



Case Study

TheGreenShot

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It's no secret that producing entertainment—films, shorts, commercials, video games, etc.—is a colossally expensive affair. Hundreds of millions of dollars are often spent to bring a given piece of content to the market, and tracking where all that money goes can be a challenge. Along with the financial burden, such giant productions also carry major environmental concerns. The emergence of regulation and mandatory reporting, along with consumer pressure, means that production companies increasingly need to be aware not just of how money is being spent but also about a production's carbon footprint.

To meet this need, CSAIL Alliances Startup Connect Plus member [TheGreenShot](#) created a suite of production management software. Their products engage crew members to gather the granular knowledge necessary for producers to make better decisions both for the environment and their bottom line. Now, with the help of CSAIL expertise, they're aiming to elevate their technology to the next level.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The idea for TheGreenShot began when co-founder and co-CEO Max Hermans was working as a general location manager on large productions. He noticed that there was very little visibility of how real-time money was being spent and that consequently, the process of creating entertainment was unnecessarily wasteful. Because entertainment is such a people-intensive area—employing over 30 million worldwide—motivating such a huge workforce to behave in a way that would allow for proper data collection, especially in fast-paced environments like a film set, was a difficult problem. In 2018, Hermans began to work on a solution and, in 2021, the company launched at the Cannes Film Festival, where they piloted their product with the film *Annette*, starring Adam Driver. Co-CEO Véronique Pevtschin, who joined TheGreenShot after 15 years in cybersecurity, jokes that Hermans might be the first person to launch a startup on the red carpet.

Initially, TheGreenShot offered a single, large suite of connected programs to track everything from carbon reporting to finances. However, they soon realized that this created an unnecessary hurdle for customers, since a given production might not need every aspect of their system. They then switched to a modular solution, which enabled a more tailored approach and also allowed users to trial aspects of the software before buying into its broader capabilities. Pevtschin says that many clients come in wanting a “very basic module, time sheets or things like that. But we increasingly have clients who enter through what I call ‘the green door.’”

A main reason for this is increasing regulation, especially in Europe. New laws, such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, mandate sustainability reporting for all companies operating in the EU. Other regulations require large companies who lend money to know the environmental impact of that money, and many businesses have committed to Science Based Target Initiatives, which require them to participate in quantitative approaches to addressing global warming. All of this means that there's a pressing need for production companies and managers to know at a very detailed level what their carbon footprint is and how it can be improved.

Fundamentally, TheGreenShot aims to facilitate data collection by leveraging the entertainment workforce. With their free phone app, TheGreenShot makes it easy for crew members—most of whom work on a contract basis, jumping from project to project—to upskill, encouraging and empowering them to participate in the changes that need to be made. Each individual working on a production can log expenses and track details, giving production managers a real-time perspective on budget and carbon management. The software can also simulate choices to help managers select more sustainable or economical options.

Like all startups, TheGreenShot is now focused on growth. After receiving strong support from the European Commission’s MEDIA programme, which supports the European film and audiovisual industries and includes a strong focus on industry sustainability, TheGreenShot has since expanded to the US. In May of 2024, they acquired Earth Angel, one of Hollywood’s leading sustainable production services agencies which worked on films such as *Killers of the Flower Moon*, *The Whale*, and *the Amazing Spiderman 2*, reported to be one of Sony Pictures’ most eco-friendly blockbusters. Pevtschin explains that this step gives them a foothold in the US and adds new capability to their range of services, especially with the help of Earth Angel founder Emellie O’Brien, who brings 10+ years of experience applying sustainability to entertainment production.

Another step they are looking to make is creating a recommendation engine, which would use AI to offer cost-saving and eco-friendly alternatives. For expert insight and access to the most up-to-date AI research, TheGreenShot has decided to connect with MIT CSAIL as they explore this new direction.

CONNECTING WITH CSAIL

As an alumna of MIT and the VP of the MIT Alumni Club in Belgium, Pevtschin says that she “never lost the connection” to MIT. “I’ve always been monitoring what’s happening on campus,” Pevtschin explains, so when the question of AI came up at TheGreenShot, she knew where to look. Despite the pressure for every tech company to be using AI solutions, TheGreenShot was careful to think through their use case and make sure there was a real application for it that meshed with TheGreenShot’s pre-existing products. When the initial tests went well, Pevtschin reached out to Managing Director of CSAIL Alliances Lori Glover to see how TheGreenShot might get involved with the computer science research happening at CSAIL. Lori then connected Pevtschin with Client Relations Coordinator Christiana Kalfas, who leads the Startup Connect and Startup Connect Plus programs. Startup Connect Plus turned out to be a perfect fit for TheGreenShot, as it allowed them to engage with CSAIL at a price point that was accessible for a developing startup.

This all happened, fortuitously, right before the 2024 CSAIL Alliances Annual Meeting, which brings together industry members and CSAIL researchers to explore recent research and collaboration successes. Pevtschin describes how important it was for her to attend in person since, “even in this very online world, it’s good to come and meet and interact.” At the 2024 Annual Meeting, Pevtschin was able to connect with researchers during topic-focused lunches, attend a variety of sessions that she found “super interesting,” and arrange investor meetings. She says that the event gave her insight into the different ways that industry members can collaborate through CSAIL Alliances and ideas of who TheGreenShot might reach out to next. Mainly, the event solidified their plan to bring TheGreenShot’s AI use case to the lab as a research challenge and then implementing that research in practical, real-world applications.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Pevtschin says that in her role as TheGreenShot's co-CEO, she has three main goals. First, she wants to prioritize innovation, which will help them stand out in the industry and bring the best possible solutions to their customers. Second, she wants to leverage their relationship with CSAIL to do this, tuning into the talks, events, and research happening in the Stata Center. And finally, she wants to focus on investment by connecting widely with other future-thinking companies like those she met at the Annual Meeting. Because, while TheGreenShot started in the entertainment industry, their products have widespread potential and could be useful for event planning in a variety of fields. "Whenever [a company] orders a commercial, a corporate video, anything like that, this is actually something you're going to have to report on," Pevtschin says. "It's not just entertainment."

Overall, TheGreenShot's mission aligns with Pevtschin's on a personal level. Describing how climate change has ravaged the olive trees in southern Italy where she's worked and lived, she says, "being able to connect digitizing an industry with this complete mindset paradigm change in how you approach climate, that for me is the great opportunity. That's what excites me." It's not easy work to change behavior in such an enormous and complex industry, but she's glad to be enabling positive change through TheGreenShot. And knowing that MIT has made climate a key priority makes Pevtschin sure she's in the right place as a member of CSAIL Alliances.