

JigSpace

Frustration with using static information to teach and learn about our multi-dimensional world was the spark that led to this 3D software, explains co-founder and CEO Zac Duff.

Interview by Jane Nicholls

What’s your elevator pitch?

“Our software helps companies that manufacture large, complex, technical products to explain their products, processes and ideas easily in 3D. They import their CAD [computer-aided design] files into our JigSpace (jig.com) tool and can quickly create a presentation in a platform like PowerPoint or Canva then immediately share that with colleagues and customers.”

What was the problem you were trying to solve?

“Every manufactured product starts life as a 3D file on an engineer’s computer. They use computer-aided design tools to build models that go into the manufacturing process. Marketing comes along and asks if they can get some renders – nice, shiny images for TV and magazines. It always has to go back through engineers and becomes a bottleneck where they can’t use these assets outside of engineering, even though they are a fantastic representation of the products.”

How does it work?

“You don’t need to download an app; it works on your iPhone, iPad, on the web, anywhere. You can do in minutes what would typically take an agency or an in-house team weeks if not months. Say you’re a training manager and you want to show how to replace a part in a piece of equipment. You bring the CAD file into the tool to make what we call a Jig. The CAD file includes all the screws, nuts and bolts, and you can drag the parts around in the Jig, annotate them with text and create a video or audio to explain what you want to show. That’s immediately shareable in 3D via a link or QR code. If you have a VR headset you can walk around it.”

How did you get it off the ground?

“I made video games for about 10 years and in 2013 started teaching video game design. We were using PDFs and PowerPoints to teach 3D tech and that annoyed me. I started prototyping a tool to quickly make content like I would a PowerPoint, only in 3D, and called it a Jig. The first one I made in 2015 was simple assembly instructions for an IKEA Lack table – four legs and a tabletop. I convinced my co-founder, Numa, to join me by showing him my rubbish code. He was teaching programming with me but previously he’d done scientific and engineering visualisation for CSIRO.”

How did you convince investors?

“We went to Silicon Valley and incorporated JigSpace in the United States. We went through an accelerator, started raising money. Neither of us had been in startups and I knew almost nothing about VC funding. I sent some cold emails to investors and Boost VC – who became an early investor – asked for a demo. When we came back home about five months later, we set up the Australian subsidiary, which is really where all the work happens. In 2017, Numa and I were in a tiny office and we’d run out of money but then the iPhone 10 launch featured JigSpace in the keynote and in the App Store on that day. We were able to raise money off the back of that and eat something other than noodles. We’ve since been in three more keynotes and had seven million downloads.”

What’s next?

“We’ve partnered with the Audi F1 team for 2026. Rather than showing sponsors’ logos in a mockup, they can see them on the car in 3D, and with a VR headset or Apple Vision goggles you can walk around it and even sit in the cockpit. That’s a powerful thing. Our Gen AI tool, JigSpark, will launch later this year – it uses AI to generate a 3D interactive presentation by using a CAD file and a link to a product website. We describe it as helping make the hard to explain, hard to forget.”

Fact file

Founders Zac Duff, 38 (far right), and Numa Bertron, 38

Investors Boost VC, Rampersand, Investible, Aura, Vulpes, Breakthrough Victoria, Anorak

First customer “In 2016, Hino Trucks paid \$30,000 for a Jig that was a virtual version of their new vehicle. It saved them from taking these trucks all around the world – instead they could take a couple of iPads.”

Headquarters Melbourne but largely remote, with team members in Sydney, Perth, Japan, France and New Zealand

Number of employees 24, plus occasional contractors

