Technical and User-Oriented Prerequisites for Video CV Web-Based Recruitment Platform

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Abstract: Youth unemployment tends to be higher than in other age groups mainly because young people represent an inexperienced labour force. Some authors also believe it is due to an inability to match the qualified workforce to vacant positions. The importance of enabling young people to participate equally in the labour market is of the essence for economic growth. One of the attempts to tackle this issue was addressed through the Erasmus+ project CUVID, aimed at providing young people a way to present themselves in video-based form. This paper analyses quality standards for video CV platforms. For this purpose, 19 expert interviews with HR managers were conducted to identify their expectations towards video CVs. Based on the analysis of expert interviews, a recommendations summary with technical and user-oriented prerequisites was created, along with requirements and a transferability model for video CVs in the form of the CUVID platform.

Keywords: employment; labour market; recruitment; video CV; web platform

1 INTRODUCTION

A growing concern of high unemployment rates among young people in the EU has been addressed in many scientific papers as well as in media and daily conversation. According to the Eurostat [1], in the year 2021, around 5 million young people (aged 15-29 years) were unemployed in the EU. The main reasons for this high number could be attributed to lack of experience or adequate qualification after young people finish their formal education and enter the labour market. Some authors also state that there is a recorded deviation or inability to match the availability of young workforce and vacant positions [2].

As Generation Y has grown up with the internet, they are tech-savvy and are actively searching for jobs in the job market. This factor prompts them to apply through online recruitment, either through job portals or the company website [3]. A habit of daily interaction between humans and a wide range of online services raises the question of why aren't all segments of life covered by this wave of digitalization. One of the areas that remains almost the same is the process of reviewing a job application. The most common way of applying for a job is to provide a written resume that contains all the essential personal information, qualifications, and skills that could help an HR manager to make an educated decision about a job candidate. Curriculum vitae or CV is a short account of one's career and qualifications prepared typically by an applicant for a position [4].

A video CV, as opposed to a traditional, written resume, provides a more in-depth overview of the applicant's personality traits and communication skills, both of which are highly valued in today's business [5, 6]. HR departments adopted new recruitment practices as remote work became more common following the coronavirus pandemic crisis. Among these practices are video interviews, which provide a better overview during the recruitment assessment stage [7, 8]. Employers must have a streamlined recruitment and selection process to gain objective insight into applicants' formal and other achievements [9].

Implementing other forms of evaluation or digital presentation of personal academic or other relevant achievements is not a novel practice for tech companies and digital natives but rather a widely spread practice [10]. Employers have been screening potential employees' online activities since the advent of social media. The issue arises when job applicants fail to consider their digital social accounts as a potential source of information for future employers. Businesses are abandoning measuring applicants' institutional appropriateness by forming opinions based on information from social media profiles as awareness of privacy and discriminatory concerns grow [11, 12]. It is expected to meet those needs and trends by providing a more comprehensive revision of the traditional approach to job application through the development of an adequate tool for presenting an online resume. For this purpose, a video presentation would be the best option.

The Europe 2020 strategy focused on promoting economic growth through one of its flagships, The Youth on the Move. This flagship aims to enhance the performance and quality of the education and training systems, promote youth mobility, both for learning and work purposes, ensure a smooth and speedy labour market transition of young people, and reinforce the international attractiveness of Europe's higher education [13, 14]. As a response to the Europe 2020 strategy, the CUVID (CUrriculum VIDeo) project was applied and approved. The project was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Europe continued making youth unemployment its priority by adopting Youth Employment Support in 2020. Key actions include broadening young people's age group from 15 to 29 year-olds (previously 15-24), being more inclusive to avoid any forms of discrimination, and being more future-proof to profit from the digital and green transitions [15].

Fostering employment and social inclusion of young Europeans is at the heart of the CUVID project. While young graduates from academia also suffer from high unemployment, VET (Vocational education and training) graduates encounter even more difficulties finding (first) employment. For that reason, project focuses primarily on VET students and teachers. The objective of CUVID is to

enable young people to present themselves and their skills to potential employers most beneficially and effectively. With this project, young people will not only be motivated to use a new application method but will also be able to gain skills in video production, job application methods, and self-presentation that they can also transfer and benefit from in other contexts. The task for the partners involved in the CUVID project was to develop a web-based platform designed to provide a solution for video CV presentations.

This paper aims to provide a gap analysis by conducting interviews with HR experts to obtain recommendations from their perspective, clarify their expectations and special needs, create tailor-made videos CV platform, and identify specific problems and challenges with regard to video-based application processes and forms.

