

Lang, Tania (2000) "The effect of the Internet on travel consumer purchasing behaviour and implications for travel agencies" in Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol 6 Number 4, Sept 2000.

Tania C. Lang

Tania Lang is a Senior Consultant in the Management Consulting group at Ernst & Young and specialises in ecommerce and ebusiness solutions for the tourism industry. She has several years sales and marketing experience in the tourism industry and holds a Masters of Business by Research degree from the School of Tourism at Southern Cross University in Lismore. She also holds a Graduate Diploma of Arts (Tourism) from Monash University in Melbourne. She has been involved in several ecommerce projects in the tourism industry ranging from small Internet start up companies to substantial ecommerce projects in partnership with other major industry players.

Abstract

The Internet and World Wide Web remain one of the most topical issues for travel agents. Some analysts predict there will be no need for travel agents in the future as consumers turn to the Internet to make their travel arrangements. The aim of this research was to investigate the travel purchasing behaviour of consumers and the future implications for traditional travel agencies. Primary data for this study was collected in the United States, where it is generally recognized that a high level of Internet usage exists. The results suggest that whilst travel consumers are increasingly turning to the Internet, many are still hesitant to book on-line. Many travellers surveyed had utilised the Internet for travel purposes such as obtaining information, but few regularly book on-line. The main barrier against booking travel via the Internet is the perceived lack of a secure payment method. Other significant reasons stated were a lack of confidence with the technology, and a need for a personal service and human interface. The results of this research conflict with suggestions in the literature that travel agents will lose their client base overnight when secure payment methods are developed and consumers become more experienced with the technology. This study also highlights opportunities that may exist for travel agents, such as the promotion of their services to those consumers who have already accessed the Internet and are more informed.

Introduction

The Internet and World Wide Web remain one of the most topical issues for travel agents in Australia. Some analysts predict there will be no need for travel agents in the future as consumers turn to the Internet to make their travel arrangements. There is no doubt that the number of Internet users has been growing exponentially along with the number of consumers turning to the Internet for their travel arrangements. But the plethora of statistics pertaining to on-line travel are generally produced by companies who may have an interest in inflating these figures. Very little objective academic research has been conducted in regard to travel consumer behaviour and the Internet. However, it might be argued that consumers that will drive the changes in the travel industry and their utilisation of the Internet will ultimately affect the implications for travel agents.

Regardless of the size of the Internet and its utilisation by consumers, there is little doubt that the Internet is revolutionising distribution channels and the changing the way many companies do business. Suppliers, such as airlines and hotels, are making strategic decisions to target consumers directly and bypass the traditional distribution channels.¹ It is important to note that the Internet is not a new distribution channel as such. In fact, many companies have attempted to target consumers directly for many years. However, the Internet has some distinct advantages which will be discussed in the literature review. As a result, it is changing the way both companies do business and the purchasing behaviour of consumers. The effect of the Internet on business and consumers is clearly evident in the tourism industry which as Sheldon² notes is "highly information intensive". As information is so easily disseminated via the Internet and the

tourism industry is so information intensive, it is not difficult to understand why the Internet is a perfect medium for distributing travel products.

1.1 Aims and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the travel industry's recent utilisation of the Internet and Web is affecting the travel purchasing behaviour of consumers. Primarily, this research will seek to investigate travel consumers' perceptions of the Internet and Web and how are they utilising the Internet and Web?

Literature Review

As the Internet and Web become a mass-medium,³ changes in the socio-demographics appear to be developing. Schonland and Williams have noted a decrease in the percentage of users with a higher socio-economic status.⁴ Both Sheldon (ib id) and Schonland and Williams (ib id) note that the distribution of users is leading towards being reasonably even between male and female. In fact, recent forecasts suggest that by 2001, women will account for 52 per cent of users in the United States and 45 per cent of total Internet users in the world.⁵ Older people with plenty of spare time are starting to use the Internet in much greater numbers.⁶ In the United States it has recently been estimated that 56 per cent of Internet users have a 'college' education or higher but demographic research also indicated that the educational standard of Internet users has gradually dropped since 1996, "as the net becomes cheaper, easier to use and more widely accessible to the general public".⁷ Even though the comment was made three years ago, Walle (ib id) summarises these findings by suggesting that, "initially, access to the Internet tended to be linked to affluent, young educated, and upscale individuals; today this trend is being rapidly transcended".

As the Internet and Web develop as a mass medium, it is no longer possible to formulate a profile of a typical user. Researchers are now looking at new methods of segmenting Internet users for marketing purposes. According to Sheldon (ib id), Internet users can generally be classified into two segments: long time users who have been using the net for several years and newer users who are just learning. Long time users who are more confident using the technology, tend to make more on-line purchases than newer users.

Research by Forrester in the United States⁸ suggests that consumers can now be segmented for marketing purposes using "technographics" which they define as, "a survey and segmentation system that analyzes consumers by the motivations, attitudes, and income they bring to the adoption and use of technology". Instead of using traditional criteria, such as geographic location which is meaningless in cyberspace, Forrester has formulated three new criteria for segmenting Internet consumers which are:

1. primary motivation - what drives people to consume new products and deviate from traditional distribution channels,
2. attitude towards technology and whether they are optimistic or pessimistic towards new technology; and
3. household income, in particular whether they are considered to be generally high-income consumers, with annual household incomes over US\$25,000 for singles or US\$35,000 for families, or low-income consumers (Bernhof, ib id).

Following a survey of 125,000 North American consumers, Forrester Research has proposed that there are 4 broad groups of consumers consisting of a total of 10 market segments with labels

such as 'Fast Forwarders', 'New Age Nurturers' and 'Mouse Potatoes'. The four broad groups of consumers are outlined as follows (Bernoff, ib id):

1. **High-income optimists.** These consumers lead all others in technology adoptions. Their differing motivations divide them into three segments called Fast Forwards, New Age Nurturers, and Mouse Potatoes.
2. **Low-income optimists.** This group is filled with strong followers, especially in adoption of low-cost products and services. Motivational segments in this group include Techno-strivers, Digital Hopefuls, and Gadget Grabbers.
3. **High-income pessimists.** Despite substantial income, consumers in this grouping resist complex technologies. We segment them into Handshakers, Traditionalists, and Media Junkies.
4. **Low-income pessimists.** This grouping is rarely a factor in technology markets. A single segment, Sidelined Citizens, includes all low-income pessimists.

1.2 Advantages of the Web for consumers

The advantages that the Internet offers consumers as identified by many of the respondents are generally well documented and include:

- convenient and instant access for availability enquiries and bookings at times when consumers want to research and purchase travel;^{9 10 11 12 13} Dorren and Frew, 1997
- ability to easily access information that detailed and also up-to-date^{14 15 16 17 18} (Sheldon, 1997: 93; Diebold and Bertelsmann, 1997: 112) which is according to Buhalis¹⁹ assists the travel consumer by making the product more tangible in their mind;
- a cost advantage in purchasing travel on-line as a result of the market becoming more competitive^{20 21} (Diebold and Bertelsmann, 1997: 112), as well as the ability for consumers to take advantage of substantial on-line discounts that cannot be obtained via any other traditional distribution channels²² (Sheldon, 1997:) or possible cost advantages for consumers as a result of decreased distribution costs Reinders and Baker (1997: 121); and
- avoidance of travel agent fees and charges (Sheldon, 1997: 7).

1.3 Barriers and disadvantages of the Internet and Web for consumers

There are several perceived disadvantages that stop consumers purchasing travel on-line and these are widely documented as follows:

- inability to locate the web sites and information they require;²³
- time factors;^{24 25} (Sheldon, 1997: 66
- security issues;^{26 27 28 29} (Reinders and Baker, 1997: 121; Sheldon, 1997: 67; Murray, 1996;
- 'data overwhelm' or 'information overload';³⁰ (Mazumdar, 1997: 57; Sheldon, 1997: 105;
- cost disadvantages^{31 32} Sheldon, 1997: 106; Reinders and Baker, 1997: 122);
- lack of confidence in the technology³³ (Sheldon, 1997: 67; and
- lack of a human interface. (Passmann et al, 1997: 210).

1.4 Implications of the Internet for travel agencies

According to Forrester Research, in 1997, only 37 per cent of travel companies were set up to receive on-line reservations but by the end of 1998, that figure had increased to 75 per cent.³⁴ So the potential for damage to intermediaries is certainly real. Microsoft's Bill Gates predicates that, "the Internet is a tidal wave...it will wash over the computer industry and many others, drowning those who don't learn to swim in its waves" (Cockerell, 1995: 7). Are the implications really so dramatic for travel agents as Bill Gates suggests?

Whilst Sheldon noted that the potentially greatest implication for travel agents if consumers use the Internet and Web, is a decrease in profitability due to the loss of supplier commissions (1997: 104), she also notes that profitability may be increased as a result of consumers researching their own trips and then booking with a travel agent. These knowledgeable consumers not only allow travel agents to maintain their commissions, but also save the agents substantial time as they do not have to seek information for the consumer. This time can then be used to offer other value added products which will increase their profitability (Sheldon, 1997: 106). There is little doubt that some consumers will choose not to complete their purchase with a travel agent, opting to book direct with a supplier, especially for simple products. However, according to a study by Haas,³⁵ even though many Internet users go on-line to find product information, most users prefer to log off and buy their goods through traditional channels.

Obviously many of the disadvantages for consumers in utilising the Internet will have positive implications for travel agents. One of the documented reasons that travel is not purchased on-line is the time factor, primarily the fact that it often takes a long time to locate information. As time is money, it is feasible that some consumers who wish to save time will continue to use a traditional travel agent.

In regard to security issues, Walle (1996: 75) has highlighted that travel agents have "enjoyed something of a reprieve from direct competition with the Internet" but as new security measures are becoming commonplace allowing safe on-line credit card transactions, this protective barrier is being removed. However, studies by Singh (Lynch, 1997), suggest that plans for widespread on-line shopping will be dashed unless on-line businesses do more to convince Internet users of the safety of electronic trading. The implication for travel agents is that many consumers are likely to continue purchasing travel through their traditional channels as long as they perceive security to be an issue.

Data overload is another widely documented disadvantage for consumers and often leads to confusion and the "possibility of missed opportunities and/or higher costs".³⁶ The implication for travel agents is that their expertise and experience is likely to be called upon by consumers to decipher the mass of information and assist them in the decision process (Loban, *ib id*). It is likely then, that more complex products will continue to be distributed through traditional distribution channels such as travel agents.³⁷ In fact, it has even been argued by van der Heijden³⁸ that information technology, such as the Internet and Web, might have positive implications for travel agents as it increases the complexity of travel for consumers, thereby offering travel agents the opportunity to act as travel counsellors and reduce the complexity.

It has been implied that travel agents may be doomed once consumers lose their 'technofear' of the Internet and WWW.³⁹ However, there will probably continue to be a significant number of potential travellers who are not computer literate and/or do not have or want access to the Internet or WWW. These consumers will prefer to use traditional distribution channels and will continue to appreciate things done the old, traditional way.⁴⁰ (Sheldon, 1997: 207)

The need for personal assistance and advice by many consumers, as noted by Passmann et al (1997: 210), is a positive implication for travel agents as these clients are likely to continue to book through traditional channels, even if they use the Internet and Web to gain information. Whilst consumers may be happy to purchase small consumer items via the Internet such as books and compact discs, they may not be ready to make larger, more intimidating purchases on-line such as travel.⁴¹ According to Boyers (ib id.), many consumers need an “emotional connection” before they buy and that is where travel agents can benefit by providing this “human touch” to fulfil the need for a human interface. In addition, they can also verify the information the consumer has obtained and reduce the “insecurity of travel” by being responsible for all travel arrangements.⁴²

At the moment, it can be argued that travel agents have the advantage because most travellers prefer a human interface and as Needle (1998) comments, “it will be years, if ever, before computers give us anything close to the warm and personal service we hope to get from dealing with a live travel agent”.

1.5 The changing role of travel agents

Whilst the implications for travel agents discussed up to this point have generally been quite positive, it is highly feasible there will be some reduction in the number travel agencies as argued by Reinders and Baker (1997: 126). According to Walle (1996: 77), the Internet offers suppliers and consumers the opportunity to eliminate a reliance on travel agents and if travel agents are to survive, they must meet this challenge. Many of the advantages the Internet offers consumers have potentially negative implications for travel agents. These include easily accessible detailed and up-to-date information, the ability to make instant availability enquiries or bookings, possible cost advantage and the avoidance of travel agent fees and charges.

Most industry commentators hold the similar belief that travel agents will continue to be the dominant distribution channel providing they adapt their role to meet higher customer expectations and changing consumer requirements^{43 44 45 46 47 48} Cockerell, 1995: 6; Loban, 1997: 830; Sheldon, 1997: 68).

There are also many recommendations in the literature which discuss the future role of travel agents. In the future, travel agents will need to focus on providing consumers with a convenient method of making reservations, obtaining information and to stop acting as agents for suppliers and principles (Montgomery, 1995: 295) or, as Glab (1996: 61) stresses, they will not be around in the next millennium. According to Loban (1997: 830), there will still be an important role for travel agents as “counsellors” and they will continue to be the primary information source for many consumers. As “counsellors” they must be able to provide useful information specific to the clients needs. Therefore, travel agents will require the ability to access and process large amounts of information and be able to narrow down the choices and match the appropriate information with client’s preferences⁴⁹ (Loban, 1997: 830; They will also need concentrate on offering consumers value added services (Cockerell, 1995: 6; Racette, 1995: 11). O’Brien and Dunn⁵⁰ summarise this advice as follows:

In the future world of electronic commerce, accessing destinational and product information, assessing its quality and reliability, and providing expert advice will be the core competencies and values added by retail travel agents.

1.6 Importance of Technology for travel agents

It will be difficult for travel agents to change their role and act as “counsellors” if they do not keep up with technology. Manente et al,⁵¹ view the new technologies as positive for travel agents

stating that they offer, “a huge opportunity to re-engineer their role and to become global travel consultants who offer integrated and high-quality travel solutions”. In the near future, there is no doubt that the Internet can be used as an effective tool by travel agents to access more detailed and timely travel information.^{52 53} Another issue travel agencies face is how and when they can create a “useful, productive presence for themselves on the Internet...at a reasonable cost” (Glab, 1995: 59). Sheldon (1997: 58) proposes that the Internet may also provide travel agents with a business opportunity by enabling them to promote their products via the Internet to a broader geographic market at a minimal cost.

Research methodology

Research for this study involved the collection of primary data in Seattle, United States in November, 1998. Quantitative research methodology using the survey method was used to measure attitudes and opinions of North American travel consumers. Individual adult (18 or over) consumers of travel were the units of analysis. The population consisted of all adult travel consumers who were residents of the North America at the time of the study. The researcher aimed to achieve a sample size of 200. The study population (from which the sample was actually collected) consisted of all adult travel consumers who were residents of the United States or Canada who were in the public seating area at Seattle-Tacoma (SEATAC) airport over two days, Wednesday 25 November and Monday 30 November, 1998. The proposed method of sampling could not be utilised due to airport security restrictions, hence respondents were approached in an ad hoc manner at the researcher’s discretion in the public, non controlled, areas of the airport. The researcher was very careful to explain to potential respondents that the opinions of non-Internet users were just as valuable as Internet users and that the survey was not a test of their knowledge. Upon completion of the data collection process, all the data was compiled and cleaned ready for analysis.

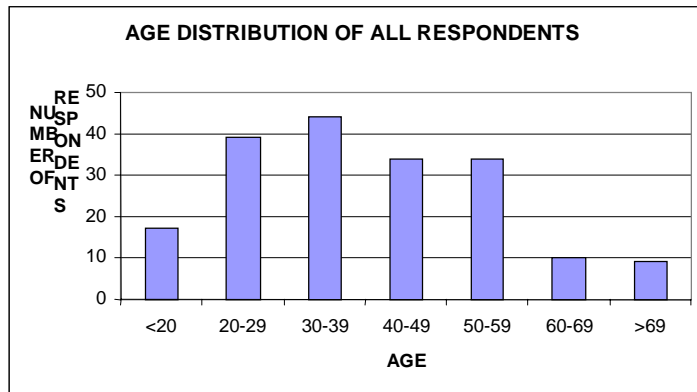
Results

The surveys were conducted at Seattle Airport over two days over the Thanksgiving holiday. Seattle experienced one of its wettest Novembers on record and Wednesday 25 November was a particularly bad weather day. These conditions resulted in an excellent response rate as there were a significant number of ‘stranded’ or ‘delayed’ travellers who had little to do with their time and who were more than happy to complete a survey when approached. In total, 215 consumers were approached and 203 completed surveys. Two travellers approached did not live in North America and they were excluded which resulted in a final sample of 201.

1.7 General demographics of all respondents

A total of 193 respondents completed the section on personal information. The gender split was fairly even but there were slightly more males, 53% compared to 47% females. In terms of occupation, 24% were skilled workers, 50% were counted as ‘professionals’ or white collar workers, 3% were homemakers and 12% were students. There was a high number of well educated ‘professionals’ (71% had a college degree or higher) but that is to be expected when surveying travellers as opposed to the general population. In regards to the age of the respondents, there was a reasonable distribution of age groups although there tended to be a greater number of younger people (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Age demographics of travellers surveyed



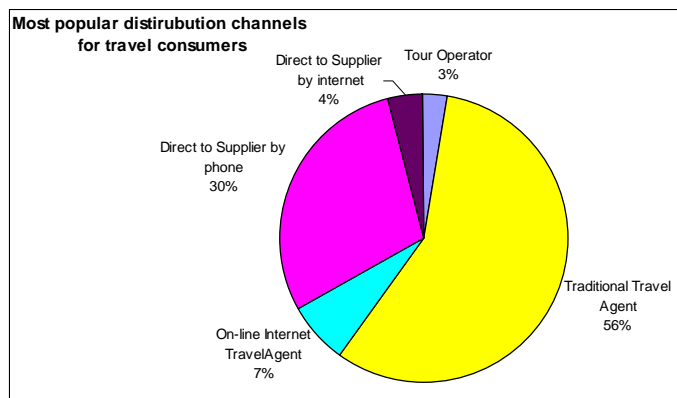
Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201

In regards to geographic distribution, all respondents were from North America. A total of 41% of all respondents were residents of Washington State. A further 13% were from the state of California and the remaining were from other US states (39%) or Canada (7%). By surveying respondents over the Thanksgiving period, a greater number of residents from other states apart from Washington were obtained.

1.8 General travel purchasing behaviour

Of the 201 respondents who completed surveys, 93% stated that they generally pre-booked their travel arrangements prior to departure. Only 7% stated that they generally make arrangements once they reach their destination. Further more, for the 186 respondents that generally pre-booked, travel agents were still by far the most popular distribution channel, with 56% of consumers stating that they ‘most often give payment’ to a traditional travel agency when making travel reservations (Figure 3). 30% of respondents preferred to book direct with a supplier by phone. But most importantly, a relatively small but significant 11% stated that they most often booked via the Internet, either direct to a supplier (4%) or via an on-line travel agency (7%).

Figure 3 – Distribution channel most often used by consumers when making payment for travel arrangements

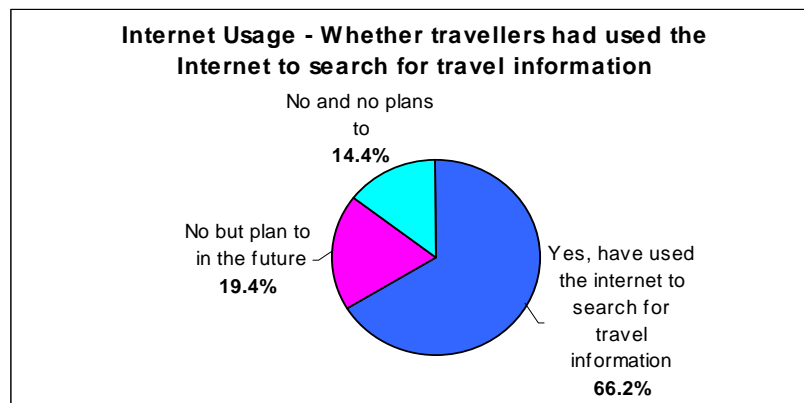


Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201.

1.9 Utilisation of the Internet for travel purposes

As highlighted in figure 4, approximately two thirds (66%) of all the respondents stated that they had used the Internet/World Wide Web to search for travel information. Of the remaining third (34%) of travellers who had not accessed the Internet for travel information, over half (57%) said they expected to in the future. In total, 14% of all the respondents stated that they did NOT plan to access the Internet in the future. The main reasons stated for not planning to access the Internet were, 1) preferred to use their travel agent (5 respondents); 2) had a computer but were not on-line (4); 3) preferred dealing direct with suppliers by phone (4) and 4) had no computer (3).

