"I WANT TO START MY OWN USE-IT!"

USE-IT

WHAT IS USE-IT?

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USE-IT is the quality label for no-nonsense tourist info for young people. USE-IT initiatives currently exist in 40 cities in Europe. They all publish free maps, most of them have a Facebook page, some have a website, or even run an info desk for young travellers. In 2015, a mobile app for iPhone was launched, and hopefully for Android later.

WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES?

- USE-IT is made by locals: we don't work with travel journalists but with local people.
- USE-IT is not commercial: nobody pays to be included on the map.
- USE-IT maps are free.
- USE-IT is for young people: not meant to please every body, only a specific target group.
- USE-IT is up-to-date: new editions are made every year.
- USE-IT is not a trendy guide, it's about the life and soul of the city. (See www.use-it.travel/style-guide)

HOW IS USE-IT ORGANISED?

Every USE-IT is largely independent. Everybody receives subsidies to run the project, usually from local authorities (city, province, region). USE-IT Oslo is paid with Norwegian money, USE-IT Prague with Czech money, and so on. However, everybody shares the USE-IT principles and philosophy and is member of the same European organisation called USE-IT Europe.

WHAT DOES THE NAME MEAN?

The first USE-IT brochures (not maps yet) were made in Copenhagen and distributed in an alternative youth centre called 'Huset'. Travellers pronounced it as "use it" and that's probably how the name stuck. Nobody knows for sure, though.

SINCE WHEN DOES USE-IT EXIST?

USE-IT started in 1971 (in hippie times) in Copenhagen as a low-budget info desk for young travellers. Other initiatives followed later in Oslo, Rotterdam and Ghent, always with the same philosophy. In 2005, the first USE-IT Map for Young Travellers – as we know them now – was developed in Ghent (Belgium). In 2007 an international organisation called 'USE-IT Europe' was founded to support the current and future USE-IT initiatives, and also to protect the USE-IT principles. Since then, more and more cities have joined the network.

WHAT DOES USE-IT EUROPE DO?

USE-IT Europe protects the quality of USE-IT publications. Local initiatives are responsible for their own content and design, but there are some basic communication guidelines to follow before you can become a member, and the non-commercial principles also have to be guaranteed at all costs. This is why the Board of USE-IT Europe gives a final approval to every new publication.

HOW MANY USE-ITS ARE THERE?

USE-IT currently exists in 40 cities all over Europe, and the number grows every year. See www.use-it.travel for a current state of affairs.

CAN I JOIN?

WHO CAN START A USE-IT?

Firstly, you have to be a local. That's the difference between USE-IT and a lot of travel guides. USE-IT believes that you cannot write well about a city if you visit it for just a few weeks. Secondly, you have to embrace the basic rules: USE-IT is not-commercial, free and made by young locals for young travellers. Thirdly, you cannot become a member as a private person. You need an organisation to publish your map (see "STARTING UP").

WHO DECIDES WHERE TO START?

You. USE-IT Europe does not decide where to launch a project, it all depends on the initiative of young locals. That's why there are some maps of lesser-known cities, while some major tourist destinations are not in the network. And that's what makes it cool too.

IS MY CITY A GOOD CITY?

Probably. It does not depend on size or popularity, but on relevance for the target group. Is your city an interesting place for young international travellers to spend a couple of days? Then it's a good city for a USE-IT map.

CAN I MAKE A MAP OF THE REGION?

No. USE-IT is a city project.

AND IN A NON-EUROPEAN CITY?

Not yet. USE-IT Europe wants to become stronger in Europe first.

AND A MAP IN MY OWN LANGUAGE?

Yes, but only the English version can be published with the USE-IT label. Other versions will not be included on the website.

AM I THE FIRST IN MY CITY?

Perhaps, perhaps not. Just send a mail and ask. If others have started already, USE-IT Europe will bring you in touch so you can have a coffee together. So far, there has never been any competition, only collaboration.

IS IT FREE TO BECOME A USE-IT?

No, you pay a yearly contribution of €1.000 to USE-IT Europe. This money needs to be part of your budget, when applying for money (see next page).

CAN YOU PUT ME ON THE WEBSITE?

Not yet. There are a few things you have to do before you become "Work in progress" on www.use-it.travel. See the section "STARTING UP" for what you have to do to get there.

WHERE IS THE MONEY?

CAN USE-IT EUROPE GIVE MONEY?

No. USE-IT Europe gives practical support, feedback, and official membership. Not money.

