

## Getting the Local Scoop... through the Digital World

Written by Mike Morellato

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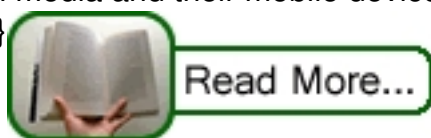
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Screenshot from Apple [website](#)

With an increasing demand among travellers for the "local experience" at a new destination, many people are turning to our digital world to assist them. There can be much to gain when seeking out locals in a destination, and this can help to lead to more responsible travel patterns. Becoming more familiar with the local culture, learning the local language, exploring new forms of transit, discovering local cuisine, supporting local business and realizing that some cultural happenings are not found in a guidebook... all of these experiences can be fulfilled or heightened with the help of a local. With our increasingly digital world, many are looking to the internet, social media and their mobile devices to assist them on their travels.

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The website [Localyte.com](http://Localyte.com), currently in beta form, is looking to bridge the gap between the wandering foreigner and the educated local at the destination. You can post questions before or during your trip to the "Localytes" who are experts in the destination and find answers that will help you make the most of your travelling experience. You can also connect directly (face-to-face) with a local, with many offering services to the

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travellers.

After browsing the site, it seems the local help ranges from expensive tour guides to free local compatriots offering to show you around. There has been some reservations among travellers to use the face-to-face services, as it can be difficult to ensure the safety of the situation. In response to this, Localyte has posted the following in their FAQ:

*The great majority of people in the world have good intentions. However, travelers and tourists can be targets of crime or scams. If you do wish to meet a Localyte or use a service they may offer, Localyte.com provides several ways to better know who you are meeting:*

- You can read what the Localyte writes about themselves, their home location, and their services
- You can easily see the answers they've provided to other Traveler's questions
- You can read reviews from other Travelers, and contact travelers who have worked with the Localyte before
- You can talk directly with the Localyte

With some due diligence on the part of the traveller and some common sense thrown in, I think the service can be a useful one to help you get connected in the destination you are heading. There seem to be plenty of success stories where travellers have experienced a culturally fulfilling and rewarding adventure that they normally would have been sheltered from through traditional travel or tour groups. In addition, Localyte has now released [Pocket Sherpa](#), an iPhone app that connects users to their site remotely and allows them the continued local connection while galavanting the globe. Personally, I enjoy a minimalistic approach to the use of any mobile devices, computers and email while away from home - but for those hugging their mobile devices while abroad, consider getting connected to informed locals that can help you make the most of your travels