

10 Key Findings from the 2022 Travel Digital Experience Benchmark Report

1 Online traffic to travel websites is low and steady.

Online traffic in the travel industry was low and steady compared to other industries due to lockdowns and travel restrictions still in place throughout the year. Unlike before the pandemic, our data shows no spike in the first quarter of the year (usually the busiest time for travel advisors). However, we see a slight uptick in traffic during the summer months when many restrictions were lifted for a short period.

What this means:

The number of sessions per month is a great indicator of how well your marketing efforts are working. However, the low traffic is very likely due to the pandemic and the travel restrictions in place. In 2022, travel brands should focus on attracting more visitors to their sites again.

2 60% of traffic in the travel industry comes from mobile.

The travel and hospitality sector was dominated by mobile traffic last year, with 60% of website visitors originating from a mobile device in 2021. This suggests that customers are happy to browse for holidays and experiences on their smartphones.

What this means:

It's never been more important for travel brands to ensure their mobile experience is as smooth and logical as can be because those who optimize their mobile sites and apps with data-driven insights will benefit from higher conversion rates and increased revenue.

3 80% of traffic in the travel industry comes from unpaid sources.

Earned (or unpaid) traffic was a huge driver of site visits last year, with 80% of web traffic coming from earned sources across the travel and hospitality industry.

What this means:

With tight budgets and fewer travel possibilities in 2021, it's likely that many brands cut back on paid ads, relying heavily on unpaid sources instead to reduce marketing costs during a tricky period for the sector.

4 46% of visits are returning users across the travel industry.

Across the travel and hospitality industry, we found 46% of traffic was made up of returning users last year, meaning less than one in every two visitors on average was an existing customer. While many customers tried new digital experiences in 2021, it's clear that many remained loyal to the brands and online experiences they know and love too.

What this means:

Competition to win back old customers and gain new ones is more intense than ever as the world reopens for tourism. What's more, the online travel market is heavily saturated and today's customers have more choices than ever before. Just because they booked with you once doesn't mean they won't go elsewhere for a better experience next time, making a positive and personal booking experience even more important.

5 Visitors prefer to browse for bookings on desktop.

For the travel industry, we found that users are more likely to spend longer browsing on desktop, at 6 minutes and 59 seconds compared with just 3 minutes and 30 seconds on mobile.

What this means:

This means that nailing both the desktop and mobile experience is paramount to success. Travel brands need to understand exactly why their customers pick one device over another to optimize their digital properties intelligently. For travel, it appears mobile users prefer it short and snappy, while desktop users are willing to spend more time browsing—so travel brands need to make sure to emulate this across their digital properties.

6 Visitors stay 'above the fold' when browsing travel websites.

Scroll rates in the travel industry decreased from 67% in 2020 to 53% in 2021, making it clear that travel brands should invest more time in optimizing content.

What this means:

The data suggests that travel customers view just half the page on average, which means some of the websites digital efforts might be wasted—more so than in 2020 when the average scroll rate was higher.

7 42% of travel visitors bounce after viewing just one page.

The average bounce rate for the travel industry is 42%. This is down—though only very slightly—from 43% in 2020.

What this means:

With just under half of users bouncing after viewing just one page, there's still plenty of work to be done to create seamless experiences in the travel space. Brands should consider analyzing their homepage scroll rate, bounces above the fold, content engagement patterns for bounced visitors, and further refine their site indexing and high-traffic landing pages to ensure visitors are finding content that is relevant, engaging, and useful.

8 The probability of bounce increases by 32% when page load time goes from 1 to 3 seconds. (Google)

Travel brands don't have much time to meet or exceed visitor expectations. Visitors want results and they expect them to occur immediately, especially given our collective digital fatigue thanks to the pandemic.

What this means:

Speed is one of the biggest factors for visitor experience perception. Customers often prioritize speed above all else in today's digital world, so this really could be a make or break for a business. At a minimum, travel brands should aim to nail all of their Core Web Vital scores.

9 The travel industry average conversion rate is 3.9%.

Compared to the industry-wide conversion rate of 2.3%, the travel industry stacks up pretty well with 3.9%. Also, conversions for the travel industry have increased by 63% from 2.4% in 2020.

What this means:

The data suggests that travel brands have spent time optimizing their customer journeys to increase the number of people taking the desired action on their sites. Although, this big year over year increase in conversions comes as little surprise given not many people were traveling around the world in 2020.

10 Travel visitors are more likely to convert on desktop.

It appears users prefer to book holidays on larger screens, with a conversion rate of 4.6% on desktop compared to just 3.1% on mobile.

What this means:

This suggests that users find navigating desktop sites easier (and perhaps less fiddly) than mobile. So for travel brands, it's worth offering their mobile users the option to complete their booking on desktop, i.e. allowing them to save trips and bookings to their account on mobile to finish on desktop. Users love to browse quickly on mobile devices but could be put off by having to fill in more complicated booking and payment information. Giving them the option to save their booking, will help increase conversion rate, customer satisfaction and retention.



For even more data and insights on the travel and hospitality industry, check out the [2022 Travel Digital Experience Benchmark Report](#).

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