2 METHODOLOGY

Semi-structured expert interviews were conducted to define the technical and user-oriented prerequisites for developing a video-based CV web platform. As a part of a more extensive research, expert interviews with 19 heads of companies or HR experts were carried out. The goal was to establish how they would perceive and rate the introduction of a video CV platform as a new or alternative way of evaluating applicants for a specific job position, as well as their perspectives on the benefits and potential drawbacks of such a platform. Results provided in-depth qualitative insight that contributed to the extraction of conclusions and guidelines in the later stages of the project.

Interviews were carried out as a part of the Erasmus+ project with companies that fulfilled predefined criteria in partner countries: Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Portugal. The CAWI method was applied during the interviewing process. This considers the use of computers for recording, following guidelines, and presenting mock-ups and sketches of existing video CV platforms.

Table 1 List of anonymised interview participants with company description

ID	Country	Industry/Sector	Employees
P1a	Austria	Metal industry	1050
P1b	Austria	Automotive industry	6500
P2a	Portugal	Specialized Retail	1200
P2b	Portugal	Training and consulting	17
P2c	Portugal	Plastic industry	220
P2d	Portugal	Vocational training	20
P2e	Portugal	IT Company	140
P2f	Portugal	IT Company	35
P3a	Croatia	Chemical industry	861
P3b	Croatia	Agriculture	1620
P3c	Croatia	Construction	440
P3d	Croatia	IT Company	50
P4a	Austria	Hotel industry	340
P4b	Austria	Automotive industry	3500
P5a	Czech Republic	Health service	840
P5b	Czech Republic	Automotive industry	520
P5c	Czech Republic	Machinery	10
P5d	Czech Republic	Health / fitness	10
P5e	Czech Republic	Automotive industry	570

2.1 Sampling

Purposive sampling, which is common in qualitative research, was applied. The project proposal predetermined the size of the sample. The selection of the companies and their representatives was based on characteristics relevant to the study. Criteria for choosing the interview candidates:
1) Local companies in all consortium countries that have employed at least ten vocational occupations through the job application process in the last three years, and
2) Companies that have implemented customized software for the business optimization process.

Both criteria had to be met in the process of interview candidates' selection.

3 RESULTS

Results are divided into five distinct segments: gap analysis, expectation/needs, advantages, obstacles, and recommendations. These segments include semi-structured open-ended questions presented and elaborated to the interview participant by one of the representatives of the projects partner country. The outcome presentation only includes the most pertinent elements for debate.

3.1 Gap Analysis

In this segment, the intention was to determine the standard procedures for evaluating job applications. All interviewed companies have developed their own standardized evaluation and employment process.

"We have our own evaluation process based on common and professional standards" – P5a

The procedure usually starts when a need for a specific work position is detected. After that, the company advertises job requirements on a platform of choice: press media, radio, websites, job offer portals, local web portals, social networks, recruiting centres, and in a few cases, Labour market service. The most common are three rounds of evaluations. Starting with preselection – elimination of applications that do not meet job requirements, after which follows a personal meeting with the HR officer or commission where testing for a job occurs, and the latest round is a final interview with the board members and or head of the department requesting a job opening.

A significant difference is detected between large and small interviewed companies. Larger companies tend to receive a large number of applications per job vacancy. Hence, they needed to develop a more structured way to manage all the applications through a digitalized database which they also consult in future job offerings. In contrast, small companies have fewer candidates, so they invest their time in evaluating them more closely. Interestingly, most of the interviewed companies are not using or are not satisfied with the local Labour market service and mostly rely on their own communication channels (paid, owned, or earned) with the labour market.

With regard to how they see that the current application process can be improved, interviewed companies can be divided into two broad groups: those that are satisfied with the current application process and the ones that see room for improvement. Out of 19 respondents, 7 or 36,8% are satisfied with the current state, and 12 or 63,2% of interviewees would like to implement innovations based on experience.

When asked where they see added value in the introduction of video CV applications, 7 out of 19 interviewed companies did not see the added value. The main reasons stated were that the video CV application form is almost unknown to them and that there is a potential danger of discrimination. Also, it would present a certain difficulty when searching specific keywords within a video, unlike in a written form, and uncertainty about whether the candidates would feel comfortable with the video presentation.

"In my experience, I can say that I have not seen any tool that is really helpful in improving the selection process" – P1b

On the other hand, 12 out of 19 interviewed companies, or 63,2 %, see added value in Video CV format. They state that the first impression is essential in detecting desirable characteristics; it makes the selection process faster in the early stages, and it is easier to estimate if the person is truthful and motivated. It also helps centralize the applicant database, encourages creativity, shows that the applicant is interested in the position, and shows information beyond the capabilities of traditional CVs.