WHERE DO I ASK FOR MONEY?

- from the city or tourist info
- from the youth centre
- from the university
- from the European Commision
- from crowdfunding

Or from a mix of the above. Show as much initiative as possible to puzzle your budget together!

WHY THE CITY / TOURIST INFO?

USE-IT generates profit, even if it is not-for-profit. Young people are more than 20% of the travel market and spend more than ever before. An impact study about USE-IT maps from 2016/2017 revealed that of more than 4.000 users:

- 34% have used more than one map already
- 14% stay longer because of the map
- 97% look for other USE-IT cities when they choose their next travel destination
- 63% of tourist info staff is happy because USE-IT maps can make selections that they don't

See www.use-it.travel/survey_2017

WHY THE YOUTH CENTRE?

Travellers love to talk to locals to get the best tips. Some youth info centres do want to reach out further than local youth and also want to help out this international target group with real inside advice. So USE-IT can be part of an existing youth info centre, as is the case with USE-IT Oslo and USE-IT Vienna.

WHY THE UNIVERSITY?

USE-IT maps are useful for exchange students as a gift in their welcome package, but also as a way of promoting the city internationally.

WHY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION?

The European Union believes in the empowerment of young people and USE-IT defends a lot of its basic values. Check www.ec.europa.eu/youth

WHY CROWDFUNDING?

USE-IT is a real European network, with many happy users and a growing recognition of the brand. It may be difficult to gain enough money using crowdfunding tools like www.indiegogo.com, but it can work if you find the right creative approach.

WHAT ABOUT PRIVATE MONEY?

Can a telephone company or a bank fund a USE-IT map? Yes, but only if they agree to stay out of the content and design. They cannot "brand" the product. Email info@use-it.travel if you have questions about what this means.

HOW MUCH?

HOW MUCH TO START A USE-IT?

That's hard to say, because it depends on so many things. How many maps will you need to last for a year? Will the writer and designer get paid for the work? Who will do the distribution? Do you also want to start an info desk or a summer info tent? All these things have to be sorted out first.

HOW MUCH FOR JUST A MAP?

Probably between € 10,000 (minimum budget) and € 20,000 (ideal budget). You definitely have to work with friends and volunteers, but why wouldn't you be paid for your work?

WHAT IS THE IDEAL BUDGET?

1. print costs for 30,000 maps to 200,000 maps, depending on the city's popularity
2. around € 1,000 to send maps to other USE-ITs
3. € 1,000 membership fee USE-IT Europe
4. digital street map data (usually you can ask this from the city as part of their support)
5. proof prints, photocopies etc.
6. distribution in hostels / cheap hotels, with follow-up every three months
7. travel costs for a flight + accommodation for the yearly USE-IT Europe meeting (can be in any member city)
8. at least one full week's pay for a professional graphic designer
9. a paid part-time researcher + writer during two months
10. a paid part-time coordinator during four months (for grant applications, preparations, volunteer coordination, contact with USE-IT Europe, distribution, follow-up for next year and taking care of continuity)

If you also want to run an info desk, create a website etc, you will need to plan for a more extensive budget.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM BUDGET?

Numbers 1 through 6 in the above list, meaning everybody gets paid except the people who put all their energy into it...

WHEN DO I PAY MEMBERSHIP?

Every year, before you publish. The process is explained on the next pages.

CAN'T WE DO IT FOR LESS?

Many USE-ITs have done this, yes. Then nobody gets paid except the printer, the postman and USE-IT Europe (membership fee). But if you create a map with the absolute minimum and only volunteers, how will you convince your local authorities that they have to give you more next year? And what will happen when the volunteers leave on a world trip? It's best to take it seriously from the beginning, because that's the best way to provide continuity. Don't forget: you're providing a real service to young travellers and the city, and you deserve credit for this.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE CONTACT USE-IT EUROPE BECAUSE THEY WANT TO MAKE A MAP FOR THEIR OWN CITY. VISIT BARS, COLLECT STORIES, WRITE NO-NONSENSE TEXTS... THAT SOUNDS LIKE A FUN JOB. IT IS, ACTUALLY. FOLLOW THESE FIVE RULES, AND YOU'LL GET THERE.

1. SHOW SOME BALLS

2. BE SMART

3. DON'T BE PATIENT

4. USE YOUR FRIENDS

5. TALK TO US!

>>> Never hesitate to talk to people who make decisions. Drink coffee with the boss of the local youth info centre, meet the head of the tourist office, email the youth or tourism minister. They are the people who make decisions. Explain what you want to do, show some passion, and don't talk about money from the start.

