

Google Capital Invests in Duolingo

Pittsburgh, PA (June 10, 2015) – [Duolingo](#) has just closed a US\$45 million investment round led by Google Capital, with participation from its previous investors.

The most downloaded app in the Education category on both [Google Play](#) and [iTunes](#) now has over 100 million users. There are in fact more people learning languages on Duolingo in the United States than in the entire US public school system.

Yet the most appealing aspect of Duolingo for Google may not be its impressive numbers or accolades but its novel approach to what may be the future of online education.

"Duolingo's mobile-first, adaptive, and gamified platform is changing the way people are learning languages across the globe," said Laela Sturdy, partner at Google Capital. "We were blown away by Duolingo's growth and engagement numbers, and we're thrilled to partner with them as they shape the future of education."

Educational technology has largely focused on video-based platforms. Passively watching an offline experience on video has not only lead to disappointing course completion rates but also inhibited the collection of data that can be used to optimize learning outcome.

Duolingo's digital-native interface has paved the road for a new chapter in education by requiring constant user attention and engagement, while its gamified design motivates students to come back on their own. More significantly, every tap can be analyzed in large scale to improve the rate of knowledge acquisition.

A large team of machine learning PhDs is using this data to craft adaptive courses that deliver tailored education for each student. According to a [well-known study in educational psychology](#), the average tutored student performs better than 98% of students learning in a 20-person classroom. "Because human tutors are scarce and expensive, we are using technology to give everyone access to a personalized education in a scalable way," said Luis von Ahn, Duolingo's co-founder and CEO.

The company's mobile-first mentality is also bringing quality education to most people's pockets. Traditional classes require access to specific locations, financial resources and large chunks of time, while Duolingo's "bite-sized" lessons can be consumed in minutes, from anywhere. This is particularly impactful in many international markets where access to schools or high quality education is significantly lower than access to mobile phones.

Even traditional classrooms have adopted Duolingo in large scale. The recently launched [Duolingo for Schools](#) platform already has over 100,000 registered teacher accounts. Some teachers have substituted language textbooks, while others have adopted the platform's

curriculum. Students do extra work due to the game-like interface and receive real-time feedback, allowing teachers to optimize in-class time by addressing general questions.

The investment will enable the Duolingo team to make the platform even more adaptive, personalized and effective, and to expand the platform's presence in schools across the globe.

Duolingo had previously raised a \$3.3 million Series A investment round lead by Union Square Ventures in 2011, a \$15 million Series B led by NEA in 2012 and a \$20 million Series C led by Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers in 2014. Other investors include actor Ashton Kutcher and author Tim Ferriss.

About Duolingo

Created by crowdsourcing pioneer Luis von Ahn and Severin Hacker, Duolingo is known for its free, science-based language education platform selected by Apple as iPhone App of the Year in 2013, by Google as Best of the Best for Android in 2013 and 2014, and by TechCrunch as Best Education Startup. With over 100 million users, Duolingo is by far the most popular way to learn languages online.

The platform currently offers over 40 language courses, including Klingon and Esperanto. There are more people learning Irish on Duolingo than the native Irish-speaking population, and in just a few days since launch, more than three times as many Esperanto learners as there are members of the World Esperanto Association.

About Luis von Ahn

Luis von Ahn is the inventor of reCAPTCHA, a crowdsourcing technology used worldwide to digitize millions of books every year. Luis sold two companies to Google in his 20s, was awarded the MacArthur Genius grant for his accomplishments and has been featured in The Economist, The New York Times, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and other prominent media worldwide. He received his Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University.

About Google Capital

[Google Capital](#) is a growth equity fund backed by Google. Google Capital invests in companies that use technology to change the way people experience the world. Advised by Google technology and product leaders, the Google Capital team has the extensive operational and technical expertise to make smarter investments and help our portfolio companies succeed. Some of Google Capital's investments to date include SurveyMonkey, Lending Club, Credit Karma, ZenPayroll and Glassdoor.