3.2 Expectations/Needs

The most common needs specified in the process of traditional (paper) CV applications amongst interviewed companies are the need for more space for personal expression and the difficulty of examining soft skills in written CV form. Additionally, some participants stated that the importance of motivational letters is underestimated as it covers three essential issues: why me; why this company; and why this job position. Also, it is a great way to differentiate yourself from other competitors when similar qualifications or work experiences are compared. Proof of formal education is something that needs to be added to job applications when it comes to applicants with a lower level of education or qualification. Also, it would be nice to have a chance to update or correct CVs once it has already been submitted.

"More space for personal expression" – P5c

"…it would be useful to have a verification on declared information (diplomas, recommendations...) ". – P5e

3.3 Advantages

Only one of the participants sees no direct advantages of using CV video application in terms of making their job more efficient. The rest of the participants highlighted speeding up the preselection process, saving time and money by streamlining the process, making the evaluation process more collaborative, centralized tracking, consistency in the application of specific criteria, more in-depth way to evaluate candidates, and getting more information than they usually

would from a written application and thus making decisions about candidates easier.

"Bringing useful information in one-minute sequence…" – P5c

"If there would be a complete package, everything standardized – then it might help save time." – P4b

3.4 Obstacles

When asked if participants could identify any specific problems and challenges considering video-based application processes and forms, they responded that it could affect how candidates are perceived if they don't feel comfortable in front of the camera. As previously mentioned, it could raise some discrimination issues. Furthermore, integration with the current recruitment system could be difficult, and problems with candidates not using appropriate/suggested technology and the security conditions for content privacy are not guaranteed. Today's social network platforms largely depend on popularity and the number of registered users, so that could be an issue in the case of the CV video platform. Also, it would be unfair for the candidates that do not have access to the required technology to be excluded from the evaluation. Smaller companies are happy when they get any applicants, so if there is a prerequisite of sending a video for a job position, they could get even less. They see this type of presentation suitable only for some job positions.

"We see your idea of connecting companies and applicants in this virtual marketplace as a long-term process that needs to take many details into account" – P4b

Interviewed companies state that the reasons for rejecting an applicant's resume or portfolio in video format would be the same as for a written CV – if the candidates do not meet previously defined and posted requirements. A lack of communication capacity would put off a certain number of companies if the competencies do not match the job description. Such practices would include below average presentation of content and frivolous approach to profile or video creation. Affectation, pretence (acting) and making the video look like an advertisement would also be seen as reasons for rejecting the application.

3.5 Recommendations

Almost all interviewed participants would consider implementing a video CV platform in the future. Some would like to try it out of curiosity, some for experimental purposes, and as an opportunity to re-evaluate and upgrade the current recruitment system.

"If it works efficiently and does not imply a massive additional effort to forward a Video CV internally to a department manager (maybe by using a link) then it is a professional tool with added value." – P1b

Participants see benefits such as time-saving, the chance to evaluate candidates' character and appearance, and an opportunity to generate an additional pool of applicants that they could use in search of a perfect candidate for open positions in the future. Participants were mostly unified when providing general tips for potential applicants concerning

presentation tips, dress code, amount of information to provide, etc. The gathered statements are presented in Tab. 2.

Table 2 General tips for potential applicants – as provided by interview participants

Presentation tip	Introduce yourself
	Past job experiences
	What job position are you applying to
	How can you contribute
	What are your expectations
	Objective, concise and professional communication
	What differentiates you from others
	Provide easily proven information
	Take time to make the video personal
	Inform yourself about the company
	Highlight your best features
	Tell only information relevant to the applied position
	Appear authentic
	Relaxed presentation
Dress code	Adequate for the job position
	Clean and respected look
Amount of information	Short video
	1 – 1,5 minutes
	less is more

3.6 Video CV Platform Features

In this section, participants defined the criteria concerning quality and applicability as well as rated the importance of video and sound quality when evaluating the applicants' video CVs. On average, participants preferred that applicants upload short versions of video CVs that would last up to 138 sec on average and 175 sec for the extended video CV version. They expect the video and sound to be clear and understandable.

Tab. 3 shows the selection of relevant services and technical assets that participants chose based on their preferences. These services include geo-positioning of applicants, webcam interviews, social network presence – LinkedIn, Facebook, the possibility of transfer of CV profiles from other social platforms, past work presentations, awards, diplomas, recommendations, standard CV in PDF etc.)

Participant recommendations also included: timeline of application status (accepted, rejected, under consideration), dashboard with analytical capabilities, drop-down menu for job categories when conducting a search, candidate status (unemployed, employed, between jobs).

