt on earlier and you have a green shirt now. [chuckles] AI is not magic. I mean, if you send only a picture where you are like that, you will be like that on the results. But it's not magic. [chuckles]

# Challenges with Unreal Me

31:31

Alexey

**What was the main challenge here for this project? In the previous project, you said the main challenge was reaching the target audience (crypto traders) and it's not easy. What was the main challenge here?**

31:46

Pauline

I think the main challenge was also customer acquisition. It is very hard. But at least with this project, we made some sales. Not enough to be Ramen profitable, which is a very famous target when you are indie hacking. But I think the main issue was to reach people and also to get some not too high prices. At the very beginning it was very difficult because it cost I think it was 15 euros per fine tuning. After you add our costs, it was difficult to do low prices. Also it's something that is not very useful. I mean, it's fun to have a picture of yourself in AI. It can be useful, I know. You can use it for professional settings. I know some people use it for Tinder.

33:03

Alexey

**It’s a nice use case. Somebody actually uses it for Tinder, right?**

33:07

Pauline

That's what he told me. Yes. [chuckles]

33:10

Alexey

**Do you have his testimonial on the website? Like “I used UnrealMe for Tinder and I found the love of my life.” No? [chuckles]**

33:27

Pauline

[chuckles] That would be a great story, I guess.

33:32

Alexey

**Yeah, exactly. [chuckle] I guess in both of these cases reaching the target audience was the main problem. [Pauline agrees] Is this always the case? When you build something, you cannot expect that people will just come? Do you need to proactively promote it?**

33:48

Pauline

Proactively. Yeah. This is something that you will really see (or at least I saw) when I make sales. Every time I talk about it, it doesn't happen just like that. Another issue is the time, of course. I was lucky for UnrealMe because my friend was still on maternity leave, so she had time because she was alone at home and sometimes with the baby. I know that sometimes she had some time.

34:33

Alexey

**Sometimes babies sleep, right?**

34:35

Pauline

Yes, exactly. When you're alone, I guess you…

34:39

Alexey

**You do indie hacking. [chuckles]**

34:44

Pauline

You think about a lot of features that you can do, but of course, we are limited in time.

# Staying motivated with indie hacking projects

34:55

Alexey

**What motivates you to do this? Why did you even start working on indie hacking? Because you wanted to learn more outside of your job? What was the main driver for you?**

35:08

Pauline

Yeah, I think I enjoy the ideation part – thinking about things that could be done. I also like to create. That's something that motivates me. I think it’s a good addition to my work, because although I like my work – and not that you do the same thing all the time at your work, because it's very not true – this is kind of a personal project. I can work on whatever I want. I think it's really interesting.

# Skills Pauline picked up while doing indie hacking projects

35:47

Alexey

**The skills that you acquire through these projects – through indie hacking – do they help you with your main job?**

35:59

Pauline

Actually, yes, because it gave me a new culture. Before indie hacking, I used my free time to do whatever things. Now I use this free time to also know more about AI – about data. I guess it's profitable for IBM, of course. Also, I trained myself to learn new skills. I think I understand data engineering better now, even if it's not really the part I'm working on, I learned GCP with this – some parts of it.

36:52

Alexey

**You learned GCP, you learned data engineering, and you also learned marketing – social media marketing in particular. What else did you learn?**

37:03

Pauline

What did I learn? I learned that even if you are a very good developer, without marketing, you're nothing. [chuckles] There are also some indie hackers that say, “Just launch before building,” so they do a landing page with a newsletter and see if people are interested. And if they are, then they build. I actually met someone who did this and he invalidated his idea like that. So yeah, it really depends. I forgot, sorry, the question at the beginning.

37:42

Alexey

**The question was – what kind of new skills did you pick up? GCP, data engineering, social media marketing, idea validation – what else?**

37:51

Pauline

I think that's also quite a lot.

37:54

Alexey

**That's already a lot. But maybe there is more?**

37:59

Pauline

Probably…

38:01

Alexey

**You said that you already knew web development to some extent when you were building the landing pages.**

38:09

Pauline

Yes. At first, I built the landing page, but that was a skill I already had. After, when we made a few sales, we were able to build some templates. So now, for the next project, I can build faster because I have a very nice template already done. Because the website I did before was kind of quick to do, but not very awesome. At least I don't find it beautiful, but it's the best I could do. Also something I learned is about new tools, like using more Photoshop. It's a tool I use a lot, but I'm still at the very beginning of learning.

