

# Travel Web Site User Experience

June 2013

TRENDING REPORT



## Contents

In this Document .....	2
Background .....	2
Travel Sites in Context.....	2
Going Deeper .....	2
The Business Impact of Improving Travel Web Site Usability .....	4
Understanding Travel Web site Usability .....	5
Understanding Key User Groups on Travel Web sites .....	6
Methodology .....	7

## In this Document

This document contains an overview of our data and insights for travel web sites. We show how travel sites compare to each other, and as a group compare to other sites for usability, extent of engagement, and their likelihood to compel site visitors to take desired actions such as booking a hotel or flight (how we define conversion for travel sites). We correlate good user experience with business impact, and discuss a key UX problem travel sites have in common.

## Background

In April 2013, Change Sciences asked users to interact with leading travel web sites and share their experiences and insight on what information they look for when contemplating a trip. Although the focus is on hotel booking sites, many of the findings from this research are relevant to any travel-oriented web site. In the last year alone, over 148.3 million travel bookings were made online. In the United States, over 76% of leisure travelers planned their trip online.

### Going Deeper

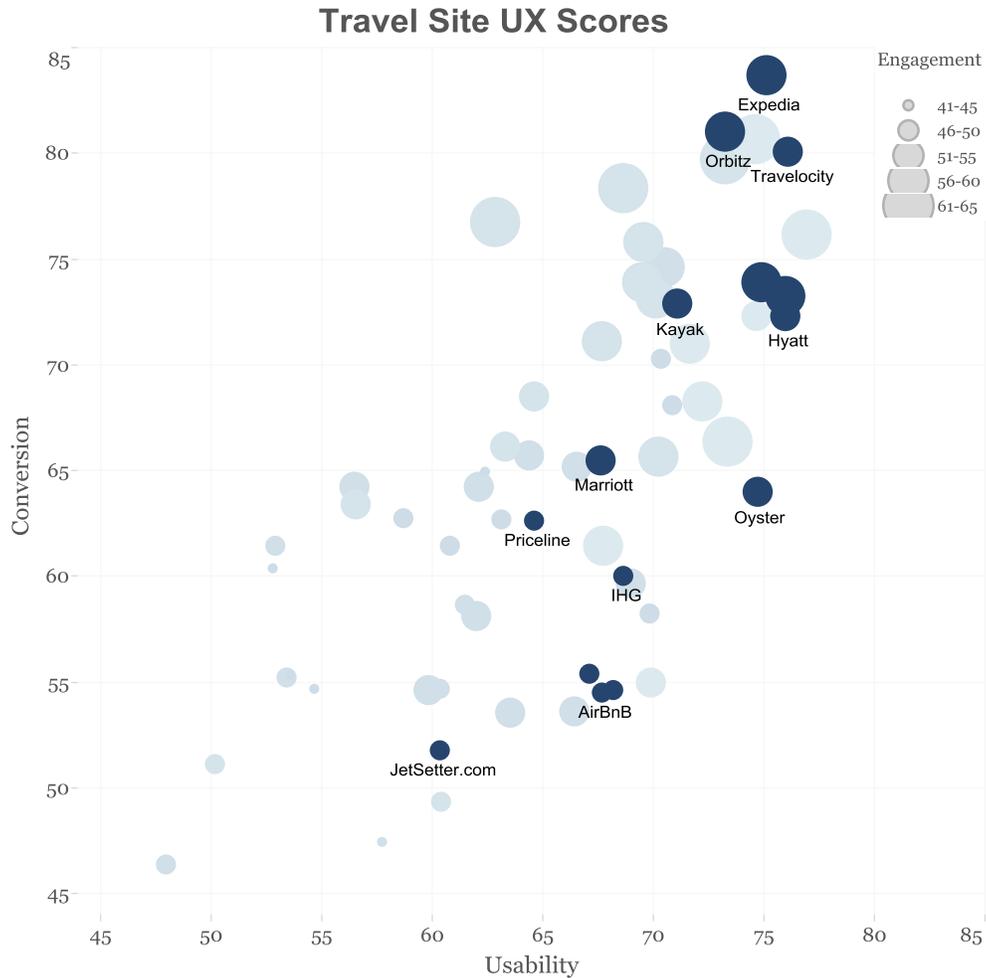
The data shown here represents a high level summary of how hotel web sites, and by association, travel web sites as a whole, perform. The full report, customized for a given site, includes:

- Detailed documentation of design patterns that drive engagement on travel web sites
- A detailed site-level gap analysis, including annotated screenshots showing precisely **where and why** a site falls short for usability, engagement, and conversion
- Documentation of which sites were most trusted by social media influencers and other key demographic groups
- Documentation of which sites are most likely to be recommended by social media influencers
- Normalized metrics to track ease of use, engagement, and conversion over time

Get in touch today to learn more. <http://www.changesciences.com/contact>.

