
**TOURISM NATIONAL PROGRAM
BARBADOS (BA-T1033)**

Design of new heritage/cultural tourism products

Digital marketing Analysis.



ICN –Artea Consultores

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The importance of tourism in Barbados as a principal driver for growth and its significance to the national economy (15% of direct GDP) have meant that the drop in number of visitors between 2008 and 2013 (around 8.5%) and the steady fall in tourist revenue of around 17% over the same period¹ have been a major concern for the country over recent years. The figures for 2014 suggest a slight recovery (+2,2%), albeit at a slower rate than that hoped for², with a negative being the cruise sector which has continued to fall by the same percentage rate³.

The global economic crisis has undoubtedly been one of the main causes for this delicate situation, however the better performance of some of Barbados' competitors within the source market would suggest that the destination has lost some of its appeal among tourists, and that there is now a need to rethink certain key strategies. One suggestion would be to diversify and move on from the traditional focus on sun and beach options in order to create a more suggestive and competitive image.

Within this new competitive scenario, Barbados has already recognised the importance of its UNESCO World Heritage listed sites in the promotion of a more diverse product, with cultural tourism as a key component in marketing strategy and a means to update and revitalize the current image of the island as a destination.

The UNESCO listed sites are clearly of major importance, but there are also a whole range of other proposals and attractions that are equally representative of the identity and unique character of the island. These products, in addition to enriching the current offer, can also be presented from the standpoint of creative tourism, which seeks to connect with a breed of modern tourist who, above all, likes to feel involved and a part of their environment. A list of these new products can be found in Component I of this consultancy document: Heritage/cultural tourism product portfolio strategy, with emphasis on the area of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison. Design of new heritage/cultural tourism products⁴. Barbados National Tourism Program (BA-T1033)

In relation to marketing as a communication and sales tool, we must also mention another unstoppable trend, namely the rise of the Internet as a hugely influential factor in terms of inspiration, decision making and travel booking (the internet is now second only to the recommendations of friends and family when it comes to choosing holiday destinations⁵), making it absolutely essential to promotional and commercial strategy.

¹ The published results of the BSOVS for the 2008-2012 period show that an average visitor to Barbados has been reducing its daily expenditure: from USD\$194.65 in 2008 to USD\$161.42, in 2012. An updated identification of Barbados' tourism profiles: the expenditure patterns in 2015. Javier Campos ULPGC.

² Slight fall in revenue since 2013 (from 964 to 947US\$ million). International Tourism Receipts. UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2015..

³ Caribbean Tourism Q2-2015

⁴ Introduction. Cultural tourism concept, trends and outstanding experiences

⁵ Google study on the issue (Ipsos MediaCT/Google Travel Study, Waves 4 and 5, April–May 2012 and May–June 2013)

Against this background, the Government of Barbados in its Global Marketing Plan 2014-2015 has drawn up an operative strategy designed to address the decline in arrivals from its main traditional markets (USA, UK and Canada) as well as attracting more trade from other European countries such as Germany and emerging markets like Brazil. The Plan encompasses a broad range of proposals, tailored according to each specific market and emphasises the cultural product exemplified by Bridgetown and the Garrison. The Digital marketing strategy will focus on improving presence on the social networks, the creation of new applications and the launch of landing pages for specific markets and promotional campaigns.

A full commitment to this strategy of developing cultural products, with the solid backing of the National Tourism Program and funding from the IDB, should now allow digital marketing to grow and advance significantly.

The present diagnosis will look to identify the current positioning of Barbados within this digital environment, a situation characterised by a strong starting position and which reflects much of the effort made over recent years, but also indicates a number of significant areas for improvement.

If we look at one essential aspect, such as the value proposition which Barbados presents to the world via its website, we will clearly see that is largely orientated towards sun and beach tourism. This is perhaps logical enough given the strength of this main product, but is not in itself a differentiating feature compared with its competitors, many of whom are now offering more varied experiences - as shown by countries such as Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, all of whom also present plenty of attractive visuals and excellent graphic design on their official sites.

If we take a basic quantitative reference point, such as the number of visits to the website (approximately 25,000 visits per month) and we compare it against other competitors, we might say that it is a fair number, but could be improved. The same is true of the social network presence figures. In both cases there is a basic lack of content and conversation. Without content (scarce and with little updating), our presence on the digital universe is minimized, and without conversation we are unable to attract and maintain user interest (engagement).

Another reference point which demonstrates the health of the destination is provided by the level of interest shown towards the term *Barbados* on the internet. According to data obtained from the Google Trends tool it seems to have registered a progressive drop in searches among the key markets over the last 10 years – although, on the positive side, the opinions of visitors on the internet and travel pages are generally very favourable, with the exception of the price factor.

From the analysis of search trends undertaken by markets⁶, we can generally assess the level of interest in the terms *culture* and *heritage* in the main source markets, which helps to confirm the value of investing in products related to cultural tourism. This analysis also explores the opportunities for segmentation to provide a more personalized strategy, according to the characteristics of each market or audience sector.

⁶ Google study on the issue (Ipsos MediaCT/Google Travel Study, Waves 4 and 5, April–May 2012 and May–June 2013).

The crucial UK Market, for example, seems to be showing less interest in the term *Barbados* on the internet, meaning that we now need to redouble efforts to stall the shift towards other destinations. Bearing in mind that the British Market generally tends to be among those showing the greatest interest in cultural tourism⁷, this should be a key area to focus on in order to renew popularity from that particular sector. In all events, it is important that this cultural link is presented in a **focused, innovative and creative form**, geared towards a younger tourist audience who are currently opting for more exotic destinations.

The interest shown by this market in the “**all inclusive**” concept is particularly worth noting, as it shows a shift away from the traditional association of Barbados with the elite and luxury connotations and a greater concern with price variations among the demand potentially looking at the destination.

Among the main interests (**motivations**) shown by the **USA** market (and which are also reflected in other studies conducted with the context of this consultancy⁸), heritage and culture feature heavily. Again this is another reason to reinforce these products within the overall destination offer directed at this particular sector.

Cruises are also among the main areas of interest evidenced by internet searches from the USA⁹. It is essential that we address this audience (Americans make up 81% of cruise liner passengers with stopovers in Bridgetown¹⁰), and emphasize the characteristic appeal of stopovers in Barbados to ensure that these continue to be included within cruise routes. With this in mind we need to ensure attractive content, as well as additional information on the issues which concerns this particular market such as security and accessibility.

The Canadian market is one of the most stable for the island's tourism, but there has also been somewhat of a fall in interest noted for Barbados in favor of destinations such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico, according to search indicators¹¹. This is a market where climate is a major factor, with searches showing interest in both **cruises** and **heritage and cultural tourism**¹², and it is essential that we successfully combine both aspects in the overall offer in order to compete with Jamaica and Puerto Rico, whose offers seem to be currently attracting more interest.

Aside from the traditional sectors, Barbados has also been focusing its attention towards the opening of new and potentially profitable markets, such as Latin America and other European countries.

The Brazilian market has shown a steady drop in the frequency of the term *Barbados* in search trends over recent years, although there have been signs of recovery in 2014. If we look at the general trend for internet searches these tend to concentrate on words such as tourism, vacation, Caribbean and tourist service terms (resorts, hotel etc.). This would tend to confirm that this particular sector is largely interested in leisure and relaxation and that the main Barbados offer should focus on those aspects for this market.

⁷ Appendix BB_ Conversation related to: cruises, all inclusive, heritage

⁸ An updated identification of Barbados' tourism profiles: the expenditure patterns in 2015. Javier Campos ULPGC.

⁹ Appendix BB_ Conversation related to: cruises, all inclusive, heritage

¹⁰ Barbados Tourism MasterPlan 2014-2015. Report 5

¹¹ Point 5.1 of the Diagnosis: Barbados presence in the main searches relating to the tourism sector (page.41).

¹² See analysis of Canadian Market trends, Component I.

The German market is the second most important within Europe and current search trends have been showing a steady increase over recent years (2009-2015). Along with the standard searches associated with general tourist services, there has also been specific interest in **Bridgetown**, a clear indication that German tourists are attracted not only by the climate and beaches, but are also interested in immersing themselves in local culture¹³. This needs to be taken into account to ensure the message is reinforced and the right information provided on new tourist products.

In all events, this segmentation needs to be backed up by a common message that will imprint the destination on the mind of the traveller and make sure that the diversity of information reinforces rather than dilutes the overall impression given. It is also essential that the global marketing strategy is properly aligned with the digital marketing policy to ensure success.

From the results obtained from a study of both the private and public media formats, it has become clear that the synergy between the two sectors could be significantly improved. There are plenty of opportunities for coordinating efforts which are currently not being fully exploited – this would provide greater depth, information on products and visibility of the tourism offer and lead to a better positioning of the value proposition on the principal digital channels.

Lastly, we would suggest that in order to optimize strategies for the future and assist with decision making, it is essential that actions within the digital environment are periodically monitored and assessed on the basis of the KPIs available with the technology, as a way of measuring their impact and evaluating the return on digital marketing investments.

¹³ See analysis of German Market trends, Component I

2 PRESENTATION

This document should be read within the context of the Barbados National Tourism Program (BA-T1033), supported by the IDB, which aims to address the diversification of the tourist industry and consolidate the competitiveness of Barbados through the development of a new range of tourist products based on the Island's cultural heritage.

This consultancy report, which will partly assist in the design of the Program, is made up of two Components: Component I: *Heritage/cultural tourism product portfolio strategy, with emphasis on the area of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison*; and Component II: *Marketing strategy and operational planning, to promote the new heritage/cultural tourism products (focus on digital channels)*.

The purpose of this second component is to back up the new cultural tourism offer with a strategic marketing and operative plan to establish the route map for the launch and promotion of these new cultural products, along with the involvement of the private sector as a major ally and principal beneficiary.

This diagnosis document is the first step on the route and looks to address two main questions:

To understand the current positioning of Barbados within the digital tourism panorama. This will involve looking at how Barbados is promoting itself; who is interested; why they are interested; where the information is being sought and where it is being commented upon. We will also present a comparative analysis against the principal competitors.

To analyze the specific digital marketing strategy in place up until now, to identify how it is affecting the positioning of the destination.

For this purpose, as will be seen below, we have carried out a detailed analysis of the different variables which define a destination's digital positioning; prior to the purely digital analysis, we consider it appropriate to start the study with some considerations on the destination's general strategy as it is undeniable that the strategy defined around the cultural product must be joined together with the country's general strategy.

In order to perform this analysis we have used the information contained in the Barbados marketing plan for 2014. We also considered it appropriate to gather some thoughts about the general positioning in terms of brand, which are also analysed from the digital marketing point of view.

In relation to the specific analysis of the digital marketing, in order to improve the understanding of the study and with the objective of putting together a global digital tourism framework, its evolution over recent years and the position held by Barbados as a tourism destination, the analysis has been structured as follows:

First of all we will offer a general overview of the current situation of Barbados in terms of tourist markets, challenges and marketing strategies within the country, followed by a look at the digital tourism sector, placing special emphasis on the transformations to the digital setting over the last 10 years, in order to understand the scenario in which Barbados competes with the aim of presenting a solid and attractive brand for the digital tourist.

In this new technological framework, the digital tourist has changed their search, choice and decision-making behaviour about the destinations to visit, which is why we analyse their **behaviour on the Internet** so as to understand where the online marketing strategy has to be worked on in order to successfully fulfill the proposed objectives.

After this initial overview, the study will focus on the Barbados **value proposition** followed by a similar analysis of their direct competitors. In this section we will take a close look at Barbados, both in

general terms and specific tourism type offers (Sun & Beach, Culture & Heritage and Cruises), and the results of these indicators will be compared against the competition (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Puerto Rico) by market sector (Canada, Europe and USA). This will allow us to obtain a general diagnosis of the value proposition for both Barbados and other destinations in the region..

In the next section, the **aim was to identify Barbados' status within global Internet searches**, specific searches from the main tourist countries of origin (USA, United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil, Germany), and the behaviour of the term *Barbados* compared with the main competitors from the Caribbean area. Using the tools Google Trends, Google Adwords and Keywordtool, we will analyse the search trends over a 10-year period (2004-2014), as well as the words most commonly used or on the increase in relation to these searches.

In the last section, we will analyze the perception of Barbados reflected in Internet conversation. Firstly we will monitor global conversation in regards to Barbados and analyze the opinions reflected, the geographical focus and the digital channels (networks, blogs,etc) in which these occur. Secondly, we will assess the digital sources in which conversation around Barbados is taking place, which will allow us to identify the areas where strategies need to be put in place and focused towards directing the conversation to our best interest. Thirdly we will look at the presence of both public and private offers on the main OTA's, as well as the most visible and stand-out comments on each, enabling us to assess the global image presented to the potential visitor to Barbados when looking for information on these channels.

By this point in the analysis a **general view will have been obtained of the global setting, the behaviour of the digital tourist and their perception** of the Barbados destination. After this we shall look in further detail at the proposed content which Barbados offers on the Internet.

For this purpose we will focus on the study of the public profile of Barbados, first of all by analysing the official page (visitbarbados.org) and its offshoots aimed at the European market (visitbarbados.com) and the Brazilian market (visitebarbados.com). After this we continue by analysing the main social media profiles related to the official page, and we end by devoting a part of this study to analysing the private sector by looking at their reservations page (www.bookbarbadosnow.com) directly supported by the official webpage (visitbarbados.org).

Finally we dedicate the close of the analysis to **general conclusions** which will give us the current situation of the Barbados brand and show us the basis upon which work has to be done for the future digital marketing strategy.

2.1 Methodology

The above information was obtained from a detailed study of the Barbados public and private digital channels, from the social networks of the official site and from the reputation of the Barbados brand on the Internet (November 2014 to April 2015). The results allow us to set out the bases in order to create an online marketing strategy according to the current requirements.

The following public channels have been analysed:

Visitbarbados.org.- Barbados official site.

Visitbarbados.co.- Official landing page aimed at the European market.

Visitebarbados.com.- Official landing page aimed at the Brazilian market.

Social Media.- Main social profiles of the official site (Facebook, Twitter and Youtube) and comparison with the main competitors from the Caribbean area.

The private reservations channel has also been analysed bookbarbadosnow.com.

At the same time the public channels have been analysed of the main Caribbean competitors (Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Curacao, Bermuda, Belize, Aruba, Bahamas), in order to analyse Barbados' situation vis-à-vis its direct competition and to study the strengths and weaknesses of the competition.

Tools and software

The main professional tools on the market have been used in order to carry out this study:

The browsing and traffic data from visitbarbados.org, visitbarbados.co and visitebarbados.com has been analysed using the tools **Google Analytics, Google Webmasters Tools and Similar Web**.

The loading time has been analysed of the different elements from the visitbarbados.org page with the tools **GTMetrix, Webpagetest, Loadimpact and Google Developers**.

The user experience has been analysed with the tools **Nibbler, Woorank and Majestic**.

The search engine optimisation of visitbarbados.org has been analysed with the tools **Woorank, Semrush, Ahrefs, Moz open explorer and SeoSiteCheckUp**.

The social profiles of visitbarbados.org have been analysed with the tools **Lykealizer, Smetrica, Facebook Insights and Fanpagekarma**.

The online reputation and the conversation has been analysed with the tools **Socialmention, GoogleAlerts, GoogleTrends and Touchgraph SEO**.

Each analysis section is done with an explanation of the items analysed, the different Kpis monitored, the tools used and the objectives of the analysis.

After the general analysis, the general conclusions draw a picture of the general framework of the Barbados brand on the Internet which allows for a 360° online marketing strategy to be constructed for all of the channels, supported by the correct use of the monitoring tools and the new heritage tourism products which will complete Barbados digital tourism offer.

Ideally we would have liked to have studied the results from the analysis platform of the several official profiles active on the Internet, however we have not yet been allowed access to this information. ¹⁴

¹⁴ **Visitbarbados.org** – Google Analytics. Social media related with visitbarbados.org: Youtube, facebook and Twitter profile analysis tools.

Visitbarbados.co – Google Analytics. Social media related with visitbarbados.org: Youtube, facebook and Twitter profile analysis tools.

At the time of delivering this document, we had no data on KPI reports on specific objectives, or the campaigns and promotions conducted via the various channels and formats¹⁵.

This lack of official information has slightly limited our possibilities in terms of assessing official Barbados activity, its grade of acceptance, profile of followers, etc.

Visitebarbados.com – Google Analytics Social media related wit visitbarbados.org: Youtube, facebook and Twitter profile analysis tools.

¹⁵ Social Media campaigns, SEO, SEM for the positioning in search engines, Campaigns for niche markets (silver, cruiser, honeymoon, etc.), general campaigns in digital media, Public Relation campaigns, campaigns in blogs, adsense or other advertising platforms integrated in sites, specific campaigns for mobile devices, campaigns for apps, E-mailing.

3 BARBADOS: CURRENT SITUATION AND CHALLENGES.

In Component I of this consultancy report, we have analyzed the behaviour of the principal markets in Barbados over recent years, with the aim of producing a snapshot of the current situation in both the Island itself and in relation to other competitor destinations.

The data shows that in 2014 the UK continues to be the principal market for Barbados, accounting for 186,823 tourist visitors every year (35% of all stayover arrivals). This market, however, has seen an accumulated drop of 8% since 2005, comparable with that of the USA (9%) over the same period. The Canadian market has helped somewhat to compensate for this decline with an average annual growth of 4% (a total growth of 38%). It is also important to note that although in 2005 around 20% of visitors came from the Caribbean region (mainly Trinidad and Tobago), this percentage has dropped to 15% in 2014. Tourist demand from the rest of the world (principally Brazil and Germany) is the one group that has risen substantially, in both relative and absolute terms, between 2005 and 2014, now accounting for around 70,000 visitors a year.

In relation to the Caribbean sphere, a recent report by the Caribbean Tourism Organization (2014), confirmed that, largely due to the worldwide economic crisis, the region as a whole witnessed a substantial decline between 2008-2010. Nevertheless, in 2012, certain parts of the United States, the Dutch Caribbean Islands and the Spanish speaking Caribbean countries enjoyed considerable growth of 8.4%, 5.7% and 5.4% respectively (excluding Cancun). In 2013, tourism worldwide saw an overall increase of more than 4%, with the Americas rising by some 7%, and the Caribbean as a whole around 6%. Meanwhile Barbados has lagged slightly behind with a modest growth of 2.2%.

There is no single explanation for these results, although they may to a large degree be due to the worldwide recession, while also indicating changes to the preferences and motivations of visitors (as analyzed in Component I of this report), resulting in a fall in competitiveness of the destination.

This situation has led to Barbados making a positive effort towards repositioning itself via the 2014-2015 Marketing Plan 2014-2015, aimed in particular at recovering the main sectors of USA, UK and Canada, while also addressing the challenge of attracting new markets such as Latin America and the Caribbean, with Brazil as the principal starting point. Together with the target markets listed above, the Barbados Marketing Plan also covers the wider European market, with a special focus on Germany, where the number of visitors to the Island has grown by around 40% since 2007.

Within the framework of the campaign to improve competitiveness of the destination, and to meet the challenge of creating an individual identity different from the competition, the Barbados Marketing Plan aims to widen the traditional offer of sun and beaches to include weddings and honeymoons and other group offers and incentives, as well as promoting new products more related to cultural tourism, as exemplified by Historic Bridgetown and the Garrison - now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site¹⁶.

This particular opportunity for Barbados within the cultural tourism sphere, is clearly indicated by the index of motivations for travel to Barbados listed in a recent study by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), which revealed that local culture was one of the main reasons for visiting Barbados, cited by 24% of Canadian tourists and 18% of North Americans¹⁷. These figures are particularly interesting for a destination traditionally associated solely with sun and beach attractions.

¹⁶ "Recent research shows that countries which are listed as a World Heritage Site, have seen an overall increase in visitors in the region of 30% to 40%". Barbados White Paper on the development of tourism, 2012.

