



MetaMoji Press Kit – 2014

OVERVIEW: HISTORY

MetaMoji's founders, Kazunori and Hatsuko Ukigawa, have over thirty years of experience in advanced technology development.

They were the founders of JustSystems Corporation, which registered and won hundreds of patents and created the first commercial approach to the use of alpha-numeric keyboards with Asian languages, such as Japanese, and which also developed the first office productivity software, including word processors, for the Japanese market.

Kanji conversion

For Japanese, whose writing system is among the most complicated in the world, an efficient kana-kanji conversion engine is essential for computer users. In addition to the Western alphabet, Japanese programs must accommodate the hiragana and katakana writing systems, each consisting of 46 characters, and thousands of kanji. To input kanji, computer users must first type characters in roman letters, which are interpreted as transliterations of kana, and then convert them into kanji by choosing from a list provided by the conversion engine.

Kaz and Hatsuko, running what was for many years Japan's only significant personal computer software maker, introduced the ATOK kana-kanji conversion engine in the early 1980s. ATOK, in combination with their Ichitaro word processor, long retained its top position, despite endless challenges from Microsoft.

Their Ichitaro word processor, introduced in 1984, continues to be the only true "native" word processor in Japan and is still the word processor of choice in Japanese schools and government offices. In addition, the Ukigawa team produced Japan's first digital spreadsheet (Shanshiro), database (Goro), and drawing (Hanako) applications. All remain in widespread use today.

Imagination and awards

These early stage productivity applications were also supported by imaginative and award-winning advertising that became classics in the history of Japanese marketing.

Kazu and Hatsuko have shown a distinctive passion, historically, for inventing technology that not only solves immediate problems, but charts the way to future developments, often serving as a role model for other developers in Asia and around the world. Their breakthrough word processor, Ichitaro, was a revelation, not just because it revolutionized document creation in the Japanese market, but also because it introduced that market to features (including interfaces) that were not commonly available even to users in the West at the time -- such as a "windows"-based presentation.

This came years before Microsoft got around to supporting such developments. The current MetaMoJi team consists of some of the finest software engineers in Asia – veterans who have participated in these innovations over the years, working side-by-side with Kazu and Hatsuko.

A “click” away

The applications designed by Kaz and Hatsuko typically offer an enormous range of features, "just a click away" in intuitive configurations. Hatsuko, who has been in charge of engineering and design over the past 30 years, has always emphasized functionality balanced with harmony and aesthetics in the on-screen interfaces, delivering a user experience that is graceful and a pleasure to use.

MetaMoJi, continues to create revolutionary new productivity and connectivity apps – now including Note Anytime and Share Anytime – that are transforming the global workplace by helping everyone work smarter.

A marriage of programmers

The 1979 marriage of two computer programmers from remote Ehime University in Southern Japan has transformed the world of business and personal computing

across Asia after four decades – but this legendary, visionary couple aren't finished yet.

Kazunori and Hatsuko Ukigawa met as classmates at Ehime University on the island of Shikoku. Both were studying electrical engineering and both were focused on computer programming. Both graduated in 1973 and they were married in 1975.

Their shared interest in bringing the Japanese language fully into the digital revolution resulted in their first major company, which was the first in the world to successfully link the kanji characters prevalent across Japan and China to a Western keyboard system.

Because of their pioneering work, both Kazunori and Hatsuko Ukigawa enjoy deep respect in the information systems industry across Asia and around the world.

Preserving the Japanese language

In their own country, Kazunori was the youngest member to serve on the governing body of Kokugo Shingikai, the Japanese Information Ministry governing preservation of East Asian Han ideographs and the Japanese language as Japan entered the computer age and cyberspace.

His wife and partner, Hatsuko, was the only Japanese and one of few women in the world chosen to become a full member of the powerful international Unicode Consortium.

Unicode innovations

The Unicode Consortium is a global non-profit corporation devoted to developing, maintaining, and promoting software internationalization standards and data, particularly the Unicode Standard, which specifies the representation of text in all modern software products and standards.

Members of the prestigious organization include major computer corporations, software producers, database vendors, government ministries, research institutions, international agencies, and important user groups around the world.

The first company that Kazunori and Hatsuko founded was also the first in Japan to implement the new Unicode architecture in word processing software. More recently the couple have introduced a new technology, xfy, on XML and Java which is based on the Unicode standards and policies and is now in Version 5.0.

Beyond the keyboard

Because of the innovations first introduced by the Ukigawas, speakers of Asian languages were able to fully participate in the computer and Internet revolutions while using their own languages and character sets, transforming and elevating business practices, productivity and process controls to emerging global standards.

In 2009, Kazunori and Hatsuko formed a new company, MetaMoJi Corporation, that is specifically focused on providing handwriting stroke-based business productivity and work-share connectivity not just to Asian users, but to the world.

Since its founding, MetaMoJi has quickly introduced a new wave of global software innovations by turning digital mobile devices into “smart paper” with a revolutionary set of products including 7Notes, Note Anytime, Share Anytime and the Su-Pen stylus.

MetaMoJi creates

MetaMoJi creates products to break barriers between devices and users with revolutionary applications on smartphones and tablet devices. MetaMoJi’s unique innovations give users the comfort of an analog experience with the convenience of digital technology.

MetaMoJi’s mission is to contribute to the advancement of human beings with unique applications to collect knowledge, write documents, organize ideas and share them with others. Please visit the corporate site for more information.

MetaMoJi creates products designed to overcome the barriers that make it hard for people to use advanced technology.

No. 1 iPad app in Japan

MetaMoji created “7notes” – a revolutionary application for smart phones and tablet devices that lets users communicate with those devices via handwritten input – a natural and “analog” key that unlocks the power of digital technology when keyboards don’t suffice.

The company’s 7Notes is a handwriting conversion app that quickly became the number one paid iPad application in Japan. It was instantly the second-best grossing app in its iPhone version. The first English edition ranked in the top ten in 21 countries in its first year, with downloads from over 80 countries

MetaMoji has also created “Note Anytime” – a full-featured note and document application. MetaMoji’s mission is to make all human knowledge work and communications easy, efficient, and available to all users, no matter their age or background.

In 2013, MetaMoji introduced Share Anytime, an interactive virtual whiteboard for simultaneous editing of visually rich documents in full vector graphic resolution. Share Anytime also now instantly captures and records image, text and sound in real time from meetings using the app.

MetaMoji has its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, with R&D centers in Tokushima, Fukuoka, Osaka, and Fujinomiya, and global partners in Silicon Valley, London, Vancouver, and Seattle.

Vision

The vision of Kazunori and Hatsuko Ukigawa is to fundamentally transform computer interaction into a much more natural experience that goes beyond the traditional QWERTY keyboard – bridging paper and pixels in a process as easy as jotting down a note in a notebook or sketching and amending drawing with pencil and paper.

The software that both of these computer industry legends have now developed at MetaMoji is unique in its ease of smoothly handling and processing handwriting and hand-marked input.

Each stroke of a finger or stylus is recorded in high-resolution vector graphic imaging – making every part of a letter, sentence or drawing a work of personal art and artistry.

Breaking down barriers

Kazunori and Hatsuko Ukigawa are still committed to breaking down barriers between devices and users with revolutionary applications for smart phones and tablet devices.

Their aim is to provide a smooth and easy use experience – regardless of the operating systems, formats or languages required by business and personal communication. It is the comfort of an analog experience combined with the convenience of digital technology that can be e-mailed, printed, archived or shared – in real time.