

MOBILE VERSIONS OF TRAVEL WEBSITES ARE PREFERRED OVER THE DESKTOP SITES



Travel enthusiasts are having a better mobile experience on travel sites, compared to some traditional desktop sites.

According to eDigitalResearch, a research company that specializes in customer experiences, it was found that some of UK's leading travel brands have a better mobile experience compared to their desktop counterparts.

To obtain the multichannel eTravel Benchmark results, eDigitalResearch studied the overall satisfaction of customers on the travel websites of the top twenty one travel brands in the UK including Booking.com, IHG, and Marriott. The research covered mobile sites, desktop sites, as well as mobile apps.

Booking.com registered an improvement of about three percent on their all-round multichannel score. This was attributed to the continuous effort that Booking.com has been making to improve their mobile websites. The mobile search for Booking.com was rated higher than its desktop search. This suggests that some mobile search features like the Geo-location function are considered very important by mobile users who are often searching for information hurriedly.

In general, some of the things that were noted to be of significance to mobile users were the mobile site's first impressions, the design, and the usability of the site. After a more detailed analysis, it was found that those websites that were able to mirror the features of their desktop sites like optimized imagery, functionality, and messaging, with a very responsive design on their mobile sites were more likely to be rated highly by travelers.

Such intense mirroring of desktop features on mobile sites was observed to have been perfected by Thomson and First Choice, who are both benchmark newcomers. First Choice and Thomson took the second and third positions respectively in the all-inclusive multichannel list. In the desktop category, Thomson took the lead with an 87% score owing to the top-notch visual stimulus as well as the ease of navigation on their desktop site.

The research results showed that travel customers were now more interested in an uninterrupted experience on all channels. After Google's algorithm update early this year that made it a fundamental requirement for all brands to have a mobile site that is optimized, efforts have been made by numerous brands to ensure they subscribe to the requirement. For travel brands to have a multichannel experience that is competitive, **it is vital that they ensure their mobile sites are not only optimized, but also provide the same usability and functionality as the desktop websites.**

According to Global Operating Officer, Derek Eccleston, in as much as customers expect a perfect experience on all channels, some brands are yet to achieve this. He reiterated the fact that the only

way travel brands could stay competitive was by ensuring an unbeatable overall customer experience, including the customer's digital experience.

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