

The Internet in competition with the traditional information sources

**- a study of vacation planning for
package vs non-package travel**

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Tourists and the need for information

- “*For many vacationers, gathering, processing, and evaluating information is an integral part of the travel experience*”
Snepenger, D. and M. Snepenger (1993) *in VNR'S Encyclopedia of Hospitality and Tourism*, 830.
- Extensive information acquisition may be expected for **unknown destination** and for expenditures involving **large financial outlays**
van Raaij, W. F. (1986). *Consumer Research on Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research* **13**: 1-9
- Information is used in deciding among alternative destinations, holiday activities, transportation modes, accommodation, departure date&duration
- It seems that on most occasions the tourists are using a relatively long time on this activity before a trip (see for instance:)
Dellaert, B. G. C. (1999). *The Tourist as Value Creator on the Internet*, ENTER 1999, table 2, p.74

Information sources

- “*Leisure tourists differ in their information search behavior such that homogenous groups can be formed on the direction of their search, defined by the **specific source(s)** used.*”

Fodness, D. and B. Murray (1997). “Tourist Information Search.” *Annals of Tourism Research* **24** (3): p. 507

- **Categories/classifications;**
Social, personal, marketing and editorial

Vogt, C. A. and D. R. Fesenmaier (1998). “Expanding the Functional Information Search Model.” *Annals of Tourism Research* **25**, p. 552?

Source of information: commercial or non-commercial and

Type of information: impersonal or personal

Fodness, D. and B. Murray (1997). “Tourist Information Search.” *Annals of Tourism Research* **24**(3): 507

Hypothesis

- **H1 Package travelers prefer** to contact travel agents or tour operators to get information when planning a vacation
- **H2 Non-package travelers prefer** to use Internet to get information when planning a vacation

The H3 to H6 concern the sub-categories of the information source **Internet**

- **H3 The package travelers prefer** to use the web-sites of travel agents or tour-operators
- **H4 The package travelers prefer** to use web-sites that give a good overview of activities and attractions instead of a lot of detailed information
- **H5 The non-package travelers prefer** to use web-sites of local suppliers or tourism organisations
- **H6 The non-package travelers prefer** to use web-sites that give a lot of detailed information about activities and attractions instead of a good overview

The survey

- Time of the survey: February 2001
- Recruiting: the respondents were recruited from a representative national panel, the invitation was sent to 700.
- Sampling frame - who received the invitation to participate?
 - * individuals with **travel experience**
 - has travel abroad (by plain) or been on a package-vacation abroad
 - are using the Internet
- Grand total: 392 including 25 incomplete questionnaires
- Response rate: 52% (367/700)

The profile of the sample compared to the national Internet-population

	Travel survey February 2001	National Internet survey Winter 2000/01
<i>Gender and % using the Internet</i>		
men (N=2469)	-	62%
women (N=2907)	-	54%
<i>Internet usage</i>		
daily	79%	66%
weekly	19%	15%
monthly	2%	9%
seldom	0%	5%
<i>Age groups</i>		
15 - 29 years old	13%	23%
30 - 39 “	35%	29%
40 - 49 “	28%	23%
50 - 59 “	19%	18%
60 years or older	6%	7%
<i>Income before tax</i>		
less than 25000 EURO	10%	22%
25 - 50000 EURO	63%	58%
more than 50000 EURO	18%	12%
Un-answered	8%	7%
<i>% with e-commerce experience</i>		
- has booked something online	63%	50%
<i>E-commerce and travel services</i>		
* has booked air-tickets online	28%	13%
* - ” - accommodation online	35%	11%
* - ” - holiday packages online	21%	13%
	N=367	N=3094

