

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BRITAIN – THE LAND OF ONLINE TRAVELLERS

Nielsen//NetRatings, the leading provider of Internet research, today releases its latest research on one of the most buoyant and competitive sectors in the UK Internet - the online travel sector:

- Over half (54%) of online Briton's visit a travel site; that's over 14 million people every month - a growth of 20% in the last year alone
- 86% of all British surfers aged over 50 have visited a travel site in the last year - 1.5 million of them visited the secure pages of travel websites to book in September 2005
- Surfers spend on average 40 minutes a month viewing more than 70 pages of content on a variety of travel sites, from airlines to cruise lines, hotels to travel agents

Alex Burmaster, European Internet Analyst at Nielsen//NetRatings says "The figures for the online travel sector continue to impress but what screams out is the staggering percentage of over 50's who go online for travel. This not only has far-reaching implications for the Internet as a whole but confirms beyond doubt that the web is not just a young person's tool."

### THE OVER 50 PHENOMENON

The lucrative over 50's age group is a wide and varied audience hungry for travel experiences and adept at using the Internet to get the best deals – a point that all sectors of the web should sit up and take notice of:

- The most popular travel site with the over 50's is Expedia – ahead of second-placed Lastminute.com by almost 900,000 visitors during summer 2005

### Top Online Travel brands for those aged 50 and over, May- Sept 2004/May-Sept 2005

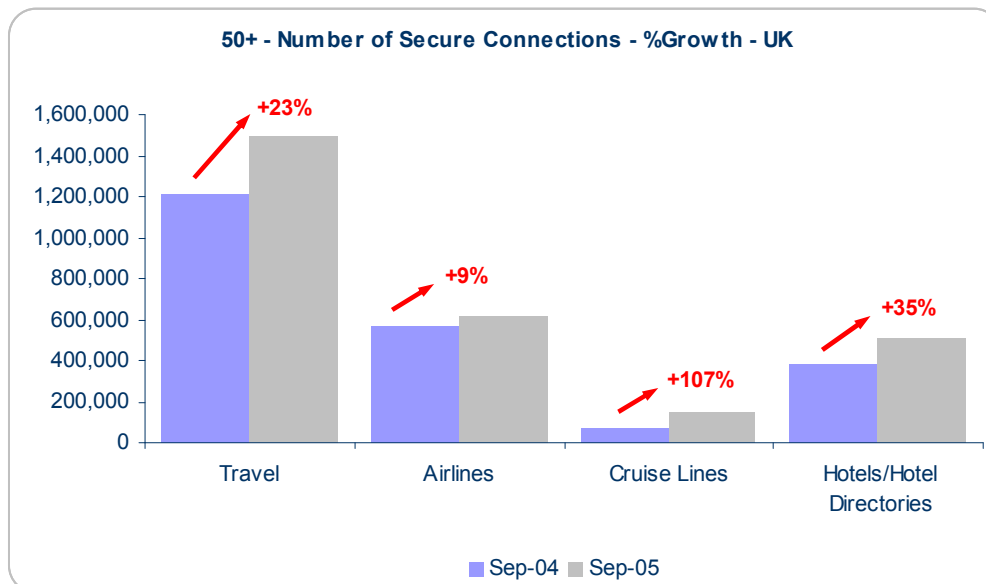
Rank May-Sept 2004	Rank May-Sept 2005	Brand	Unique Audience
1	1	Expedia	2,398,408
2	2	Lastminute.com	1,531,368
3	3	TUI (own Thomson)	1,342,877
7	4	Ebookers	924,010
4	5	Opodo	811,994
10	6	Thomas Cook	768,612
5	7	MyTravel	725,938
6	8	Travelocity	671,821
9	9	First Choice	592,281
8	10	Octopus	577,167

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings NetView May 2004-Sept 2005

- Overall, pure online travel sites are more popular with the over 50's than the traditional high street brands - Expedia, Lastminute.com, Ebookers, Opodo, and Travelocity collectively more popular than TUI (who own Thomson), Thomas Cook, MyTravel and First Choice
- The over 50's are "looking and booking" online more than their younger counterparts - accessing the secured section of travel websites to make bookings much more regularly

Whilst the Big Four high street brands - TUI, Thomas Cook, MyTravel and First Choice - may have a lower audience in this age group compared to the purely online brands, the traditional high street travel agent sites have seen a significant increase of 7% in audience in the twelve months since October 2004.

Cruise lines are particularly popular with this age group; being twice as likely to be visited by those aged 50+ (nearly half of visitors to Cruise Lines sites are 50+). The chart below shows the number of visitors accessing the secured part of each website in September 2004 and 2005, and how this has grown. Sites in the cruise line category, overall, have more than doubled the number of visitors going to secured parts of the site over the last year.

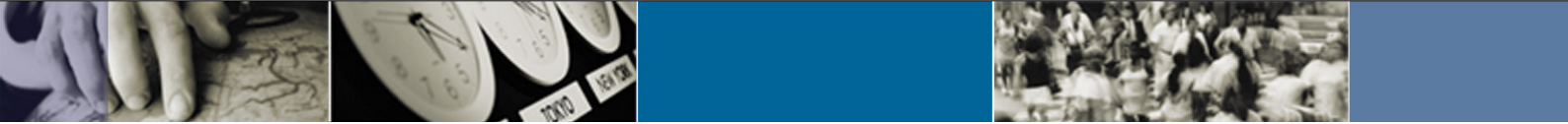


Burmester comments, "The way that the 50+ age group has embraced the online travel sector contains valuable lessons for all sectors looking to increase their online customers – for example looking closely at what cruise line companies are doing that has resulted in the huge increases in number of visitors going to secure pages.

The behaviour of this age group is an extremely vibrant example of how the Internet can be used to improve people's lives and experiences. It's worth pointing out, it's not simply a case that they're sticking with offline brands they've trusted over the years – only Thomson makes it into the Top Five travel sites, all the other four are purely online brands. If the older generation can utilise the web to such an extent this bodes increasingly well for the web over the next few years.

It is well known that this age group in particular are a huge audience for holidays and travel and the development of the Internet has enriched the lives of those over 50, as well as those taking early retirement and releasing capital from their homes to succumb to the desire to travel the world.

The Internet gives them the opportunity to research destinations, create itineraries, compare prices and book trips in real time. The ability to have more control over the total cost of a package also means that for those with the travel bug it's now possible to plan several trips a year from the comfort of their PC."



### Where else are Over 50's going online?

It's not only the travel sector that has benefited from the growth in silver surfers: the table below shows the sites most likely to be visited by people over 50 - these include online trading, genealogy and military sites.

Rank	Sub-category	Composition Index: Likelihood of Visitors Aged 50+
1	Cruise Lines	162
2	Online Trading	142
3	Genealogy	142
4	Long Distance/Local Carrier (Telecoms/Internet services)	137
5	Delivery/Stamps	135
6	Multi-category Special Occasions	125
7	Military	125
8	Airlines	124
9	Financial News & Information	123
10	Hotels/Hotel Directories	121

### EDITOR'S NOTES

Please source all information to Nielsen//NetRatings.

Please note that ACNielsen and Nielsen are both separate, unrelated companies and should **NOT** be quoted when sourcing the attached data. If an abbreviated name is required then please use NetRatings

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#### About Nielsen//NetRatings

Nielsen//NetRatings is a global leader in Internet media and market research, providing companies with valuable insight into their businesses. Nielsen//NetRatings offers the industry's premier source of actionable Internet data and digital media research on Website usage, online advertising, consumer attitudes and competitive analysis.

For more information, please visit [www.nielsen-netratings.com](http://www.nielsen-netratings.com)