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ViewPoints.com Reviews \$5M

Yet another review site enters a crowded market.

June 19, 2007

By Adena DeMonte

ViewPoints.com, a new ratings and reviews site, said Monday it raised \$5 million in first-round funding from Chicago-area venture capitalists.

Chicago-based Viewpoints.com, founded in October of 2005, is already up and running. The user-generated reviews site joins a crowded market, filled with sites ranging from Yelp to Epinions.

Does the Internet really need another user-generated reviews site? ViewPoints CEO Matt Moog thinks his site will win over mind share. And Mr. Moog isn't alone in attempting to gain traction. There's also RatePoint, another new online rating and reviews company that also received its first round of funding on Monday (see [RatePoint Scores \\$6.5M](#)). Meanwhile, online retailers like Amazon.com, all seem to have some form of a rating and comment system available for users to review products.

But Mr. Moog said his site is different because it is a social network. It's most similar competitor, in that sense, would be Yelp, but Yelp offers reviews of local establishments and events, whereas ViewPoints.com lets a user review a restaurant one minute and a digital camera the next. Also, Viewpoints focuses on the 25- to 49- year-old demographic, while Yelp seems to focus more on 18-25 year olds.

"None of those sites ultimately pull all the different pieces together in the way we do, with 700 different categories," said Mr. Moog.

The social networking piece of the puzzle makes it possible for users to find similar reviewers, and then read reviews according to related interests. While contributors might also write reviews on other sites, ViewPoints would be one location where they could build up their reputations as online reviewers. Finding similar reviewers is part of a growing trend in online recommendation technology.

Recommendation technology is often based on a set of pre-defined demographic information and often also includes personal ratings within its recommendation algorithms. MyStrands, focused on the online music market, said Monday it raised \$25 million for its recommendation technology (see [MyStrands Gets \\$25M](#)).

ViewPoints investors included the Illinois Innovation Accelerator Fund, Morningstar founder and CEO Joe Mansueto, The Alter Group President Michael Alter, Draper Fisher Jurvetson managing director Matt McCall, Apex Venture Partners partner Lon Chow, and J.B. Pritzker, founder and partner of New World Ventures and CEO of The Pritzker Group.

"If anyone could create a site that's in a crowded market and take mindshare away from the existing players, I think Matt and his team could do it," said board member and investor Lon Chow, who is also a

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