

The map search module of Microker for producers and craftsmen

We connect producers to customers through a web application

Microker Limited Partnership was founded on 7 December 2002 by two natural persons, and its main activities were business consultancy and accounting services. One of the founders and managing director is Éva Lengyel, the founder and operator of the map search website of Microker for producers. The original main activities of the limited partnership were gradually ceased. From the beginning of 2017, we started developing the web application within the framework of this organisation and in the future the limited partnership will also provide the operational background of the website.

Microker is a map search system where producers and customers can find each other directly. The objective of this website is that more people can get healthy food from controlled sources and closer to their place of residence, in addition, more producers can sell their products at the place of production at a lower cost.

Objectives

raising awareness, promoting sustainable food consumption, promoting sustainable livestock production and promoting chemical-free (bio) agriculture by providing the public with information on what products they can access in their vicinity and where, who produces them and under what circumstances. Promoting small-scale producers and markets and strengthening local communities is one of our objectives.

Project description

After a long period of planning, the development of the website began by a team in January 2017, based on the plans of the founder. The map search module of the website of Microker was also optimised for mobile phones, and on 13 December 2017 it was launched in test mode, then it went live in June 2018. It can be viewed [here](#).

On the website you can set the distance from your location, and you can also search for products and producers. The results appear on a map, so you can quickly find where the product you are looking for is located closest to your location. Producers can create a profile where they can show their farm, upload their products, photos, prices and descriptions.

We created the Facebook group “What is Microker? — Buy directly from producers!” to provide customers and producers with a communication interface.

In early January 2019, the next step of the development was translating the website into English. It will expected to go live in the last days of January 2019. Thus the website will allow people from abroad the find local craftsmen and local gastronomic specialties wherever they travel.

This website currently has 805 registered users and is free of charge, out of which 294 producers are selling their products. In addition, there are producers registering

from the neighbouring countries of Hungary: areas of Serbia, Romania and Slovakia inhabited by Hungarians. 5 000 flyers and 500 posters have been made to promote the website, we will start placing them in the coming weeks.

The website of Microker has gained a significant amount of users and followers in a short period of time. The number of our Facebook page followers has passed 2 000. The group “What is Microker? — Buy directly from producers!” currently has more than 1 800 members.

The Hungarian National Rural Network promoted Microker on 12 January 2019 as a pilot project on its website, see [here](#), and on 21 January, it was the first article in its monthly newsletter as a good practice in Csongrád County (as an annex).

After 6 months of operation, we can say that this website will not only bring together producers and customers, but will also help create smaller communities. The marketplace of Microker is currently operating only in the Facebook group. In this, the producers publish their products on a daily basis, and those who are interested can write them and organise the delivery. Several charitable donations have been given, and there are a lot of pieces of feedback of satisfaction from customers. Producers often share photos and videos about the farm and their daily activities, so that customers can get information about where and under what conditions the products were produced.

Because communication does not take place on the website due to a lack of development, this makes it much more difficult to promote the website. If the communication interface is completed, it is expected that the number of website users will increase significantly. In the future it is also planned to display the producer markets on the map with opening hours, possible discounts and notices. After the website has been fully completed and promoted, it will contribute significantly to sales increase in the short supply chain.

At the moment, apart from Microker, there is no interface or database where people can find producers and craftsmen closest to their places of residence. Finding producers on advertising sites is cumbersome, you also cannot set the distance from your location. The map search module of Microker is a solution that allows you to quickly see on the map, after entering the search term, how far the given product is from your location.

When the website becomes more known, it is likely that you may find the product you are looking for within 1-2 km. Only self-made products can be displayed on the website, and trading and selling of used goods are not allowed on this interface, which makes sure that you buy directly from producers. Producers can also be evaluated on the page with written feedback, so you can develop trust for a producer with good feedback already when searching.

The cost of developing and promoting the website to date has been entirely financed by the founder, and the day-to-day running is done on a voluntary basis by her.

Cost of development so far:

- situation assessment, planning: HUF 350 000;

- graphic works, web design: HUF 250 000;
- programming, development: HUF 2 291 000;
- operational costs: HUF 80 000;
- Promotions, marketing: HUF 860 000;
- translation, proofreading: HUF 150 000;

Costs in case of availability of the current state and additional financial resources:

- Creating a landing page for viewing from abroad, translating: HUF 450 000;
- Planning and programming of communication interface: HUF 2 800 000;
- Advertising and media campaign: HUF 2 500 000;

After the promotion of the website, in case of a sufficient number of users and visitors on the website, the revenue from the placement of ads according to the topic of the site is expected to provide opportunities for further development, therefore we plan to develop the display of local producer markets on the map according to this, displaying opening hours and local discounts.

If our future revenues allow, we plan to organise events with the involvement of registered producers and craftsmen on the site to promote local food and handicraft products and to strengthen local communities.