¹⁷ Culture is also cited by 21-22% of both stayover tourists and cruise passengers in the results of the Barbados experience: ex-post reasons. Economic Assessment Of Airlift Support Policies. Deliverable D4. An updated identification of Barbados' tourism profiles: the expenditure patterns in 2015. May 22, 2015. Javier Campos-Méndez. University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)

We should not forget the importance of cruise tourists and their sightseeing tours ¹⁸ as a target for the new cultural tourism policy. The results of the cruise passenger surveys related to the new products specially conducted for this report will provide key information for the Operative Marketing Plan.

Within this repositioning process, and in the face of the economic crisis situation, the country is also taking steps in terms of price positioning via programs such as the Barbados Island Inclusive package, designed to provide better value for money in difficult times - even if this policy is at odds with the traditional image of Barbados as more of an exclusive and luxury destination.¹⁹

3.1 General marketing, digital marketing: importance of the tourism brand.

Within this strategic context, digital marketing has a vital role to play in the overall Marketing Plan, as a means of reinforcing strategies and actions to attract visitors to the website and social networks and by promoting and developing a range of tools such as landing pages and Apps. The aim is to achieve greater impact on tourists, given that if we look at the example of the figures listed in the ULPGC study, the percentage of air passengers influenced by internet information is currently only 11.95%.

Before going into detail on the specific analysis for this diagnosis, we would like additionally consider the importance of the Island's positioning in terms of the tourism brand, which we feel is perhaps a weak point that needs addressing, given that it may have repercussions on the effectiveness of the overall marketing of the destination (both traditional and digital).

We will go on to indicate some of the shortcoming in the global marketing strategy in terms of brand presentation which could easily be revised in order to boost the image of Barbados as a destination.

In our opinion, backed up by the Barbados Tourism white paper review, the current positioning strategy does not quite clarify either the positioning Barbados wishes to present, the image that it wants to transmit to its target audience or the key features to set it aside from its competitors.

This leads to the lack of a single Barbados identity on the internet, which is currently somewhat inconsistent in all of the communications. This inconsistency could be corrected by producing a document which covers all of the attributes and characteristics of the Barbados brand and which can be used to support all of the communications, regardless of which communication agent they are made by (agencies, communication office, public sector, private sector, community manager, etc.).

Specifically in relation to the **tourism brand**, we have included the following considerations from the *Tourism White Paper* on this matter

- While Barbados has had the same flying fish logo for over 20 years, it has had at least five (5) tag lines in the last ten years:

Just Beyond Your Imagination

Experience the Authentic Caribbean

¹⁸ In terms of the economic impact of cruise tourism, the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) indicated that in 2011/12 (2008/9) expenditure for Barbados amounted to US\$53.7 million (US\$53.6 million), generating full time equivalent employment of 1,794 (1,665) personnel and wage income of US\$18.3 million (US\$17.2 million).

¹⁹ On average, the number of tourists that chose 'all inclusive services' only represented 13.2% of the sample. Economic Assessment Of Airlift Support Policies. Deliverable D4. An updated identification of Barbados' tourism profiles: the expenditure patterns in 2015. May 22, 2015. Javier Campos-Méndez. University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)

It Doesn't Get Better

Never a Dull Moment in Barbados (tag line for Caribbean market)

Long Live Life

- We agree again with the White Paper when it claims that the lack of a clear brand positioning has resulted in a fragmented approach being taken to marketing and promotion across the different geographic markets. Each geographic area customizes the marketing message to its specific market and there are several variations of the logo utilized in the various advertisements and promotional campaigns. There is no integration of a singular logo, tag line and marketing message in a way that would resonate in the mind of the customer and create top mind awareness.
- Going forward the island needs to reinforce its core competencies and unique attributes to create a distinct brand identity and positioning in the market that will successfully differentiate the Barbadian product and make the brand sustainable and enduring. A single and distinctive brand must be developed, that will be communicated seamlessly across all five geographic locations of Europe, the UK, Canada, the USA and the Caribbean and Latin America. It must be recognizable, memorable and impactful and resonate with the types of visitors the island is trying to attract, in a way that results in increased brand recognition, market share and brand loyalty.

3.2 Where is the Digital Tourist?

Returning to the specific aims of this diagnosis, it is important to establish the current context in relation to the so-called digital tourist and its consequences on how we understand the tourism industry.

Over the last ten years the technological revolution has changed the way in which they obtain inspiration, search for information, plan, take decisions, make bookings, purchase and share everything relating to their trips and experiences.

This revolution is based on the following pillars:

The entry into the market of a **new range of communication devices** (smartphones, tablets, etc) and the continuous innovation of their features, allowing a continuous interconnection between individuals, destinations and companies.

The **social Internet revolution** through social networks, forums and recommendation platforms, which force brands and companies to change their communication paradigm in order to transmit their messages, as well as giving the client massive power over the reputation of the destinations and their companies.

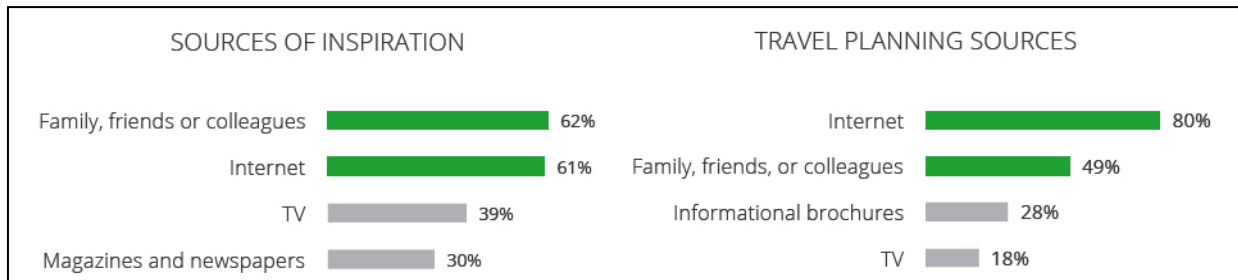
Internet's acceptance as an essential part of our lives, which has become a tool integrated into most of our communications, decisions and activities, whether leisure-related or professional, with this new reality particularly affecting the tourism sector according to the latest studies.

This new reality forces the tourism destinations to construct a solid digital brand using channels which are suitable to the new requirements and a communication strategy for all of the channels. This is the only way in which to monitor the conversation about the destination, analyse the brand image and improve the destination's products and services so that the message about the destination enters into the digital conversation and prevails in the mind of the tourists.

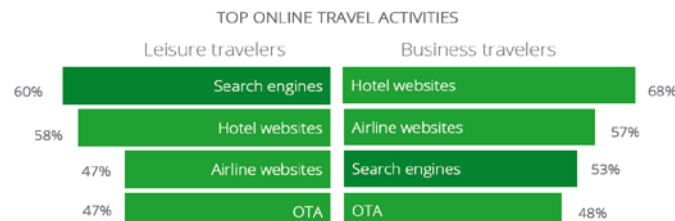
This is shown in the latest Google study on the issue (Ipsos MediaCT/Google Travel Study, Waves 4 and 5, April–May 2012 and May–June 2013.).

This study shows the following:

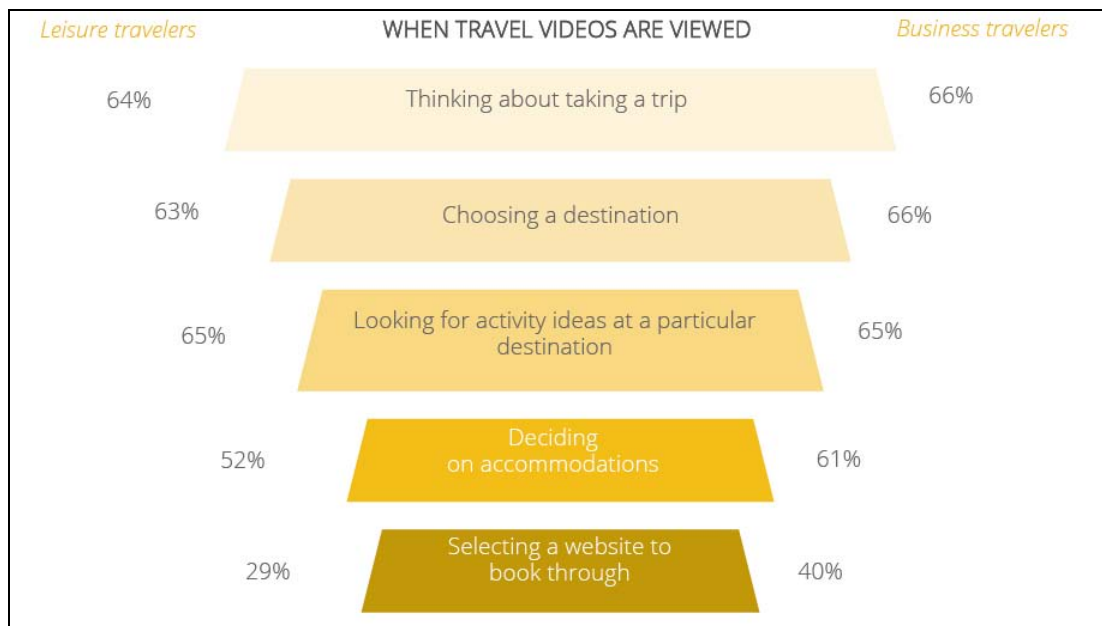
- *Internet (61%) is the second source of inspiration for the tourists when it comes to inspiring a trip, only exceeded by family, friends and colleagues (62%).*
- *Internet (80%) is the first platform when it comes to planning trips.*



- *The search engines, websites for hotels and airlines and the online travel agents (OTAs) are the main search sources, and it is therefore essential to develop an online strategy in these channels.*



- *The tourist's main activities on the Internet reflect the importance of consulting other travellers' reviews and experiences (42%-55%), and the importance of video (30-47%) as information support.*
- *The destination webpages (like barbados.org) and the related applications are vitally important when it comes to the tourists taking decisions (41%).*
- *The need to be visible and operative on all devices in order to achieve a greater success ratio and a better user experience, as they are increasingly inclining towards a multi-device browsing experience (computer-smartphone-tablet).*
- *The growth of the video format as Internet information and sales support for choosing a destination (63-66%) or the activities available at the destination (52-61%).*



Google Travel Study, 2013

This and other related studies coincide in showing the same trend: Internet is a fundamental support when it comes to the tourist taking a decision and the technology will be present throughout the travel process.

This introduction gives us an idea about how we have to present on the Internet in order to construct a solid tourism image and product in line with the proposed objectives.

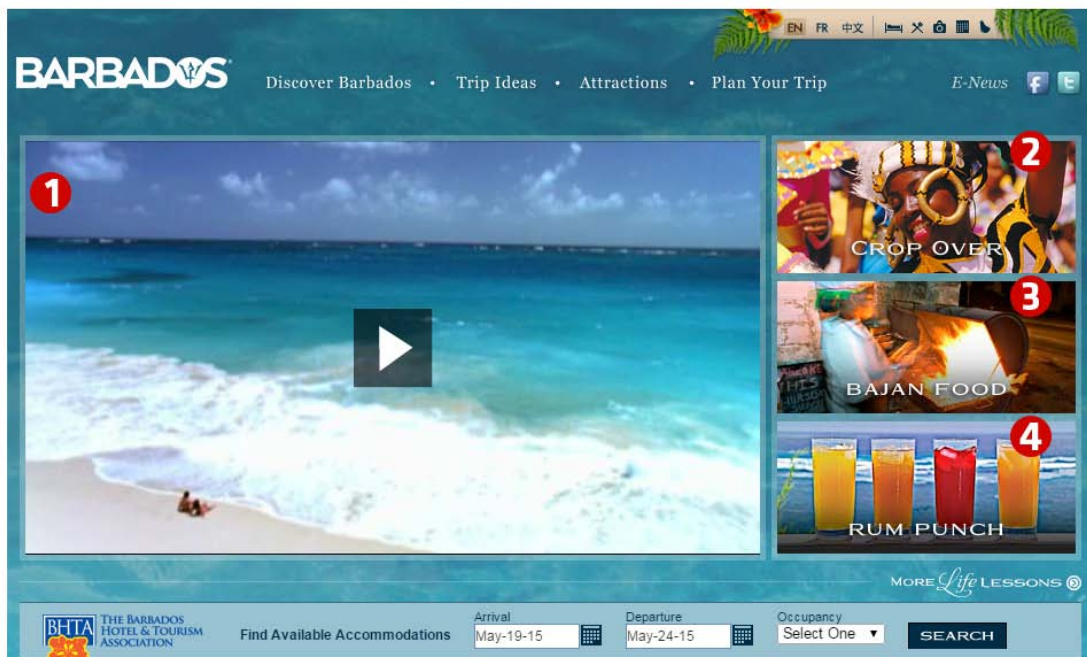
4 BARBADOS Value proposition on public channels

4.1 Barbados general value proposition

By sun and beach tourism we take to mean an experience based on generally warm and sunny weather, a large concentration of hotels and leisure activities (nightlife, shopping, eating & drinking etc).

The landing page for Barbados as a destination features plenty of content related to a sun and beach style tourism offer.

The first part of the website is orientated towards presenting Barbados as a destination for relaxation (1), leisure activities (2) and free time (3) & (4).



1. Image and video of tourists enjoying a beach.
2. Image and link to a local Barbados festival.
3. Image and link to typical Barbados cuisine.
4. Image and link to Rum drinks.

The second part of the website is devoted to a description of what one might find in Barbados, under a promotional image of Rihanna as a national icon and the slogan Long Live Life, as shown in the destination presentation text:

"Welcome to Barbados.

***the** home of our musical icon, **Rihanna**. the official ambassadors of **how to live life**.*

*In Barbados, we've mastered **the art of fine living**. And offer daily lessons for those who seek to do the same. Here at the official tourism site of Barbados, you'll discover a vibrant culture passionate in spirit and full of life. A place where refined **luxury** and **exceptional culinary delights** **dance and mingle among lush tropical greenery, limpid blue waters and warm golden sunlight**."*

***Spend a day on a white sandy beach. Try some flying fish. Enjoy a rum punch. Learn to trade the rush, **rush for the slow and easy**. Just give us a few days and you won't remember the old you. Let us teach you how to truly live**."*

The destination presentation text focuses on representing the Island as a friendly place where one can enjoy the good life, meet friendly people, eat great food, and all in a paradise setting. Little mention is made of the cultural heritage of the country, choosing rather to present Rihanna as its principal icon.

Brand ambassadors can offer a significant benefit for a destination through engagement with the target audience (in this case the millennials), but one needs to carefully measure the specific weight of such ambassadors, given that the destination has no control over them and may be directly affected by their actions - which may even be detrimental to the destination's best interests.

The animated footer largely refers to discount promotions (Brilliant Barbados campaign), flights and routes (Jet Blue) restaurant offers and accommodation.

4.1.1 Cruises

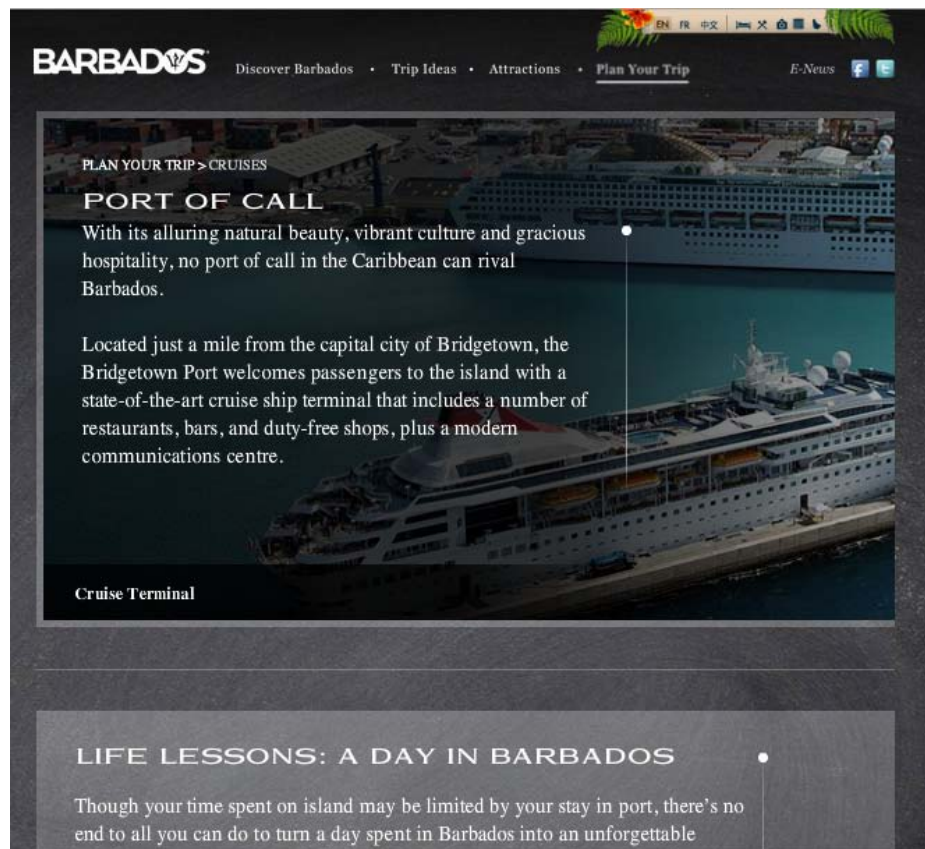
There is a specific cruise section on the website, but it is not visible from the home page. It is located on a pull-down menu in the Plan Your Trip section.



The link takes you to a page on cruises divided into two blocks:

The first block consists of three paragraphs which explain how to find the port and what to do on arrival. All the activities on offer are related to sun and beach tourism (eating, drinking, shopping, car hire, horse racing and drinking rum). There is no information on Barbados' cultural heritage.

On the second block there are 6 paragraphs under the heading *Life Lessons: A day in Barbados*; five plans are offered: Beaches, Shopping, Adventures, Getting Married and Festivals & Events, all very much sun and beach tourism related



Here are our suggestions for possible improvements and inclusions to the page:

- A guide or map for cruise passengers.
- Multimedia information (audio-video-photographs) to back up the content.
- Special offers for cruise passengers.
- Links to private sector services and offers for cruise passengers.
- Links to cruise company offices.
- Support information for cruise passengers, calls to action (interest forms etc.)
- An overall content policy, offering extra information of interest.
- Customer opinions from those who have enjoyed the experience (reviews).

Conclusions on the cruise tourism treatment.

- The information is very limited and there is no integration between the public and private sectors.
- The content is insufficient to engage and provoke interest for this type of tourist, who will probably need to consult other sites for valuable information to provide a full idea of the cruise experience from the destination.

4.1.2 Sun and Beach -

As we have seen in the general value proposition, the official website is largely focused on the specific characteristics of a sun and beach destination.

The most highlighted strongpoints of Barbados on the official site are:

- Beaches and relaxation, Nightlife, Cuisine, Leisure, Adventures, Shopping and Drinking.

The term **all-inclusive**, on the other hand, does not appear on the official site, despite the fact that this is now one of the most sought after concepts among sun and beach customers (see reference in the diagnosis via Google Trends).

It was, however, suggested in the appendix, which analyzes the term all inclusive²⁰, that this would be a theme for development on the website.

Furthermore the claim which supports the destination, “Long Live Life”, is directly related to sun and beach characteristics (relaxation, leisure and fun).

Sun and beach conclusions:

The destination is completely positioned by content on this type of tourism.

- In relation to the accommodation offer, and taking into account the range of establishments existing on the Island, from luxury 5 star hotels and villas to small hotels and guesthouses, there is no specific section which covers this variety of possibilities and which would help to present a much richer and more diverse impression.

4.1.3 Culture and Heritage

This type of tourism has the least coverage within the website.

On the home page there is no reference to the Culture and Heritage of Barbados, either directly or in a secondary manner (photos, video, text, etc).

The drop down menus at the top provide two links to cultural information (Culture & Heritage and Historic sites).



²⁰ See appendix Island inclusive

1. Culture and heritage
2. Sun and beach (leisure, relaxation and free time)

In the graphic one can see the minimal specific weighting given to heritage within the visitbarbados page.