The four groups of information sources and sub-categories

<p>Brochures</p>	<p>Brochures and catalogues from travel agents or tour operators Brochures and catalogues from national tourist organizations Brochures and catalogues from local or regional tourist organizations Brochures and catalogues from others such as transportation companies, accommodation etc Advertisement in newspapers</p>
<p>Travel literature</p>	<p>Travel books which are handy to carry when travelling Travel books with a lot of detailed information, but few nice color photos Travel books with nice color prints, but less detailed information Travel books about selected topics (in-expensive travel, history, sport ...) Travel magazines Maps & books with maps</p>
<p>Travel agents & tour operators</p>	<p>Direct contact with travel agent for information about activities, attractions etc at the destination. Direct contact with travel agent for practical information (the location of the hotel, bus-transportation etc) Direct contact with travel agent for advice and recommendations from people that have visited the destination</p>
<p>Internet</p>	<p>A web-site of a travel agent or tour operator A web-site of a national tourism organization A web-site of a regional or local tourism organization A web-site of a transport-company or hotel chain A web-site of a travel portal A web-site of a publisher of travel literature A web-site with travel recommendations (other travelers personal recommendations) A web-site with interactive maps A web-site that facilitates communication with other travelers. A web-site which gives a good overview, but don't give much detailed information A web-site which gives much detailed information (rich content) A web-site of a local supplier</p>

**The ranking of the four groups of information sources by package (PT)
and non-package travelers (NonPT)**

	Brochures	Agents & operators
	PT – NonPT $x^2 = 35.2, p < .001$	PT – NonPT $x^2 = 33.3, p < .001$
Most useful	39% - 17%	35% - 19%
Second most useful	33% - 27%	21% - 12%
Third	16% - 33%	28% - 29%
Fourth	12% - 23%	16% - 41%
	Travel literature	Internet
	PT – NonPT $x^2 = 30.6, p < .001$	PT – NonPT $x^2 = 36.6, p < .001$
Most useful	9% - 26%	17% - 39%
Second most useful	14% - 24%	31% - 37%
Third	28% - 24%	28% - 14%
Fourth	48% - 26%	24% - 10%
N=	180 - 187	180 - 187

**The most useful of the information-sources by
package and non-package travelers.**

	Package travelers (PT)	Non-package travelers (NonPT)
Brochures	39%	17%
Travel agents & tour operators	35%	19%
Travel literature	9%	26%
Internet	17%	39%
N=	180	187

Sub-categories of brochures

	Brochures from agents & operators PT – NonPT $x^2 = 57.9, p < .001$	...from national tourist org. PT – NonPT $x^2 = 20.4, p < .001$	...from regional or local tourist org. PT – NonPT $x^2 = 31.7, p < .001$
Most useful	72% - 33%	6% - 22%	11% - 30%
Second most useful	10% - 17%	29% - 27%	21% - 28%
Third	8% - 24%	33% - 23%	27% - 21%
Fourth	5% - 18%	22% - 20%	25% - 11%
Fifth	6% - 9%	11% - 9%	16% - 9%
	...from others – transportation, accommodation, PT- NonPT $x^2 = 11.6, p < .02$	Advertisement in newspapers PT - NonPT $x^2 = 20.1, p < .001$	
Most useful	3% - 8%	8% - 7%	
Second most...	14% - 19%	26% - 9%	
Third	18% - 19%	14% - 14%	
Fourth	38% - 39%	11% - 12%	
Fifth	27% - 16%	41% - 58%	
N=	180 - 187	180 - 187	180 - 187

Sub-categories of direct contact with a **travel agent (TA) or tour-operator**

	Direct contact ....for information about activities, attractions at the destination PT – NonPT $\chi^2 = 1.8, p < .40$	....for practical information (the location of the hotel, transportation etc) PT - NonPT $\chi^2 = 3, p < .22$	....for advice and recommendations from people that have visited the destination PT – NonPT $\chi^2 = 5.9, p < .053$
Most useful	17% - 17%	49% - 41%	33% - 42%
Second most...	41% - 47%	20% - 34%	29% - 19%
Third	42% - 36%	31% - 26%	37% - 39%
N=	180 - 187	180 - 187	180 - 187

