

BOOKING WITH APPS VS. MOBILE WEB SITES



With reports such as the latest eMarketer forecast suggesting that almost 26 million US consumers will book their hotels, airfares and other travel options via a smartphone or similar device in 2014, it is no surprise that many businesses in the tourism sector are looking more closely at mobile technology. In 2012, 15.6 million booked via a smartphone and 12.1 million via a tablet, in 2014 this has risen to 25.9 million on a phone and 24.9 million on an tablet, by 2016 this is set to reach 37.2 million and 36.7 million respectively. What the report goes on to suggest is that they should be focusing more specifically on apps as this is where most consumers prefer to make their bookings.

What is so appealing about these apps that makes them that preferred choice?

These mobile applications, whether they are for airlines, hotels or any other areas of tourism that chose to use them, are highly appealing to customers, much more so than the alternative mobile sites. A survey in March 2013 found a definite preference for apps, for example 37% of business travellers favoured a travel aggregator app while 10% preferred the mobile site and 33% of leisure travellers favoured a branded airline app while 9% preferred the mobile site.

There are many reasons why consumers are turning to these apps. To start with there is the added convenience as these applications are designed for the device, making them easier to use, and around 38% of businesses polled are using GPS to offer app users localised information on nearby establishments and deals, with more expected to follow suit. The other reason for this love of travel-based apps is the level of personalisation that gives them a friendlier feel. Apps can save personal data like card info and loyalty scheme details as well as favourite brands, all to be more welcoming and save time. In the end, these apps make the most sense for all concerned because they improve the process for the buyers and help industry marketers streamline the process further, which means this forecasted growth in app use is sure to be seen.

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