

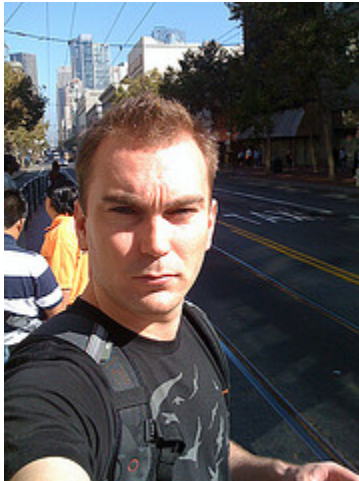
# An Interview With Ian Cumming And Scott Woodhouse Of Travellr

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Ian Cumming and Scott Woodhouse, co-founders of Travellr, were kind enough to give [TechNation Australia](#) an email interview. Here we go:

**Please tell us a little something about yourself, your hobbies, what you do when you're not working on your startup?**



**Ian:** This year I've been getting into diving - the water is really cold in Tasmania where we live so it takes a bit of determination to get in the water - but it's so much fun! I also love to ski and spent my Australian summer with some mates at Niseko on the north island of Japan skiing massive powder runs non-stop every day! Best of all I love traveling! This year I've been to Vietnam, Cambodia, Japan, the USA, and will be heading off to the UK for New Years. I've made some truly amazing friends traveling and had some of the best experiences thanks to meeting locals!



**Scott:** Outside of Travellr, I'm a marketing consultant at In-tellinc - a Hobart-based tech incubator specialising in early stage startups. Like everyone at Travellr, I'm a big fan of travelling, and take time out for it as much as I possibly can (I've already blown this year's leave out of the water almost two-fold with trips to the UK, Greece, France and the US.....will have to do some serious negotiation for Christmas). My biggest love is whitewater kayaking, and I've toured the US and Canada twice paddling remote steep creeks and rivers. That said, some of the best whitewater in the world exists here in Tasmania...GO TASMANIA!

**Any new games/sports you're currently on that you think the world should know?**

**Ian:** I think that everyone should know about [bigstereo.net](http://bigstereo.net), my favorite music blog ever!

**Scott:** Um, the last computer / video games I played seriously date back to the late '80s on my Atari 2600. If you're looking for specifics, I guess that California Games, Dig Dug and Enduro Racer are hot favourites that I would've recommended to people around that time.

**Please tell us about your company/startup?**

**Ian:** Travellr is a new online travel startup that will change the way travelers find the best advice and local knowledge about anywhere in the world. Travellr is a service that allows travelers to connect with like-minded locals and past visitors to get the most insightful, relevant, and personalized answers possible.

**Scott:** Travellr has five core people based in Hobart, with a growing network of advisors and correspondents scattered across the world. We're funded by local investors, including Ian's company Insight4 - a software development firm, and In-tellinc. Right now we're working hard to finish and launch the private beta by December, raising additional funding to assist with an aggressive product development and marketing strategy, and planning our move to San Francisco in early 2009.

**How long has [travellr.com](http://www.travellr.com) been running?**

**Ian:** The concept behind Travellr started out as an idea I had last year while I was travelling overseas. I bounced the idea off Scott and together we developed an initial business and marketing strategy around the idea of a building a service for travelers to be able to ask questions about anywhere in the world. We developed an early stage prototype at the start of the year and then raised some funding and applied for an AusIndustry COMET grant to get the idea off the ground. Last month we took Travellr to Silicon Valley as part of ANZA's 'Gateway to the US' program (<http://www.anzatechnet.com/>) where we pitched to VCs and investors at Plug and Play Tech Centre's Fall DEMO event (<http://www.pluginandplaytechcenter.com>). We are now busy working on launching our private beta for December this year!

**What is the main point about [travellr.com](http://www.travellr.com)?**

**Scott:** When you're travelling, you just can't beat local knowledge - it's invaluable. And when you find it, it can totally make your trip. But unless you actually know someone who lives where you're travelling, it can be very difficult finding qualified information that's specific to your questions. Sure, you can trawl through review sites, forums, social networks and the like, but it's a lot of effort, and there's no guarantee that you'll even find what you're looking for. All you want to do is ask a simple question. This is the problem we're solving with Travellr.

**Who are the people that [travellr.com](http://www.travellr.com) is trying to reach?**

**Scott:** Initially Travellr will target backpackers and 'flash' packers (professionals who backpack), but the service solves a universal problem and we can see it being adopted by all people who travel. In the current economic climate, as people's shrinking budgets cause them to research their travel more closely, a service like Travellr becomes increasingly valuable.

**Can you give a ballpark figure of many users are presently using [travellr.com](http://www.travellr.com)? By how many percent is it growing per month?per quarter?**

**Ian:** We're still in the development stage of the project so you'll have to check back with us in a few months to find out our uptake.

**How are you making [travellr.com](http://www.travellr.com)?**

**Ian:** We've raised some initial early stage capital with assistance from AusIndustry's COMET fund (<http://www.ausindustry.gov.au/>) and local investment, which has enabled us to put together marketing, technical, and business expertise to build the business. We've also sought out a some key travel and tourism advisors to help us out and provide additional insight to the team. We are currently looking at raising additional capital via angel investment to assist us with future product development and implementing our initial marketing strategy.

**What are your metrics for [travellr.com](http://travellr.com)? Is this metric industry-wide/industry-specific or is it something proprietary?**

**Scott:** For Travellr, the biggest and most critical milestone is reaching critical mass - growing the community to a point where people can receive high-quality answers to their questions both a) quickly enough to be useful on the road via a mobile device, and b) from well-matched locals who share similar interests and characteristics. This high standard of user experience requires strategic distribution of users, not only by geographic location, but also according to profile.

**Who are the main competitors of [travellr.com](http://travellr.com)?**

**Scott:** There's no question that online travel is a crowded (and competitive space), but by focusing purely on travel questions and answers, Travellr sits in a niche. There are a small handful of sites such as GeckoGo, STA Travelers and Lonely Planet that allow users to ask questions, but these guys play predominantly in the travel social network space, offering everything but the kitchen sink, including itinerary and media sharing, blogging and reviews. For them Q&A is essentially bolted on as an afterthought, and as a result is poorly implemented. And to be honest, who wants (or has time) to join yet *another* social network? I don't want to post photos, make friends or share my itinerary - I just want to be able to quickly and easily ask locals questions to get information that's valuable to me!

**What is your definition of entrepreneurship?**

**Ian:** I like to think that entrepreneurship is the art of turning a great idea into an even better business.

**Scott:** Having the guts to believe in what you're doing and fully committing to it.

**Given a chance to do it all over again, would you have started [travellr.com](http://travellr.com) again? What would have done differently? What did you do right?**

**Scott:** Nothing really, other than maybe taking time to hang out in the US sooner. Pitching Travellr in Silicon Valley is definitely the best thing we've done for the project to date. It was a good kick in the pants, and forced us to consolidate our core-value proposition, business model and message to investors. The progress we've made with Travellr since making the decision to take it to the Valley has been nothing short of remarkable, and we've been able to bring back a lot of energy and insight from the experiences we had on this trip.

**Any inspiring thoughts for future startupper?**

**Ian:** Always be open to advice and criticism from others as this is free feedback that will help you improve your idea!

If you want to learn more about Travellr or just chat with Ian and/or Scott, try to bump into them at the upcoming [Sydney BarCamp](#) on November 15 at the [UNSW Roundhouse](#).

interview and posted by: Paul [“The Pageman” Pajo](#)

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