Companies expect applicants to emphasize the following elements in their video CV: education and work experience in detail, career breaks, and hobbies or interests if there is enough time on the video pitch. Also, they have pointed out that there should be two versions of video CVs, short and extended video versions. A short video CV version should contain answers to the questions: who am I; what are my competencies; what are my strengths; what are my weaknesses and why this job position. Extended video CV version should be used for presenting values that correspond with the company culture, readiness to be a part of the team, and skill demonstration, e.g., for a cook apprentice, a video would be done in the kitchen. Certainly, it would be desirable to see what distinguishes them from the competition.

Companies usually expect a customized video for a specific job position because it shows effort and engagement.

Table 3 Additional services and assets companies would prefer on Video CV platform

ID	Geo positioning	Web cam interview	Social network presence	Awards, diplomas, etc.	Standard CV in .pdf
P1a	X	X			X
P1b	X	X			X
P2a		X		X	X
P2b		X	X		X
P2c	X				X
P2d		X	X	X	X
P2e	N/A				
P2f	N/A				
P3a	X	X		X	X
P3b	X	X	X	X	X
P3c	X	X	X	X	X
P3d	X	X	X	X	X
P4a	-				
P4b	-				
P5a	-				
P5b		X	X	X	X
P5c	X			X	X
P5d			X	X	X
P5e	X		X	X	X

According to the participants, the most prominent place of the applicants' profile should be used for presenting the most important information such as name, age, vocational or academic degree, address, and work experience. Companies would be interested to see the profile picture and the job position the applicant is applying for.

As expected, most participants count on the possibility of interacting with their applicants via e-mail (Tab. 4.). Although they like private messaging and push notification options, most interesting information is that they would continue or would like to use the phone for contacting their applicants.

Table 4 Preferred ways of interacting with the potential job applicants

E-Mail	Private Message	Push Notifications	Phone Call
X11 (58%)	X6 (32%)	X7 (37%)	X8 (42%)

3.7 Limitations

Although much attention was given to the selection of interview candidates, a small sample size, typical of qualitative studies, limits the generalizations and external validity of the findings. Also, geographical distance between partner countries proposes a different starting point when choosing between potential interview candidates depending on the availability of companies in the area that are relevant to this research. As this qualitative research is exploratory in nature, it covered the main aspects of the topic and addressed the most prominent research issues.

4 CONCLUSION

All interviewed companies have developed their own standardized evaluation and employment process. The significant difference between interviewed companies is

between large and small companies. Larger companies tend to receive a large number of applications per job vacancy. Hence, they needed to develop a more structured way to manage all the applications through a digitalized database which they would also consult in future job offerings. In contrast, small companies do not have that many candidates, so they invest their time to evaluate them more closely.

Companies are most concerned that a video CV is not a widely accepted job application format. There is a specific need for a solution to minimize companies' concerns when presenting the added value of video CV vs. standard application. Furthermore, there is a potential danger of discrimination, difficulty in searching specific keywords as it is possible in written form, and uncertainty on whether the candidates feel comfortable about video presentation. These identified problems can be tackled by implementing an awareness program among concerned parties, which is already a part of the CUVID project proposal. By providing video tutorials, candidates are instructed on how to perform in front of the camera, thus making them more comfortable in such situations. In addition, it should be considered that the video CV platform should have some key word search capabilities.

Some participants stated that video presentation is more suitable for some job positions and less for others. For that reason, video tutorials should suggest how all candidates, regardless of their vocational orientation, could utilize video CV presentations for their benefit. Only one of the participants does not see any direct advantages of using CV video application to make their job more efficient. The rest of the interviewees highlighted: speeding up the preselection process, saving time and money by streamlining the process, making the evaluating process more collaborative, centralized tracking, consistency in the application of specific criteria, more in-depth way to evaluate candidates, and getting more information than from a written application thus making decisions about candidates easier. The major obstacles identified by interviewed participants were the difficulty of integrating with the current recruitment system, problems with candidates not using appropriate/suggested technology, and the security conditions for content privacy are not guaranteed. Also, they can see that this type of presentation suitable for some job positions but only for some. In most cases, reasons for rejecting a video CV application would be the same as for a written CV – if the candidates do not meet previously defined and posted requirements.

The data collected through expert interviews served as guidelines for the design model based on which a web platform for video CV presentation was created within the CUVID project approved by the Erasmus+ program. This model can serve as a simulation or a blueprint for interested parties looking to implement a more efficient solution for the e-recruitment process. The practical implication of the work stems from identifying technical elements that, in a practical sense, contribute to the functionality and good user experience of jobseekers and employers in the labour market. The economic contribution is reflected in HR experts' confirmation that the web platform for video resumes would help them solve the organizational issues surrounding the recruitment process, increase the business's digital presence and more efficiently find the right person for the vacant position.

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