>>> The major issue for USE-IT is continuity. If you're smart, you cooperate with an existing organisation to provide some structure for the future. If you do everything yourself, what will happen when you leave next year for a world trip? Share the project, make sure it's supported by other locals as well.

>>> Don't expect to get your full budget from the beginning. But that should not stop you from getting started. Mapping the city is just fun to do. In some cases, you get money more easily by showing the work that you have already done.

>>> Creative people are usually terrible at doing business. However, the most succesful USE-ITs are those with a good mix between creativity and coordination. So if you're only interested in the content and the layout, look for the right friend to write applications and take care of the business side.

>>> Don't play solo. Other USE-IT members had the same questions about how to select places, how to create a good layout etc. So mail info@use-it.travel or ask for feedback from the other members. And don't worry: you're not the only city where it's hard to get taken seriously as a young cool person. Just learn from the others.

1. STARTING UP

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Go to www.use-it.travel/start-me-up to download a small list of questions. Email it to info@use-it.travel. USE-IT Europe will let you know if other people have already tried to start a USE-IT in your city and will put you in touch with others.

DOCUMENTATION

Go to the tourist info centre and hostels and check the maps and brochures that they give to young travellers. This is useful documentation, especially when you have to convince people to fund the project. It is important to know that there is nothing like USE-IT already and it is equally important to prove that you did good research.

TAKE THE TEMPERATURE

Go and "take the temperature" with possible subsidising authorities. Don't talk to them about money yet, just see if they are interested in the young target group. Make them enthusiastic about the project and jealous of all the other cities with a USE-IT map. What makes your first contacts easier is to show examples of existing maps. USE-IT Europe can send you a package by post.

LOOK FOR A PUBLISHER

You cannot become a member of USE-IT Europe as a private person. You always need an organisation behind you as the official publisher and USE-IT member. Sometimes this organisation is a Youth Information Centre, sometimes it's a cultural organisation, sometimes it's a new organisation created especially to publish USE-IT maps. What is important, is that the publishing organisation is different from the funding authorities, to assure your independence. If you choose to create a new organisation, do not call it USE-IT (for legal reasons). Any other name is OK.

LOOK FOR MONEY

This is the hard bit. How to convince the big chiefs to contribute money to your project? There is no fixed recipe for this. The most important "stakeholder" are the local city authorities and you should prove to them that USE-IT generates more money than it costs. The project is not for profit, but generates a lot of profit. Use the facts and quotes from www.use-it.travel/survey_2017! Another strategy is to create a first version of the map and show it at a meeting. It's more work, but it's also more fun and more effective. If you want to do that, mail info@use-it.travel to get a login for the USE-IT database.

BECOME A "WORK IN PROGRESS"

When the preparatory work is done, you can become a "work in progress" on www.use-it.travel . For this you need:

- to have a publishing organisation (private persons cannot become a member)
- to be sure you will get the minimum budget of € 10,000 (see "HOW MUCH?")
- to be sure you will publish within half a year

Once the cooperation agreement with USE-IT Europe is signed and membership fee has been paid, your organisation is officially a member of USE-IT Europe for this year.

2. WORK IN PROGRESS

START THE CREATIVE WORK

When you have become a "work in progress", you start getting creative help from the network to get there.

1. CREATE THE TEAM

Decide who will be the creative coordinator in your team. This is the contact person for USE-IT Europe too. Also decide who will do what, and prepare your time schedule. Share this with USE-IT Europe and ask for feedback.

2. JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

Your whole team can join the internal USE-IT Facebook group to get to know the others better and to ask specific questions.

3. INSTALL THE MAILBOX

Every USE-IT city has an email address like prague@use-it. travel, dresden@use-it.travel, oslo@use-it.travel etc. USE-IT Europe will provide login and passwords.

4. USE-IT DATABASE AND DUMMY

Collect a first selection of places in the online USE-IT database. With this first selection, you can create a draft "dummy" layout to decide which part of the city you put on which side. It is very important to decide this in the beginning, because it will determine the rest of the work. Send it to USE-IT Europe for feedback!

5. RESEARCH IN THE CITY

The real work. You can do this with one or more persons, but you usually get the best results if one person collects all the info and writes the first texts.

6. FIRST TEXTS

Read www.use-it.travel/style-guide carefully, and write your first texts in the database. USE-IT Europe will offer feedback, or look for an existing member to help you out. The same texts will later also automatically flow into the mobile application when you are finished.