39:08

Alexey

**Did you ever need to use Photoshop at IBM?**

39:12

Pauline

Sometimes I use it for IBM, yes.

39:14

Alexey

**Okay, so I guess this is another useful skill you picked up that you can use at work, right?**

39:19

Pauline

Yeah, but I use it not so much for work with a client but some for internal projects sometimes. Yes.

# Balancing a day job and indie hacking

39:27

Alexey

**How do you balance your work at IBM with indie hacking? Is it difficult? I guess if you work from nine to five, and then at the end, you might be exhausted and then you have other projects to work on. How do you find the energy to do this?**

39:49

Pauline

I think it's just patience. If I told you I love to ride horses then you say, “Okay, wow! That takes patience. That’s great!” Or “I love dancing. I do two hours every two days.” etc. It's very common to have hobbies like that. Mine is building projects. I don't see it as exhausting. For me, I'm motivated to work on it, actually. It's not “Okay, my work day is finished. Ugh, I have to work again.” I don't see it as work. Actually, I think it's essential if you want to do indie hacking in addition to your work, you have to be passionate about it.

40:54

Alexey

**So that's your hobby – it gives you energy. At the end of the working day, you might be tired, but you started working on your side projects and you get energy from this.**

41:08

Pauline

Yes. And if I don't, I just don’t do it.

41:13

Alexey

**Because you don't have to, right?**

41:17

Pauline

I don't have to, yeah.

41:20

Alexey

**That's where the “independent” (indie) part comes into play. You don't you owe anything to anyone? You don't have funding, you don't have investors, so nobody's pushing you to actually work except for only yourself.**

41:40

Pauline

I think it could be different if I had a successful service used by a lot of users – probably there would be some client support, and we would have to manage our time, but this is not our case. We'll see later for that. [chuckles]

# Micro SaaS and AboutStartup.io

41:59

Alexey

**I saw a tweet from you – it was actually a reply. The tweet that you replied to was, “Do you have a list of micro SaaS ideas?” And you replied that “Of course, there are many on my list.” So maybe, can you tell us first of all, what is a micro SaaS (micro software as a service)? Is this what we discussed? All these things that you built are micro as software services projects?**

42:27

Pauline

Yeah. I don't know if the term “micro” is important but yeah, I have a lot of ideas. I have my Notion to-do list. Of course, I won't build them all. When I have an idea, I work on a project – if it works, that's cool, I can improve it. If it doesn't, I start a new one, as I said. Now I'm working on some Twitter tools to make better analytics of your data. This is one I will launch as well. There are other ones on my list. I won't tell you what they are, not because it's confidential, but because I don't know if I will launch them one day. There is one actually that I can tell you about, which is blog creation.

It's called AboutStartup.io. This is very new. I just launched today, you probably see it in your tweets. The idea of it is – I wanted to interview other people that do indie hacking, or that build some companies, even if it's a small one, in order to inspire people. Also to say that there are not only successful people – it takes time and that's okay. When you start doing indie hacking, you shouldn't think “Okay, I will be a millionaire at the end of the year or something like that.” I think this is not the way to think because it's very hard. So I want to share some stories. This is something I wanted to do for a long time, so I just started.

44:35

Alexey

Okay, great. I’m looking forward to seeing this. This is a blog, right? [Pauline agrees] It's a website with a bunch of articles. It's not a software as a service thing?

44:47

Pauline

Yes, exactly. It’s not.

44:52

Alexey

**So how can you earn money with this? Or is it more like just a fun project?**

44:58

Pauline

It's a fun project, but there are some people that earn money with blogs. There are several ways to do this. Imagine you have a blog where you talk about cars a lot. You can find a sponsor who will say, “Okay, I'm a car manufacturer. Can you write an article about my car?” That's a way of earning money. You can also monetize with ads and also with affiliation. That's a few ways.

