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Wikiloc - Community Maps

Girona, Spain

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Wikiloc is a Web 2.0 platform that allows local communities to show off geographic information of their territory to an international audience interested in Geotourism in an easy way.

About You

Contact Information

Title

Mr

First name

Jordi

Last name

L. Ramot

Your job title

Founder

Name of your organization

Wikiloc

Organization type

Startup

Annual budget/currency

Annual Budget/Currency

Mailing address

C/Miquel Suris, 15. Sant Feliu de Guixols 17220 (Girona) SPAIN

Telephone number

+34 620 074 376

Postal/Zip Code

17220

Country
Website

http://www.wikiloc.com

Email address

jordi@wikiloc.com

Alternative email address

Alternative email address

Your idea

This will be the address used to plot your entry on the map.

Street Address

Pic de Peguera, 15

City

Girona

State/Province

Girona

Postal/Zip Code

17003

Country

Geotourism Challenge Addressed by Entrant

Quality of tourist experience and educational benefit to tourists , Quality of benefit to residents for the destination , Quality of tourism management by destination leadership , Quality of stewardship of the destination.

Organization size

Small (1 to 100 employees)

Indicate sector in which you principally work

Tourism-related business

Year innovation began

2006

Indicate sector in which you principally work

Living culture, Nature, Destination aesthetics, Indigenous people, Adventure, Education, General tourism, General destination stewardship/management.

Place your video embed code here from YouTube, Google Video and other video sharing websites. How to embed a video from YouTube .

Paste your code here

Innovation

What is the goal of your innovation? Please describe in one sentence the kind of impact, change, or reform your approach is intended to achieve.

Provide local communities with an effective way to create their own maps of georeferenced trails and points of interest and to show off that information on digital maps on the Web and in Google Earth

Please write an overview of your project. Include how your approach supports or embodies geotourism or destination stewardship. This text will appear when people scroll over the icon for your entry on the map located on the competition homepage.

Wikiloc is a Web 2.0 platform that allows local communities to show off geographic information of their territory to an international audience interested in Geotourism in an easy way.

Explain in detail why your approach is innovative

The geographic information found in Wikiloc is unique since it comes from anyone who wants to participate including, but not limited to, government agencies, private companies and citizens. A teenager in the Andes has the same right to participate than a mountain bike club in the UK or the best outdoor company in the Grand Canyon. Schools, local guides or kayac enthusiasts are all part of the same community. No barriers nor filters. Everyone can participate freely and it's the community who decides which content is the best.

In the technical side, Wikiloc may be seen as a "social Internet Mapping platform" that allows a virtual community to create and share their own geo-referenced information around the World, enabling the idea that everyone can create geographic information (Neo-Geography) using a web 2.0 approach

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Impact

Describe the degree of success you have had to date. How do you measure, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the impact on

sustainability or enhancement of local culture, environment, heritage, or aesthetics? How has it transformed or contributed to the power of place or demonstrated the sustainability of tourism? How does your approach minimize negative impacts?

Wikiloc has had from the beginning a strong identity of showing off the best trails with beautiful photos and videos of the area. As the site grows, newcomers perceive this characteristic and try to do the same when sharing their own trails. Wikiloc is about describing as best as we can unique places of the planet, but equally important is the fact that the target audience is outdoor enthusiasts and active travelers. People that respects the nature and the culture of the place and behaves similarly online and in the real world.

How many "Inca Trails" are out there in Latin America? probably many and comparable in natural beauty and cultural background, but also likely to be unnoticed without an effective way to promote and tell the world where they are, how to get there and what local facilities we may find in the area. If we explore trails in Latin America from wikiloc.com we'll discover already many unique trails that doesn't appear in the official tourism destination guides and brochures. The same happens for the majority of regions.

The success for the site may be measured by the fact that volunteer collaborators have translated the site to 14 languages, the site itself presents a growing curve both in Internet traffic (+2.000.000 pageviews per month) and content (+65.000 trails, 6000 new every month and with already more than 100.000 photos and videos taken along the routes by a growing community of 60.000 users worldwide). The project won an award from Google for its technology and later on, its unique content and targeted audience, has allowed it to be a featured participant of the Google Earth community.

Wikiloc allows local communities to create maps, with quality and complementary information, with the goal to promote quality offers and connect them with a targeted global market

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In what ways are local residents actively involved in your work, including participation and community input? How has the community responded to or benefited from your approach?

Wikiloc is already used by schools where teachers find a great way to teach neo-geography to children, e.g: http://www.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/user.do?name=Colegio+Aguamansa , individuals, clubs, local-communities and everyone who is willing to participate.

Wikiloc Community Maps wants to be a tool for local communities to create new tourist product directly, without intermediates, and ?from their own knowledge and criteria. This product is essentially based on the geographical territory where they live. The community can create services around that place or create routes around their services. The popular vote of the visitors in the virtual community will evaluate the quality and interest of it.

How does your program promote traveler enthusiasm, satisfaction, and engagement with the locale?

Wikiloc makes easy for visitors to contact directly the author of the trail, point of interest or service that apears on the map and ask for more information, booking, extra activities, etc.. and have a direct and authentic conversation, without intermediaries.

