



For Immediate Release:
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ONLINE TRAVEL PURCHASES SPLIT EVENLY BETWEEN TRAVEL AGENCIES AND SUPPLIERS' WEB SITES; AIRLINE SUPPLIER SITES NEARLY DOUBLES CONVERSION RATES OF ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN//NETRATINGS

Nielsen//NetRatings Launches New Online Travel Research Service to Provide Marketers with Actionable Information on Web Consumer Behavior

NEW YORK — June 21, 2005 — Nielsen//NetRatings, the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis, reported today that while the majority, or 54 percent, of online travel shoppers begin travel research with an online travel agency, consumers are evenly split between travel agencies and airline suppliers' Web sites when it comes to the actual purchase of online travel, according to the latest Nielsen//NetRatings Quarterly Travel Benchmarking Survey. In comparison, 37 percent of online travel shoppers begin research at a travel supplier Web site, and 9 percent begin with a travel meta-search provider.

"The wide selection of travel suppliers drive the majority of travel shoppers to begin their research with agencies and meta-search providers before directly visiting a supplier," said Heather Dougherty, senior Internet analyst, Nielsen//NetRatings. "At that point, suppliers are in a strong position to capture a potential sale as consumers visit their sites to confirm pricing and frequent flyer benefits before making the final purchase. Additionally, the growth of travel meta-search players, such as Kayak and SideStep, provide suppliers with sales opportunities through side-by-side price comparisons with agencies."

Popular Online Travel Destinations

With nearly 50 percent of airline ticket sales and reservations conducted exclusively online during the last six months, according to the Nielsen//NetRatings @Plan Summer 2005 release, online airline suppliers have a stronger foothold in conversion. Agencies fared better in drawing visitors to the site for price comparison shopping, destination searches and multi-trip bookings.

Southwest Airlines, American Airlines and Delta ranked as the three most visited airline Web sites during April 2005. Southwest led with 8.1 million unique Web surfers, compared to 5.7 million and 4.9 million that visited American and Delta, respectively (see Table 1). Southwest converted the most lookers into bookers with a 14 percent visitor conversion rate, followed by Delta and American with 10 and nine percent.

Table 1: Top 3 Airline Web Sites Ranked by Visitors, April 2005 (U.S., Home & Work)

Airlines	Unique Audience* (000)	Visitor Conversion Rate**
Southwest Airlines	8,141	14%
American Airlines	5,663	9%
Delta	4,912	10%

* Source: Nielsen//NetRatings NetView, June 2005

** Source: Nielsen//NetRatings MegaView Travel, June 2005

Online travel agencies attracted up to twice the number of visitors as airlines during April 2005. Expedia led by drawing 16.3 million unique visitors to its site, with Travelocity and Orbitz ranking as the second and third most popular online travel agency with nearly 12 million each (see Table 2). Expedia, Orbitz and Travelocity secured conversion rates of nearly five percent, four percent and three percent, respectively.

Table 2: Top 3 Online Travel Agencies Ranked by Visitors, April 2005 (U.S., Home & Work)

Travel Agencies	Unique Audience* (000)	Visitor Conversion Rate**
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Expedia	16,260	5%
Travelocity	11,714	3%
Orbitz	11,616	4%

* Source: Nielsen//NetRatings NetView, June 2005

** Source: Nielsen//NetRatings MegaView Travel, June 2005

“As suppliers and agencies struggle to gain the competitive edge, supplier sites are beginning to leverage their large customer base by becoming a one-stop shop for air, hotel and car reservations. The addition of additional types of travel options elevates suppliers onto the same playing field as online travel agencies as a source for an overall travel package,” continued Dougherty.

Introducing MegaView Travel Service

These findings were culled in part from the newly launched Nielsen//NetRatings MegaView Travel service that reports overall online booking site traffic and reservations data. The research enables suppliers, agencies and marketers to improve their online strategy for increased online sales through competitive benchmarking, itinerary insights and bookers’ conversion rates. Custom reports can be conducted to delve deeper into comparison shopping, cross purchases, affinity analyses, top search terms used by travel shoppers and demographic data.

Travel suppliers, agencies and marketers can access syndicated reports and surveys, enabling them to:

- Track visitor and session conversion ratios
- Examine visitor behavior according to travel type reservations
- Quantify total dollar spending and drill down by travel type
- Measure visits for comparable sites where reservations were made
- Analyze average travel itinerary and number of reservations across suppliers and agencies

MegaView Travel service is based on the Nielsen//NetRatings’ MegaPanel®, which provides businesses with the most comprehensive intelligence on online travelers by linking past surfing behavior from the panel's large sample with current opinions through real-time surveys. By combining these survey results with the actual surfing habits of the respondents, suppliers, agencies and marketers are able to better understand how travelers are spending online. MegaView Travel is the fourth product introduced from MegaPanel®, an online syndicated suite of services that provides comprehensive Internet market research for key vertical industries including financial services, search, online retail and travel.

Availability of Nielsen//NetRatings Online Travel Research

Nielsen//NetRatings MegaView Travel is now available as a syndicated service. Also available now is the Nielsen//NetRatings Quarterly Travel Benchmarking Survey, which provides an in-depth look at online traveler behavior, satisfaction of top travel Web site features, and impressions and attitudes about the top sites. Please contact a local Nielsen//NetRatings sales representative at <http://netratings.com/contact.jsp> for more information about the services.

Webinar Features Latest Blog and Online Travel Research

To learn more about Nielsen//NetRatings’ latest research findings on online travel, join Ken Cassar, director of strategic analysis, and Marc Ryan, director of analysis at Nielsen//NetRatings for an informative Webinar focusing on online travel and blogs today. To register, please contact JFan@netratings.com.

About Nielsen//NetRatings

Nielsen//NetRatings, a service provided by NetRatings, Inc. (Nasdaq: NTRT), is the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis and is the industry's premier source for online advertising intelligence with its NetView, AdRelevance, @Plan, WebRF, MegaPanel® and SiteCensus services. Covering 70 percent of the world's Internet usage, the Nielsen//NetRatings services offer syndicated Internet and digital media research reports and custom-tailored data to help companies gain valuable insight into their business. For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com.

Editor's Note: Please source all data to Nielsen//NetRatings.



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