

New Phocuswright Study Reveals Late Adopters Propel Online Travel

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PhoCusWright Report Finds Evolution in Online Traveler Profile

The U.S. online travel market continued its growth in 2007, and saw an upswing in the online traveler population—that is, adults who have taken a commercial air trip and stayed at a hotel for leisure in the past year, and used the Internet in the past 30 days, according to a new PhoCusWright report.

The report, The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Tenth Edition, finds that this evolution in the travel environment presents travel providers with a more polarized market. The novice "late majority" has different travel, shopping and buying behavior than their more seasoned online counterparts. They also have varying levels of online technology savvy, requiring different communication approaches from travel providers.

"With new users, travel providers find themselves in the position of needing to assure these shoppers of the value and security of purchasing online," said Susan Steinbrink, senior analyst at PhoCusWright. "Providers should focus on offering more personalized technology, an intuitive and step-by-step shopping and booking process, and prominent 'human touch,' such as customer support phone numbers, click to call and live chat."

Also among the report's findings:

-With half of online travelers using the same purchase channel for leisure as they do for business travel, providers must set robust pricing fences to minimize buy-down.

-The pendulum has swung back to online travel agencies, which dominate in consumer reach for every travel component category purchased online.

-Despite increased rates and increasing economic pressures last year, hotel was the most popular component purchased overall.

The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Tenth Edition is a nationally representative survey of online travelers that observes and analyzes a range of travel shopping and purchase behavior. While focusing primarily on leisure travelers, the Tenth Edition also probed the behavior of frequent business travelers.

The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Tenth Edition is available for individual purchase.

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