

ONLINE BOOKINGS TO DROP BY 3 PERCENT



Travel sector as well as online booking has been affected by the current crisis. This segment, however, has a space to grow despite the crisis.

Internet has changed the way of our lives and it is especially true about travel. Nevertheless, even online booking is uncertain in the current economic situation. According to the market research company PhoCusWright, **online bookings will drop by three percent this year**. These numbers regard leisure and unmanaged business travel bookings, which are typical for small businesses and self employed people. The researchers expect an **overall 11 per cent drop in travel** for 2009. Among the main drivers of the decline in travel are travel budget cuts by companies which are expected to result in significant losses for the travel sector.

On the other hand, the crisis may be an opportunity for companies that are not yet online. According to PhoCusWright, **online travel bookings now represent more than a third of the total travel marketplace**. Bookings of air tickets are fairly common nowadays, however, hotel, rail and tour operators still have enough space for further development in this field. We can expect that 20 per cent of European rail travel and tours will be booked online this year.

As the global crisis further affects the budgets of common tourist people change their travel behavior. For example the French are no longer going on month-long holidays. These days they prefer shorter multiple breaks.

Various researches are done to identify how people behave online. According to Google, people searching for travel related information have increased the number of words in the search phrase from 2.5 to 4+. A recent analysis based on information received from 80 travel websites shows that customers buy their air tickets 44.1 days in advance, they book hotel 41.7 days in advance and hire a car 19.4 days prior their trip.

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