## Travel Sites in Context

Figure 1 compares the user experience scores for travel web sites to other sites in the Change Sciences Experience Cloud dataset. Usability is shown on the x axis; conversion is shown on y. The size of the sphere shows the engagement score.



**Figure 1**

There is significant variation among travel sites in their overall engagement, usability, and conversion scores, pointing to a significant opportunity for poor and average performers.

Figure 2 shows how travel web sites compare to another group of sites similar to travel web sites (the lighter blue dots). This group consists of sites that, like travel sites, ask users to make selections from similar products based on a variety of factors. While the average usability score differs by less than a percentage point, travel websites possess much greater variation for time on task. This reveals the potential for travel web sites to improve ease of use overall.

## Travel Site Usability and Time on Task

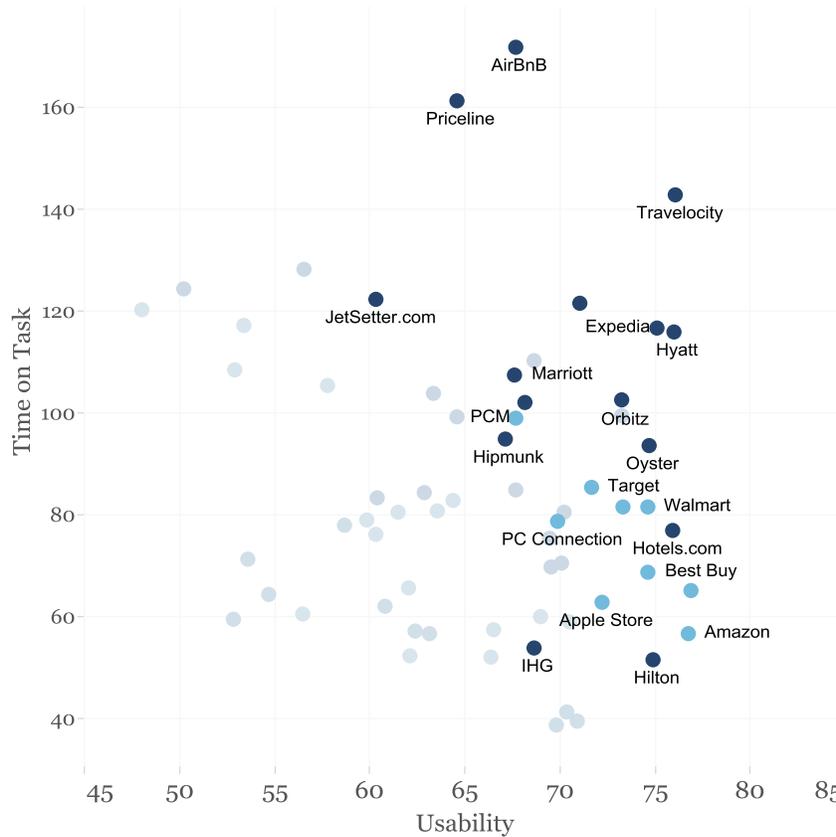
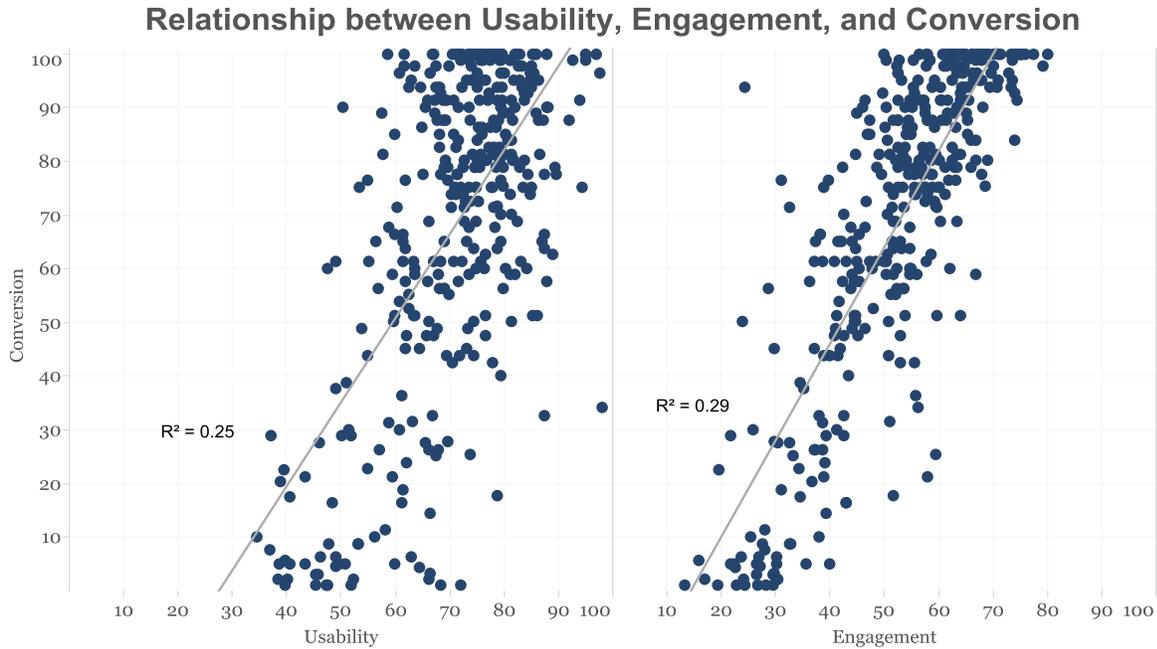


