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World Wide Guide

Charting your own course.

By **Christopher Tennant**
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If Jane really loves shopping at Colette in Paris, kind of hates Heathrow, and would rather be seared alive than set foot in Manhattan's Meatpacking District, what's her favorite restaurant in Tokyo? Six years ago, back when Jane's every taste and eccentricity weren't data points ripe for extrapolation, this S.A.T.-style teaser would have been difficult to solve without knowing her particular palate. In 2011, however, the name and address of the Japanese paella stand she's been subconsciously seeking will be only an algorithm away, provided she's a member of **InTheMO.com**, the brainchild of **Cary Levine**, 30, who is trying to redefine the way we search for things online.



Cary Levine, founder of InTheMO.com, photographed at Secret Service, in Los Angeles. By Jonathan Becker.

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When you first log on to InTheMO, you're asked to rate a series of seemingly random "Spots" in your city—from nightclubs and restaurants to neighborhoods, parks, and stores—on a 1-to-100 scale. "The five-star rating no longer makes sense and doesn't account for enough nuance," says Levine. "Your responses form the basis of a "taste profile," which is then used to predict how much you will like other things, which the site refers to as "Recs."

"We started InTheMO to answer the questions that sort of plague us, whether we're traveling or in our own city: Where do we want to go tonight? What do we want to do tomorrow? There are several things I rely on when making a decision about where I want to go: I trust my own eyes, I trust recommendations from friends and experts, and I trust my personal taste. I wanted to build a site that could emulate that experience online."

The "eyes" part proved the biggest challenge. To help users decide which Spots would be worth visiting, Levine and his cohorts began building what he claims is now the "largest library of high-quality guided-local-video content on the planet": more than 3,500 one-and-a-half-minute "documentaries" in which various celebrities and industry leaders give tours of their favorite cities, stores, restaurants, and hotels. Filmed in 57 cities, from L.A. to Paris to Hong Kong, testimonials and tips are given by people such as Lady Gaga, restaurateur Thomas Keller, filmmaker Michel Gondry, and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban.

To deliver the right Recs to the right users, "we've created a best-in-class, better-than-Netflix, artificial-intelligence compatibility engine that learns your tastes and can actually predict how likely you are to enjoy something—whether it's a film or a hotel or a taco stand—based on how much people with similar tastes enjoy it," he says, rapid-fire. "Each time you use the site, it gets smarter until it becomes like a personal concierge for you in every city around the world."

Keywords

Fanfair, Websites, Christopher Tennant, Cary Levine, InTheMo



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