

PRESS RELEASE - INCREASING MISTRUST OF USER GENERATED CONTENT AMONGST CITY TRAVELLERS

Amsterdam, Netherlands - October 25, 2008 – User generated content, (The dictation of website content by its users), is currently all the rage in today’s travel industry. Now a new series of blogs offering travelers the opportunity to experience 15 different European cities “like a local”, takes a contrasting approach.

Spotted by Locals believes the key to reliable and high quality information lies in the personal handpicking of their bloggers, through a strict selection procedure. Only “real” locals are chosen to write about their favorite spots in the city they love.

Screw the Eiffel tower!

City travelers are progressively looking to learn more about the local culture of their chosen destinations. They do not only want to “do a city” by visiting standard highlights.

An excellent example of this shift in travel attitude can be seen in the hugely successful Couchsurfing project (where visitors can stay with locals instead of in hotels). The project has risen from 6,000 members in 2004 to a significant 750,000 in 2008.

“Local” places infested with tourists

Travel guide authors are often enough travelers themselves, and as such cannot necessarily offer the local perspective readers are looking for. Also a lot of the time the information in paperback travel guides quickly becomes inaccurate or no longer current.

“During my city trips, that ‘cute local spot’ frequently turned out to be infested with tourists carrying the exact same city guide” states Spotted by Locals founder Sanne van Poll.

Online travel tips often unreliable or un-trustworthy

It seems travelers are increasingly turning to the Internet to source a wealth of travel tips written by locals and travelers alike.

There are of course some drawbacks to so-called “user generated” travel information. Aside from the fact that genuinely local tips are often written in the local language, Spotted by Locals also believes that content reliability can be questionable.

It is often difficult or plain impossible to see who is behind the “local” travel tips. Is it really a bona fide local or actually a traveler who has only visited the spot once? Perhaps it is even the proprietor of the spot with motivations of self-interest?

A strict selection of real local bloggers

On the Spotted by Locals cityblogs, real locals write about the places they regularly frequent or enjoy visiting. All Spotters are presented prominently on the site with their real names, a picture and a detailed personal profile.

Spotted by Locals sees that the key to creating high quality, up-to-date and authentic content is a face-to-face interview with the “Local”. After establishing if they meet the required criteria and speak the local language, they are then selected to write for the site.



About Spotted by Locals

Spotted by Locals was started in 2008 by avid travelers (and married couple) Sanne & Bart van Poll. It is the first cityblog-network with handpicked bloggers who write about spots and pass on travel tips from a personal and local perspective. It has recently launched 15 European city blogs, and will soon be launching a further 10 in the coming months.

###

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Bart van Poll | Spotted by Locals | [Bart\[at\]SpottedbyLocals.com](mailto:Bart[at]SpottedbyLocals.com)
T: +44 9737007277 | A: Sluisstraat 15h, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Press kit: www.SpottedbyLocals.com/press-kit