The section **Culture and heritage** has only one paragraph of introductory text, a slide with 4 images and four links to cultural subsections, Heritage, Art, Bajan Music and Cuisine.

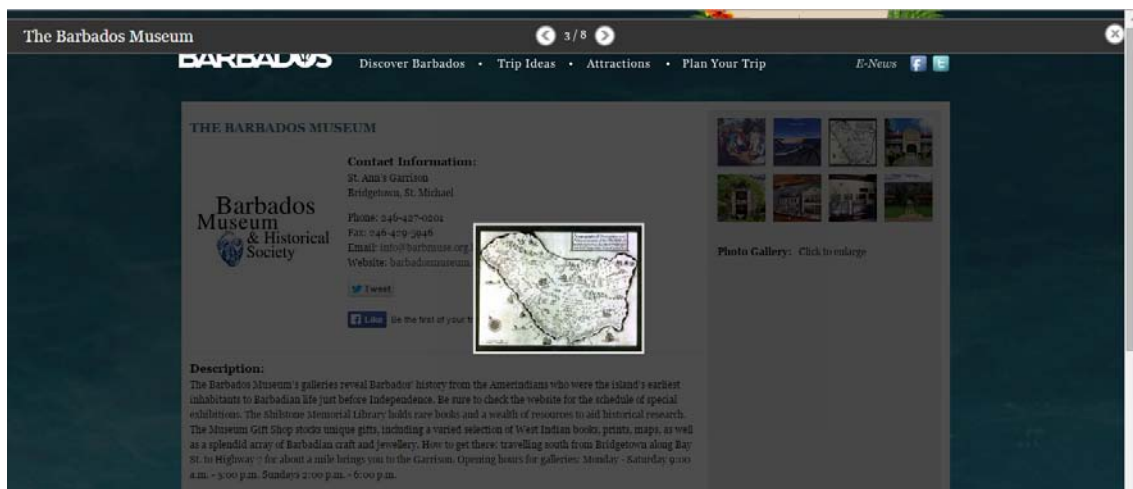
Each of these subsections has an introduction of between 1 and 3 paragraphs which offer a general idea of each aspect which are reinforced in a second block with Life Lessons in video format, or a popular Bajan recipe in the case of Cuisine.

In general there is a lack of the following:

- More detailed text and information in all of the subsections.
- A concrete strategy of interlinked information on specific aspects described in the text..
- A greater presence of multimedia formats to enrich each section.
- Better integration with the social networks to support the content (Instagram, Youtube, Pinterest, etc).
- Better integration of social network buttons to share information on user profiles.

The **Historic Sites** section has two introductory paragraphs which direct to a page full of heritage content which is not integrated on the visitbarbados.org site.

In the second block there is a short description of more than 50 historic sites, some with links to a specific location from the page's list of attractions, in which the user can consult contact details, share information on the main social networks (twitter and facebook), read a short description and see a gallery of low resolution photos, which in many instances give a poor idea of space.



Conclusions on the treatment of Culture and Heritage:

- The Barbados culture and heritage content is relegated to second place.
- Heritage information needs more space on the website and better visual presentation (images, enriched text, etc).
- The integration of cultural and heritage content into the forefront together with sun and beach information via a storytelling process, would offer a more profound and attractive dimension to the image of Barbados, enriching the expectations of potential tourists visiting the website.

4.1.4 General conclusions on the Barbados brand value proposition.

- According to the results of our analysis, the value proposition is largely orientated towards sun and beach tourism (relaxation, leisure and fun).

- All the information on the home page, both textual and graphic, is devoted to sun & beach, leaving no space for other themes such as cultural heritage or experiential tourism.
- This positioning need to be corrected in order to broaden the range of attractions that Barbados offers the user and present alternatives based on the Island's culture and heritage which will only enrich its overall appeal as a tourist destination.

4.2 Value proposition of competitors by source markets

4.2.1 Cuba (Canada, Europe)



The value proposition of Cuba has changed over recent years. This, together with the current political situation, is promoting an economic reawakening within the country, a higher profile within the tourism sector and the opening of new markets (USA).

The official website, **cubatravel.cu**, has an average of 5,000 monthly visits, representing a very low internet presence, well below direct competitors such as Puerto Rico (120,000 visitas) and five times lower than Barbados (25,000 visits). Its social networks have few followers (3,000 on facebook, 588 on twitter) and its presence on Google searches is almost invisible (it does not appear on the first page of value searches such as “visit Cuba”, “vacations Cuba”, “holidays Cuba”, “travel Cuba”, etc).

Four years ago the Cuban Tourism Minister introduced a new tourist image under the title *Autentica Cuba* and integrated this into all the digital profiles. To promote this new concept a website was created **autenticacuba.com**, duplicating official sites and social media profiles.

The autenticacuba.com website now has 55.000 monthly visits (figures for Nov14-Apr15) with traffic mainly from Canada (16.57%), Finland (13.84%) and USA (12.56%)



For a more complete analysis of the destination, we will look at both tools, as well as their geographic traffic.

Cubatravel.cu Website design and usability

It is a website with a modern design, although visually rather weak, which supports the message of the official brand (Autentica Cuba) and contains a good quantity of relevant information.

- **Strong points:** It is well structured, has interactive applications and surveys and allows the user to sign up and share information with other users. The information is well presented, is divided up by tourism type (Beaches, Nature, Culture, Sightseeing Trips, etc) and has a map of the Island which allows one to access specific locations and learn more, mainly with textual content. There is also plenty of support information for the traveller (How to get there, Guide to Cuba, FAQ Downloads).
- **Weak points:** Integration with social networks is poor, browsing is slow, there is no video and conversation and diffusion on the networks by users is not actively encouraged. Also some of the additional information is hard to read and is scarcely backed up by multimedia formats (photos+video). Lastly, there is a lack of updated information and no news or calendar of upcoming events.

GOOD PRACTISES:

1. Languages
2. Private sector
3. Culture & Heritage
4. Logo+claim

5. Authority
6. Traveller information/help
7. Outstanding information
8. Feedback tools
9. Interaction tools
10. Interactive tools

11. Info by type of tourism
12. Island /cities info

The screenshot shows the Cuba Travel website with the following annotations:

- 1:** Language selection (Spanish, English, French, German, Italian, Russian).
- 2:** Private sector link (VENTAS ON LINE).
- 3:** Culture & Heritage (Ballet Nacional de Cuba).
- 4:** Logo+claim (AUTÉNTICA Cuba).
- 5:** Authority (cuba travel PORTAL OFICIAL DEL TURISMO).
- 6:** Traveller information/help (¿CÓMO LLEGAR A CUBA...).
- 7:** Outstanding information (Regatistas de Cuba y Estados Unidos...).
- 8:** Feedback tools (ENCUESTA: ¿Ha visitado Cuba?).
- 9:** Interaction tools (COMPARTIR TU VIAJE).
- 10:** Info by type of tourism (Recorre LA HABANA en 360°).
- 11:** Info by type of tourism (NÁUTICA, NATURALEZA, CULTURA Y CIUDAD, etc.).
- 12:** Island /cities info (Mapa de Cuba).

DESTINOS TURÍSTICOS

<p>Pinar del Río</p> <p>La Habana</p> <p>Varadero</p> <p>Villa Clara</p> <p>Cienfuegos</p> <p>Trinidad</p> <p>Jardines del Rey</p> <p>Camagüey</p> <p>Las Tunas</p> <p>Holguín</p> <p>Granma</p> <p>Santiago de Cuba</p> <p>Guantánamo</p>	<p>OFICINAS DE TURISMO</p> <p>Alemania</p> <p>Italia</p> <p>Canadá (Montreal)</p> <p>Canadá (Toronto)</p> <p>Argentina</p> <p>Reino Unido</p> <p>México</p> <p>Suecia</p>	<p>ENTIDADES TURÍSTICAS</p> <p>Gran Caribe</p> <p>Gaviota</p> <p>Ecolur</p> <p>Havanatur</p> <p>Cubamar</p> <p>Publictur</p> <p>Marlin</p> <p>Palmanes</p> <p>Translur</p> <p>Islazul</p> <p>Cubanacán viajes</p> <p>Cubanacán hoteles</p> <p>Habaguanex</p> <p>Cubatur</p>	<p>VENTAS ON LINE</p> <p>Reservas Hoteles</p> <p>Gran Caribe</p> <p>REX Renta de Autos y Limusinas</p> <p>Reservas Hoteles</p> <p>Cubanacán</p> <p>Conectando Cuba</p> <p>Reservas de vuelo</p> <p>Cubana de Aviación</p> <p>Cabaret Tropicana</p>
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Autenticacuba.com | Website design and usability

It is a website with a modern design which contains a good quantity of relevant information.

- **Strong points:** It is well structured, visually strong and with a straightforward and intuitive navigability. Fast loading time which does not diminish the browsing experience. Good use of graphics and integration of Youtube and video on the main page. Very focused on information, the initial section contains browsers allowing one to consult events, and activities by geographical area. The second layers contain plenty of information on culture & heritage, sun and beach options and experiential tourism.
- **Weak points:** Poor integration with the social networks in general, although specific content can be shared, the integration of the buttons is not the most appropriate. Contains information on second layers, but the descriptions are generally short and the information limited. The private sector is present but not very well connected or presented (no links or contact details). No applications for interacting with customers or bulletins, no feedback available.

GOOD PRACTISES:

1. Language variety
2. Dropdown menu
3. Interactive map
4. Logo+claim

5. Variety of tourism types
6. Culture & Heritage
7. Activity finder
8. Photo Gallery
9. Video and Youtube integration
10. Events and calendar

11. Info by type of tourism
12. Private sector

autenticacuba.com 27 °C Havana

EXPLORE CUBA DESTINATIONS THINGS TO SEE & DO TRAVEL TIPS

Beyond Cuba's spectacular beaches, there are countless adventures to enjoy.

Beaches > Water Adventures > Land Adventures > Ecotourism >

Arts & Culture > For the Kids > City Life > Resorts & Hotels >

Spas & Wellness > Weddings & Honeymoons > Festivals & Holidays >

English
Español
Deutsch
Français
Italiano
Português
Русский

Explore Auténtica Cuba

Perfect weather. Pristine waters. Spectacular scenery. Soaring architecture. Exotic wildlife. Exuberant nightlife. And a distinctive procession of vintage automobiles. This is not just another island getaway. This is Cuba.

The real Cuba is vibrant mix of history and music, poetry and passion, adventure and astonishingly rich culture. Christopher Columbus called it "the most beautiful land human eyes have ever seen." But don't take his word for it. Discover it for yourself.

Explore the Map

Spectacular Beaches

Cuba offers sun-seekers more than 300 immaculate beaches, from the secluded beauty of María del Gordo to the glistening sands of Cayo Coco. [Explore More](#)

Wander Through History

Lose yourself in a romance with the past, in the Caribbean's most fascinating cities. [Explore More](#)

***** GUIDE TO CUBA *****

Find things to do and places to stay during your visit.

Baracoa
All Activities

Search

Cuba's Distinctive Sound

Rich, rhythmic and soulful, Cuba's signature music is an exotic blend of Spanish, French, African and American influences. [Explore More](#)

Photo Gallery

Beyond those sun-soaked beaches, there's a whole country to explore. Get a glimpse of Auténtica Cuba. [Explore More](#)

Auténtica Cuba Video

Take an enchanting 6-minute tour of the real Cuba. [Explore More](#)

Cuba Festivals & Holidays

Experience Cuba's festive spirit by planning your trip around one of the country's legendary fiestas. [See all Festivals & Holidays](#)

XI DIGITAL ART SALON AND COLLOQUIUM

November 2 - 6
Salon featuring audiovisual samples and printed [...] [Explore More](#)

What to do in Cuba

- > Culture
 - > Architecture
 - > Ballet
 - > Cinema
 - > Coffee Culture
 - > Literature
 - > Sport
 - > Style Primer
 - > Visual Arts
- > Music
- > History
- > Quick Facts
- > Quick Guide

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Analysis of autenticacuba.com by type of tourism

- **Culture & Heritage:** Both pages contain plenty of information on culture & heritage and visual positioning and access from the the home page is highlighted.
- **Sun and beach:** Both pages have a significant space for this type of tourism.
- **Experiential tourism:** good presence on both pages, although the private sector is not fully integrated and the page does not offer adequate contact or consultation formulas (contact details, links, forms etc).
- **Cruise passengers:** No specific information or good positioning on either page.

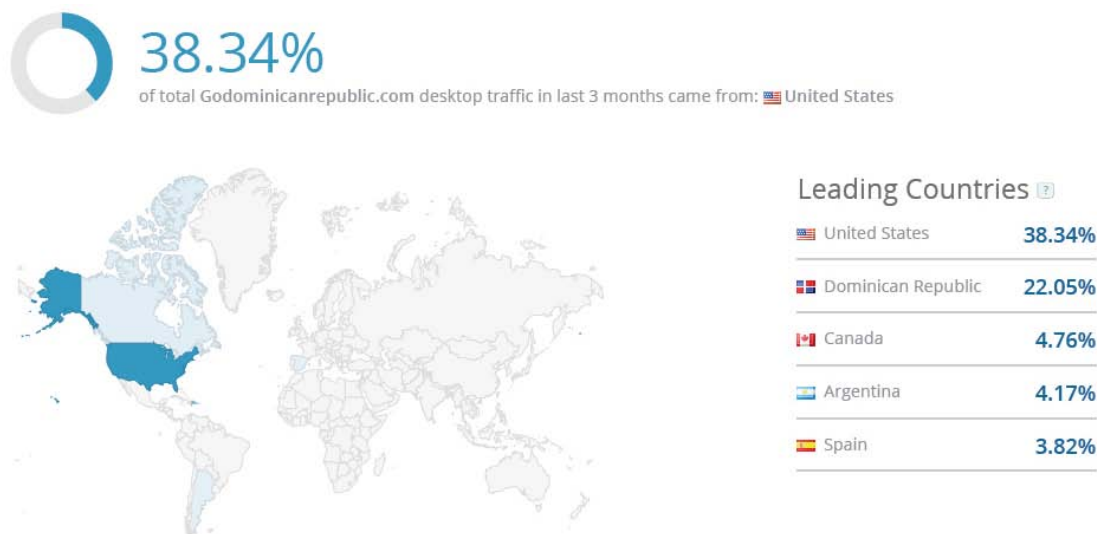
4.2.2 Dominican Republic (USA, Canada, Europe)



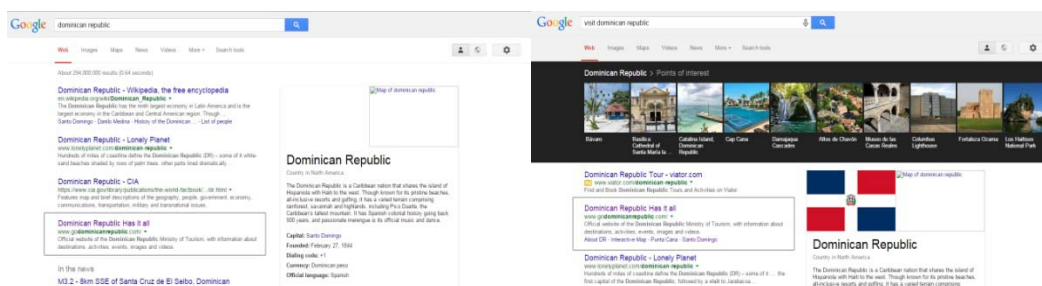
The value proposition for the Dominican Republic has been historically linked with sun & beach. On the strength of the claim “Has it all”, the destination has recognised the need to enrich its tourism offer in order to provide new tourist attractions and the engagement of a new generation seeking a more complete and authentic experience based on culture & herand experiential activities.

The official site, **godominicanrepublic.com**, has more than 120,000 monthly visits (figures for Nov2014-Apr 2015), with seasonal peaks of up to 170,000 visits, and leads the Caribbean Islands zone in terms of traffic, although it is still well below continental destinations such as Mexico (520,000 visits).

The **godominicanrepublic.com** site shows traffic mainly from the USA (38.34%) followed by traffic from the Dominican Republic (22.05%).



Godominicanrepublic.com also has very good positioning on Google searches, occupying first place in value searches such as “visit dominican republic”, “dominican republic history” or generic searches such as “dominican republic



godominicanrepublic.com | Website design and usability

The website has a state of the art design, with a high level of usability as all the information is presented on a page without a scroll and with well designed icons and widgets which allow the user to browse in a simple and intuitive manner.

- **Strong points:** Very well structured, visually powerful with simple and intuitive navigability. Excellent use of graphics (photos, video, icons), and good integration of the social networks and share buttons, which play a key role in the site design to promote the maximum diffusion of content. Very focused on information and multimedia content, with plenty of photos and videos. The second layers of the site contain lots of information on all types of tourism and the private sector is well represented with a specific space and good integration and information, (photos, descriptions, map, contact details, services, etc.)
We would highlight the good strategy content, with the internet as a nucleus of information, via social networks demonstrating high engagement levels, such as Facebook (207,000 likes) and Twitter (35,200 followers).
- **Weak points:** High loading time, which may affect the browsing experience and increase levels of abandonment. Historical and heritage content does not have its own section, although it is well integrated into the website as a whole.

GOOD PRACTISES:

1. All in one screen
2. Language variety
3. Interactive map
4. Logo+claim

5. Social high integration
6. Culture & Heritage
7. User login
8. High icons usability
9. Video and Photo high integration
10. Events high visibility

11. Info by type of tourism
12. Private sector good integration

LANDING PAGE



PRIVATE SECTOR



VIDEO-PHOTO CONTENT



CALENDAR



INFORMATION PAGE



Godominicanrepublic.com | Analysis by type of tourism.

- **Culture & Heritage:** Without an exclusive section, the heritage and cultural aspects of the Dominican Republic are nevertheless well represented in the course of the text (geography, experiential tourism, etc) on the website. However, a specific area for this content would have been welcome.
- **Sun and beach:** Very present in the graphics throughout the site, the logos, colours and photos seem particularly focused on attracting the user to this sun and beach environment. Also prevalent in the activities content and information.
- **Experiential Tourism:** This has a good presence on the site. The Dominican Republic is presented as a dynamic destination, full of possibilities, and with a range of activities on offer. The home page highlights a specific location, with a floating slide which informs the user on specific events and activities, with the private sector well represented.
- **Cruise passengers:** No specific information.

4.2.3 Jamaica (USA, Canada, Europe)

The Jamaica value proposition is strongly linked with sun and beach tourism. The claim (Get all right) and the tourism offer are heavily focused on relaxation, leisure, sun and beach.

The official site, **visitjamaica.com**, has an average of 100,000 monthly visits (figures for Nov14-Apr15), one of the highest among the Caribbean islands (after the Dominican Republic with 120,000 visits)

Traffic is principally from USA (60.85%) and Jamaica itself (11.53%).

**Leading Countries**

United States	60.85%
Jamaica	11.53%
Canada	6.74%
United Kingdom	5.11%
Spain	1.35%

Visitjamaica.com also has good positioning on related Google searches, occupying leading positions on value searches such as "Jamaica travel" (3rd position), "Jamaica guide" (4th) or generic searches such as "Jamaica" (2nd).

visitjamaica.com | Website design and usability

Modern website design, acceptable usability on scroll and a simple and intuitive browsing experience.

- **Strong points:** Well structured, visually powerful (video slide, javascript and pictures) and with simple and intuitive navigability. Good use of graphic resources and integration of the social media via share buttons. Well focused on tourist strongpoints and services (honeymoons, golf, music, adventures, etc). The second layers of the website contain plenty of information on tourist attractions with good integration of the private sector, trip planner, social network buttons to promote visibility and a complete information file (photos, description, map, contact details, services, etc.).
- **Weak points:** Not translated into any additional languages, which is restricting for many users. This is a poor practice for reaching new markets and global positioning. The history and cultural heritage of the Island do not have a specific weighting within the page and no reference is made to them in the value proposition, with the exception of the historical sites section on the events and culture menu.