7. CREATE SOME BUZZ

Announce the project and generate some buzz. This may help you get more attention and extra volunteers for your team. If you create a Facebook page, make sure the page is called "USE-IT Yourcity" with USE-IT in capital letters.

STAY IN TOUCH

At every stage, stay in touch with USE-IT Europe and the nearby USE-ITs. We're in this together!

3. YOUR FIRST MAP

WHEN CAN I PRINT?

Once the creative work is finished, the Board of USE-IT Europe will approve your map. It is important that you have this permission, because USE-IT Europe legally owns the label. Don't worry too much about this: if you stay in touch during the creation process, this is usually a formality. Then you send the map to the printer and have a party.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY A FEE?

Indeed, there is a €1000 membership fee. USE-IT Europe runs largely on volunteers, but one part-time editor is paid to keep the network running and follow up on new initiatives. You will get:

- feedback from USE-IT Europe on texts and design
- the email address yourcity@use-it.travel
- an invitation to the annual USE-IT Europe meeting
- a printable version of your map on www.use-it.travel
- your cover on the backside of other USE-IT maps
- access to the USE-IT mobile application for your city
- the domain www.yourcity.use-it.travel if you need it
- access to survey results, the newsletter and all other internal communication

HOW IS THE APP PUBLISHED?

USE-IT Europe adds your city to the USE-IT Europe app after sign-off of the map. The data comes from the USE-IT database, so it's important you check all the final texts there. The info in the app is an exact copy of the info in the map.

CAN I JUST CREATE THE APP?

No. It's only possible to become a USE-IT member with a printed map. No map, no app.

CAN I JUST MAKE A WEBSITE?

No. Paper maps are the core business of USE-IT. No map, no web.

DO I PAY MEMBERSHIP EVERY YEAR?

Yes, your organisation pays a membership fee for every year that you publish a USE-IT map. If you don't, you lose the membership benefits listed above.

DO I MAKE A MAP EVERY YEAR?

Yes. Being up-to-date is one of the major benefits of USE-IT maps and it should always be your aim to create a new edition every year. If you don't, the Board can decide to remove your map from the website and the app. But let's hope it never gets that far!

HOW IS USE-IT ORGANISED?

WHO IS THE BOSS?

You are.

WHAT DOES USE-IT EUROPE DO?

- communicate (website, social media, newsletter)
- follow up on new members
- organize the yearly meeting with all members
- represent USE-IT on conferences and meetings
- give feedback during the creation process
- give final approval to every map
- manage surveys like www.use-it.travel/2017_survey
- look for additional funding for the app and other network improvements

SO USE-IT EUROPE IS THE BOSS?

Yes and no. There will never be discussions about personal taste, only about the basic principles. This quality control is necessary to protect the brand name and the network.

IS THERE A FIXED DESIGN?

There is no fixed layout, illustrations or typography for the USE-IT maps. However, a few rules are fixed: the size of the cover, the position of the logo on the cover, etc. See www.use-it.travel/style-guide.

IS THERE ANY FIXED CONTENT?

Yes and no. The content has to be tailor-made for young travellers, has to be non-commercial, no-nonsense, easy to read and concrete. But you select, write and design yourself.

WHO WORKS FOR USE-IT EUROPE?

For the moment, only one person is paid by USE-IT Europe on a part-time basis, namely the editor-in-chief of the network. The president of the organisation is a volunteer. Of course, many young people work on USE-IT maps and at the info desks, but they are not employed by or volunteering for USE-IT Europe. The local USE-ITs and USE-IT Europe are two different things, and the sum of all USE-ITs is much bigger than the network organisation.

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND!

Then contact info@use-it.travel and shoot!

USE-IT IS TOURIST INFO FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:
NO-NONSENSE, MADE BY LOCALS, NOT
COMMERCIAL, UP-TO-DATE AND FREE.

ARE YOU ADDICTED TO WALKING THE STREETS
IN YOUR CITY? IS IT YOUR HOBBY TO DISCOVER
NEW PLACES AND TO TELL EVERYBODY ABOUT
THEM? DO YOU KNOW THE REAL STORIES
BEHIND THE FAKE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS?
ARE YOU A TRAVELLER YOURSELF, BUT SICK
OF THE GLOSSY TOURIST BROCHURES THAT
LIST ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING YOU WERE NOT
LOOKING FOR?

LET'S SEE HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER.