

MOBILE

35M individuals in UK engage with digital travel content each month

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Louis Vuitton Spirit of Travel campaign 2015

By NANCY BUCKLEY

United Kingdom travelers are choosing mobile travel content at an equal rate to information offered on desktops, but smartphone usage is growing more quickly, according to a new study from Expedia Media Solutions.

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Luxury Daily

Mobile users in the U.K. are more frequently accessing travel information, encouraging travel related companies to maintain a mobile-optimized presence. Understanding habits and trends among users will help hotel, plane, cruise and other travel marketers best reach clients in the U.K.

"Mobile adoption is showing no sign of slowing, and people are getting even savvier with how they are using tablets and smartphones for travel content consumption and booking," said Noah Tratt, global senior vice president of media solutions at Expedia, Inc.

"There is an incredible opportunity to further reach UK travelers across devices and throughout the travel planning process," he said.

Expedia commissioned comScore to conduct a study on the importance of multiplatform devices in online travel content consumption in the UK. comScore blended online travel

behavioral data with data collected through a survey. The demographic is those over 18 living in the U.K. who booked travel in the last six months. The survey was conducted between March 27 and April 6, 2015.

Where in the world

In the U.K. 73 percent of the population engages with digital and travel content as opposed to 63 percent in the United States.

Three-fourths of U.K. travelers own a PC, smartphone and tablet and use all three to plan their travel arrangements.

There are 25 million U.K. consumers using mobile devices to access travel content each month, and 70 percent of those are only getting travel information on their smartphones. Accommodating to smaller screens is necessary to meet this twist in travel planning.

Also, the planning is not happening in applications, as about 81 percent of mobile users view travel content through a browser. The use of tablets in the U.K. is much higher than in the U.S., and 10 percent of these users are using apps, almost negating the purpose of travel apps.

However, consumers that do use apps are spending more time on apps than on browsers for travel information.



Mobile usage

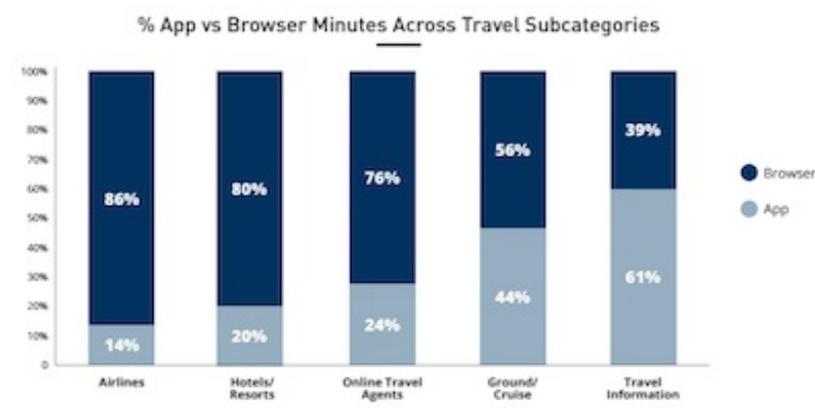
Looking at when usage spikes also helps travel brands understand how to direct focus. For instance, PC usage is high during the workday, but phones and tablets are used much more frequently at night. Consumers are also spending 70 percent more time engaging with content on PCs.



Luxury travelers

Since 2014, tablets have increased in popularity among U.K. travelers. For instance, in 2014 28 percent of people reported using a tablet for researching, whereas in 2015 51 percent use their device.

Luxury travelers, in particular, are much more likely to use a tablet for all stages of their traveling experience.



App vs. browser

Compared to the U.S., U.K. travelers are more open to mobile bookings. Also, U.K. individuals are more inclined to browse travel sites for fun.

Ads galore

When it comes to mobile travel advertisements, 21 percent of tablet users and 13 percent of those on a smartphone intentionally click on the ads.

British brands have been looking toward this trend with ads on travel publication Departures.

For instance, British apparel brand Burberry showed the versatility of its handbags through a banner ad on travel publication Departures' Web site.

At first glance, readers of Departures assumed that Burberry placed an ad for its new Bee handbag due to the roomy bowler style, making it ideal for travel as a small catch-all.

Brands often place ads that are relevant to the content primarily featured on a publication's mobile and desktop Web page ([see story](#)).

Also, travel brands have succumbed to this trends with their own ads.

For example, The Leading Hotels of the World showed just how “remarkably uncommon” its properties are with a series of ads housed on travel magazine Departures’ mobile Web site.

Leading Hotels of the World’s three ads, placed as a banner and two sidebar boxes, are relatively traditional and common and do not recall the remarkably uncommon aesthetic the hotelier is aiming for, but this irony attracts the reader’s attention. Each of the three ads repeat the same phrasing which may seem redundant to most readers, but the thought of what Leading Hotels of the World means by remarkably uncommon may drive click-throughs ([see story](#)).

The use of mobile ads, or often cross-platform advertising, will likely increase as mobile usage does.

"Mobile devices have had an increased impact on online travel content consumption throughout all travel stages and content categories, and that impact is only going to become greater," Mr. Tratt said. "As we see from the study, 25 million people in the UK engage with travel content on a mobile device monthly, with 70 percent access only via a smartphone and 14 percent access using both smartphone and tablet – and consumers are making more travel purchases on mobile devices, especially tablets, with that expected to continue increasing.

"With this in mind, digital IS the future of travel," he said. "What an incredible market for us to test and learn with digital now, so that we are prepared as marketers to continue engaging audiences across multiple devices – those that exist today and those that we can only imagine for tomorrow."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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