JAMAICA THINGS TO DO FEEL THE VIBE YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE WHERE TO STAY WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS CONVENTIONS

TEMP 83°F LOCAL TIME 9:43AM

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL ALL RIGHT

FROM LONG SANDY STRETCHES TO CRYSTAL CLEAR WATER AND SECRET COVES, OUR BEACHES ARE WHERE YOU MAKE MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME. JUST TAKE A LOOK

GOOD PRACTISES:

1. Floating icons menu
2. Dropdown menu
3. Video slide
4. Headlines
5. Visual information
6. Highlighting activities
7. Highlighting tourism strenghts
8. Private sector integration
9. Interactive map
10. Trip planner
11. Social media integration

LANDING PAGE

THINGS TO DO GET OUT AND ABOUT ON THE ISLAND OF ALL RIGHT

Jamaica Travel Channel
A journey through Jamaica is full of fascinating sites and people. Come explore with us!

FEEL THE VIBE LEARN ABOUT ALL THINGS THAT MAKE JAMAICA SPECIAL

LOCAL LIQUOR AND BEER
We take a lot of pride in our rum and beer, which we have become famous for. See where it all started, our local breweries and what you should try when you get here.

CUISINE
With influences from all over the world, and our own natural produce and spices, Jamaica is a treat for any foodie. Learn about our fine dining, pin dishes and street food.

PEOPLE
The people make Jamaica, and Jamaica makes the people. Find out about the mesh of cultures and influences that have made us who we are today, and the people who call the island home.

MUSIC
If there's one thing we're well known for, it's our music. From storytelling, to chat and gossip, if we can make music out of it, we do. See who influences us and why we love it.

JAMAICAN ESSENTIALS
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BE WELL EQUIPPED FOR YOUR ISLAND ADVENTURE

Practice your swing on our immaculate golf courses

Cruise our beautiful white sand beaches

Have a night out on the town

Experience world-class cuisine with a Jamaican twist

Try an exciting range of outdoor adventures

Celebrate your wedding day or honeymoon

PRIVATE SECTOR

Chukka Caribbean Adventure's Zion Bus Line

DESCRIPTION
Our authentic Jamaican Country Bus, the "Zion Bus Line", will take you on a unique tour from island village to island town, via Carenage to the beach and final resting place of the King of Reggae, Bob Marley. This pilgrimage has been specifically designed for Reggae enthusiasts and hard-core Bob Marley fans, who would like to visit the "Caretaker" of Reggae. Head to the rhythm of Bob's greatest hits as you go!

Four Facts:
• Duration: 1 hour
• Minimum Age: 12 years & older
• Complimentary refreshments: Beer, Punch, Fruit Punch and Water & Soft Jamaican Fruits
• Complimentary lunch at local jerk Centre
• Entrance fee to Bob Marley's birth & burial place is included
• Refreshments: Country Donkey, State of the Art, 2000 Stereo System, Cooling Fans and Chrome Air Rims
• Refreshments: Juice and more
• Not optional for program session

OPENING TIMES
Every Day 8:00 am - 10:00 pm

FACILITIES
Cultural tours

RELATED
Roses Forest and Green Gables Estate

INTERACTIVE MAP

Map of Jamaica

Runaway Bay Golf Club
The Jewel Golf Course is a 9-hole (par 72) Signature 18-hole championship golf course which offers an unparalleled experience for beginners and accomplished golfers alike.

Things to do

JAMAICA TRAVEL CHANNELS

ACTIVE AND RELAXING

CUISINE

EVENTS AND CULTURE

TRAVEL & HOLIDAYS

WEDDINGS AND HONEYMOONS

Visitjamaica.com | Analysis by type of tourism.

- **Culture & Heritage:** Without an exclusive section, the heritage and cultural aspects of Jamaica are nevertheless well represented in the course of the text (geography, experiential tourism, etc) on the website. However, a specific area for this content would have been welcome.
- **Sun and beach:** Very present in all the visual elements of the site. Information structure and content strongly orientated towards this aspect of the Island's offer.
- **Experiential tourism:** Good presence of experiential tourism which together with sun and beach tends to dominate the website. Experiential tourism is well represented by private sector services information.
- **Cruise passengers:** No specific information.

4.2.4 Puerto Rico (USA)



The Puerto Rico value proposition is strongly linked to sun and beach tourism. The website, claim (The All Star Island), and tourism offer are focused on relaxation, sun and beach.

The official website, **seepuertorico.com**, has an average of 80,000 monthly visit (figures for Nov14-Apr15).

Traffic is mainly from USA (64.70%), followed by Colombia (11.12%).



Seepuertorico.com has a decent positioning on related Google searches, occupying average positions on value searches such as "Puerto Rico travel" (5th position), "Puerto Rico guide" (5th), Puerto Rico vacations" (7th), and generic searches such as "Puerto Rico" (4th).

Puerto Rico.com | Website design and usability

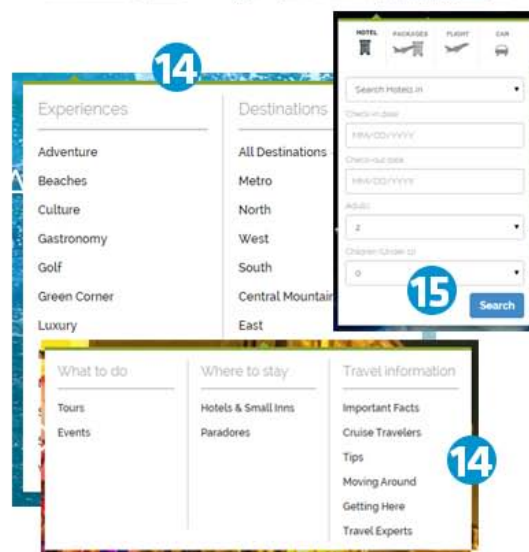
Website with a modern design, has an acceptable usability level on scroll and a simple and intuitive browsing experience.

- **Strong points:** Well structured, visually powerful and with simple and intuitive navigability. Good use of graphic resources. Excellent integration of the social media (vimeo, instagram, facebook, twitter) via share buttons and widgets presenting information for users on the general content. Good integration of authoritative reviews on the main slide (tripadvisor) and all the site subsections. Integration of hyperlinks and slide images directed towards related information. Very focused on experiential tourism (All Star vacation experience) with a news and events section which updates and adds dynamism to the content.
- **Weak points:** Weak integration of the private sector which in many cases (Hotels) is limited to a list with links to the owners' websites.



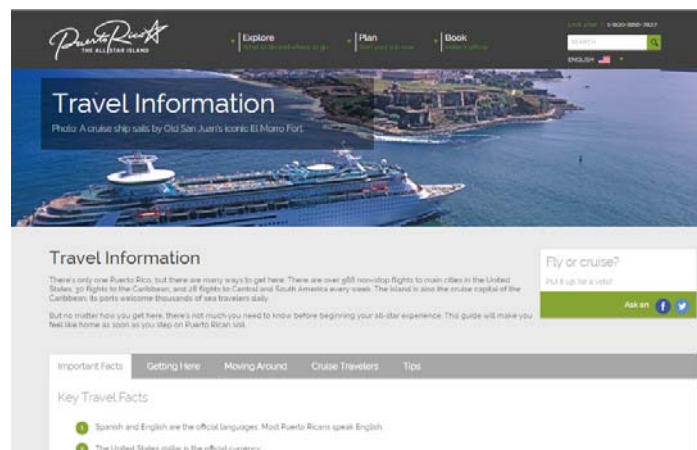
GOOD PRACTISES:

1. Logo+claim
2. Reviews and trust
3. Calls to action
4. Interlink with related content
5. Languages
6. Headlines
7. Private sector
8. Market segments
9. Much content in landing
10. Next events
11. Interlinked content
12. Social buttons in content
13. News
14. Dropdown Menu + Help info
15. Booking tool integrated



Seepuertorico.com |Analysis by type of tourism.

- **Culture & Heritage:** Not one of the main themes for Puerto Rico, which is very orientated towards experiential tourism. There is however a culture section, which briefly describes various topics, divided into sections, with individual private sector website links offering related products and services.
- **Sun and beach:** Although present, as befits a Caribbean destination, it is not the main theme in the value proposition.
- **Experiential tourism:** Puerto Rico is well focused on experiential tourism, both in the structure and information provided on the website, as well as the inclusion of reviews and opinions from travellers commenting on the destination and the activities available. The visual content is dominated by the experiences of tourists themselves, which adds confidence to the user when evaluating the destination.
- **Cruise Passengers:** There is a specific tab for cruise passengers, with helpful information and a list of private sector companies devoted to these services. No information, however, on specific cruise passenger routes.



4.2.5 General Conclusions on the competition's value propositions.

In general terms, we would conclude the following:

- Caribbean destinations are directing their strategies towards an experiential value proposition as a starting point from which they are presenting the rest of their characteristic features (beaches, culture, music, etc.)
- Those destinations, such as the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, which are best managing the integration of the social networks are achieving the most engagement and highest traffic. This serves to confirm the importance of a good content and social media strategy to achieve the highest presence on all channels.
- The content offered on the websites is crucial to the overall positioning, as demonstrated by those destinations with the best results in value or generic searches on the internet. This is exemplified by the Dominican Republic.

On a specific level, we may conclude as follows:

- All have strong websites, both in terms of visuals and text content and usability. It is vital that Barbados offers the user a rich visual experience based on content.
- We should highlight the excellent integration of the private sector in the Dominican Republic website, as well as the outstanding presence in the Puerto Rico page of content provided by social media platforms (instagram) and reviews (tripadvisor), which help promote a sense of trust on the destination as well as a strong social network profile.
- None of the destinations analyzed make use of the all-inclusive tag or refer to price in their arguments.
- Cruise passengers in general do not receive much information on the official destination websites. This could provide an opportunity for Barbados, with a strong official positioning strategy to turn the Island into a leader within the Caribbean region, both in terms of positioning and quality of services and content.
- Culture and Heritage do not play a leading role in any of the value propositions for these destinations, although some do handle this topic better than others (Cuba and the Dominican Republic), offering a highlighted position on the site or including such information in a secondary manner.

5 BARBADOS' SITUATION IN GLOBAL SEARCHES RELATED TO TRAVEL CATEGORY

Internet is an infinite source of information, its capacity to generate information is increasingly leading companies to invest in the study and analysis of the Big Data in order to identify and analyse the important information from the millions of data generated every day.

In the study in question we have divided the effort into three main sections:

First of all the **search behaviour** has been analysed relating to the tourism sector in the Caribbean and Barbados during the period 2004-2014, comparing the data with some of the main competitors (Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Barbados). The aim was to analyse Barbados' presence in the searches through that time, the differences with its main competitors and the evolution of the searches in the main markets (USA, United Kingdom, Canada).

Secondly Internet has been monitored in order to prepare a **snapshot of the health of the Barbados brand** in the different channels. The conversation has been monitored in the main social networks, as well as every mention of Barbados in the media, online travel agents, forums and blogs. The analysis was performed over a period of two weeks in order to look at the immediate pulse of the Barbados brand in the over 400,000 mentions made. The aim was to analyse the current image given by the Barbados brand on the Internet and its current main positive and negative attributes.

Thirdly an analysis was performed of **Barbados' presence, both public and private, on the main OTAs** in the market (Tripadvisor, Booking, Expedia) in order to look at Barbados' presence on them and its relationship with the competitors, and the users' valuation of the destination. The history of the Barbados perception has also been tracked on the main websites, blogs and forums, in order to analyse Barbados' image over time.

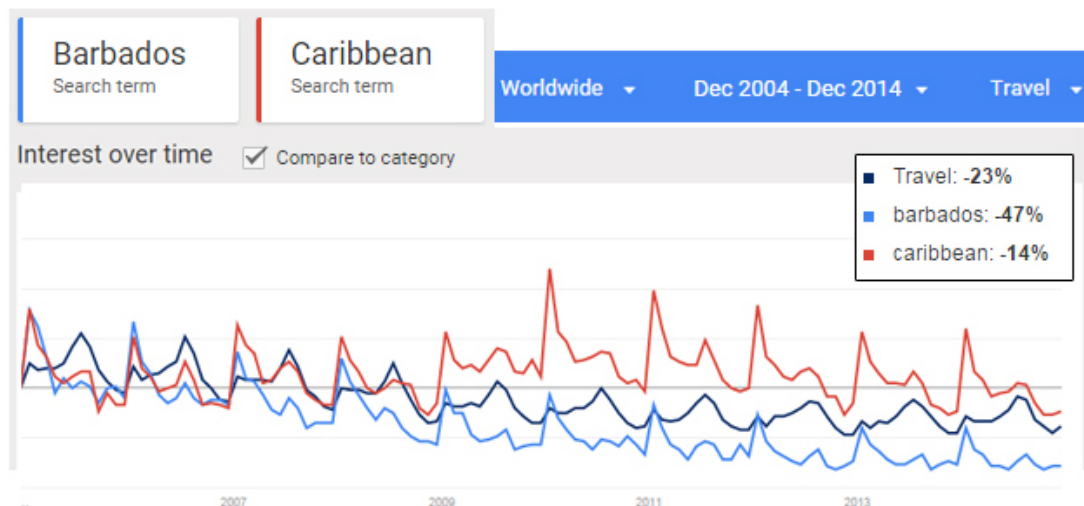
5.1 Barbados presence in the main searches relating to the tourism sector.

Using the tools Google Trends, Google Adwords and Keywordtool, we are going to analyse the search trends over a 10-year period (2004-2014), as well as the words most used or those which are increasing relating to these searches.

The **objective** of this section is to **find out Barbados' importance in the global Internet searches**, the specific searches from the tourists' main countries of origin (USA, United Kingdom, Canada), and the behaviour of the Barbados term in relation to the main competitors from the Caribbean area.

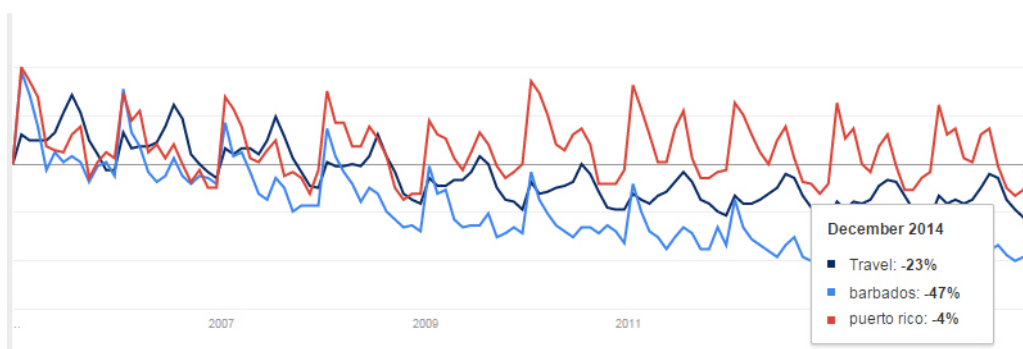
Barbados vs Caribbean | Worldwide travel search behaviour

In the period between December 2004 and December 2014, a general drop of 23% has been noted in the travel search category. As seen in the chart, this general downwards trend is less pronounced for the “Caribbean” search term which saw a strong rally from 2010 and then a fall of -14%. The trend in relation to the “Barbados” term is particularly worrying, which has dropped gradually over the years by 47%.



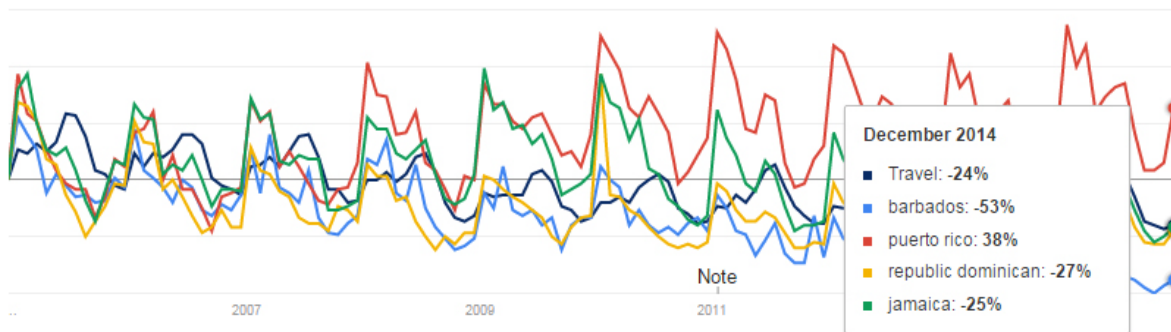
Barbados vs Puerto Rico vs Travel category | Worldwide searches

This search behaviour confirms a falling interest in the Caribbean area. When the search terms were compared from the Caribbean competition, the trend was the same for all of them except for Puerto Rico which only fell by 4% and performs regularly on the chart.



These falls in the search terms is partly due to the fact that new destinations have emerged with similar characteristics at a lower price, but also due to a trend seen in the tourists from the countries which have traditionally provided tourists for the area (USA, United Kingdom, Canada) to change their travel destination habits to discover new destinations.

Barbados in USA vs Puerto Rico vs Republic Dominican vs Jamaica | US Searches



Particularly concerning is the searches trend in the countries which have historically brought the most tourists to Barbados (USA, United Kingdom, Canada). Barbados has dropped by 53% in relation to 2004, which is much more than Dominican Republic (-27%) or Jamaica (-25%). In the case of Puerto Rico, this destination has grown by 38% as regards 2004, which shows that it is a successful destination for the USA market.

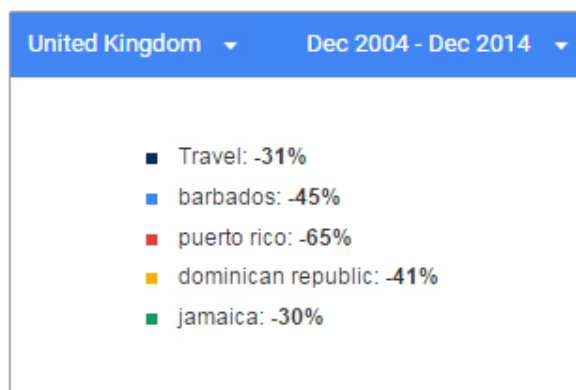
Barbados vs Puerto Rico vs Rep. Dominican vs Jamaica vs Travel | Searches Canada

Similar behaviour to that of the USA is also seen in the Canadian market where, apart from the increasing presence of Puerto Rico (33%), what also stands out is the strong increase of Jamaica (119%) and the fall of Barbados (-29%) only negatively exceed by the Dominican Republic (-33%). In the British market all destination have seen a general reduction, possibly also as a result of the competition from the emerging destinations.



Barbados vs Puerto Rico vs Rep. Dominican vs Jamaica vs Travel | Searches United Kingdom

As we have now seen how the Barbados term behaves in the tourism searches related to the Caribbean area and its main competitors, however in order to better understand the presence of the Barbados brand on the Internet and its loss of global influence in relation to other destinations, the **presence of Barbados has also been analysed in 2004 and 2014 in relation to some of its strongest competitors (Jamaica and Puerto Rico).**



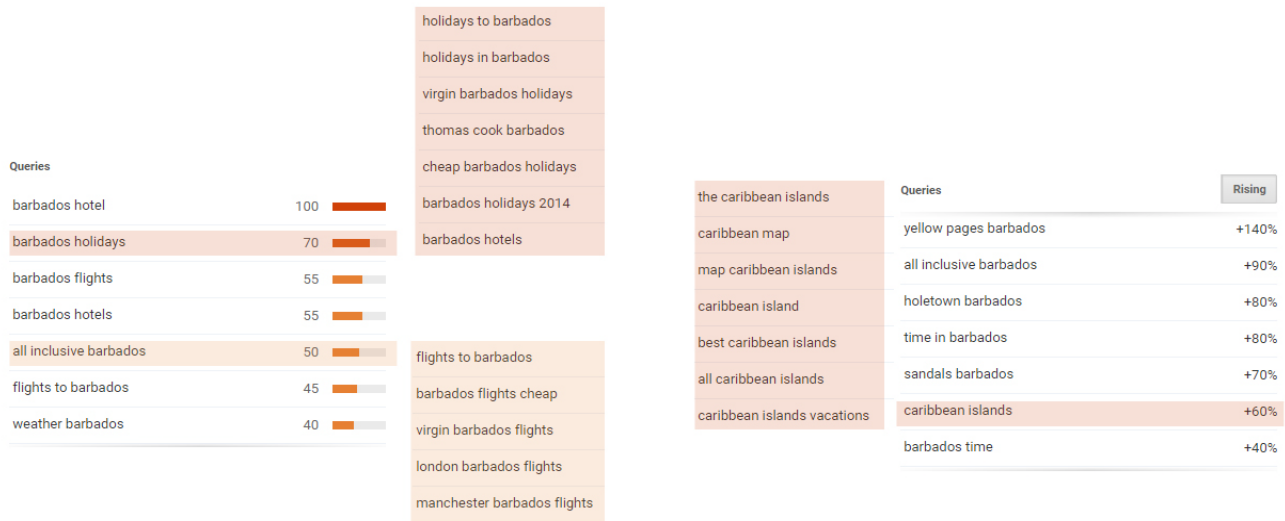
The compared charts for 2004 and 2014 show that the trend of the Barbados search on the Internet



on the global level has hardly changed, while its main competitors have considerably increased their presence in the search trends, which shows both an increase in the global interest for these destination and also the **stagnation of the Barbados brand**.