Figure 4 – Internet usage by travellers

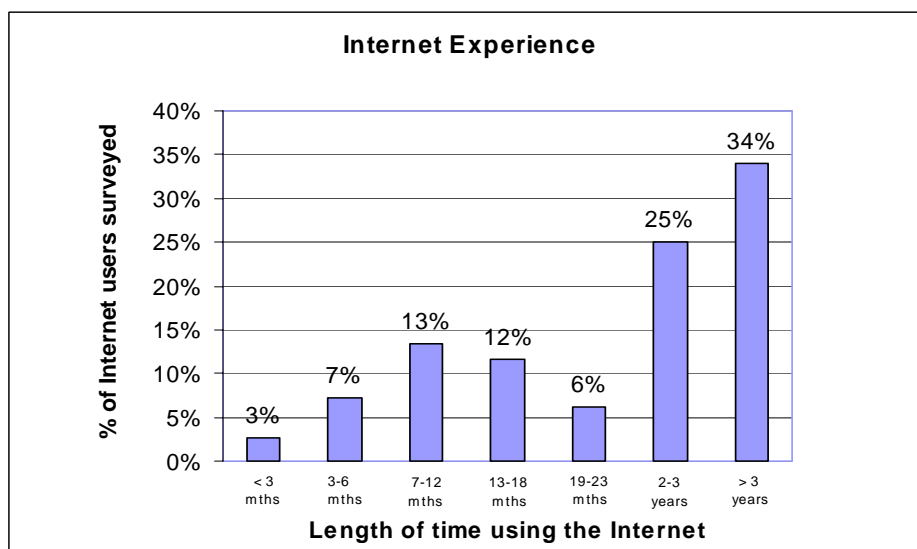


Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201.

1.9.1 Details of Internet Usage and Experience by those who had accessed the Internet for travel information

A significant percentage (59%) of the Internet users claimed they had been using the Internet for over 2 years (Figure 5). Only 10% of users had been using the Internet for less than 6 months. In addition, two thirds of the users only accessed the Internet (excluding email) for less than 4 hours a week (66%). More Internet users accessed the Internet from home (74%) although a significant number also accessed the Internet from their work place (62%). Nearly 11% of respondents accessed the Internet from a friend/relative/neighbour's computer (9.2%) or from an Internet café (1.5%).

Figure 5 – Months/years of experience using the Internet



It has already been noted that two thirds of all respondents had accessed the Internet to search for travel information. The respondents who had searched for travel information were then asked to ‘check’ boxes relating to how they had used the Internet for travel information and these results are available in table 15. Most users (over 90%) stated that they had used the Internet to search for information about a destination. Many of the respondents had used the Internet to **check** airfares and flight schedules (79.4%) and also to search for hotel information (60.3%). However, only a third of the Internet users surveyed had made an on-line booking or reservation but nearly half (46.6%) of the Internet users had used the Internet to obtain information before going to a travel agent.

Table 15 – Utilisation of the Internet for travel by consumers

Internet used for the following:	Number of people	% of all Internet users	% of all 201 respondents
to search for information about a destination	118	90%	59%
to check air fares and flight schedules	104	79%	52%
to check for information about hotels	79	60%	39%
to email a quote request for my travel arrangements	26	20%	13%
to make an on-line booking or reservation	44	34%	22%
to search for last minute or on-line specials	50	38%	25%
to obtain information before I go to a travel agent	61	47%	30%
to communicate with other travellers on-line	10	8%	5%
<i>* NB No total as answers not mutually exclusive</i>			

Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = size 201

Perhaps the most significant point to note in table 15, is that nearly a third (30%) of all respondents had obtained information on the Internet before going to a travel agent. Of the 61 respondents who had used the Internet to obtain information before going to a travel agent, half (50%) had been using the Internet for more than 3 years and a further 22% had been using the Internet for 2 to 3 years. If these figures are added together, 72% of Internet users who had used the Internet to obtain information before going to a travel agent have been using the Internet for over 2 years.

Of this group of Internet users with over 2 years experience who had sought travel information from the Internet before going to a travel agent, 77% stated that there would be a need for travel agents in the future. Only 23% of this group of experienced Internet users stated that there would not be a need for travel agents in the future. Reasons stated as to why there would be a need for travel agents in the future included:

- (1) Time factor 18%
- (2) Issue of security 9%
- (3) Information overload and confusion 24%
- (4) Cost disadvantage for consumers 3%
- (5) Lack of confidence in technology use 18%

1.9.2 Advantages of the Internet/WWW for consumers:

Respondents who had accessed the Internet for travel information were asked to list the advantages of the Internet and WWW which are listed in table 16. Only 3% of consumers actually listed 'avoidance of travel agent fees' as an advantage when using the Internet for travel arrangements.

Two thirds of the respondents (65.6%) listed convenience and instant access as one of the major advantages. The words "convenience" and "24/7" (a term widely used in the United States meaning 24 hours/7 days a week) was a very popular answer. Other significant advantages listed by a third of the respondents included time (32.6%); the ability to easily compare prices (33.6%) and the ability to access detailed or up-to-date information (32.1%). The availability of more options via the Internet was also important for several consumers (28.2%).

A significant advantage which was not clearly identified in the literature was the avoidance of 'sales pressure' when purchasing via the Internet. Nearly 10% of consumers listed this as an advantage stating that they could search for information and were not under pressure to make an instant decision about their purchase.

Table 16 – Advantages of the Internet for travel consumers

Advantages of the Internet / WWW for consumers as listed by those who had used it to search for travel information	Number of people	% of Internet users
Easy to use "User Friendly" Medium	17	13.0%
Ability for consumers to obtain information	28	21.4%
Easily accessible, detailed and up-to-date information	42	32.1%
Convenient & instant access for availability enquiries and bookings	86	65.6%
Cost advantage for consumers	38	29.0%
Avoidance of travel agent fees and charges	4	3.1%
Time	44	33.6%
Easy to compare prices	44	33.6%
More options	37	28.2%
personal control over booking	13	9.9%
Finding like minded host country contacts or travellers	1	0.8%
No sales pressure to make instant decisions	13	9.9%
Earn more frequent flyer points booking direct on-line	1	0.8%
* NB No total as not mutually exclusive		

Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201

1.9.3 Consumer reasons for not booking on-line

Not surprisingly, the most stated reason for not booking via the Internet was the issue of security. Of the group of 86 respondents who had used the Internet for travel information but had NOT booked on-line, over a third (35%) claimed the issue of security as a reason (table 18). The next most stated reason by 20% of this group was a lack of confidence in technology. Other important reasons for not booking on-line were the lack of a human interface and personal service (15%) and the fact that they were happy and loyal to their existing travel agent (15%). Some

respondents gave more than one reason so the number of respondents in each response group were not mutually exclusive.

