

LiveJournal.com steps up gear in India, launches new communities, welcomes Suhel Seth on Advisory Board

LiveJournal.com, the San Francisco based global blogging platform, marked the next phase of their development in India by launching a number of new India focused communities designed to provide forums for informed and intelligent user-generated content. To coincide with these plans LiveJournal also announced today that Mr. Suhel Seth had accepted a position on its global advisory board.

Suhel Seth, Managing Director of Counselage and well known marketer, writer and actor has taken up a post on the LiveJournal advisory board where he joins the likes of Silicon Valley expert Professor Larry Lessig and investor Esther Dyson.

Suhel brings along a keen understanding of the Indian business, social and political environment, adding further edge to LiveJournal's own understanding of the online and social media landscape.

Commenting on the progress made in India and Mr. Seth's appointment, Ms. *Annelies van den Belt, CEO of SUP, owners of LiveJournal* said 'We are thrilled to have Suhel on our Advisory Board. He brings a breadth of knowledge, understanding and creativity that we have already started to benefit from. We have made good progress in India with new communities and users coming on board; I know that with the help of Suhel and other supporters in India, we will continue to grow.'

Commenting on his role *Mr. Seth* said 'In a world, where elections are being run through networking sites and where communities are being created along philosophy and interest, LiveJournal is the more realistic and interactive face of community building. As a marketer I believe, LiveJournal will not just change the way brands engage with consumer clusters but equally will re-define the space of community building: from pleasure to business and pleasure. I am honoured to serve on the Advisory Board: for me joining this board is a reflection of the stature of Brand India and the interests and intellect of Indians as a whole.'

To complement this announcement, LiveJournal today unveiled brand new India communities on cinema and sport respectively:

1. India Movies - which aims to bring leading voices from the movie Industry, critics and fans together on one common forum. The community is moderated by Deepa Gahlot, national award winning film critic from Mumbai. The community can be found online here:

http://india_movies.livejournal.com/

2. India Sport - a new community which will share Indian sport in all its dimensions, with G Rajaraman, one of the most credible sport editors in the country. The community can be found online here: http://india_sport.livejournal.com/

These new projects build upon on earlier LiveJournal initiatives in India that focused on writing, travel, Bollywood and US elections:

1. India Writing - LiveJournal's very first local India project was launched recently with the very successful Quick Tales Flash Fiction Contest (over 1000 valid entries; the results of which were also announced today).

India Writing is a global forum which aims to bring together Indian writers, across geographies, genres and forms. *India Writing* supports web users who share a passion for creative writing and who want to use LiveJournal to widen their audience and raise their profile. The flourishing community can be found online here: http://india_writing.livejournal.com/ US Elections 2008 Community: With *Mint* the business daily, as one of the media partners from India (along with *The Independent* from UK and *Gazeta.ru* from Russia), this global community asked LiveJournal users in the US their views on the US elections and their contributions were showcased by the media partners. The community can be found online here: http://us_election2008.livejournal.com/

3. India Travels - in partnership with Kunzum.com. This community is aimed at those who live in India who want to write about the great places they have visited and those outside who want to find out about hidden treasures. The community can be found online here: http://india_travels.livejournal.com/ Bollywood Club - launched with zoOm Television as partners, this community gives contestants on the TV show, by the same name, a chance to engage face-to-face with viewers. The community can be found online here: <http://bollywoodclub.livejournal.com/>

Speaking on a visit to Delhi *Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, Director of Corporate Development, SUP, said* , 'This week is an important staging post for LiveJournal in India. We have already run a very successful writing contest which generated more than a 1,000 entries. We are now pushing on with more plans to support the development of self-publishing in India; we believe that the strength of the Indian online scene and the richness of India culture provide a perfect backdrop for us to grow in the market with the help of new and existing users'.

LiveJournal in India currently has 70,000 unique visitors a month; 800,000 page view a month and 40,000 account. LiveJournal user base in India is currently growing at 25 percent. (Source: Internal LJ logs, Omniture -- October 2008)

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