5.2 Top Keywords and rising keywords in Internet searches²¹.

Over the last 5 years (Dec 2009 - Dec 2014) the word most related to the Barbados searches was **"Hotel"**, followed by **"holidays"**, **flights** and **"all inclusive"**. If we look closer at the search layer of the terms, we find other related terms which show the demand for the offer (**cheap**, **all inclusive**) and the geographic source of the searches (**London**, **Manchester**).

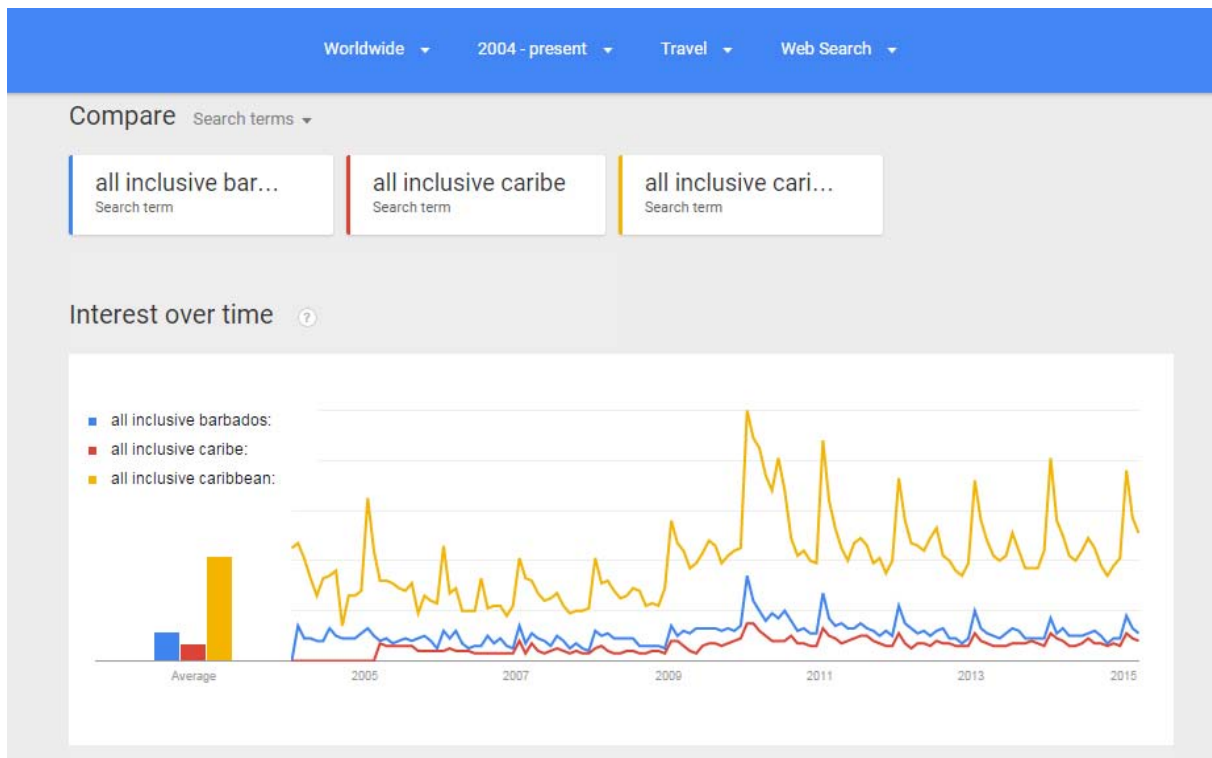


The search trends over the last 10 years show that Barbados has lost importance which, together with the rise of other destinations in direct competition, means that a strategic effort must be made in order to allow Barbados to recover its position as a preferential Caribbean destination on the Internet.

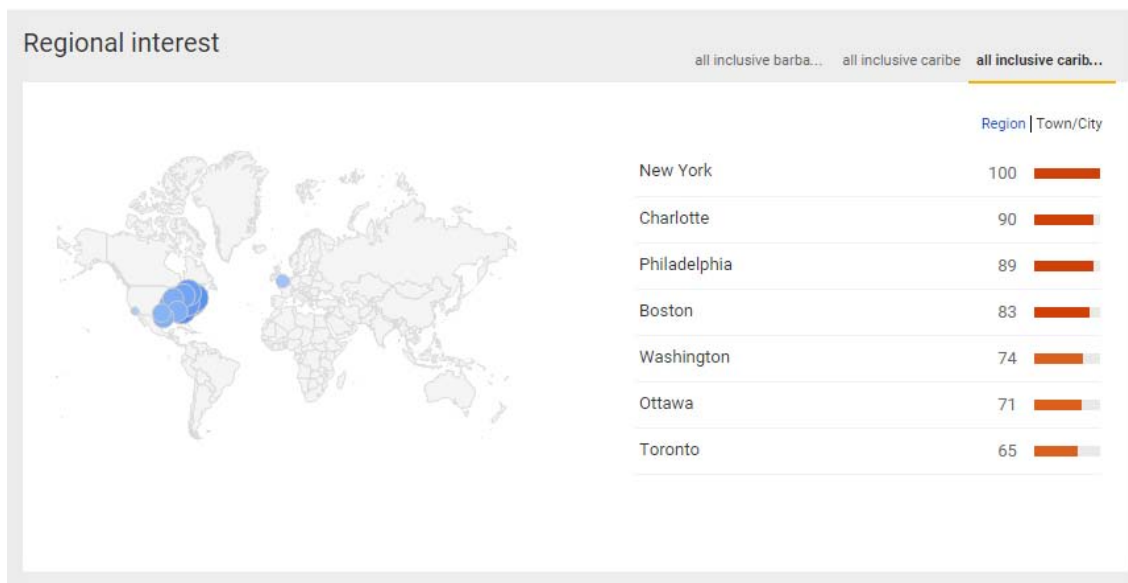
The relevance of the terms *all inclusive* and *cheap* also shows a market trend towards searching for the price factor.

²¹ All data for this research has been provided by the Google Company through the Google Trends tool.

Comparison of top keywords related to “all inclusive” searches in Caribe, Caribbean and Barbados.



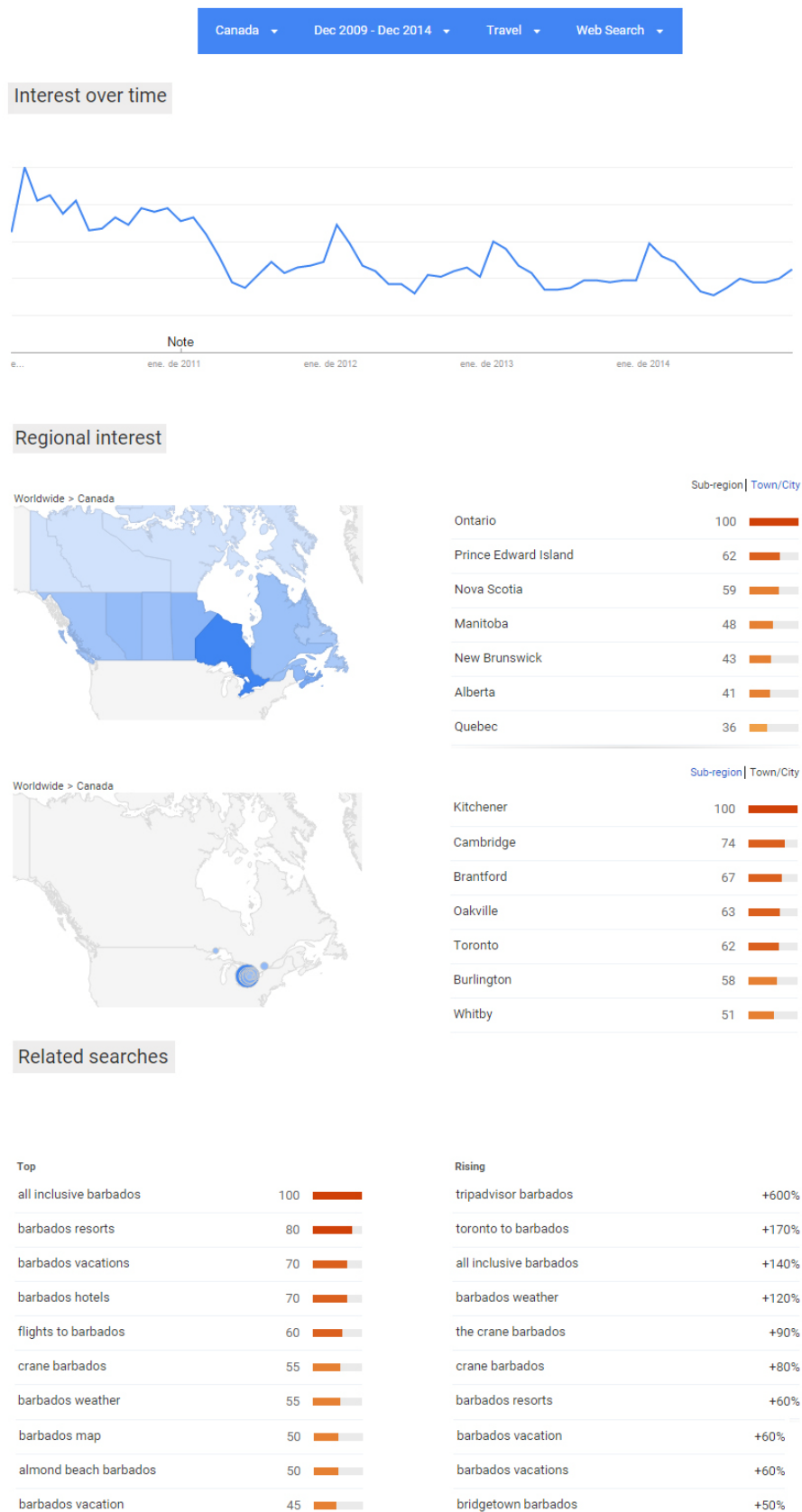
The graph shows a reference term growth from the year 2009 throughout the Caribbean.



The graph shows that cities from the United States and Canada are where most searches related to the term *All inclusive* are concentrated.

5.3 Top Keywords by source market

5.3.1 Canada



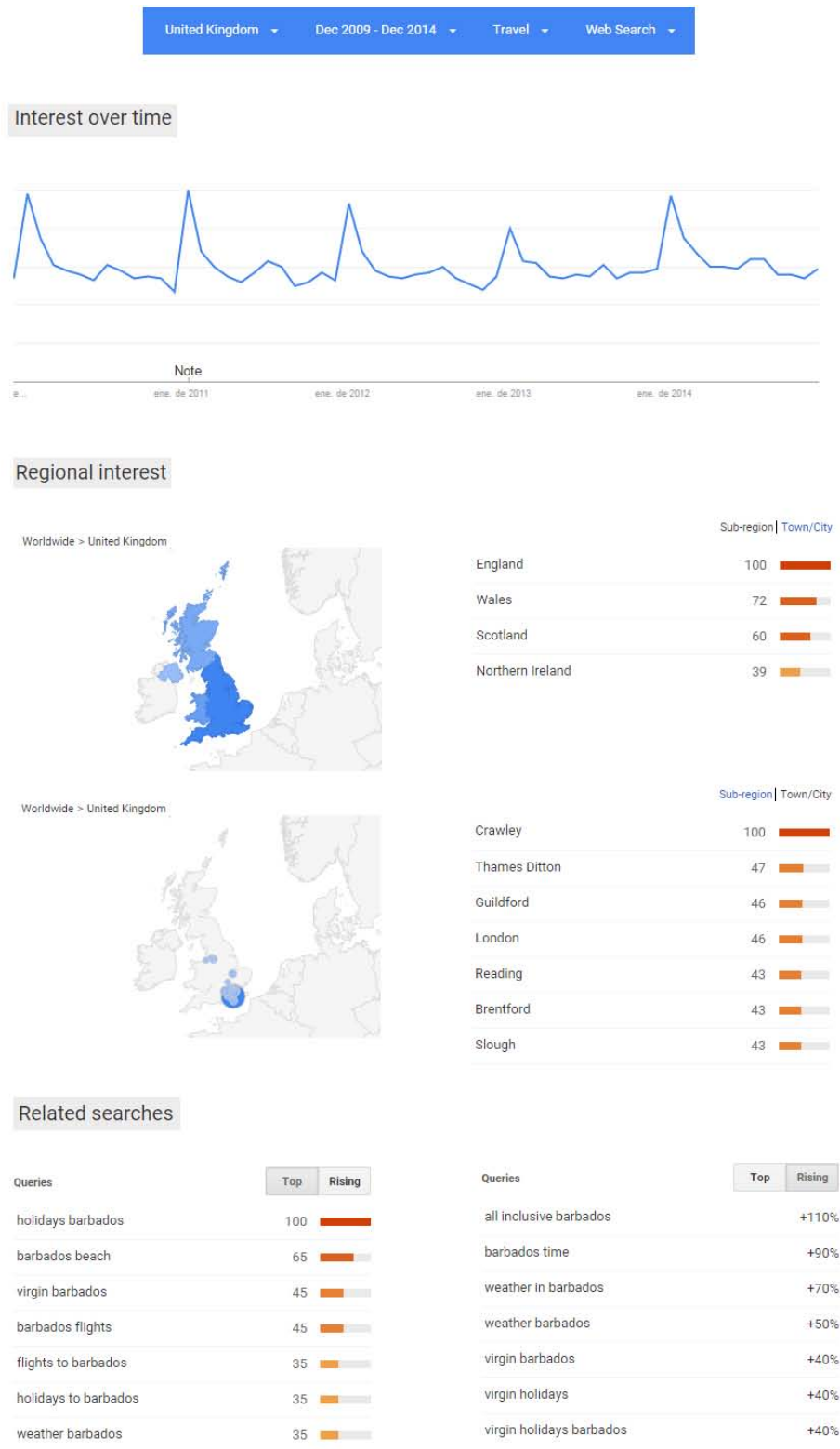
Canada Analysis:

Interest over time: Interest decreasing from 2009 with seasonal peaks between December and February, coinciding with the peak season.

Regional interest: The Ontario area leads in terms of interest, followed by Prince Edward Island and New Scotland.

Related searches: Predominance of terms related to *All inclusive*, followed by searches by private sector (*resorts, hotels, flights*) and generic term "*vacations*". It worth highlighting the significant growth of the term "*trip advisor*" (600%) in related searches and its importance for users when assessing destination (especially with regard to the private sector). Significant growth of the term "*all inclusive Barbados*" (140%).

5.3.2 United Kingdom



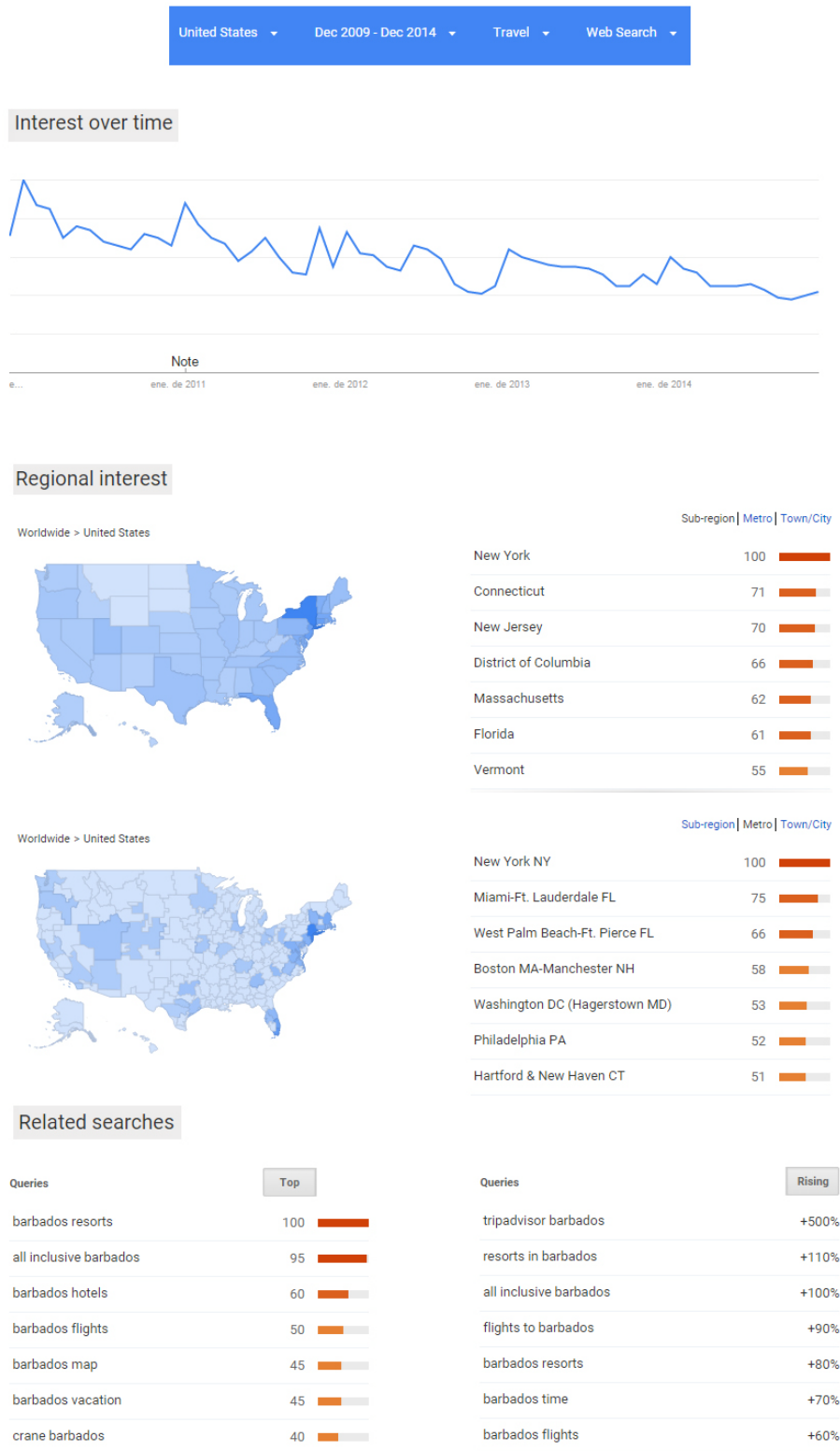
United Kingdom Analysis:

Interest over time: The graph does show a slight variation in the economic crisis period in 2012 and 2013, losing volume related peaks in high season compared to other years' searches.

Regional interest: The South of England leads interest considerably.

Related searches: Lead by generic destination terms, *holidays barbados*, *barbados beach* and *virgin barbados*. Significant growth of the term "*all inclusive*" (110%).

