

## **“Swiss Roots Website”– Americans and Swiss Discover Their Common Roots Online**

*The “Swiss Roots” website – which will launch on March 29, 2006 – is an innovative new internet community with two main platforms: a genealogical search section, which invites people in the United States with “Swiss Roots” to explore their heritage and ancestry and an interactive community allowing users to share in their Swiss affinity. American “Swissophiles” can meet and interact with Swiss people, share stories and advice, and learn how Swiss culture permeates their daily lives. “Swiss Roots” is also a vehicle for people to discover and reinforce each others’ passion for Swiss culture, and to realize exactly how Swiss each of us really is. Additional features include surprising information on Switzerland, profiles and interviews of famous Swiss emigrants, promotional offerings and a “Swiss Roots” event calendar which lists Swiss-related events across the USA. The “Swiss Roots” website has been developed by IgoUgo, based in New York, and Swissinfo, based in Switzerland.*

### **“Swiss Roots” Web Community**

IgoUgo developed the “Swiss Roots” community for a growing audience of people to share information, advice, photos, and experiences, and their passion for what Switzerland has brought to the world. Sophisticated database applications allow users to search and sort member stories, and provide personalized content. Members can set up friends networks, and can easily contact one another to ask questions, exchange information, and build friendships without geographic bounds. In return for writing their stories, Swiss Roots members accrue valuable points redeemable for gift certificates and Swiss Roots merchandise, and other rewards. The IgoUgo-powered community also includes message boards, an interactive calendar of local and national Swiss events, and access to thousands of reviews on Switzerland destinations.

### **Genealogical Search and Heritage**

Swissinfo has put together a wealth of information for Americans of Swiss descent who wants to find out about their ancestors, where they came from, and what life was like in the Switzerland they left behind. In the genealogy section a number of different databases – including Ellis Island passenger lists, revised to correct misspellings and mishearings – make it possible to search for ancestors by name and/or place of origin for free. Via links to the homepages of these Swiss localities, users can find out what they are like today, and perhaps plan a visit to their ancestors’ former home.

In the “Heritage” section, web users will find an illustrated timeline with events in Swiss and American history, so they can see what was happening in both countries when their ancestor made that momentous decision to cross the Atlantic. A series of portraits

describes the great contribution to American society made by Swiss immigrants and Americans of Swiss descent, in all fields of human endeavour, from inventors and businessmen – from Louis Chevrolet to Milton Hershey; to politicians like Hubert Hoover; to film stars like Yul Brynner or Renee Zellweger; and many, many more. There is something on the Swiss Roots site for every taste, including items such as typical Swiss recipes.

**About IgoUgo**

IgoUgo develops and hosts leading online communities for a variety of companies including destinations, media, ecommerce companies and others, including those of The Travel Channel, RCI, and Rough Guides. Its online community platform includes sophisticated database and personalization applications, IgoUgo Friends Network, comprehensive editorial review, and a rewards program. IgoUgo communities are proven to improve online activity and transaction rates, site traffic, and customer loyalty. IgoUgo also runs the most popular online travel communities in the world, IgoUgo.com. Its 350,000 members—all passionate travellers—share firsthand travel experiences, advice, and photos, with candid tips and inspiring stories covering more than 4,100 destinations.

**About Swissinfo**

The swissinfo Webfactory is an autonomous unit of swissinfo, the internet and multimedia center of competence for the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, producing Switzerland-orientated websites, DVDs and printed material for internal and external customers, including the Swiss Foreign Ministry. It has already worked with the Consulate-General of Switzerland in New York on the [www.swisspeaks.org](http://www.swisspeaks.org) website for the Swisspeaks initiative.