# How Pauline comes up with ideas for projects

45:39

Alexey

**I see. Interesting. You said you don't want to talk about particular ideas that you have on your list and that's understandable. But maybe you can tell us how these ideas ended up on your list? Where do you get ideas from?**

45:53

Pauline

Yeah, so sometimes I'm trying to do something and say, “Oh, but this doesn't work well. How can I do something else?” Exactly like Cryptopy – I was on my computer looking at the chart and said, “Oh, this takes me too much time. How can I reduce this time?” I Googled it and didn't find any solution to fix my problem, so I said, “Okay, it doesn't exist. I will build it.” It’s also because I have the skills to do it. I mean, if I don't like the bread in my city, I won't create my own bread. [chuckles]

46:36

Alexey

**I see. So it mainly comes from your frustration or from the limitations of other tools. There is a tool that solves a problem, but it doesn't solve it in a way that you want and you say, “Okay, it's possible to make it better.” And you take note of this idea.**

46:59

Pauline

Yes, exactly. That's exactly what we did. The exception is for Unreal Me. It was really just because we saw other competitors that validated the idea, so we said, “Okay, maybe we can earn some money with it.” So that was different.

47:18

Alexey

**What are your plans? You said that you are about to launch this AboutStartup.io today, and then you have a Twitter analytics tool. What else should we expect from you in the future? Or you don't know yet?**

47:36

Pauline

I don't know, it depends. Because I like to share my results and not only “Hey, I'm successful!” but also, as I said, you have to show failure. I like to be transparent. While doing this, there was one person that contacted me and said, “Okay, about Cryptopy – I have a crypto audience. Can you create a Telegram for me, so that every time I trade, my audience sees what I bought or sold?” So this is the kind of opportunity that you don't expect at first, but this happened.

48:28

Alexey

**Okay, interesting. What you’re saying is that you plan to work on your existing projects a little bit and then maybe there are some new ideas that you will have, and maybe you will launch them too. Right?**

48:43

Pauline

Yes. I think it's very common that you have an idea and then you start to build it and say, “Okay, maybe I can do it differently.” And so you change your mind.

# Going from an idea on paper to building a project

48:54

Alexey

**And the way you do this – let's say you have an idea on this list that you haven't started working on yet. How do you go from this idea on the list to actually launching it? What are the steps?**

49:08

Pauline

First, I talk with my friends and we evaluate if there is really a need – if there are a lot of competitors, for example. We don't want to build just to build. Again, except maybe for Unreal Me because we could build it very quickly. So we evaluate and we say “Okay, do I need this? Yes. Will other people need it? Probably. Do we have the skills to do it? Yes. Okay, then we can build it.” That's also what happened with the Twitter tools. I tweet a lot and I saw that the Twitter analytics tool is very bad. At least I don't like it. [chuckles] It's helpful, but there is a lot of information I can’t get from it. I wanted my own tool. I know some other tools exist, but they all have different offers. I think I offer something different, at least I believe in my own way.

# Pauline’s Twitter success

50:35

Alexey

**Since you mentioned Twitter, you also said (correct me if I'm wrong) that you started your Twitter account in the summer of 2022. [Pauline agrees] Now, you recently tweeted that you have 10,000 followers. This means you got 10,000 followers in half a year, right?**

51:00

Pauline

Yes, exactly.

51:01

Alexey

**That's a very impressive result. How did you do this?**

51:05

Pauline

I think I started this in June, and I had 11 followers, [chuckles] because I had the account for a few years, but I didn't use Twitter before. I guess one day I subscribed and never came back. This summer, I had an interesting conversation with someone who told me about personal branding. He created some companies too and he told me, “You create one project and you create an Instagram for this project. Then you create another project, you can put the trust of your audience that you’ve built for the first one. You want continuity. The common thing between all your projects is you, actually.” I said, “Okay, that's true. I want to share with people what I do.” I do data, I do indie hacking, so I talk about both and it seems that people like it.

52:19

Alexey

**Otherwise, they wouldn't follow you, if they didn’t like it, right?**

52:27

Pauline

Or maybe they click ‘follow’ accidentally? [chuckles]

52:28

Alexey

**Yeah, accidentally – maybe one or two but not 10,000.**

52:36

Pauline

I hope so. [chuckles]

52:38

Alexey

**What do you think you followers like more, posts about data science or posts about indie hacking or something else?**

52:47

Pauline

I think it works better with data science because people can identify more with it. When I share courses or some use cases, I think I get more interaction from it. But I don't build my Twitter only strategically. Indie hacking is an important part of my life and I want to share about it, so I choose not to go all in on data, and to talk about the two subjects.