5.3.3 United States



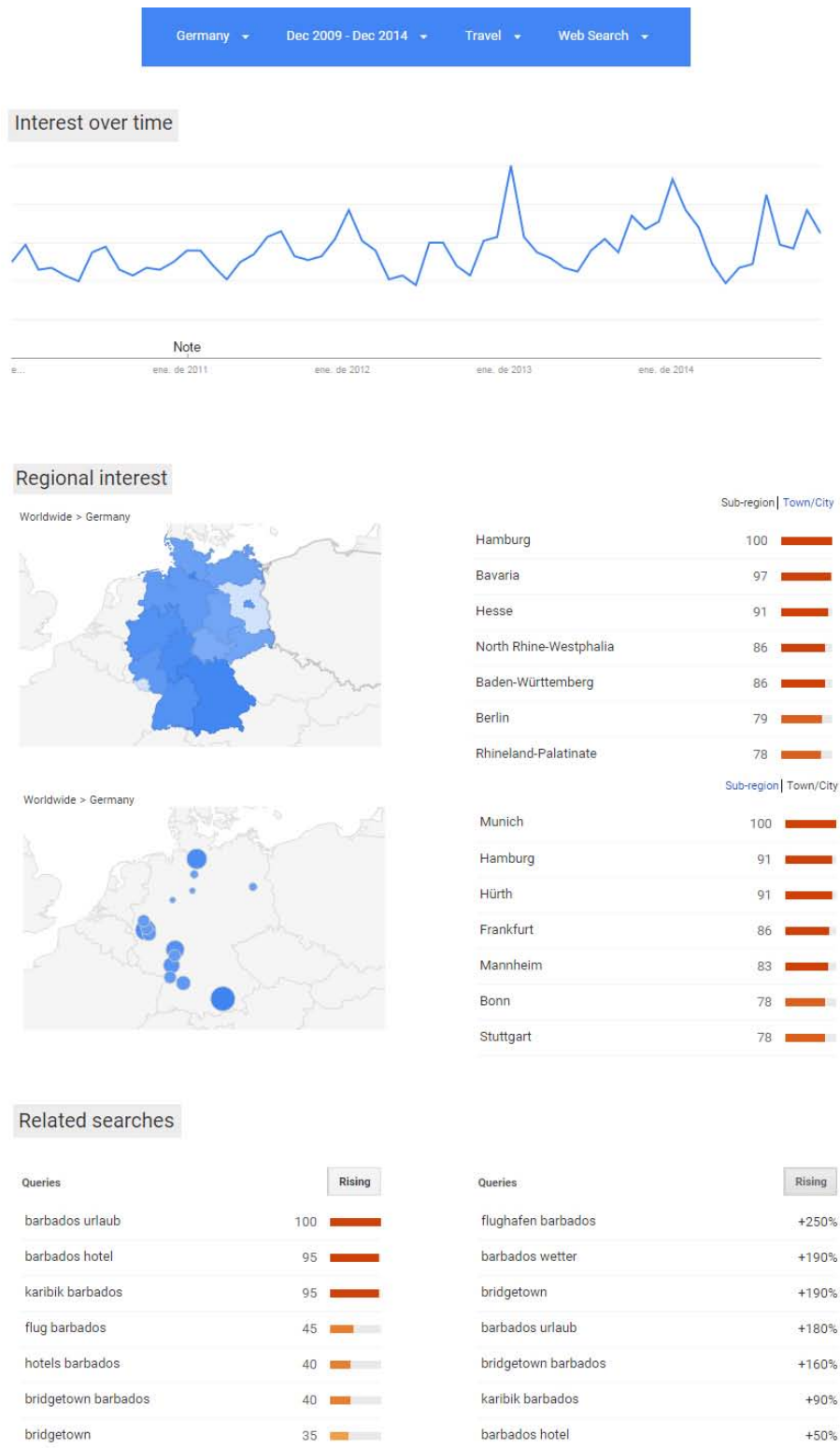
United States Analysis:

Interest over time: very pronounced Interest decreasing since the beginning of the economic crisis, the graph reflects a loss of regular interest without signs of recovery.

Regional interest: Predominantly from New York and in the East Coast in general.

Related searches: Leading terms those relating to Barbados resorts, followed closely by All inclusive. Important growth of Tripadvisor terms (500%) and All inclusive (100%), especially regarding the valuation of private sector supply and type of offer.

5.3.4 Germany



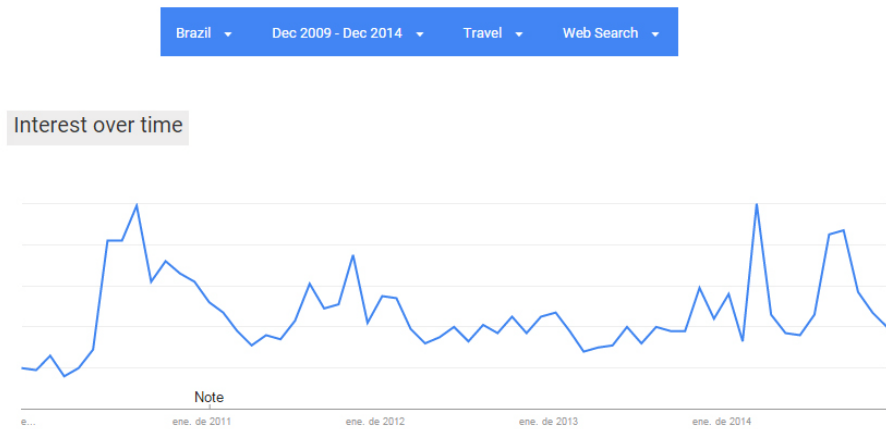
Germany Analysis:

Interest over time: increasing interest especially in 2013 and 2014.

Regional interest: Interest spread across the geographical area, but with greater presence in the southern region.

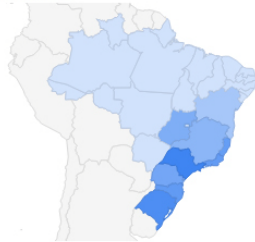
Related searches: Leading term is *Uraub* (vacation) followed closely by hotel and *Karibik* (Caribbean). Specific growth of target generic search terms (*weather*, *holidays*, *Caribbean*) and tourism infrastructure (*airports*, *hotel*).

5.3.5 Brazil



Regional interest

Worldwide > Brazil



Sub-region | Town/City

São Paulo	100	
Rio Grande do Sul	90	
Santa Catarina	76	
Rio de Janeiro	75	
Espírito Santo	73	
Paraná	64	
Goiás	56	

Worldwide > Brazil



Sub-region | Town/City

Porto Alegre	100	
São Paulo	89	
Diadema	86	
Curitiba	69	
Rio de Janeiro	59	
Brasília	56	
Campinas	52	

Related searches

Queries	Top
barbados hotel	100
barbados caribe	80
barbados resort	55
hotéis barbados	40
turismo barbados	35
hilton barbados	30
barbados cvc	30
viagem barbados	30
ilha barbados	30
hotel em barbados	25

Brazil analysis:

Interest over time: Decrease of interest from 2011 with signs of recovery in 2014.

Regional interest: Led by the Southern regions of the country, especially in state capitals and other major cities (Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre etc.)

Related searches: Particular importance of the destination generic search terms (*tourism, vacation, Caribbean*) and tourism infrastructure (*resorts, hotel*).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS:

The principal markets, although displaying variations, do tend to indicate certain general search trends in relation to the term Barbados over the 2009-2014 economic crisis period, as follows:

- Overall there has been a decrease in searches related to Barbados which is more pronounced in historical source markets.
- Greater importance of the private sector in terms of related searches, indicating the need to work together with and support the private sector in order to improve positioning on those searches.
- Important growth of tripadvisor as a term of reference in searches, indicating the importance to the user of such sites when assessing a destination, both in general terms and in relation to specific private services.
- Important growth and leading position of the term *all inclusive* among searches, indicating current tourism supply and demand trends in relation to the destination.

5.4 Barbados' perception from live conversation

This section analyses the **health of the Barbados brand** in the conversation, and for such purpose has taken a short period of time (14 days from 1st to 15th February 2015) which takes the pulse of the conversation regarding the Barbados brand and analyses its strengths and weaknesses.

Sentiment analysis²² aims to determine the attitude of a writer with respect to a particular topic or the overall contextual polarity of a document. The attitude may be his or her judgment or evaluation, affective state (that is to say, the emotional state of the author when writing), or the intended emotional communication (that is to say, the emotional effect the author wishes to have on the reader).

Over this time almost 40,000 mentions of Barbados were registered on the main Internet sources (social networks, forums, blogs, RSS, News and general websites).

	Total	Min/day	Max/day	Average/day	Sentiment analysis
Barbados	39,757 • N/A	0	6,143	1,325.23	

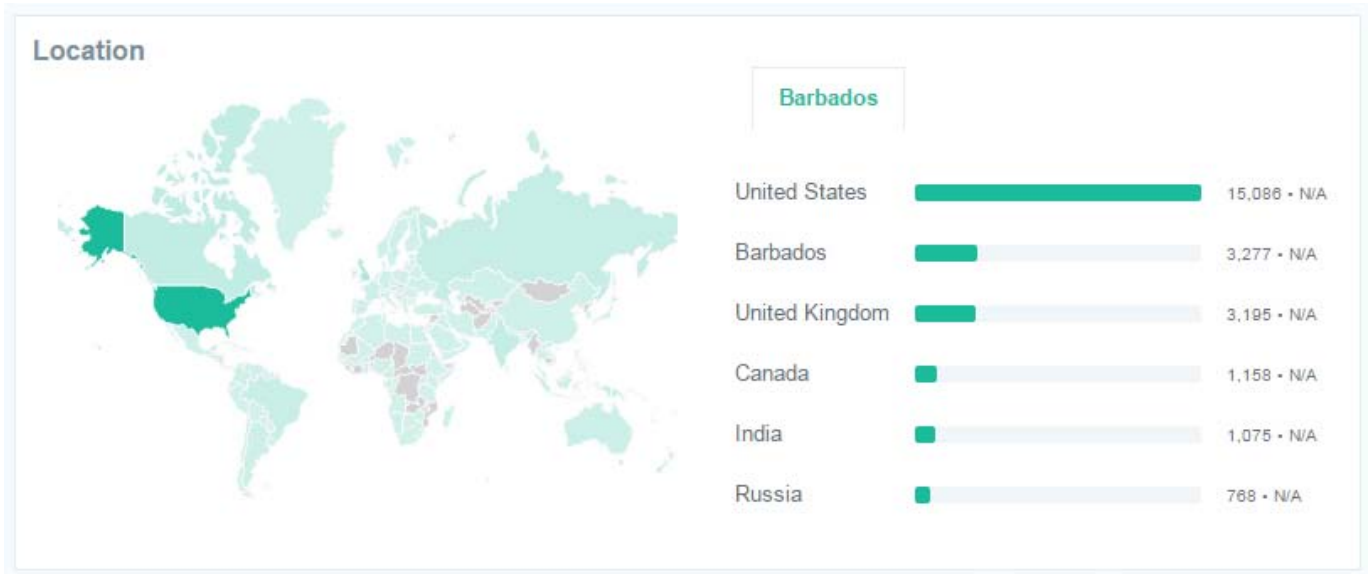
Out of the aforementioned, 12,209 were registered as positive, 24,392 as neutral and 3,157 as negative, **which indicates a positive perception of Barbados in the global conversation.**

The main source of conversation is Twitters, followed by websites and Facebook. This shows the importance of social networks when it comes to shaping Barbados' current image and the importance of monitoring the conversation in order to analyse what is being said and take measures to control, create and disseminate content which allows us to orientate the conversation towards the official message.



Location.- The main geographic areas of the conversation are **USA, Barbados, United Kingdom and Canada**, which cover 50% of the conversation. The health of the brand in the main conversation countries is **quite good**, slightly more negative in the case of the USA where the website sources (contents) prevail over the social media (conversation).

²² **Tools used.-** Appendix tools "sentiment analysis folder".



It should be noted that amongst the 10 countries where the conversation is concentrated, in **Brazil** (target market) and **Italy** (main user country of the landing page visitbarbados.co as we will see below), the **perception of the Barbados brand is very good**, and these are together with France the only countries with over 50% positive mentioned.

	Total	Sentiment analysis	Top source	Most active
United States	15086 • N/A		Web • N/A	Fri 8 PM-12 AM
Barbados	3277 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 4 AM-8 AM
United Kingdom	3195 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
Canada	1158 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
India	1075 • N/A		Web • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
Russia	768 • N/A		Web • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
Brazil	522 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
France	348 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
Australia	316 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM
Italy	221 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 4 PM-8 PM

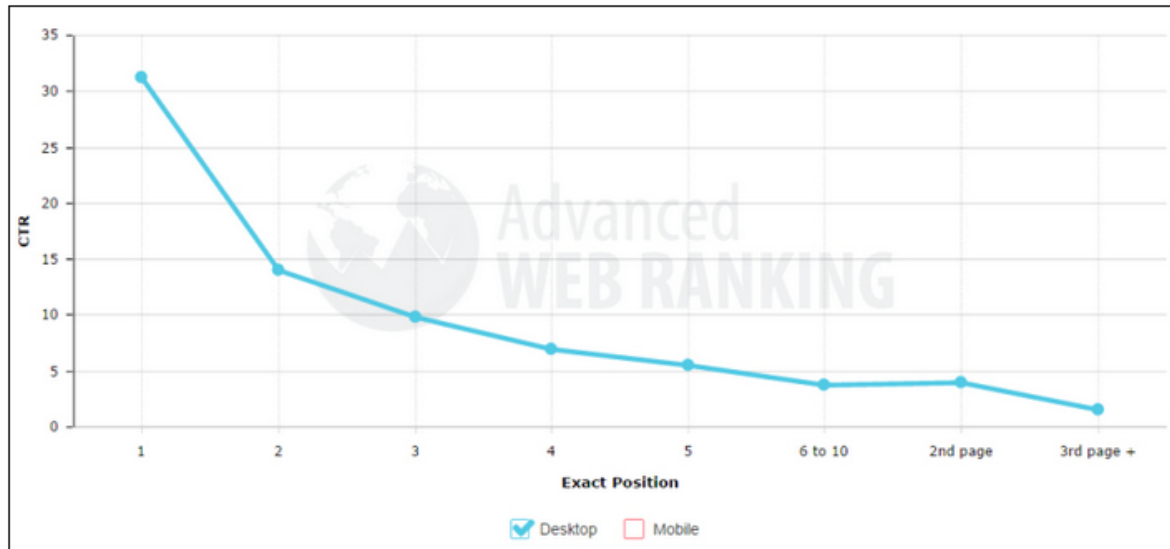
Sentiment analysis of the conversation regarding Barbados.

Sources related with Barbados mentions.- The information is presented graphically through a neuronal-type map where the main sources which have an influence on the Barbados term and which provide the information, are around the Barbados term (first layer of influence) and those linked to the category "Websites", "Social media" and "Travel sites", belong to the second layer of influence.

This map is drawn taking into account the influence of the sites on the searches (SEO relevance) and the amount of information relating to Barbados which they generate. These sources are the most visible for the Barbados term on the Internet, which means that the average user looking for information about Barbados will **access, in most of the cases, the content from these sources.**

EXPLANATION

Search engines as such as Google give information on results pages. On each results page Google offers 10 organic results. All the studies of the CTR on Google search results by position, give the first results dominant percentages (as seen in this study graphic Google Organic CTR Study 2014)

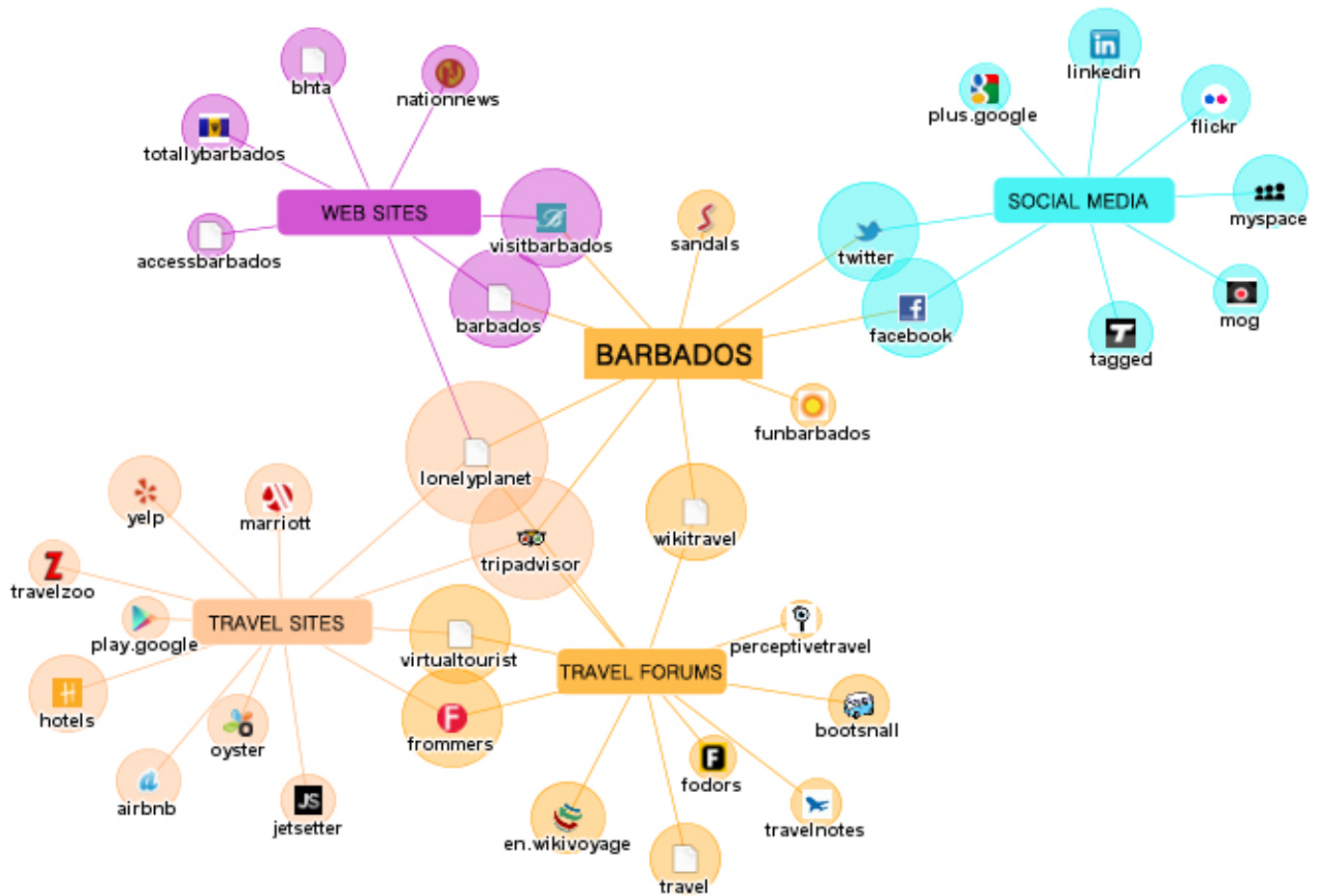


Position	1	2	3	4	5	6 to 10	2nd page	3rd page+
CTR	31.24	14.04	9.85	6.97	5.50	3.73	3.99	1.60

This explains why, in the present case, the sources of information on Barbados accessed by users correspond to the best positioned results.

In the first layer of influence we could highlight:

- *Visitbarbados.org, barbados.org, funbarbados.com* as information pages.
- *Lonelyplanet, tripadvisor y wikitravel* as booking pages and travel forums.
- *Twitter and Facebook* as predominant social networks.