Table 18 – Reasons for not booking on-line

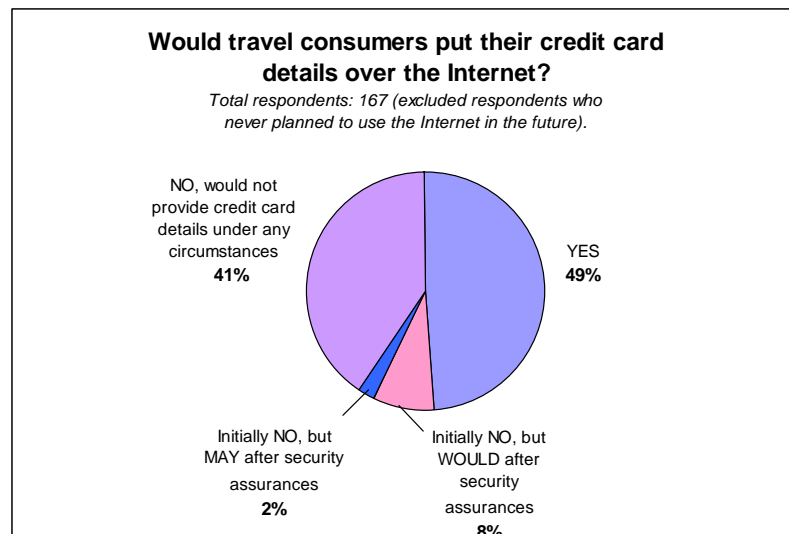
Reasons for not booking on-line by consumers who had used the Internet to search for travel information.	Number of people	% of 86 non bookers	% of all 201 respondents
Takes too much time	8	9%	4%
Issue of security	30	35%	15%
Information overload and confusion	2	2%	1%
Cost disadvantage for consumers	10	12%	5%
Lack of confidence in technology use	17	20%	8%
No human interface - lack of personal service	13	15%	6%
Happy with travel agent – loyal	13	15%	6%
Pure habit - no reason to change	6	7%	3%
Have to book with company's travel agent	8	9%	4%
Web sites not capable of complex bookings	1	1%	0%
Cannot confirm validity of web sites	2	2%	1%
Prices or information not up to date	4	5%	2%
Too close to departure date to book on-line	2	2%	1%
No regular access	2	2%	1%
Certain products not available on-line e.g. seniors fares	1	1%	0%
* NB No total as answers not mutually exclusive			

Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201

1.9.4 Credit card security issue

As already identified by consumers without any prompting from the researcher, the issue of credit card security remains the major perceived disadvantage when booking on-line. For many consumers, the issue of a perceived lack of credit card security prevents them from actually making a purchase on-line. All respondents - with the exception of those who had no intentions of using the Internet in the future - were asked if they would put their credit card details over the Internet and these results are presented in Figure 7. Just under half of those who answered the question stated that they would put their credit card details over the Internet (49%). The group that would not provide their credit card details were then given a security statement and assurance and were asked if they would provide their credit card details after reading that statement. A further 8% of all respondents who answered the initial question stated that yes they would provide after this assurance that their information was safe due to encryption technology.

Figure 7 – Consumer perceptions regarding the use of credit cards for on-line purchases



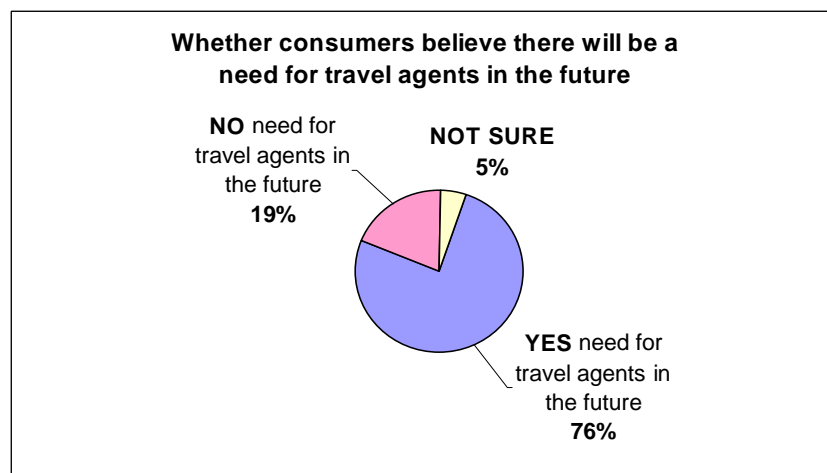
Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201

Perhaps most significant, and one of the biggest barriers for travel companies trying to sell via the Internet was the fact that 41% of respondents stated that they would not provide their credit card details via the Internet under any circumstances. When asked to state a reason for their answer, 72% stated that they simply did not trust the Internet and did not believe in absolute security.

1.9.5 Future prospects for travel agents according to consumers

Over three quarters (76%) of all the consumers surveyed thought there would be a need for travel agents in the future (Figure 9). Only 19% of consumers believed that there would be no need for travel agents in the future.

Figure 9 – Consumer perceptions regarding the need for travel agents in the future



Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201

Consumers were asked to explain their answer in regards to the need for travel agents in the future and the main reasons are summarized in table 23 and table 24. A third of the group (33%) who thought there would be a need for travel agents in the future stated the need for a human interface and personal service as a reason. Other significant reasons stated were that travel agents have

expertise and experience which cannot be obtained on the Internet (15%); the fact that a proportion of consumers have ‘technofear’ and will never use the Internet (24%) and also that a proportion of consumers would rather just pay someone else to arrange their travel (14%). The need for travel agents to arrange complicated travel was only stated by a small number (5%) of this group and the need to coordinate all the details and design custom packages was similarly stated by a small number (7%). The ability to for travel agents to find cheap packages or deals was only listed by 2% of consumers in this group.

Table 23 – Reasons consumers believe there will be a need for travel agents in the future

Reasons provided as to why there will be a need for travel agents in the future	No of people	% of 152 who said yes
Will need travel agents for complicated travel	7	5%
Humans can't replace computers - many people still want personal service	50	33%
Proportion of consumers would rather pay someone else to arrange their travel	21	14%
Proportion of consumers have technofear and will never use computers/Internet	37	24%
Will need travel agents to coordinate all the travel details and design custom packages	11	7%
Travel agents have expertise and experience which cannot be obtained on Internet	23	15%
Travel agents are better at finding cheap packages and fares, especially international	3	2%
No one to blame when things go wrong if not booked with a travel agent	1	1%
Will be more people travelling in the future and therefore a need for travel agents	1	1%
Travel agents help simplify options and reduce confusion and information overload	3	2%
* NB No total as answers were NOT mutually exclusive - some consumers provided more than one answer		

Original for this study, data collected at Seattle airport, November 1998. n = 201

1.10 Results Summary

The consumer research results suggest that whilst travel consumers are increasingly turning to the Internet, many are still hesitant to book on-line. Many travellers surveyed had utilised the Internet for travel purposes such as obtaining information, but few regularly book on-line. The main barrier against booking travel via the Internet is the perceived lack of a secure payment method. Other significant reasons stated were a lack of confidence with the technology; a need for a personal service and human interface; the ability to make mistakes when there is no one available to verify the booking; cost and time disadvantages; information overload and confusion; the inability to validate a web-site or business and increased junk e-mail or 'spamming'.

Many consumers, even experienced Internet users, are not confident purchasing complex and expensive international products via the Internet but they do utilise the Internet to search for travel information before booking their travel arrangements through a traditional travel agent.

However, many advantages were also identified by consumers when using the Internet to make travel arrangements. They include convenient and instant access; time savings; cost advantage; the ability to easily compare prices; the ability to access detailed or up-to-date information and the availability of more options via the Internet. A few other advantages were listed by travel consumers who were surveyed and these included the ability to earn more frequent flyer points by booking on-line, the ability to make contacts with like minded people in the host country or destination and of most significance, was the avoidance of ‘sales pressure’ when purchasing via the Internet which was stated by 10 per cent of respondents.

Discussion

1.11 Positive implications for travel agents

The research results for this study are not all doom and gloom for travel agents. As described in the previous chapter, approximately two thirds of the travel consumers surveyed at Seattle Airport, stated that they had used the Internet to search for travel information (see figure 4). Of those respondents who had not utilised the Internet to search for travel information, over half (57 per cent) said they expected to in the future. Whilst these figures seem to indicate that only a small percentage of consumers will be using travel agent services in the future, that is not necessarily the case.

