



Press Release from Bournemouth University

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BU awards Visiting Fellowship to leading tourism entrepreneur

One of the world's leading tourism entrepreneurs has been named as a Visiting Fellow to Bournemouth University (BU).

John Kent, Founder and CEO of www.Youtravel.com and founder of Aquis Hotels and Resorts, will use his strong track record in the tourism and travel industry to support the School of Services Management at BU. The School is a world-leading centre for tourism study and research, boasting the largest cohort of postgraduate tourism students in the UK.

"I am delighted to support the innovative research that is undertaken at Bournemouth University in Tourism," said Kent. "I have been particularly interested in the further development of research in Tourism Marketing and e-Tourism for which the University has developed an enviable international reputation."

As an executive and entrepreneur in six major companies, Kent activities within the online and dynamic packaging sector of the global tourism industry have helped him to build the value of both. He founded MedHotels.com and TravelBargains.com revolutionising the package holiday model and introducing dynamic packaging for holidays in the UK market. Both companies were then acquired by Lastminute.com, after two very successful years of operations.

He was then appointed as UK Managing Director of Lastminute.com with global responsibility for the procurement of hotels. Since leaving Lastminute.com he has generated a range of dynamic projects and is currently the founder & CEO of Youtravel.com. Kent established the online resort accommodation provider in 2006 with backing from Barclays Ventures, and achieved expected turnover of Euro 115 million for its second year.

Recently, Kent invested in Aquis Hotels and Resorts which aims to build a portfolio of wholly-owned hotels and hotels under management in the Mediterranean area. This venture has attracted substantial financial backing from Abu Dhabi.

Earlier this month, BU announced the establishment of *The John Kent Institute in Tourism*, through a substantial gift made by Kent to directly support a series of PhD studentships with the aim of establishing an internationally significant programme of tourism research at BU.

BU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Curran, commented: "This new BU-based Institute will fund a considerable number of PhD studentships in tourism research, commencing with eleven over the next four years. This is a major initiative in tourism research that has been made possible by the generosity and vision of John Kent.

"John is an entrepreneurial pioneer of e-tourism and an enthusiastic supporter of tourism research at BU. While the studentships will focus on tourism they will take advantage of our intellectual breadth and help us to develop activities in areas as diverse as tourism and health; tourism and economics; tourism and climate change; tourism and psychology and tourism and communication."

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Notes for Editors

1. BU is the UK's Number One New University (first place among all institutions that became universities since 1992) according to The Guardian University Guide 2009 & 2010. (www.guardian.co.uk/education)
2. BU was a finalist for 'University of the Year' and 'Research Project of the Year' in *the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards*, 2009.
3. In the 2008 [Research Assessment Exercise](#) (RAE) BU is the fourth most improved university in the UK for the quality of its research (according to *Times Higher Education*).

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