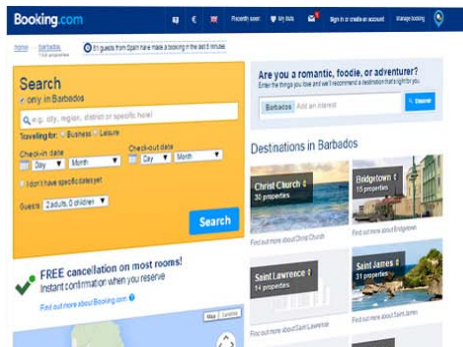
This map allows us to locate the sources where the efforts have to be focused in the marketing strategies and also helps to identify those other sources of global importance in relation to tourism where the Barbados brand is currently not present or only has a weak presence.

What stands out about this map is the lack of the social network Youtube in the first or second layer of social networks, and also Instagram instead of Flickr as the predominant photography social network.

What also stands out is the secondary role of the OTAs, the little importance of the BHTA booking platform (bookbarbadosnow.com) or the leading role of tripadvisor and lonelyplanet as sources of recommendation.

These sources shall be taken into account when it comes to working on the digital contents marketing strategy so that the official message prevails over those which are better placed in the search engines and can be inoculated in the potential tourists.

5.5 Barbados perception from standout content.



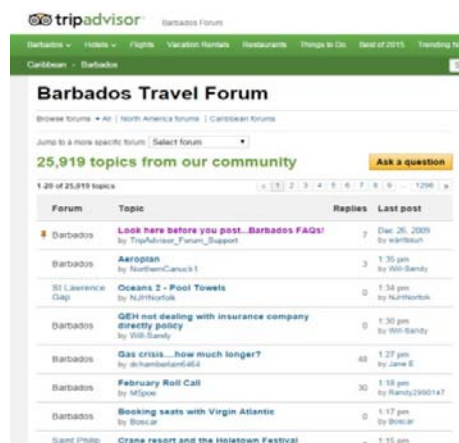
	Barbados	Puerto Rico	Dominican Republic
Private presence:	159 properties	269	715
Rating:	7.4 - 8.3 avg.	7.9 - 9.3	6.8 - 8.2
Ads in landing page:	No	No	Yes

The main recommendation websites and travel forums have all been analysed (including Tripadvisor, topix, virtualtourist, fodors, lonelyplanet and barbadosforum) using monitoring tools to look at the Barbados tourism image currently prevalent on the Internet:

The private sector Barbados tourism offer generally has a **good reputation** on the Internet ²³.

On the private level, its offer in the main online travel agencies (Trip Advisor, Expedia, Booking etc), has an intermediate grade (7-8 / 10) and the related comments support those scores.

The monitoring of the main social networks, blogs and forums using monitoring tools over the last 40 days provides us with a positive vision of the Barbados brand on the Internet, and that most of the conversations concern events, news, famous people, photographs and holiday experiences.



There is very little **conversation about the country's cultural and heritage aspect**, possibly because the official social profiles do not provoke conversation in relation to these subjects.

The travel forums²⁴. and personal blogs have articles and discussions with **negative components**, particularly focused on the lack of hospitality and poor temperament of the Barbadians, thefts and swindles during the holidays and how annoying the vendors are with the tourists. Drugs are also of concern for the digital tourist. But on the general level, the articles and discusses have a positive component, although it is true that the negative content always has a greater impact on the mind of the user.

The negative aspect which stands out most in most of the traveller forums is the **poor value for money**.

Most of the travel reviews are by tourists over 40 years old, married with children or who have gone on their honeymoon. There are a few experiential or youth profiles in the Barbados holiday reviews, more focused on the more hedonistic aspects of the tourism (beautiful beaches, sumptuous meals, etc.).

²³ See appendix Sources, Perception research folder

²⁴ See Appendix Sources, Perception research folder

Barbados is not primarily considered as an experiential, cultural or fun (activities, nightlife, youth style) tourism destination. This is the view reflected by results of the content review profiles on the most important travel forums on the internet, and the research carried out in Component I, in relation to a range of markets (Canada, UK, USA, etc) and their expectations from holidays in Barbados.

6 PUBLIC CHANNELS DIAGNOSIS

The destinations' webpages play an important role on the image given to the digital tourist, and the **importance that the destination gives to the tourist**. This is explained as follows:

If a tourist accesses an obsolete official destination page, with little information or without helpful content, possibly their perception as regards the destination will get worse as they will consider that the destination itself gives little importance to tourists, creating a sensation of insecurity and abandonment.

The destination's webpages must be well position in the most common searches, either by organic positioning (SEO) or by paid positioning (SEM), given that it a unique opportunity so that the first message to reach the tourist is the official message (brand perception and online reputation control) and not a random message from the conversation (not controlled by the official line).

The destination webpages must provide all necessary information for the tourist, must be attractive and up-to-date, maintained in continuous contact with the conversation which is generated on the Internet and have all of the necessary help tools so that the tourist feels comfortable and safe and chooses the page as a reliable source in order to plan their trip.

Finally, if the destination page is supported by a digital marketing and content strategy, it is highly likely that the official message will be disseminated more widely and become a reliable source of information for the other pages and social networks (the base for any contents strategy).

The analysis was performed on the webpages www.visitbarbados.org and the main social media channels (facebook, you tube and twitter), as well as the landing pages aimed at the European market (www.visitbarbados.co) and the Brazilian market (www.visitebarbados.com).

Due to the volume of visits to visitbarbados.org, its importance as official channel and its good position in the related searches, the analysis of this website, unlike for the European and Brazilian landing pages, also includes a diagnosis of the site's loading time and elements, as well as a diagnosis of the SEO structure of the webpage.

6.1 Visitbarbados.org



The analysis of the page included the site traffic, the visual aspect and usability, the loading time of the page, the user experience and the marketing, and finally the optimisation of the page for the search engines (SEO). The beginning of each analysis will include a brief introduction of the items and Kpis utilized for the analysis in order to make the study understandingly and easier to read.

Values analyzed:

Monthly visits, page views, bounce rate, time on site, direct traffic, search traffic, social traffic, mail traffic, display traffic, geography visitors, referring sites, top destinations, search engines, organic keywords, paid keywords and social media channels traffic.

6.1.1 Traffic Overview.

This section offers information about the **page's general position on the Internet**, the position in its **country with most visits** and the position in the **travel category**. It also gives us a traffic estimate in recent months which lets us analyse the traffic behaviour over time. Finally it provides an x-ray of the data over a month, which lets us analyse the user behaviour through the main visit Kpis (time on the site, pages visited and bounce rate).

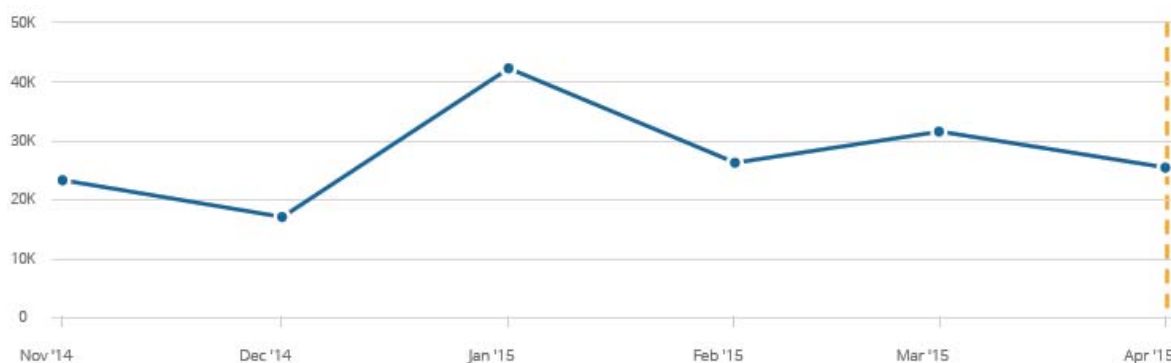
The data²⁵ corresponding to the month of April 2015 provided by Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools and analysed using the SimilarwebPro traffic tool, shows 25,000 visits in April with an average visit of 1:39 minutes, viewing 1.52 pages.

²⁵ We would have liked to have access to the Barbados account in Google Analytics in order to have specific data of country sources, traffic, users' behaviour, and other Kpis. All data in this research has been provided by Google and similar web companies using the traffic tools available and is, as such, approximate.

Estimated Visits	25K
Time On Site	00:01:39
Page Views	1.52
Bounce Rate	68.62%

The average time is low for this type of page where the user wants to find detailed information about the destination (nycgo.com: 3:32 or godominicanrepublic: 3:44). The number of pages visited together with their lack of information, shows that the user leaves the webpage after a short period of time as they did not find what they wanted.

The visits graph for the months of November 2014 to April 2015 shows regular behaviour with visit spikes in January which seems to indicate seasonal variations.



**For more specific data, we would need access to the Barbados Analytics account.*

6.1.2 Traffic Sources.-

This section allows us to analyse the page's **main sources of traffic**. Out of these, the following 5 categories were analysed for a three-month monitoring period (February-April 2015):

Direct traffic. Represents those visitors that arrive directly and immediately on your site by (1) typing your URL into the browser's address bar, (2) clicking on a bookmark or (3) clicking on a link in an email, chat or message. Direct traffic is a strong indicator of your brand strength and your success in text message marketing can also be an indicator of offline marketing success.

Referring traffic, counts those visitors that click a link on another site and land on your site.

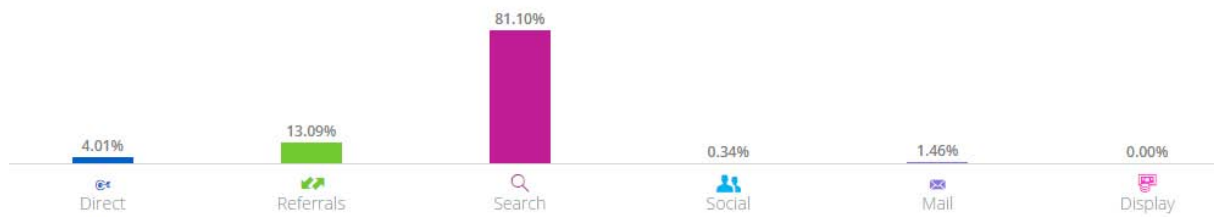
Search engine traffic, is traffic that comes from visitors clicking on links on a search results page for any search engine, whether Google, Bing, Yahoo, or similar.

Social traffic, is a traffic that comes from all the social media platforms.

Mail traffic is traffic that comes from email marketing campaigns (newsletters, etc).

Display traffic, is that traffic that comes from CPC or paid search engine traffic, which is the traffic that you purchase.

Traffic Sources



What is of particular interest is the dominion of the search engines given that 81.10% of the visits come from them and almost 95% from Google. Such a high amount means that there is high dependency on Google, and as such work should be done on the future online marketing strategy (using organic position strategies and paid searches on search engines) in order to reroute the tourists to the official website.

This high percentage also shows a lack of communication actions (Display: 0%, Paid words: 0%) in paid supports (digital newspapers, influencers sites, forums, etc) which lead to a controlled potential user traffic to the website. (referrals: 13.09%).

Finally, one should also point out the low impact of the social networks on the visits to the website (0.34%), well below websites like nycgo.com (4.10%) or Puerto Rico (3.35%). The social networks are an ideal instrument in order to generate quality visits to our website given that the followers of our profiles have an interest in the destination and are perfect spokespersons for our message. The networks also allow us to listen to the users and build a product demand and a conversation which provides us with generated viral content and the return on the investment.

6.1.3 Geography Sources.-

This section lets us analyse the **countries which generate most visits** to our website. This information is useful in order to guide the digital marketing in the main countries, in order to detect possible new markets which are not being given much attention but generate a significant number of visits or in order to take decisions about other aspects of the website (translation into other languages, creation of exclusive content for the main traffic generators, etc.).



49.86% of the visits come from the **U.S.A.**, followed far behind by **United Kingdom (17.19%)** and **Canada (7.61%)**. These three countries make up 75% of the visits and the historic providers of the tourists to Barbados.

India stands out as the 5th most significant country by number of visits with 2.7% of total traffic generated in the last three months. With access to the Google Analytics account for Barbados a

deeper analysis of the users' profiles and activities could be conducted on those countries that show an interest in Barbados without having any specifically directed promotional campaigns in place. A study of this nature could be interesting in order to identify potential markets for Barbados.

A preliminary look indicates that the **interest has been maintained by these countries** and an acceptable presence of the current Barbados brand in their searches. By looking more closely the following conclusions can be drawn:

Over 80% of the visits are from English-speakers and no market opportunity is represented in other potential non-English speaking markets (BRICS and in particular Brazil).

Limited presence of the official Barbados message and brand in the world.

A lack of positioning in searches in other languages and countries, possibly due to a lack of contents in the languages of those countries and a dispersion of the content effort to other sites (visitbarbados.co and visitebarbados.com).

6.1.4 Visuality and usability.-

A webpage must provide interesting information by way of guidance which allows the user to know what they are going to access, be intuitive and easy to browse in order to keep up the interest, offer contents about the products and services with offers and promotions, to ready so that its content can be easily shared and allow interaction between the users in order to generate conversation and create confidence.

On its home page Barbados.org presents multimedia content which takes up 60% of the visible space, accompanied by 3 lateral blocks to access content, a drop-down menu tab, a language bar at the top and with quick access, and finally a widget with the page bookbarbadosnow.com.



1 HEADLINE MISSING

- No claim (long live life). No video title. No call to action.
- Headline is good for SEO, to increase the clicks on video content, and to help at user navigation.

2 LANGUAGE MISSING

- Every target have to navigate in his own language (portuguese, german, etc.).
- Good for SEO, good for users engagement.

The first shortcoming which is detected is the lack of a title or claim to reinforce the message and to guide the user about the content which they are going to find. In the case of Barbados there is already a claim associated with the destination's brand which is not used as a claim on the main page (Long Live Life). We are therefore dealing with a **home page which has no message** in its *fold line* (what is seen on the screen when accessing).

The content which is viewed when accessing a webpage of these characteristics must respond to the following questions by the user:

What is Barbados? Claim, call to action, slogan

Who is Barbados? Influencers, ambassadors, reviews, etc.


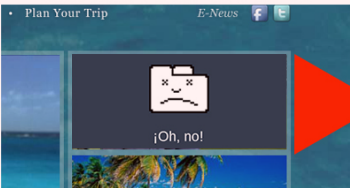

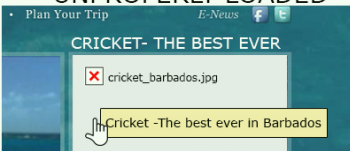

Where is Barbados? Location, how to get there, etc.

What does Barbados offer me? Main items in its offer.

Why Barbados? Information, content, offers, points of interest, etc.

The main video does not have a title which reveals its contents and encourages action (which significantly reduces the viewing ratio).

The lateral accesses to multimedia content do have a title, with the defect that it is integrated in the image of the miniature (bad for the SEO) and does not precisely inform about the content.

ACTUAL	IMPROVED
<p style="text-align: center;">PROPERLY LOADED</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">UNPROPERLY LOADED</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">PROPERLY LOADED</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">UNPROPERLY LOADED</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TITLE INTEGRATED IN IMAGE · FLASH ANIMATION DESCRIPTION ONLY WHEN MOUSE ON IT, NO INCITE TO ACTION · GOOGLE BOTS DON'T READ FLASH DESCRIPTION, NO SEO  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · NO TITLE AVAILABLE · NO ALT DESCRIPTION · NO SEO HEADTITLES · NO CONTENT INFORMATION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · TITLE HEADLINE OVER IMAGE · ALT DESCRIPTION · JPG FILE WITH DESCRIPTION · INFORMATION ABOUT CONTENT · SEO TECHNIQUES INCLUDED

The second shortcoming detected is the lack of languages on the website. Each user has to browse in their own language and if the website is not set up for this then they will lose interest (Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, etc.).



1 CALENDAR EVENTS MISSING

- What happen on island? festive days, important events, etc.
- Good for SEO content, good for users decision making.

2 OFFERS MISSING

- No offers (christmas, honey moons week, f weddings, etc).
- Good for SEO content, good for users decision making.

3 TESTIMONIALS MISSING

- Prosumers, travel influencers, ambassadors, etc.
- People needs trust recommendations.
- Good for trust brand, good for users decision making.

There is no calendar of events informing the user about what is happening on the island or what they will find when they plan the trip. The lack of an events calendar also reflects a lack of updating of the page, and as such the user may consider that this platform is not going to offer up-to-date information about the destination (obsolete page = sensation of neglect or abandonment).

The website does not contain *testimonies* from either users or the *ambassadors*, which offer the user proximity, generate confidence in the site and reinforce the message of the Barbados brand by third parties.

There are no **widgets from the social profiles**. These make the site more dynamic allowing the user to access the information on our social profiles and increase the site's visibility. **Nor are their buttons to share the multimedia content in social networks**, which limits the dissemination capacity and allow the page's official message to go viral.

1 SOCIAL MEDIA WIDGETS MISSING

- Facebook and twitter widgets in landing page are good for users engagement, besides to help at content strategy and social media visibility.



2 CALLS TO ACTION MISSING

- No calls to action: subscription, surveys, contests, forms, etc.
- It's important to create a valuable BBDD, to know the users profile and to set a email marketing campaign.
- It's good to increase engagement.

3 SHARING BUTTONS MISSING

- All content have to be sharing by users. (Video, news, events, pictures).
- Good for visibility, helps at content diffusion.

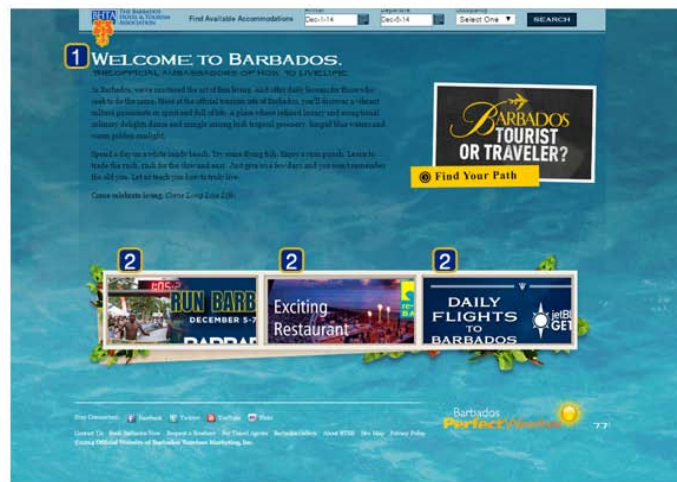


1 CONTENT ATTENTION AND LINKS

- A user is kept on a page until 17 seconds to find something of interest.
- The main pages should have calls to action or information of interest to keep the user on the site.
- Attention content must contain links to other content on the website to encourage the user to navigate through the page.

2 VIDEO TITLE AND DESCRIPTION MISSING

- Good for SEO, to increase the clicks on video content and to help at user navigation.

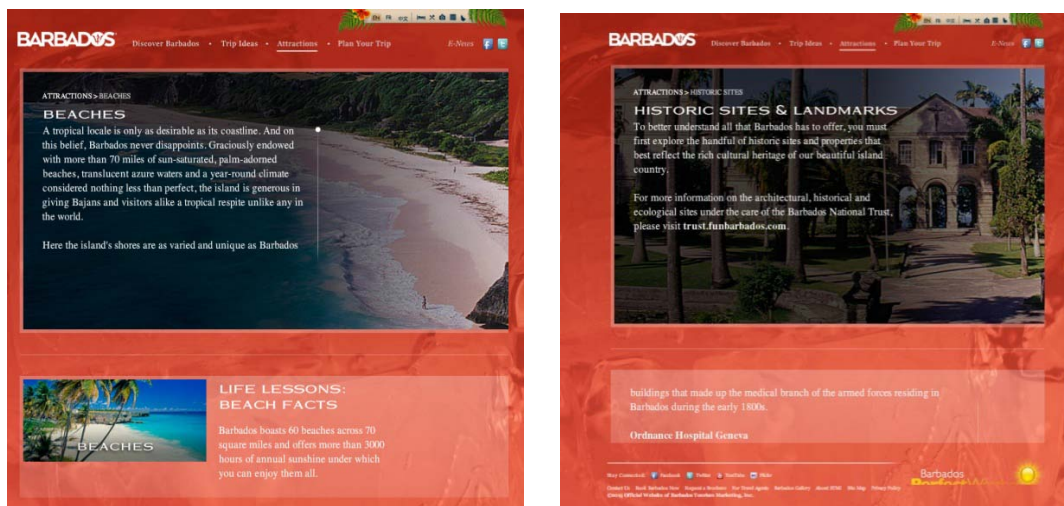


It is also important to add **calls to action (CTA)** on the page (surveys, subscriptions, competitions, reviews, etc.) which all attract the user's attention and allow them to participate in the content and generate its own database with valuable information about the type of user and their interests. This database can be used for future promotional or communication campaigns.

