

ONLINE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR VARIES ACROSS EUROPE



What do people do when browsing travel sites and what does it say about them? Does it reflect the actual travel experience and is it an important indicator for travel companies? The comScore prepared a report on the online travel behavior of consumers in the top five biggest travel markets of the EU.

Generally speaking, expenditure on desktops rose between January 2017 and 2018. **Germany leads the list with the highest expenditure in Europe.** The country registered a significant increase of 24% during the year. Germany is followed by France, the UK, Spain and Italy. France registered the highest increase of all countries in the same period – 62%.

Meanwhile, in terms of online travel behavior on desktops and mobile phones, the UK is on the top. The country has a travel audience of 39 million unique visitors. An interesting fact is that 94% of the UK's digital population visited travel-related sites, which is the highest share in Europe.

Germany, France, Spain and Italy follow UK in the rankings. However, Germany's share of travel audience is only 65% of the total digital population. This is the lowest among the top 5 countries and an underachievement, as it means that Germany is not capable of realizing its full potential in this field.

In terms of visits of travel sites, the top 5 European countries are divided into two groups. Spaniards and Brits tend to spend less time on travel sites, however, they visit them more frequently. Italians, Germans and the French visit travel sites less frequently, but spend somewhat more time browsing them.

Overall, the average total time per person per month is the highest in the UK (67 minutes) and Germany (57 minutes). Moreover, most people visiting travel sites still do so on desktops. But mobile phones are becoming increasingly popular and the rising popularity cannot be neglected.

However, despite the rising popularity of mobile phones, it is somewhat difficult for mobile apps to reach the same traffic as desktop sites. The report says that 51 websites reached an audience of more than 1 million unique visitors in January 2018. On the other hand, only 12 mobile apps reached the same mark.

Some desktop sites with most traffic are Airbnb, TripAdvisor or Ryanair, while apps include Uber and TripAdvisor with Ryanair as well.

One of the reasons for this is that mobile phones are mostly used for research purposes. **Data show that a few people actually make purchases of accommodation, airplane tickets etc. on their**

phone and use their device mainly to gather information.

ComScore defines heavy travel users as the “top 20% of travel site visitors who spend the most time on them”. The UK has the largest share of heavy users of travel sites – 13%. Spain and France have a share of 11% and Germany with Italy 10 and 9%, respectively. It is also worth noting that these heavy users are most commonly found on ticketing sites or sites with an e-commerce component.

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