Figure 2

### The Business Impact of Improving Travel Web Site Usability

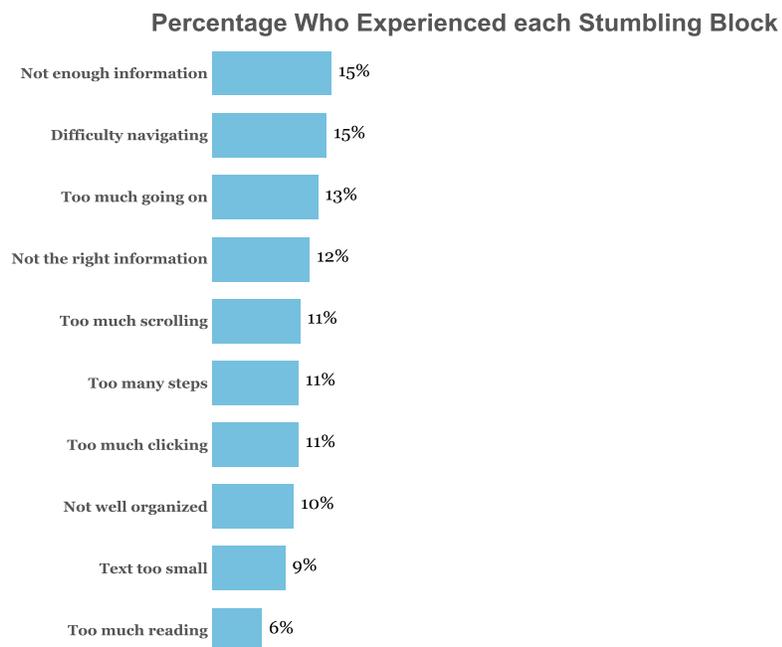
Travel web sites that are easier to use, are more likely to convert (Figure 3 following page). The same is true for travel web sites that have higher engagement. Although the correlation of usability and conversion is strong, the correlation between engagement and conversion is greater. Perceived ease of use is obtained by asking users how successful they felt after completing a task regardless of whether or not they accomplished the task.



**Figure 3**

## Understanding Travel Web site Usability

The top stumbling block for travel web sites was evenly split between having difficulty navigating and in not possessing the right information (see Figure 4).



