

New Survey Reveals Unique Habits and Preferences of Next Generation Travelers

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Technological change has reinvented the manner in which travel service suppliers bring their products and services to the marketplace in recent years, and a new survey now reveals that emerging technology has had an equally profound effect on the behavior of those who use it.

The NEXTgen Traveler(TM) survey of 2,559 adults-co-authored by PhoCusWright and Ypartnership -was conducted in March 2008. Respondents were "active users" of the latest computer, entertainment or consumer technology, and took at least one overnight trip requiring the use of commercial accommodations during the previous 12 months.

According to the survey, these "next generation" travelers are highly educated (30% with a 4-year college degree, 20% with at least one year of graduate school), affluent (30% of households with an annual income in excess of \$100,000), and are equally likely to be Echo Boomers (18-28 years of age) as Baby Boomers (43 to 61 years of age), thereby debunking the belief that the usage of new technology is concentrated among younger travelers. They have a zest for travel (75% would travel more if they had more money, 62% would travel more if they had more time) and spend, on average, over 50% more on travel services annually than their less tech-savvy counterparts.

"The data paint a fascinating picture of the manner in which emerging technology has re-shaped the attitudes and behavior of contemporary travelers," said Philip C. Wolf, President and CEO of PhoCusWright. "And it is clear that tech-savvy travelers display a significantly different market profile than travelers who are less wired."

As expected, "next generation" travelers are heavy users of the latest technology: two thirds (65%) take pictures, text message (63%), access the Internet (33%) and play video games (29%) with their phones. Two thirds also shop online sites such as eBay (67%). Four out of ten (37%) own the latest video game console, and one out of four (23%) has a GPS in their car.

"Next generation" travelers also rely heavily on the Internet when it comes to planning, purchasing and sharing information on travel experiences:

-Seven out of ten (71%) use the Internet to search for travel information, while 41% have taken a virtual tour of a destination, and 38% have built a trip itinerary online,

-More than half (58%) cite the "ability to check the best fares/rates" as the most important feature in a travel Web site,

-Almost four in ten (37%) report being influenced by personal comments read on social networking or travel advisory Web sites, but they frequent social networking sites such as MySpace.com (56%) and Facebook (30%) more than travel advisory or review sites such as TripAdvisor (14%),

-Fully one-third (33%) have authored and posted a travel review online.

The media consumption habits of "next generation" travelers also differ markedly from those of their less tech-savvy counterparts. Advertising messages are often ignored, and traditional media outlets appear to exert little influence. More than half (56%) read newspapers online, while almost one out of five (18%) never reads a hard-copy newspaper.

"The implications of this work for marketers of travel services are quite profound," said Peter C. Yesawich, Chairman and CEO of Ypartnership, and co-author of the survey. "They not only suggest the need for a fresh approach to media strategies that will reach this growing audience, but raise provocative questions about the influence of the user-generated content that is now flourishing online."

More information-Report Overview, Table of Contents and Methodology-is available [online](#).

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