As previously noted, the two thirds of survey respondents who had utilised the Internet for travel arrangements, often did not book or pay for their travel via the Internet. In fact, data from figure 3 indicates that 56 per cent of all respondents most often used a traditional travel agent to book their travel arrangements. Over 90 per cent of those who had utilised the Internet for travel, stated that they had searched for information about a destination. As also noted, many of these Internet users checked airfares and flight schedules. But most importantly, only a third of those who had utilised the Internet for travel, had actually made an on-line booking or reservation. Furthermore, nearly half (46.6 per cent) had used the Internet to search for travel information before going to a travel agent.

Arguments offered in the literature (Sheldon, 1997: 67; Reinders and Baker, 1997: 121), suggest that one of the main reasons that many consumers do not book on-line is that are uncomfortable with the new technology. The results of this study initially appear to support their argument. Of the group of respondents who had utilised the Internet for travel information but had never booked via the Internet, lack of confidence in technology use was stated by 20 per cent as the reason for not booking on-line. However, a further analysis of the results suggest that once travel consumers are comfortable with the technology, many will still choose not to book their travel arrangements via the Internet. As discussed in the previous chapter, of the 61 respondents who had used the Internet to obtain travel information before going to a travel agent, 72 per cent had been accessing the Internet for over two years and half of these 61 respondents had been accessing the Internet for over three years. It appears that many travel consumers do not stop using the services of travel agents once they become experience Internet users which contradicts the claims made by Sheldon and Reinders and Bakers. This is potentially good news for travel agents around the globe who have previously been advised that they will, "lose their customer base, virtually overnight" once the majority of consumers adapt to the new technology (Sheppard, 1997: 4). As the results also highlight, 77 per cent of those travel consumers who had accessed the Internet for more than two years, believe that there would be a need for travel agents in the future. This suggests that perhaps there are other significant reasons why travel consumers continue to use traditional distribution channels.

The most stated reason by experienced Internet users for using the services of a traditional travel agent is the need for a human interface and personal service. The, "lack of personal assistance and advice" when booking via the Internet is explained by Passman et al, who comment that, "...users tend to feel uncomfortable with an impersonal assistant" (1997: 210). Even though many of these experienced Internet users are fully capable of booking their own travel arrangements via the Internet, the results suggest that many travel consumers appreciate the human interaction, personal service and assurances that traditional travel agents provide.

In the short term, many barriers exist for travel consumers which are preventing them from purchasing travel via the Internet. Regardless of whether these barriers are perceived or real is irrelevant as they are certainly having an impact on the growth of on-line travel commerce. In

the immediate future these barriers give breathing space for traditional travel agents. Mid term, it is probable that one by one, these barriers will be removed so it is important that travel agents keep up with the technology and don't just sit back to wait to see what the future beholds.

Perhaps one of the biggest barrier for consumers, which is widely documented in the literature, is the perceived issue of security on the Internet, especially in regards to credit card payments. It was suggested by Sheldon (1997: 67) and Fleck⁵⁴ that the hesitancy for consumers to provide credit card details over the Internet is probably one of the most significant reasons that consumers still book and pay with travel agents after they have searched the web for travel information. The results of this study appear to support Sheldon's and Fleck's claim. When respondents who had accessed the Internet for travel purposes were asked why they did not book on-line, the most stated reason given by over a third (35 per cent) of respondents was the lack of security. Of the 167 respondents who had utilised the Internet for travel purposes or planned to in the future, 41 per cent claimed that they would not send their credit card number over the Internet **under any circumstances**. The main reason, stated by 72 per cent of this group, was that they simply did not trust the Internet and did not believe in absolute security. Both Walle (1996: 75) and Dreistadt (1996: 136) claim that the consumers will start to purchase goods via the Internet when secure payment methods are developed. But it has also been argued (Lynch, 1997) that widespread on-line shopping will be dashed unless on-line business do more to convince Internet users of how safe it is to put credit card details on-line. The consumer results obtained for this study appear to confirm this as mentioned, as a significant percentage of consumers refuse to put their credit card details over the Internet despite what assurances they are given.

Apart from those already discussed, other barriers or disadvantages identified in the literature were confirmed by at least a percentage of travel consumers who had used the Internet to search for travel information but had not booked on-line. Reasons stated by these consumers for not booking on-line included information overload and confusion (2 per cent); takes too much time (9 per cent); and cost disadvantage for consumers (12 per cent). There were several other reasons listed for not booking on-line which were not outlined in the literature which included: happy with current travel agent (15 per cent); requirement to book via company's travel agent (9%); web sites not capable of complex bookings (1%); certain products not available on-line (1%); and prices or information not up-to-date (5%).

These consumer disadvantages present opportunities for travel agents in any country where consumers purchase on-line via the Internet. Travel agents can welcome consumers who have researched their own travel and verify the information obtained (or offer alternatives) and often make a quick sale (as the consumer is already informed). Agents may also offer a price advantage through the offering of packages and/or alternate products not offered via the Internet, such as 'seniors fares'. Due to their expertise and experience, travel agents can also save consumers a lot of time as they often know where to search for information and undertake the time consuming task of arranging travel plans and reservations on the consumer's behalf. For consumers that are confused about the plethora of options or information available on the Web, travel agents can act as counsellors and assist consumers in choosing the most appropriate travel arrangements and as well as ensuring that special requests are made, such as seating allocations. As such, many opportunities exist for those travel agents who embrace the new technology and technologically savvy consumers who will soon become their regular consumers. If travel agents are insulted or feel threatened by consumers who do their own research and have access to the Internet, then there is every likelihood they risk losing customers either to other traditional travel agents or to intermediaries or suppliers operating on-line.

1.12 Negative implications for travel agents

However, whilst the Internet has many positive implications and opportunities for travel agents, there are many advantages that the Internet offers travel consumers that are also worth discussing as they generally have negative implications for travel agents. Many of the advantages stated by the travel consumers surveyed for this study (who had used the Internet to search for travel information) correlate with the advantages discussed in the literature.

- convenient and instant access for availability enquiries and bookings (Diebold and Bertelsmann, 1997: 30; Needle, 1998: 89; Diebold and Bertelsmann, 1997: 111; Dorren and Frew, 1997: 222; Pratt, 1996: 44) was stated by two thirds (66%) of the Internet users;
- easy to use “User Friendly” medium (Feinstein et al, 1996: 95; Williams et al, 1996: 63); was stated by 13% of Internet users;
- ability to easily access information that detailed and also up-to-date (Sheldon, 1997: 93; Bennett, 1995: 381; Mazumdar, 1997: 57; Richer, 1996: 278; Dreistadt, 1996: 137; Passmann et al, 1997: 209; Diebold and Bertelsmann, 1997: 112) was stated by nearly a third of all Internet users (32%);
- a cost advantage in purchasing travel on-line (Reinders and Baker, 1997: 121; Diebold and Bertelsmann, 1997: 112; Coward, 1998: 89; Sheldon, 1997: 105; Cockerell, 1995: 7) was stated by 29% of Internet users; and
- avoidance of travel agent fees and charges (Sheldon, 1997: 7) was stated by 3% of Internet users.

