Study Shows Gays More Likely Than Non-Gays to Book Travel Online

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One third of GLB adults use gay-specific websites to learn about future leisure travel destinations ROCHESTER, N.Y. â€“ April 26, 2005 â€“ According to a recent nationwide survey, gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) adults who are online are more likely to book hotel reservations through online portals than heterosexual online adults. While fully 35 percent of heterosexual respondents said they donâ€™t book travel online, fewer than one in five (18%) GLB respondents said they did not.

About one-half (52%) of GLB respondents were likely to visit Travelocity.com when making hotel reservations, compared to 40 percent of non-gay respondents. Gay and non-gay use of Expedia.com did not vary much (45 percent of GLBs said they are likely to visit Expedia.com compared with 40% of non-gays). Forty-six percent of GLB respondents are likely to visit Orbitz.com compared to 33 percent of non-gays.

These are the results of a survey of 2,630 U.S. adults, of whom 177 were self-identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. The online survey was conducted between March 8 and 14, 2005 by Harris Interactive?, a worldwide market research and consulting firm, in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc., a strategic public relations and marketing communications firm with special expertise in the gay market.

Many GLB online consumers rely on gay-specific travel expertise when queried on the type of resources used when planning destination travel. Outside of the assistance gays seek from friends and relatives (58%), gay-specific websites (32%), such as Outandabout.com and Gay.com, top the list of resources gays use to learn about future leisure travel destinations they consider visiting. Close behind are national gay magazines (25%), such as Passport, Genre, and Out Traveler, and gay-specific travel books (22%), such as Damron and Odysseus guides.

"Clearly, the honeymoon with online travel sites is likely to grow as more gay and lesbian consumers flock to specialized media and other gay-specific travel and tourism resources. When making leisure travel destination decisions, GLB travelers are seeking direction on how they can spend their dollars on both gay-friendly travel channels and destinations." said John Butler, Senior Marketing and Communications Strategist for Witeck-Combs Communications.

TABLE 1
Travel Websites and Hotel Reservations
"When making your hotel reservations, which of the following websites are you likely to visit?"
Base: All Adults

Total (n=2,630)
GLB (n=177)
Heterosexual (n=2,361)

%
%
%
Travelocity.com
41
52
40
Expedia.com
40
45
40
Orbitz.com
34
46
33
Hotel website (e.g. Hilton.com, Marriot.com)
31
33
31
Hotels.com
28
41
27
Priceline.com
27
32
27
Cheaptickets.com

22
24
22
Hotwire.com
15
21
15
Other
7
12
7
I donâ€™t make travel reservations online
34
18
35
Note: Data within this table weighted to reflect total U.S. adult online population.
TABLE 2
Future Leisure Travel Plans
"Which of the following do you use to learn about future leisure travel destinations you are considering visiting?"
Base: GLB Adults

GLB (n=177)

%
Friend/ Relative/ Personal Experience
58
Gay-specific websites (e.g., Gay.com, outandabout.com)
32
Gay-specific magazines (e.g., Out Traveler, Genre, Passport)
25
Gay-specific reference books (e.g., Odysseus, Damron)
22
Gay-specific newspapers (e.g., Washington Blade, Bay Windows, Dallas Voice)
14
None of these
27
Note: Data within this table were weighted to reflect total U.S. GLB adult population.
Methodology
Harris Interactive? conducted the study online within the United States between March 8 and 14, 2005, among a nationwide cross section of 2,630 adults who are online, of whom 177 self-identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (GLB). Figures for age, sex, race, education, region and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondentsâ€™ propensity to be online for the question in table 2, and those figures are representative of the general U.S. adult population of GLB adults. Figures for table 1 were not propensity weighted and are representative of the total U.S. adult online population.
In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results for the overall sample have a sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. Sampling error for GLB adults (177) is plus or minus 9 percentage points. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (nonresponse), question wording and question order and weighting. It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online sample is not a probability sample.
These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.
Additional Note: Previous research conducted by Harris Interactive in conjunction with Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. queried gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) self-identified respondents. Although we remain interested in the consumer attitudes and characteristics of transgendered individuals, for accuracy and consistency we distinguish sexual orientation from gender identity. In addition, given the low incidence of response from transgendered individuals, it is extremely difficult to draw conclusions from the data captured.
About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.
Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nationâ€™s premier strategic marketing communications firm, specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over nine years experience in this unique market, Witeck-Combs Communications has developed respected relationships throughout the community and serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay and lesbian consumers. In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25 experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trendspotting for their pathbreaking work on the gay and lesbian market.
About Harris Interactive?

Harris Interactive Inc. (www.harrisinteractive.com), the 15th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world, is a Rochester, N.Y.-based global research company that blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application. Known for The Harris Poll? and for pioneering Internet-based research methods, Harris Interactive conducts proprietary and public research to help its clients achieve clear, material and enduring results.
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