Sub-categories of **travel literature**

	Travel books which are handy to carry when travelling PT – NonPT $x^2 = 13.3, p < .02$	..books with a lot of information, but few nice color photos PT – NonPT $x^2 = 20.2, p < .001$	..books with nice color prints, but less detailed information PT – NonPT $x^2 = 4.0, p < .55$
Most useful	39% - 33%	15% - 26%	4% - 5%
Second most useful	26% - 18%	22% - 16%	6% - 6%
Third	14% - 12%	13% - 23%	13% - 10%
Fourth	10% - 19%	22% - 13%	19% - 13%
Fifth	8% - 13%	18% - 10%	23% - 29%
Sixth	3% - 5%	10% - 12%	35% - 37%
	Travel books about selected topics PT – NonPT $x^2 = 9.7, p < .085$	Travel magazines PT – NonPT $x^2 = 6.1, p < .3$	Maps & books with maps PT – NonPT $x^2 = 9.0, p < .11$
Most useful	12% - 11%	13% - 7%	16% - 18%
Second most useful	12% - 24%	13% - 11%	21% - 26%
Third	23% - 20%	17% - 18%	19% - 17%
Fourth	27% - 20%	11% - 16%	12% - 19%
Fifth	14% - 14%	24% - 24%	14% - 10%
Sixth	12% - 10%	22% - 25%	18% - 11%
N=	180 - 187	180 - 187	180 - 187

Sub-categories - Internet

	A web-site of a TA or operator PT – NonPT $x^2 = 27.7, p < .001$	...of a national tourist org. PT – NonPT $x^2 = 5.3, p < .38$	.. regional or local tourist org. PT – NonPT $x^2 = 6.8, p < .23$	transp. company or hotel chain PT – NonPT $x^2 = 9.2, p < .10$
Most useful Second most.	38% - 8% 14% - 7%	6% - 14% 9% - 11%	7% - 14% 7% - 16%	1% - 7% 5% - 5%
	..travel portal PT – NonPT $x^2 = 6.0, p < .30$	.. publisher of travel literature PT – NonPT $x^2 = 10.4, p < .06$	... individuals with travel recommend. PT – NonPT $x^2 = 4.0, p < .54$	..with interactive maps PT – NonPT $x^2 = 3.1, p < .69$
Most useful Second most	6% - 9% 8% - 4%	1% - 5% 7% - 4%	8% - 6% 6% - 6%	4% - 7% 9% - 12%
	..facilitates communication with other travelers PT – NonPT $x^2 = 5.4, p < .37$	..which gives a good over-view..... PT – NonPT $x^2 = 2.9, p < .71$	..which gives a lot of detailed information PT – NonPT $x^2 = 1.4, p < .92$	.. of a local supplier PT – NonPT $x^2 = 7.0, p < .22$
Most useful Second most	1% - 3% 3% - 2%	16% - 12% 13% - 13%	9% - 12% 11% - 13%	2% - 4% 8% - 9%

Key findings

- Information from or produced by, travel agents or tour-operators is preferred by the majority of the package travelers.
- the Internet as an information source was regarded as very useful for non-package travel in particular. It was rank as a clear first choice - 39% vs. 26% for travel literature. To some extent this result was a surprise.

Which of the hypothesis were supported?

H2 Non-package travelers prefer to use Internet to get information when planning a vacation

H3 The package travelers prefer to use the web-sites of travel agents or tour-operators

- H2 was supported - 39% of the **non-package** travelers rank Internet as the most useful source (in the second step).
- H3 was supported - a high 38% of the **package** travelers the web-sites of travel agents or tour-operators

Limitations

- The main weaknesses of this study have to do with the survey instrument.
- The fact that the questionnaire did not contain questions about which of the information sources the travelers use (or have used), and their holiday patterns means that the findings only are an indication of travelers' preferences and should not be interpreted as their actual behavior.