



Partner Update - *Trends in Travel*

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Ia ora na!

In this Partner Update, we examine various statistics and patterns in the travel industry, showing how, despite a leveling out of the global economy, the travel industry continues on a steady course. As always, if you have any news that you think would be relevant to our future Partner Updates, please contact us at feedback@tahiti-tourisme.com.

Mauru'uru
Tahiti Tourisme North America

Internet Trends

According to the 2006 YPB&R/Yankelovich National Travel Monitor, more than sixty percent of all leisure travelers use the internet or some kind of online service to obtain information and prices – a significant increase over last year. While the actual number of online reservations has not increased in the last year, the average number of online vacation bookings has shown an increase. Of leisure travelers using the internet to book their vacation, 8 in 10 indicate they have made a hotel reservation online – a significantly higher proportion than the year prior – while two-thirds have made an online airline reservation, and roughly 40% report having booked a rental car online. Complete vacation packages booked online have shown an increase over last year. Among those who reported using the internet to research a potential travel destination, over 25% claim to have visited Web logs or “blogs,” on sites such as MySpace.com, TripAdvisor.com, Ysearch.com (Yahoo-based), and VirtualTourist.com. For those who reportedly search for hotel or resort accommodations online, roughly 7 in 10 claim to have gone to an online travel agency like Expedia, Travelocity or Priceline, and nearly that percentage have used Google, Yahoo, or MSN. Comparatively, approximately 6 in 10 search the website of a specific hotel chain, while roughly one-half search the website of a specific hotel or resort. For airline reservations, 75% of leisure travelers search for airfares through an online travel agency, and a slightly lower percentage search directly through the specific airline. When searching for vacation options online, nearly two-thirds have used search engines like Google, Yahoo or MSN, while a similar proportion would search through an online travel agency. Nearly 50% would search through a specific hotel or hotel chain.

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Airline Security Measures

With increases in global air traffic and rising costs associated with air travel, maintaining safety and security has become one of the aviation industry's greatest challenges. There are more aircraft in the skies than ever before prompting the industry to work harder to maintain – and sustain – necessary levels of security. According to the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA), as of 2004, world civil aviation consists of roughly 370,000 aircraft and 1.3 million pilots flying 39 million hours. In 2005, more than 3,000 additional general aviation aircraft were produced worldwide, 20% more than in 2004. Nevertheless, air travel is still considered to be incredibly safe. According to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in 1945 there were 4.48 passenger fatalities per 100 million passenger miles; in 1995 that figure dropped to 0.04, the risk dropping by a factor of 100. When compared with 1.2 million people who are killed and another 50 million injured in road traffic crashes, air travel proves to be a safe option. However, increased security inevitably means higher industry costs, including costs for new

equipment purchases, training, maintenance, and upgrades – the trick being to maintain consumer confidence without drastically affecting ticket prices. Because of the obvious impact on travel, tourism and trade, safety and security in the aviation industry are taken more seriously than in any other means of travel. According to Dr. Assad Kotaite, President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), “Our determination to meet these challenges to safety, security and sustainability will be tested as never before with the growth in passenger traffic in the years to come. An air transport system that is neither safe nor secure cannot prosper.”

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How Do You Spell Vacation?

According to an Expedia.com study, American employers save upwards of \$21 billion annually from American workers who routinely earn vacation time but never use it. The study concluded that Americans tend to let unused vacation days accumulate, or use vacation time by only taking a “long weekend”, and typically taking work with them in the form of cell phones or laptop computers. While some theorize that Americans merely like to work, others speculate that because of the demands of competitive, high-intensity American jobs, oftentimes the transition from work time to vacation time is just too difficult. Fortunately, there is an increasing number of hotels and vacation resorts that can accommodate those who insist on mixing business with pleasure. Many resort hotels have meeting facilities and internet access in their rooms, some even offering wireless poolside access. Amenities like these allow even the most diligent of workers to vacation and still meet the demands of their jobs.

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