A possible scenario we could imagine is that of a local guide in Venezuela sharing trails she knows of in Wikiloc.com, later on a French group is planning a trip to Venezuela and find those trails online. They could ask the author for the best time of the year to go, recommended gear, etc.. the author could even promote him/herself as a guide or recommend local huts or b&b to overnight. It's a win-win collaboration and an easy and effective way to put in direct contact a touristic product and the local community with a targeted audience of active tourists.

A real sample of that interesting sinergies may be perceived in the comments from users on this trail in Costa Rica: http://www.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/view.do?id=185959

Describe how your work helps travelers and local residents better understand the value of the area's cultural and natural heritage, and educates them on local environmental issues.

Usually it is the local resident who better knows the region, its most interesting paths, its secret places, the local history... Wikiloc provides a platform to explain and show off all that knowledge and at the same time, make it easily discoverable and visible to an online community that likes to explore the world by itself. The place is the main tourist product by itself. By attracting tourism, local residents will have a sense of ownership and motivation to take care and improve that natural and cultural resources and, at the same time, this fact guarantees the satisfaction of future visitors.

Sustainability

How is your initiative currently financed? If available, provide information on your finances and organization that could help others. Please list: Annual budget, annual revenue generated, size of part-time, full-time and volunteer staff.

Wikiloc has a minimum income from Google Adsense that helps to mantain the cost of the Internet Server Provider and basics. My couple has been incorporated as a volunteer to work with the business part and financials. She is an experienced engineer with a MSc. in Industrial Organization and has been involved in Wikiloc from the begining.

Is your initiative financially and organizationally sustainable? If not, what is required to make it so? Is there a potential demand for your innovation?

To further develop the Wikiloc Community Map we will need a team working in this branch. We belive it is a sustainable product because it helps communities to promote their territory without intermediaries, reaching immediately a targeted international community of travelers and outdoor enthusiasts.

What are the main barriers you encounter in managing, implementing, or replicating your innovation? What barriers keep your program from having greater impact?

Lack of resources to finance the team to build the application. The project is replicable worldwide

What is your plan to expand or further develop your approach? Please indicate where/how you would like to grow or enhance your innovation, or have others do so.

We would like to enrich the Wikiloc georeferenced content with additional and complementary local information that brings added value to the place, information that communicates the natural and cultural heritage and also practical information for travelers, the ultimate goal is to position the region

as a destination for geotourism.

What is the origin of your innovation? Tell the Changemakers and media communities what prompted you to start this initiative.

My passion for outdoor sports and software engineering drove me to start Wikiloc as a personal project back in 2006. I was looking for an easy way to share with friends the places where I had been traveling, hiking or mountain biking. That was by the time Google had just released Google Maps and Google Earth. It turned out that my needs where shared by many other outdoor enthusiasts and travelers worldwide. Soon many people started to create and share their own trails in Wikiloc. That was the beginning of the community. In September 2006, Wikiloc won the Google Maps Award to the best national Maps Mashup, and the media helped to present Wikiloc to a broader audience. I've been working improving the project since then and recently (Jan. 2009), Google perceived the content interesting enough to feature it in their flagship product, Google Earth, in a default preview layer (seen by all users).

I have been focused in the global site until a recently event about sustainable tourism where I had the opportunity to attend. I realized that there's a common need for small communities to promote their territory. I was impressed with all the projects presented and with the hard work its coordinators where doing in this regard. I believe that Wikiloc may offer them an effective solution and at the same time involve actively those local communities.

Please provide a personal bio. Note this may be used in Changemakers' marketing material.

I'm a 35 years old Software Engineer with a passion for technology, outdoor sports and travel. My professional background has been always around maps and geographic information. I started my career back in 1995 in an urban planning department of a regional government agency. Later on moved to a private company specialized in Internet mapping and location-based services. Finally I became a freelance and created my own company. Was during that latest phase when I started working in Wikiloc in my spare time.

I worked in the company and in Wikiloc for a period until it was impossible to follow both projects. I decided to work 100% on Wikiloc.

Describe some unique tourist experiences that your approach provides. Be specific; give illustrative examples.

More and more people are planning their next trip with the help of Internet, specially those of us who look for alternatives to the 'boxed' travel packages. In this context, Wikiloc is a great source of outdoor activities at the destination, like mountain bike, hiking, horse riding but also some other activites less known like ballooning, dog sledding, bird watching, etc.. The site promotes also thematic activities like gastronomic routes, sightseeing urban trails, walks in archeological areas, competitions & races, popular events...

As a sample, a city walk around Bergen's downtown (Norway) may better illustrate this: http://www.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/view.do?id=311455

The potential of Wikiloc expands with the idea that, together with the trail itself, one may also promote and recommend ultra-local businesses (local guides, accomodation, gear rental, etc..) in the trail's area. Any tourist interested in the trail will likely be highly interested in knowing about all those, often community-driven, local services available in the area. It's a good opportunity for ultra-local small businesses to reach a global and targeted audience.

The channel arrives in the same way to a person who lives overseas than to another who lives in the same country or region. It is shown to regional, national and international potential tourists at the same time.

What types of partnerships or professional development would be most beneficial in spreading your innovation?

It would be beneficial to partner with other initiatives that could enrich the content with quality references and links in each point of interest. Quality information that could enhance further the culture, nature, and the value of each location in Wikiloc. Also it could be important to have links to practical information of the place like guides and bookings services.