

# **The Internet and city tourism – information sources for travel planning**

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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

# Hypothesis

- H1: **City tourists prefer** to use to **Internet and travel literature** to get information when planning a vacation.
- H2: **Non-city tourists prefer** to contact **travel agents & tour operators** and to use **brochure** to get information when planning a vacation.

The H3 to H4 concern the sub-categories of the information source “**Internet**”

- H3: City tourists prefer to use the web-sites that give much detailed information.
- H4: City tourists prefer to use the web-sites of local suppliers and local tourism organisations

# The survey and the survey instrument

- 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
- Response rate: 52% (367/700)
- The questionnaire contained these four main information sources (plus sub-categories).
  - \* Brochures
  - \* Travel literature
  - \* Travel agents & tour operators
  - \* Internet

# The profile of the respondents

Compared to the average Internet-user, the respondents had:

- higher income and were more experience Internet users

	Travel survey February 2001	National Internet survey Winter 2000/01
<i>Internet usage</i>		
daily	<b>79%</b>	66%
weekly	19%	15%
monthly	2%	9%
seldom	0%	5%
<i>Income before tax</i>		
less than 25000 EURO	<b>10%</b>	<b>22%</b>
25 – 50000 EURO	<b>63%</b>	<b>58%</b>
more than 50000 EURO	<b>18%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Un-answered	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<i>Percentage with e-commerce experience</i> - has booked something online at least once	<b>63%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<i>E-commerce and travel services</i>		
* has booked air-tickets online	<b>28%</b>	<b>13%</b>
* - ” - accommodation online	<b>35%</b>	<b>11%</b>
* - ” - holiday packages online	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>
	<b>N=367</b>	<b>N=3094</b>

# About the questionnaire

## The respondents could chose between these destinations

- Scandinavia
- Holiday to the Mediterranean region
- City-holiday in Europe
- Asia
- America
- Africa
- Australia

## And had to rank:

- **Brochures**
  - five sub-categories
- **Travel literature**
  - six sub-categories

**Direct contact with Travel Agents & tour operators**  
- three sub-categories

**Internet**  
- eleven sub-categories

## The profile of the segment “City tourist”

	Total sample	Non-city tourist	City tourist
<i>When starting to use Internet</i>			
1995 or earlier	26%	23%	<b>33%</b>
1996	18%	19%	16%
1997	16%	15%	21%
1998	21%	22%	15%
1999	15%	17%	10%
2000	4%	4%	5%
<i>Internet usage</i>			
daily	79%	77%	<b>86%</b>
weekly	19%	20%	14%
monthly	2%	3%	-
seldom	-	-	-
<i>% with e-commerce experience</i>			
- has booked something online	63%	61%	<b>68%</b>
<i>E-commerce and travel services</i>			
* has booked air-tickets online	28%	26%	37%
* - ” - accommodation online	35%	31%	<b>51%</b>
* - ” - holiday packages online	21%	19%	30%
	N=367	N=286	N=81

# Results

## The most useful information sources - main categories

	<b>City tourists</b>	<b>Non City tourists</b>
<b>Brochures</b>	14%	<b>32%</b>
<b>Travel agents &amp; tour operators</b>	23%	<b>28%</b>
<b>Travel literature</b>	23%	16%
<b>Internet</b>	<b>40%</b>	25%
N=	81	286

# The ranking and the differences between the segments

	<b>Brochures</b> City tourists – <b>Non City t.</b> $x^2 = 14.5, p < .002$	<b>Agents &amp; operators</b> City tourists – Non City t. $x^2 = 4.1, p < .255$
Most useful	14% - <b>32%</b>	23% - 28%
Second most useful	28% - 31%	12% - 18%
Third	37% - 21%	27% - 29%
Fourth	21% - 16%	37% - 26%
	<b>Travel literature</b> City tourists – Non City t. $x^2 = 9.9, p < .019$	<b>Internet</b> <b>City tourists</b> – Non City t. $x^2 = 7.0, p < .071$
Most useful	23% - 16%	<b>40%</b> - 25%
Second most useful	28% - 17%	31% - 35%
Third	20% - 28%	16% - 22%
Fourth	28% - 40%	14% - 18%
N=	81 - 286	81 - 286