# Connecting with Pauline online

53:24

Alexey

**I see that there is a question from Kevin. The question asks if there is any way to connect with you. Are your DMs on Twitter open? [Pauline confirms]. Okay, then we will have the link to your Twitter account in the description and then you can just contact Pauline. Also, you are in the DataTalks.Club Slack, right? So that's another way to contact you.**

53:53

Pauline

Yes, I had successfully connected a few times before, but it was very personal. It was because of my computer. But in the end, I reached it. Yeah.

54:06

Alexey

**You don't use Slack at IBM, do you?**

54:09

Pauline

Yes, we do. That was exactly the point. I thought I couldn't. I thought it was a conflict if I use Slack for other (not IBM) spaces, but actually it works. So that’s great.

54:24

Alexey

**Good. You recently made a general post saying Happy New Year, right? Something like that.**

54:33

Pauline

Yes, I think so.

# Pauline’s indie hacking inspiration

54:35

Alexey

**So thank you. Happy New Year to you as well. Another question from Kevin is whether you know Pieter Levels. Do you know who Pieter Levels is?**

54:48

Pauline

Yeah, I know him, but not personally. I saw his account.

54:54

Alexey

**Okay. What does he do?**

54:57

Pauline

He’s an inspiration. He is an indie hacker that built around 70 projects. A few of them became successful. He built one project that is called interior.ai – it's a website where you can generate a new interior for yourself using AI.

55:34

Alexey

**Interior dot IO, you said, right?**

55:38

Pauline

I'm not sure about the link.

55:40

Alexey

**Maybe just send us the link later.**

55:44

Pauline

Yeah. So what it does is – you send a picture of your apartment and it generates new decorations. This is the one I was talking about earlier, where I got the inspiration for Unreal Me. He was the one, when I saw his project was working I said, “Okay, it works for him. Why don't I try it?” So I tried it. I wasn't as successful, of course. He has a big audience, and he was the first and he did it very well.

56:22

Alexey

**I guess also for Peter, maybe it wasn't successful from the first attempt. It probably took a few trials before something took off.**

56:32

Pauline

Yes. He shared a list recently – I think it was 70 projects that he did. I think he makes a living from four of them. Maybe five? I don't know.

56:48

Alexey

**So if you shoot many arrows, then a couple of them will hit the target, even if you're a bad archer?**

57:02

Pauline

Yeah, I think the more you build, the more chances you have to be successful.

# Pauline’s resource recommendation

57:10

Alexey

**Do you have any book or other resources that you can recommend to the listeners?**

57:18

Pauline

About data, there are two words that I really love – Data Sense. It's a blog where they share a lot of use cases of data, something I read really frequently. But I don't read much. I don't have a lot of books to recommend. If you want inspiration about indie hacking, of course, AboutStartup.io is very cool. [chuckless]

57:49

Alexey

**Okay. So that's the resource you recommend to check. I guess when we release this recording as a podcast, AboutStartup.io will already be live. We will also include the link in the description. That's the resource you should go to if you want to learn more about indie hacking. Cool. Anything else you wanted to talk about but we forgot to mention?**

# Conclusion

58:19

Pauline

I think we talked about pretty much everything.

58:24

Alexey

**Okay. I guess we should be wrapping up. Thanks, Pauline. It was a pleasure having you here, finally. We postponed the stream a couple of times – finally we met. We had some technical difficulties, so this time we used StreamYard. The important thing is that we actually did this finally. Thanks for joining us today. Thanks for sharing your experience. As you said, it's very important to share the experience even though some things didn't work, maybe in the way you expected them to work, but it's still important to share this. So thanks for doing this.**

59:04

Pauline

Thank you for inviting me. It was very great to be here. It was my very first podcast to be honest.

59:12

Alexey

**Ah, that's cool. So you will remember this.**

59:15

Pauline

I did one but without video.

59:19

Alexey

**Okay, second one. Okay, then. Thanks, Pauline. Thanks, everyone, and see you soon.**

59:27

Pauline

See you. Bye bye.