

## **Media Release – October 2, 2008**

### **'Just lookers' or 'genuine bookers'?**

This week raising the brows of tour operators like Busabout, Contiki, On the Go, Topdeck and Fez Travel is bugbitten.com's innovative new criteria-based tour search engine pipped to attract more 'genuine bookers' not 'just lookers'.

There's no doubt that the trend to shift marketing spend online is overwhelming tour operators worldwide. bugbitten.com co-founder Mr Pittman believes that it's been tough enough for operators to work out where their market is online, let alone negotiating the costs and time associated with these methods of advertising. He explains: "While the cost per click method appears to be increasingly most effective for operators to gauge their traffic, the real challenge has been in achieving a higher quality of 'click-through' and also to avoid the 'just lookers'."

Mr Pittman explains that their new innovation, causing a flutter in the industry is one that will indeed provide operators a higher quality of 'click-through'. He explains: "We've launched a criteria-based tour search engine utilising a unique approach of combining industry leading tour search functionality with bugbitten.com's 3 million-plus pages of user generated content. So this will find the traveller a more relevant experience to suit their individual needs and desires." Mr Pittman adds: "It's a win-win for both traveller and operator."

While travellers are able to find exactly what they want by selecting price, currency, duration, destination and get filtered search results based on other travellers' recommendations, the operator is getting a more targeted traveller and not wasting their 'click-through' costs on lookers only. After recently spending 10 days meeting existing tour operator partners in London, Mr Pittman adds: "The feedback we received was extremely positive as the operators agree our solution is cost effective and more importantly view us as a partner that can help them build their brand by not turning their products into commodities."

Contiki Holidays Marketing Manager of UK and Europe, Jenny Black, explains that in almost two years of partnering with bugbitten.com they have really seen positive results through banner advertising and as a source of independent advice on their tours through user generated content. And now, with the introduction of bugbitten.com's new criteria based tour search engine *combined* with this expanding user generated content, she says: "I only see our relationship strengthening further because this new search engine targets our clients' needs and feeds them straight through to relevant pages of Contiki.com." She adds: "It's exactly what we need because Contiki has over 150 itineraries spanning five continents so it is easy to get lost in our site if you are a first time user. This new search engine will help us bring the right people to the right tour pages. They've essentially become our tour matchmakers!"

Five years ago bugbitten.com started as a site purely for travellers to record their journeys. Now it has developed into a platform of more than 3 million pages of user generated content, multiple travel search engines and a host of online marketing tools designed to be easily managed by a tour operator's marketing team.

2 versions:

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