Other advantages that were listed by consumers that were not previously identified in the literature, included the ability to earn more frequent flyer points by booking on-line (1 per cent of Internet users) and the ability to make contacts with like minded people in the host country or destination (1 per cent). Perhaps of greater significance was an advantage listed by a significant number of consumers which was not identified in the literature: the avoidance of ‘sales pressure’ when purchasing via the Internet. Nearly 10 per cent of consumers listed avoidance of ‘sales pressure’ as an advantage, stating that they could search for information and were not under pressure to make an instant decision about their purchase.

On the topic of consumer advantages offered by the Internet, a perceived 'cost advantage' was also listed by 29 per cent of Internet users. This of course is potentially bad news for travel agents but as discussed earlier this chapter, through their expertise and the sale of packages, travel agents can often offer consumers a cost advantage. Of course the implication here for travel agents it that they must educate consumers and convince them that they provide a cost saving. Again, this would apply to all travel agents operating in countries with a high level of Internet usage, including Australia.

In conclusion, many of these advantages have potentially negative implications for travel agents but if travel agents are aware of them, they have an opportunity to act now by trying to educate and better serve their clients. It may not be feasible to extend business hours to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and to heavily discount, however, there are other issues that consumers have identified which can be acted upon. These include offering unbiased opinions, not applying sales pressure and offering alternate more cost effective products such as packages.

1.13 Limitations

This report does not attempt to make specific predictions regarding the number of travel agencies likely to exist in the future. Nor was this research intended to provide estimates: either relating to the future numbers of Internet users or financial forecasts of on-line travel bookings. The

purpose of this research was to identify how the tourism industry is utilising the Internet and how consumer behaviour is being affected and to assess the relevant implications for travel agents.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how the Internet and Web is being utilised by consumers in North America and to discuss the future implications for traditional travel agencies. Many of the views presented by consumers were already documented in the literature and had positive implications for travel agents in Australia. For instance, the view expressed by several commentators (Sheldon, 1997: 67; Bennett, 1995: 380; Dorren and Frew, 1997: 221) that many consumers utilise the Internet to search for travel information but still book travel through a traditional travel agent, was supported by the consumers surveyed for this study.

There were many reasons suggested by travel consumers as to why they chose to continue to book through a traditional travel agent. Some consumers were not computer literate and never intended to access the Internet. Some consumers simply preferred the human interface of a travel agent, regardless of whether or not they were computer literate. Travel consumers who were experienced Internet users stated various reasons as to why they did not book on-line and these are fairly well documented in the literature. The most stated reason was the lack of a security when booking via the Internet. Consumers simply did not want to provide their credit card or personal details over the Internet regardless of what assurances were made. Other reasons stated as to why they did not book on-line were a lack of personal service and advice; cost and time disadvantages and information overload and confusion. All these disadvantages or barriers for electronic commerce, are all well documented in the literature. These consumer disadvantages all present opportunities for travel agents where consumers are able to purchase on-line travel via the Internet.

Some of the findings of the consumer research contradicted views proposed in the literature. For instance, Reinders' and Baker's (1997: 121) view that one of the main reasons Internet users booked their travel via traditional travel agents was that there were not confident using the new technology. The consumer research results from this study suggest that this is not a significant reason because many experienced Internet users still opted to book their travel via traditional travel agents.

The advantages that the Internet offers consumers as identified by many of the respondents are generally well documented and discussed in Chapter 2. They include convenient and instant access, time savings; cost advantage; and the ability to access detailed or up-to-date information. A few other advantages were listed by travel consumers who were surveyed and these included the ability to earn more frequent flyer points by booking on-line, the ability to make contacts with like minded people in the host country or destination and of most significance, was the avoidance of 'sales pressure' when purchasing via the Internet which was stated by 10 per cent of respondents. But as discussed, whilst these advantages have potentially negative implications for travel agents, opportunities exist for agents who identify these advantages early and attempt to better serve and educate potential customers.

When looking at the possible implications for travel agents, it is important to keep the situation in perspective. Currently the percentage of on-line travel sales is very small, even in the United States. Whilst on-line travel sales will continue to grow at a steady rate, it is likely that tourism will grown in general as consumers in developed countries increase their standard of living and disposable income. So at the end of the day, month, year or decade, it is impossible to accurately forecast the impact of the Internet on travel agents. What is more important is that travel agents understand the changes that are taking place in the industry and understand how consumers perceive and utilise the Internet. It is the author's experience as a travel consumer, that some

travel agents feel very threatened when they are approached and know less than their client, as would any professional. However, most consumers do not expect travel agents to know everything, but they do expect agents to know where to find the information. So opportunities do exist for travel agents to work with rather than against these technologically savvy consumers who will soon be everyday consumers. Rather than telling Internet users "Well why don't you just book it yourself?", travel agents can take advantage of informed, serious consumers and often make an easy sale. By being educated about the industry changes and keeping up with the technology, travel agents have much to gain from this new age of informed consumers.

¹ Walle, A.H. (1996). "Tourism and the Internet: Opportunities for Direct Marketing", Journal of Travel Research, vol 35 (1). p. 72-77.

² Sheldon, P.J. (1997). Tourism Information Technology, New York: CAB.

³ Dorren, C.& Frew, A. (1997). "A Qualitative Analysis of Hotel List Providers on the World Wide Web" in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh, New York: Springer. p. 221-230.

⁴ Schonland, A.M. & Williams, Peter.W. (1996). "Using the Internet for travel and tourism survey research: experiences from the net traveller survey", Journal of Travel Research, Vol 35 (2). p. 81-87.

⁵ eMarketer, (1999a). "Women Catching Up with men in Worldwide Net Use", eMarketer, 31 May 1999. [On-line] Available: http://www.emarketer.com/estats/053199_women.html [2 June, 1999].

⁶ Travelweek (1997). "Travel Specialists conduct 24% of business over the internet", Travelweek, No. 900, 27 Aug 97. p. 8.

⁷ eMarketer, (1999b). "Net User Demographics: Education", eMarketer, [On-line] Available: http://www.emarketer.com/estats/demo_education.html [7 June, 1999].

⁸ Bernoff, J. et al (1998) "Consumers and Technographics: Technographics Explained" Forrester Research, Vol 1, No 0, Jan 1998. [On-line]. Available: http://www.forrester.com/cgi-bin/cgi.pl?displayOP&PLWEB=getdoc+unity-forrester+unity_forrester+1506+0+wAAA+%28technographics%29%26AND%26%281998%26OR%261997%29%3Adate#toclink3 [19 Feb 1998].

⁹ Diebold & Bertelsmann, (1997). Digital Business: The international electronic commerce study by Bertelsmann Telemedia and Diebold - a Company of the DaimlerBenz Group, Diebold Deutschland GmbH/telemedia GmbH: Eschborn, Germany.

¹⁰ Needle, D. (1998). "Traveling the information highway", Upside 10 (5). May 1998. p. 88-92.

¹¹ Pratt, F. (1996). "The Internet and its impact on the hospitality industry", Hospitality: food service, beverage, accommodation, Aug 96. p.44.

¹² Feinstein, A.H. et al, (1996). "Tourism based Internet applications in South East Asia", Proceedings of 2nd International Conference, Tourism In Indo-China: Opportunities for investment, development, and marketing, Ho Chi Minh City, April 25-27, 1996. p.91-103.