# Brochures and the ranking of the sub-categories

	<b>Brochures from agents &amp; operators</b>  City t. – Non City t. $x^2 = 7.2, p < .127$	<b>Brochures from national tourist org.</b>  City t. – Non City t. $x^2 = 5.9, p < .209$	<b>Brochures from regional or local tourist org.</b>  City t. – Non City t. $x^2 = 10.2, p < .036$
Most useful	<b>42% - 55%</b>	16% - 14%	<b>26%</b> - 19%
Second most useful	15% - 13%	20% - 30%	33% - 22%
Third	24% - 14%	27% - 28%	24% - 25%
Fourth	10% - 12%	28% - 19%	10% - 20%
Fifth	10% - 7%	9% - 10%	7% - 14%
	<b>Brochures from others – transport, hotel etc.</b>  City t. – Non City t. $x^2 = 8.5, p < .073$	<b>Advertisement in newspapers</b>  City t. – Non City t. $x^2 = 3.2, p < .52$	
Most useful	9% - 5%	7% - 8%	
Second most...	21% - 15%	11% - 19%	
Third	9% - 21%	17% - 13%	
Fourth	41% - 38%	11% - 12%	
Fifth	21% - 21%	53% - 49%	
N=	81 - 286	81 - 286	81 - 286

## The most popular types of web-sites (sub-categories of Internet)

	A web-site of a Travel Agent or tour operator	A web-site of a national tourist org.	A web-site of regional or local tourist org.	A web-site which gives a good over- view
	<b>City t – Non City t</b> $x^2 = 5.6, p < .35$	<b>City t – Non City t</b> $x^2 = 6.3, p < .28$	<b>City t - Non City t</b> $x^2 = 5.7, p < .33$	<b>City t – Non City t</b> $x^2 = 2.9, p < .71$
Most useful	<b>21% - 35%</b>	<b>22%</b> - 16%	15% - 16%	<b>19% - 22%</b>
Second most..	19% - 15%	10% - 19%	22% - 15%	26% - 18%
Third	15% - 13%	14% - 15%	9% - 18%	13% - 15%
Fourth				
Fifth				
Sixth				
Sub-samples (N=)	48 – <b>206</b> (81 – 286)	<b>59</b> – 158 (81 – 286)	<b>59</b> – <b>188</b> (81 - 286)	<b>53</b> – <b>185</b> (81 - 286)

( $x^2$  are tested for the sub samples)

## Only minor differences between the segments for to sub-categories

	A web-site which gives a lot of detailed information	A web-site of a local supplier
	City t–Non City $\chi^2 = 9.8, p < .08$	City t–Non City $\chi^2 = 10.5, p < .06$
Most useful	18% - 18%	14% - 3%
Second most..	22% - 20%	14% - 17%
Third	29% - 14%	20% - 24%
Fourth	13% - 15%	25% - 19%
Fifth	4% - 19%	16% - 19%
Sixth	13% - 14%	10% - 18%
Sub-samples (N= )	45 – 169 (81 – 286)	49 – 140 (81 - 286)

## Which of the hypothesis were supported?

- The respondents that are labeled non-city tourists seem to be more traditional in their preferences than the city tourists. Information from or produced by, travel agents & tour-operators was preferred by the majority of the non-city travelers.
- The findings in the survey can be interpreted as a **support** to the H1 – **Internet** is ranked as the most preferred information sources among **city tourists**.
- The findings also support H2 – **brochures** are the most preferred information source and travel agents the second most preferred information source among the **non-city tourists**
- the findings did not support H3 and H4. Web-sites with a lot of detailed information, web-sites by local suppliers and local tourism organizations were not among the top three list among City tourists in this survey.

## But

- The main weakness of this study has 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 behaviour.

## Results from the 2002 survey

	2001 Total sample “Experienced travelers with Internet-access”	2002 Total sample “Frequent Internet-users with travel experience”
Brochures	28%	20%
Travel literature	18%	14%
Agents & operators	27%	17%
Internet	28%	<b>23%</b>
Friends and acquaintances	(not included)	<b>25%</b>
N=	367	458

	2001 City – Non City tourist	2002 City – Non City tourist
Brochures	14% - 32%	18% - 21%
Travel literature	23% - 28%	18% - 13%
Agents & operators	23% - 16%	15% - 17%
Internet	<b>40%</b> - 25%	<b>27%</b> - <b>23%</b>
Friends and acquaintances	(not included)	22% - 26%
N=	81 - 286	78 - 380