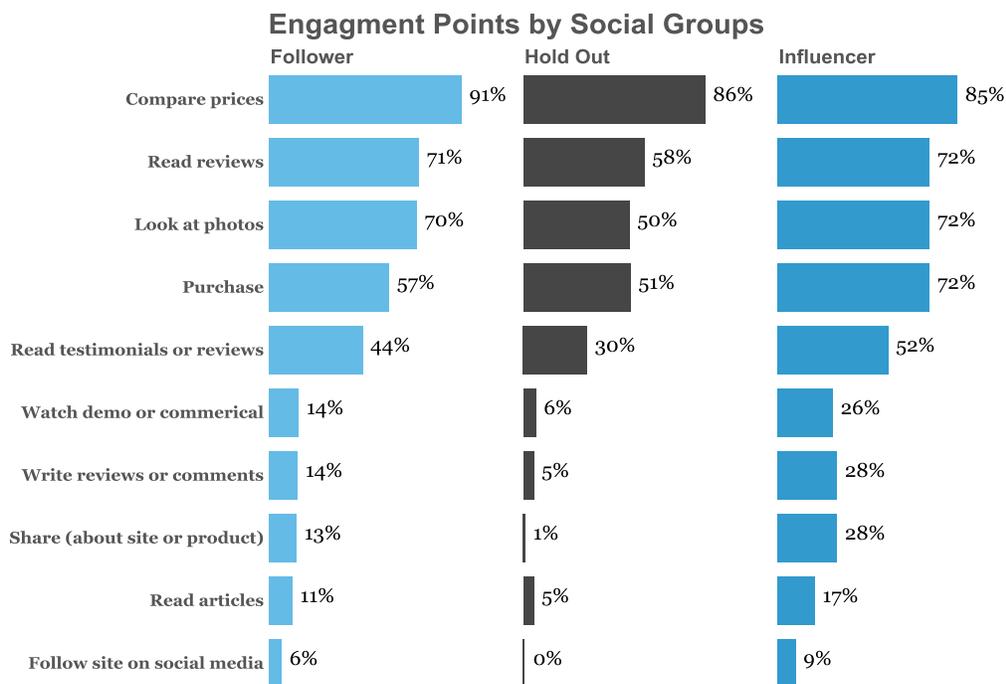
**Figure 4**

Through our qualitative analysis, it became clear that users were often confused when they reached the results page of a travel web site. Sites that did not provide strong visual cues for user priorities such as pricing and the ability to filter by price or location were often rated as less usable.

A typical user comment: “Some of the pages were a little confusing. I really don’t like that they make you enter so much information before they show you a price.” (M, Millennial, Tech Profile: Wired, Income: Comfortable)

## Understanding Key User Groups on Travel Web sites

Our data show how key user groups differ from one another. For example, Influencers, the group most active on social media, are not only the most likely to write and read product reviews but are 15% more likely to book a trip or hotel room as well. Hold Outs, those least active on social media, are least likely to have their decision to purchase influenced by reviews, testimonials, and photographs (Figure 5).



**Figure 5**

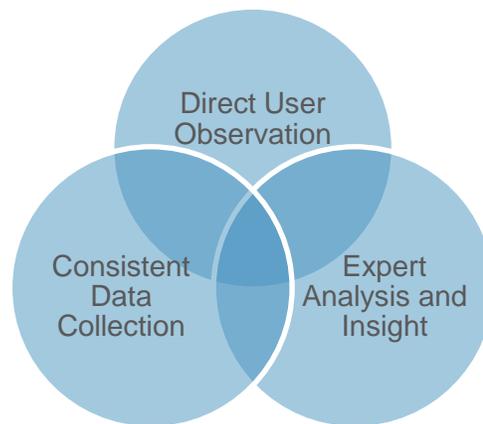
Travel sites that are optimized for Influencers and Followers may be more likely to reap social benefits.

These findings present a high-level overview of our Experience Cloud data for TV web sites. Get in touch today to schedule a free Q and A with our analyst team to learn more about how our process is changing how people see the web.

## Methodology

This research is based on our Experience Cloud™ platform. Our technology and process make it possible to see and compare how sites perform for usability, engagement and likelihood to convert. Through comparisons we are able to identify user experience performance gaps in a new and powerful way. We are able to reveal design patterns that build trust and compel people to action. And, we are able to set and track performance targets against peers and the best sites on the web.

There are three parts to our process, which are designed to provide quantitative measurement without sacrificing qualitative insight.



- By combining direct observation with quantitative data collection, we can gather the same deep qualitative insights that traditional UX labs produce.
- Consistent data collection allows for quantitative data to be compared across industries and over time. We can also compare two iterations of the same design to see which is best.
- Getting meaningful UX insight requires expertise. We supplement existing teams by providing detailed data, analysis, and an outside perspective.

For more information about how our process and technology works, please contact us:

<http://www.changesciences.com/contact>.