¹³ Williams,P. W. et al. (1996). "Using the Internet for Tourism Research: 'Information Highway' or 'Dirt Road'?", Journal of Travel Research, Vol 34 (4). p.63-72.

¹⁴ Bennett, M.M. (1995). "The consumer marketing revolution: the impact of IT on tourism", Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol 1, No 4, p. 376-382.

-
- ¹⁵ Mazumdar, S. (1997). "Realizing Travel Malls: A Logic Programming Based Approach" in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh. New York: Springer. p. 57-66.
- ¹⁶ Richer, P. (1996). "Should travel companies be selling on-line?", Journal of Vacation Marketing Vol 2 (3). p. 277-285.
- ¹⁷ Dreistadt, E. (1996). "It's showtime for tourism: new products, markets and technologies", Proceedings of the 27th Annual TTRA Conference Las Vegas, June 16-19, 1996, Lexington, KY. p. 134-138.
- ¹⁸ Passmann, C. et al (1997). "How to assess WWW-applications for tourism information systems from the end-user perspective. Methodical design and empirical evidence" in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh. New York: Springer. p. 208-220.
- ¹⁹ Buhalis, D. (1996). "Information Technologie as a Strategic Tool for Tourism", The Tourist Review, Vol 2. p. 34-36.
- ²⁰ Reinders, J. & Baker, M. (1997). "The Future for Direct Retailing of Travel and Tourism Products: The Influence of Information Technology" in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh. New York: Springer. p. 119-128.
- ²¹ Coward, C. (1998). "Bargain hunting on the Web", Black Enterprise 28 (12) July 1998. p. 89-92.
- ²² Cockerell, N. (1995). "Technology: Changing the Rules of the Game", PATA Travel News Asia Pacific, Oct 95. p. 6-10.
- ²³ Smith, C. & Jenner, P. (1998). "Tourism and the Internet", Travel and Tourism Analyst No. 1 1998. p. 62-81.
- ²⁴ Travelweek (1996b). "Abacus advances into Internet", Travelweek No. 882, 20 Nov 96. p. 22.
- ²⁵ Murray, D. (1996). "Will the Web replace your travel agent?", Medical Economics, 73 (18), 23 Sept 1996. p. 159-167.
- ²⁶ Shah, P.B. (1995). "Hong Kong watches Internet effectiveness", PATA Travel News Asia Pacific, Oct 95. p. 13.
- ²⁷ Lynch, A. (1997). "Doubts Hinder Growth", The Australian, 25 Nov 97. Networking Liftout p.3.
- ²⁸ Marcussen, C.H. (1997). "Electronic distribution of holiday and business hotels", in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh. New York: Springer. p.191-198.
- ²⁹ Dietrich, B.L. et al, (1997). "The Promise of Information Technology in the Travel Industry", in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh, New York: Springer. p. 129-139.

-
- ³⁰ Steiner, T. (1997). "Distributed software Agents for WWW-based Tourism Information Systems (DATIS)" in Tjoa, A.M. (ed.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER97 conference in Edinburgh. New York: Springer. p. 47-56.
- ³¹ Morrell, P.S. (1998). "Airline sales and distribution channels: the impact of new technology", Tourism Economics, 4 (1). p.5-19.
- ³² Friedenreich, K. (1998). "Is the bucket brigade your next travel answer?", World Trade. 11 (3) Mar 1998. p. 84-85).
- ³³ The Age, (1997). "Net tickets launch new era in travel", The Age, 8 April 97. p. D5.
- ³⁴ Hibbard, J. (1998). "Airlines, online agencies battle for customers", Informationweek 708. 9 Nov 1998. p.30.
- ³⁵ Haas, L. (1998). "Internet: source of data and sales", Computer Reseller News (791). 1 June 1998. p. 91,96.
- ³⁶ Loban,S.R. (1997). "A Framework for Computer Assisted Travel Consulting", Annals of Tourism Research, Vol 24 (4). p. 813-834.
- ³⁷ Schertler. W. et al, (1995). "The End-User Acceptance of new Information and Communication Technologies in tourism", in Schertler et al (eds.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER95 conference in Innsbruck. New York: Springer. p. 46-52.
- ³⁸ van der Heijden, J.G.M. (1996). "The changing value of travel agents in tourism networks: towards a network design perspective", in Klein, S. et al (eds.) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER96 conference in Innsbruck. New York: Springer. p. 151-159.
- ³⁹ Sheppard, T. (1997). "Agents should worry about extinction", Travelweek No 892, 7 May 97. p. 4.
- ⁴⁰ Widener, P. (1995). "Diethalm shows the way with Internet entry", PATA Travel News Asia Pacific, Oct 95. p. 14.
- ⁴¹ Boyers, K. (1998). "Travel industry outlook remains strong", Association Management 50 (2) Feb 1998. p. 64-65.
- ⁴² Buhalis, D. (1998). "Strategic use of information technologies in the tourism industry", Tourism Management, Vol 19, No. 5. p. 409-421.
- ⁴³ Wardell, D. J. (1998). "The impact of electronic distribution on travel agents", Travel and Tourism Analyst, No. 2 1998. p. 41-55.
- ⁴⁴ Glab, J. (1995). "Leisure Industries: Prospects for the US travel agency sector". Travel & Tourism Analyst, No.5. p. 49-61.
- ⁴⁵ Head, B. (1995). "Tourism gets hitched to technology." Australian Financial Review, 28 Nov 95. p. 43.

-
- ⁴⁶ IBM, (1998) "How Travel and Transportation Will Change in a Networked World", IBM Corporation White Paper, [On-line], Available: <http://www.ibm.com/IBM/publicaffairs/travel/index.html> [5 Feb 1998].
- ⁴⁷ Montgomery, J. (1995). "The Information Superhighway: Highway of broken promises?", Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol 1, No. 3 p. 291-300.
- ⁴⁸ Racette, T. (1995). "Move With the Times", PATA Travel News Asia Pacific, Oct 95. p. 10-11.
- ⁴⁹ McMahon, I. (1998). "Virtual travel futures market looms", Travelweek, No. 926, 30 Sep 98. p.1
- ⁵⁰ O'Brien, P. & Dunn, J. (1998). " Opportunities for Retail Travel Agents in the World of Electronic Commerce" in Faulkner, B. et al (eds) Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research, 1998, Part 1 – Proceedings of the Eighth Australian Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference, Gold Coast, Queensland. p.209.
- ⁵¹ Manente, M., Minghetti, V., et al (1998) "The electronic management of business travel. An integrated approach", in Buhalis, D. et al (eds) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER98 conference in Istanbul, Turkey. New York: Springer. p.201-209.
- ⁵² Needham, P. (1996). "Multiple choice for agents on CRS renewal", Travelweek, No 871. 18 June 1996, p.37.
- ⁵³ Travelweek (1997). "Concorde agent-only site a first". Travelweek, No 893. 21 May 97. p. 25.
- ⁵⁴ Fleck, R. (1998). "Electronic payment and additional utilization of smart cards in the tourism industry", in Buhalis, D. et al (eds) Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Proceedings of the ENTER98 conference in Istanbul, Turkey, New York: Springer. p. 308-317.