

**Media Contact:**

Veronica Skelton

Concept Communications for UpTake, Inc.

415.342.3435

[veronica@conceptpr.net](mailto:veronica@conceptpr.net)

**UPTAKE COLLECTS AND ORGANIZES ONLINE WORD-OF-MOUTH FROM THOUSANDS OF TRAVEL WEBSITES**

*Search and Discovery Site Launches Public Beta for U.S. Hotels,  
Offers Web's Most Comprehensive Search for Travel Attractions*

**PALO ALTO, Calif. - May 14, 2008** - Travelers now have a vital resource for making better travel decisions with today's public beta launch of UpTake, a new [vacation search](#) site that has amassed the travel industry's largest database of [hotels](#) and [attractions](#) and analyzed more than 20 million online opinions from other travelers.

Founded by Yen Lee, former general manager of Yahoo! Travel, UpTake (formerly known as Kango) brings together content from thousands of trusted web sites like Expedia, Fodors, goCityKids, Travelocity, Virtual Tourist, and [Yahoo! Travel](#), offering more than 400,000 U.S. hotels and attractions. "Unlike other travel sites, we are focused on delivering the most comprehensive coverage," said Lee. "We offer the broadest and deepest information about U.S. hotels and we'll be developing similar levels of coverage for other [lodging](#) and destinations later this year."

Sixty-six percent of American leisure travelers turn exclusively to the Web to research hotels when vacation planning\*. But only 14 percent of users start their planning with online travel agencies like Expedia or Travelocity. Studies show travelers are looking for more relevant information in general and consumer advice in particular. "It's easy to make poor vacation planning decisions, especially if you're going somewhere for the first time," said Yen Lee. "Bad travel decisions are painful because your vacation time is so scarce. Our goal is to deliver relevant travel information from across the Web, to help you avoid decisions that leave you feeling dissatisfied with your vacation."

In addition to being comprehensive, UpTake provides tailored recommendations based on analysis of more than 20 million travel reviews, ratings, and opinions from over a thousand web sites. For example, UpTake recommends hotels for different travel themes based on a deep understanding of the reviews in its database. The site has also added "girls getaway" and "[pet friendly](#)" themes to its current "[family-friendly](#)" and "[romantic](#)" travel search themes, providing travelers more ways to personalize the search and discovery process.

"When you know where and when you want to travel, existing travel booking sites excel. But today's booking sites don't help you shop based on why you are traveling or who you are traveling with. UpTake is designed to give you better recommendations based on these fundamental questions of "who" and "why." said Lee, UpTake president. "UpTake matches a traveler with the most useful reviews, photos, etc. for the most relevant hotels and activities through attribute and sentiment analysis of reviews and other text, analysis guided by our travel ontology to extract weighted meta-tags. More simply, we break apart and analyze reviews and articles so we can recommend the best products for you."

For example, for a user looking for a family hotel in San Diego, UpTake analyzes its San Diego hotel catalog for attributes like "pool", "babysitting", "oversized rooms", "3 and 6 year olds" and for sentiments such as "like", "love", "strongly recommend. " UpTake users looking for [San Diego romantic hotels](#) will then get different results than those looking for [San Diego family hotels](#). UpTake also tries to understand user intentions. If a traveler is looking for a hotel that is "good for kids", UpTake interprets it to have the same intent as phrases such as "child friendly" or "family vacation." By aggregating reviews and the most comprehensive selection of products on UpTake, the site will save travelers the time of going from site to site to find the right review for the right product to make your decision.

UpTake was developed to be complementary to existing travel sites. Like Google, it only provides a relevant abstract of the information and then offers a direct link to the site to find additional information. UpTake is also supplier friendly, providing a link to hotel websites, hotel phone numbers and addresses, photos from sites such as Hotels.com, Virtual Tourist, and Yahoo! Travel, as well as descriptions and reviews from other trusted online travel resources. In addition to lodging, UpTake also includes attractions like [beaches](#), restaurants and parks.

"UpTake helps people make more informed decisions about where to stay. For independent hotels like ours, UpTake provides another way to convert our good word-of-mouth online into more hotel stays," said Andy Thomas, general manager of [Catamaran Resorts](#).

UpTake's [management team](#) has extensive experience in travel, search and customer acquisition. Lee has more than 12 years of online travel and search entrepreneurial experience starting as a co-founder of the CitySearch San Francisco office and as general manager of travel, helped grow the overall travel category at Yahoo! to approximately \$300 million in annual revenue. Co-founder Gene McKenna is UpTake's vice president of product, and was previously vice president of product at Acxiom Digital, a leading e-marketing and database marketing company. Dr. Huanjin Chen is UpTake's search architect, a role he had previously at eBay, and Dr. Boris Galitsky is UpTake's natural language scientist with more than 70 patents and publications. Elliott Ng is the company's vice president of marketing. Previously Ng founded two companies, Loyalty Matrix (sold to Responsys) and Netcentives (sold to Cendant and InfoUSA), where he launched the largest online loyalty program backed by frequent flyer miles. Ng most recently ran web marketing for Intuit QuickBooks.

UpTake recently changed its name from [Kango](#), but the service will be available on both sites. To experience UpTake's vacation search site and take your first step to a great trip, simply go to [www.uptake.com](http://www.uptake.com) or [www.kango.com](http://www.kango.com).

#### **About UpTake**

Founded in 2006, [UpTake](#) has collected and organized more than 20 million traveler reviews, ratings, blogs and articles from across the web to help travelers to make better decisions about destinations, [lodging](#) and [attractions](#). UpTake uses a travel ontology and natural language analysis to extract meta-tags from the collective intelligence it has collected and returns unbiased, personalized recommendations based on travelers' facts and feelings. The company is headquartered in Palo Alto, California with global engineering teams in Beijing and Moscow. More information can be found at [www.uptake.com](http://www.uptake.com).

\* *Source: YPB&R/Y 2007 National Leisure Travel Monitor™*

---

'Sun logo' is a trademark of Three all, Inc.