

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/history-of-zip2>

Musk started by writing some small software over the summer and eventually started talking to some publishing companies who developed interest.



Transcript

Writing software during the summer of '95.. Trying to make useful things happen on the internet.. I wrote something that allowed you to keep maps and directions on the internet and something that allowed you to do online manipulation of content; kind of a really advanced blogging system.. Then we started talking to small newspapers and media companies and so forth.. We started getting some interest.. I mean, half of the time it'd be like watch the internet, you in Silicon Valley.. But then occasionally, somebody would buy it and we get a little bit of money from them.. There were, basically, only six of us.. There were myself, my brother, who I convince to come down from Canada; and a friend of my Mom's.. And then three sales people we hired on contingency by putting an ad in a newspaper..

But things were pretty tough in the early going.. I didn't have any money.. In fact, I had negative money.. I had huge student debts.. In fact, I couldn't afford a place to stay and an office.. So I rented an office instead.. Because, actually, I got a cheaper office than I could get a place to stay.. I just slept on the futon and shouted the YMCA on Paige Mullen.. It was the best shape I've ever been.. There was shower work out and you're good to go..

There was an ISP on the floor below us.. Just like a little tiny ISP.. And we'd draw a hole through the floor and connect to the main cable.. That gave us our internet connectivity like a hundred bucks a month.. So we had just an absurdly tiny burn rate.. And we also had a really tiny revenue stream.. But we actually had more revenue than we had expenses.. So when we went and talked to VP's we could actually say we had positive cash flow.. That helps, I think..