Visitbarbados.org **does not currently have enough written content** in order to guarantee that the user has all the information relating to the destination which they might find useful. **This statement is based on the following observations:**

1. There is no existing updated event calendar on the website (at the following address <http://www.visitbarbados.org/barbados-events-search.aspx> there is a search engine for events with 0 events). Nor is there any latest news presented on the homepage or any other information relating to what is currently happening in Barbados.
2. From the amount of text on the pages, which in some cases does not reach 200 words, we might conclude that there is not enough detailed information about the destination, activities on offer or its heritage. The density of words per page is a clear indicator of the amount of information available for users'
3. The usability of the page and the flash technology do not make navigation easy or encourage users to search for more information.

On the basis of the above, we can see that there is no detailed information about the activities available, the main points of interest, detailed help information, how to get there, contact phone numbers, links to more detailed information, use of videos and photographs to back the information. Nor does it have a good internal link strategy which allows intuitive browsing through the content by the user to the information they are interested in.



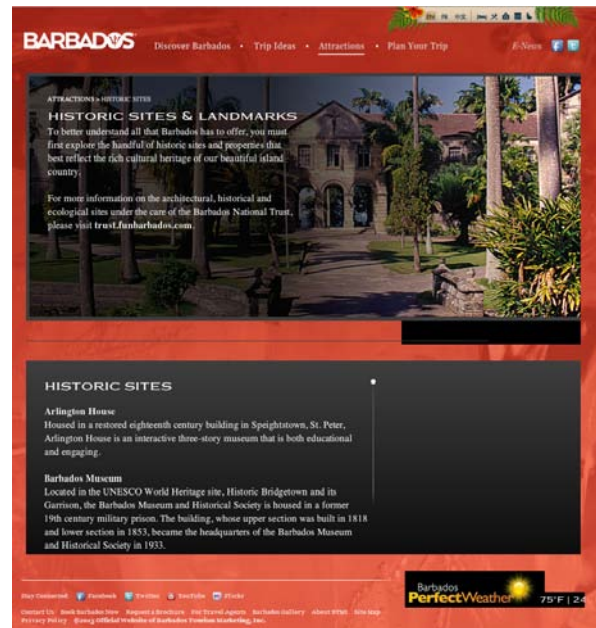
A good content strategy should always be accompanied by offers and promotions which encourage the user to make decisions about the destination or the activities they can do, and user ratings which help them to make choices.

6.1.5 Content relating to cultural heritage in visitbarbados.org.

The user can access the information about the cultural heritage using two options on the web menu, the generic Discover Barbados section and the Attractions section.

- In the **Discover Barbados** section, the menu allows access to Culture & Heritage, and from here the possibility of accessing **Heritage, Art, Bajan Music y cuisine**.
- In **Attractions**, the section dedicated to **Historic Sites** comes first on the menu and offers a list in alphabetical order of the different attractions with a descriptive file for each place and details corresponding to opening hours, website, etc. As it is an alphabetical list which mixes up proposals from all around the island and all different subjects, it is difficult for example to identify attractions in a specific physical area or relating to a specific subject. Nor are there indications which show that the offer is aimed at specific markets or audiences.

- It also needs more subjective images or videos which broadly show the diversity of possibilities associated to the heritage.



To sum up, we could say that 24 items have been analysed which should be included in a website of this type, of which 17 are not covered, 4 are there but suffering from some shortcoming and only 3 are done properly.

legend ■ No ■ Low / problems ■ x Yes

■ variety of languages (1)	■ Video titles	■ x Video content
■ Offers	■ Links to content	■ x Picture content
■ Calendar events (2)	■ Social sharing buttons (3)	■ x drop-down menu
■ Testimonials	■ Link to social profiles (4)	■ Quality information
■ Multimedia content form social	■ Social buttons visibility	
■ Trust symbols	■ Headlines	
■ Trust Testimonials	■ Calls to actions	
■ Ambassadors content	■ Chat user service	
■ Influencers content	■ Help content	
■ Review links	■ Social widgets	

Weak points:

- Variety of languages: No Portuguese, Spanish or German on official site.
- Calendar events: Poor. 0 events programmed.
- Social sharing buttons: Not available for videos, content or pictures. Not integrated with multimedia.
- Links to social profiles: No instagram, pinterest or Google+ active links

6.1.6 Comparision with the best practice destinations (BENCHMARK)

To facilitate understanding of this diagnosis, we will refer to several examples of tourist destinations, not only sun & beach destinations but also smart cities, allowing us to compare best practices and identify potential improvements which could be made to improve Barbados results.

The best practice destination chosen include Puerto Rico, Jamaica or New York, among others.

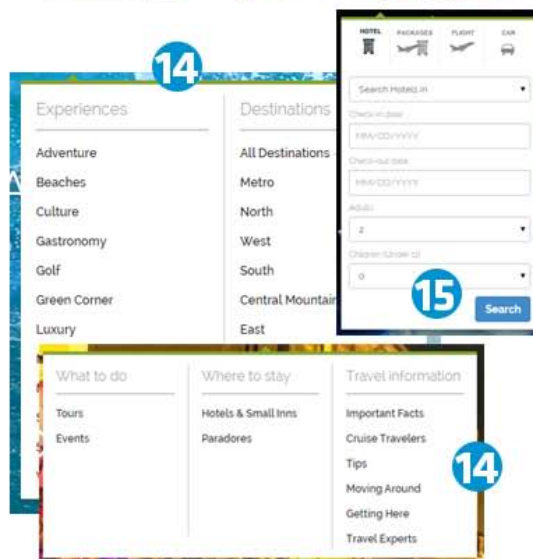
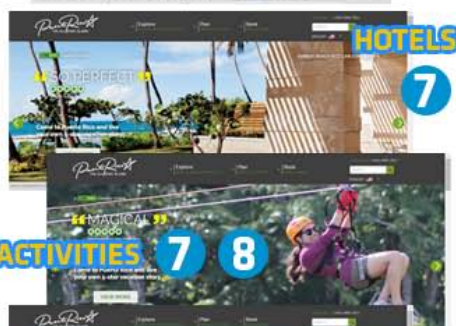
In terms of home page usability and design, we will make a comparison with Puerto Rico and London, which has the best practice in terms of arrangement of elements, quantity of information and usability.

PUERTO RICO and LONDON BENCHMARKS:



GOOD PRACTISES:

1. Logo+claim
2. Reviews and trust
3. Calls to action
4. Interlink with related content
5. Languages
6. Headlines
7. Private sector
8. Market segments
9. Much content in landing
10. Next events
11. Interlinked content
12. Social buttons in content
13. News
14. Dropdown Menu + Help info
15. Booking tool integrated



Privacy & Cookies

English

Sign in | Register

Search

Discover London Things to Do Where to Stay Traveller Information Tickets & Offers

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

GOOD PRACTISES:

1. Languages
2. Private sector
3. Arguments to visit
4. Interactivity tools
5. Offers integrated booking
6. Much content
7. Headlines
8. Offers
9. Tools and downloads
10. Trust symbols
11. Weather information
12. Traveller information/help
13. Riched dropdown

Welcome to visitlondon.com your official city guide to London, England. Find everything you need to plan your trip, from top attractions to travel information.

Climate and weather in London

Things to Do

Harry Potter's London

Best British Designers

Best of London

Oyster and Travelcards

Afternoon Tea

Sightseeing Pass

Tickets, Hotels and Offers

Hotel Deals

Restaurant Deals

Sightseeing Tours

Attraction Tickets

Shop London

London Spotlight

Tools & Downloads

Top Markets

Top Department Stores

Scott & Bunter Kensington

London Official Guide

Free Travel Maps

Traveller Information

Traveller Information

Oyster and Travelcards

Travel to London

London Airports

Coaches

Visas

Study in London

Working in London

Getting Around

Transport

Buses

Tube

Taxi

Local Trains

Cable Car

Maps & Guides

Essential Information

Money in London

Accessible London

Tourist Information

Tax-free Shopping

Bureaux de Change

London App

Free Travel Maps

Airport Transfers

6.1.7 Loading page analysis.-

This section analyses the following Kpis relating to the website loading time:

Values analyzed:

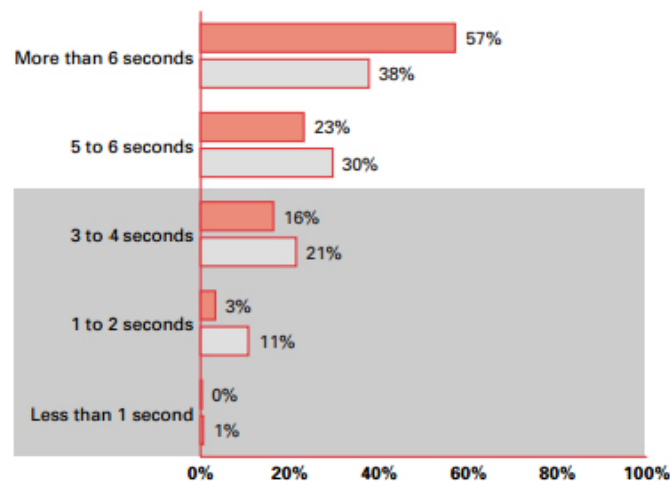
- **Content type distribution**, Shows how the website is structured.
- **Content type load time distribution**, identifies which content is penalizing the loading time.
- **Start render**, time in which main information is painted on screen.
- **Document complete load time**, time in that all elements of website are fully loaded.

Visitbarbados.org has an average load time of the document of 4.2 seconds, slightly above the recommended average (4 seconds according to various studies) but taking into account the lack of information and elements on the home page, this time could be reduced to 2-3 seconds.

Web Page Rendering Should Be Kept to No More than Four Seconds

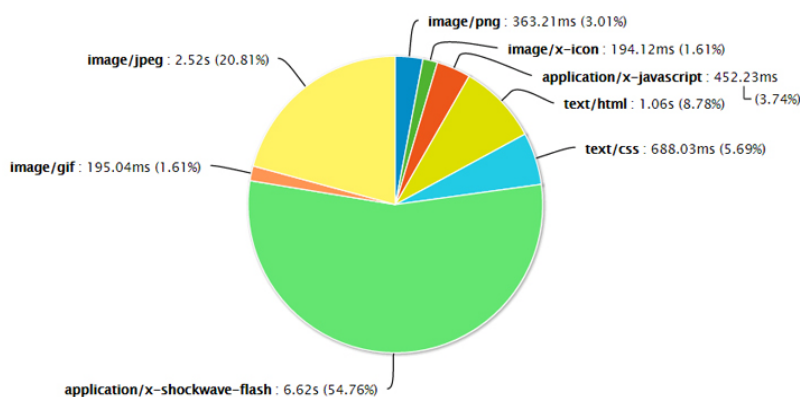
Fig. 3 Length of Time Online Shoppers Will Wait for Web Page to Render, by Connection Type

Question: Typically, how long are you willing to wait for a single Web page to load before leaving the Web site? (Select one.)
Source: JupiterResearch/Ipsos-Insight Akamai Consumer Survey (4/06), n = 469 (online shoppers with dial-up connection at primary online shopping location), n = 572 (online shoppers with broadband connection at primary online shopping location)



Source: Consumer Reaction to a Poor Online Shopping Experience, AKAMAI

We have detected that one of the main problems with the loading time is the flash content on the home page, which makes up 60% of the bytes to be loaded by the page and slow down the loading of the content. Furthermore, the flash content is not appropriate for the websites due to its incompatibility with the IOS systems (Iphone, Ipad, Ipod operating system) and its problems of compatibility in the different versions of the main browsers.



An optimization of the images, a modification of the video system (from the current internal server with flash to the integration of the videos on the official YouTube channel in order to minimise the loading time and send visits to YouTube) and an optimization of the CSS, would reduce the loading time by over 50%.

BENCHMARK

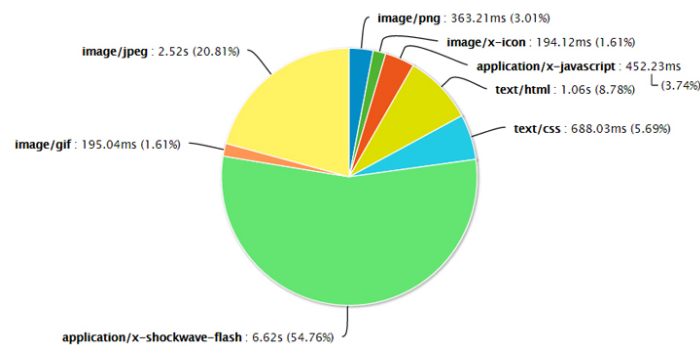
Visitlondon.com 2.782 s

Load Time	First Byte	Start Render	Speed Index	DOM Elements	Document Complete			Fully Loaded		
					Time	Requests	Bytes In	Time	Requests	Bytes In
2.782s	0.509s	1.692s	1700	764	2.782s	13	66 KB	9.581s	102	941 KB

6.1.8 User experience marketing and on-page SEO

Code and optimization

The users are increasingly browsing using various devices (tablets, mobiles, laptops, etc) and the webpages must be optimised in order to work properly on all of these.



We need to optimize our website according to the Google search engine optimization starter guide and the W3C media queries recommendations that states as follows: “a *media query* consists of a *media type* and zero or more expressions that check for the conditions of particular media features. By using media queries, presentations can be tailored to a specific range of output devices without changing the content itself. In other words, media queries allows your website to look good on all kinds of displays, from smartphones to big screens”.

```
/* Tablet Landscape */
@media screen and (max-width: 1060px) {
  #primary { width:67%; }
  #secondary { width:30%; margin-left:3%;}
}

/* Tablet Portrait */
@media screen and (max-width: 768px) {
  #primary { width:100%; }
  #secondary { width:100%; margin:0; border:none; }
}
```

Multi devices HTML code example

We did not find suitable optimisation of the webpage for the main browsing devices, mobiles and tablets, and as such the information is presented out of position, cut, in the wrong place or simply cannot be viewed. Taking into account the increase in the browsing using mobiles and tablets, it is essential to optimise the page and its subpages.

Device optimised pages			
Page	Mobile	Tablet	Viewport
www.visitbarbados.org/	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected
www.visitbarbados.org/enewsletter-sign-up.aspx	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected
www.visitbarbados.org/discover-barbados.aspx	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected
www.visitbarbados.org/bajan-culture.aspx	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected
www.visitbarbados.org/long-live-life.aspx	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected



Particularly concerning is the use of **flash technology on the page which cannot be viewed correctly in any of the devices using the IOS operating system** (Iphone, Ipad).

In 86% of the cases the images do not have a defined size which makes them difficult to view on the different devices and existing resolutions, and also some of them so not have a friendly format for web browsing.

HTML/text Ratio (on-page SEO)

The average amount of content per page (193 words) and the HTML/text ratio (6.6%) shows a **worrying lack of valuable content on the page, which is also negative for the search engine positioning** (some algorithms “award” the amount and coherency of the information), together with some shortcoming in the titles of the page, means that the **appearance on the search engines is drastically reduced**.

7.1 Amount of content



These are the thoughts of [Matt Cutts](#), Google Chief Engineer, “Is the Code to Text Ratio Important for SEO? Why?”

1) Users - Web pages with higher text content to code are easier to read and understand so users get a better feeling. Higher text content indicates that the website is built for people rather than for search engines. Happy users will come back and better user experience has become a prime search ranking factor according to Google and other search engines.

2) Better page indexing - Indexing of the web site is much more easier for the search engines crawlers when the code is clear and the ratio of the plain text is higher.

3) Improved page load speed - The less code you have the faster your page will load. This leads to better user experience which in the end becomes a prime search ranking factor.

So what is the best text to html ratio?

The best text to HTML ratio should range between 25 to 70 percent"

Internal Keywords (on-page SEO)

The key words of the website (those which are most often repeated in the content) show a lack of a positioning strategy in terms of key words (like for example: tours, adventure, booking villas, island, Caribbean vacations, luxury, Caribbean wedding, etc) and a lack of content due to the low repetition consistency (maximum 3 times).

Keywords Consistency					
Keywords	Freq	Title	Desc	<H>	
★★★★ barbados	11	✓	✓	✓	
★★★ locator	4	✗	✗	✗	
★★★★ live	4	✗	✗	✓	
★★★★ life	4	✗	✓	✓	
★★★ travel	3	✗	✗	✗	
Keywords (2 words)	Freq	Title	Desc	<H>	
★★★★ live life	3	✗	✗	✓	
★★★ request brochure	2	✗	✗	✗	
★★★ barbados gallery	2	✗	✗	✗	
★★★★ facebook twitter	2	✗	✗	✗	
★★★★ long live	2	✗	✗	✗	
Keywords (3 words)	Freq	Title	Desc	<H>	
★★★ long live life	2	✗	✗	✗	



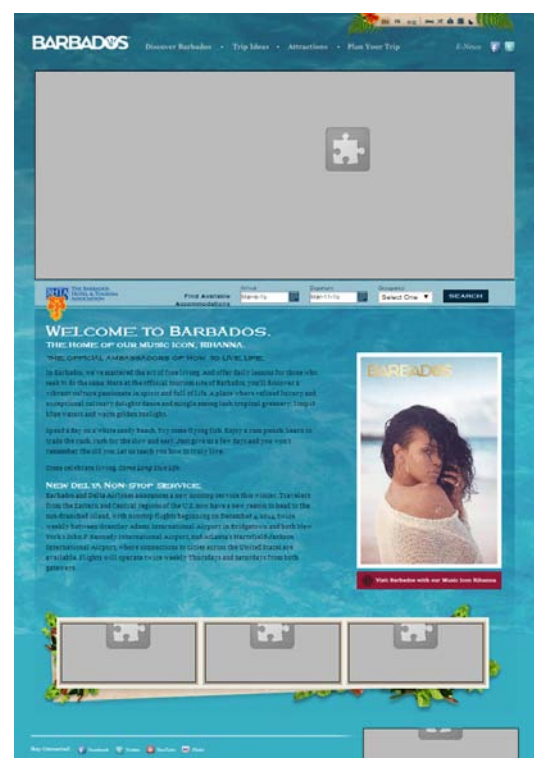
Pagerank, Title and Headings (On-page SEO)

Visitbarbados has a **good Pagerank value (6)** according to the [Pagerank algorithm explanation](#), which indicates that it is a page with recognised authority on the Internet and improves positioning in related searches.

Barbados has an **appropriate Title** (good for on-page SEO), but an excessively long description (bad for on-page SEO). The page's code makes proper use of the tags, which helps the positioning in terms of keywords and facilitates the organization of the information for the search robots.

Other shortcoming as regards correct positioning are:

- **the inclusion of flash elements on the page which generate viewing problems** due to incompatibility or lack of software updates (see image).
- The lack of a blog to regularly generate and update the site content.(Bad for on-page SEO)
- The correct tagging of the images. (Bad for On-page SEO)



Barbados has activated another two pages with different domain names which are aimed at two different markets, one for the European market, visitbarbados.co and the other for the Brazilian market visitebarbados.com.

These pages have in turn related social profiles and as such we have three official Barbados pages, three different messages and aesthetics and three different social networks, which could **confuse the user when they access the Internet to look for information** given that the user does not understand which page is aimed at them, no geographic distinction, and is only looking for information and a site they can trust. We will discuss these problems below after analysing these two pages:

6.1.9 Linkbuilding diagnosis

Backlinks are links to a page found on other websites or blogs. These are vitally important for positioning the site on browsers, as well as for obtaining traffic from external links

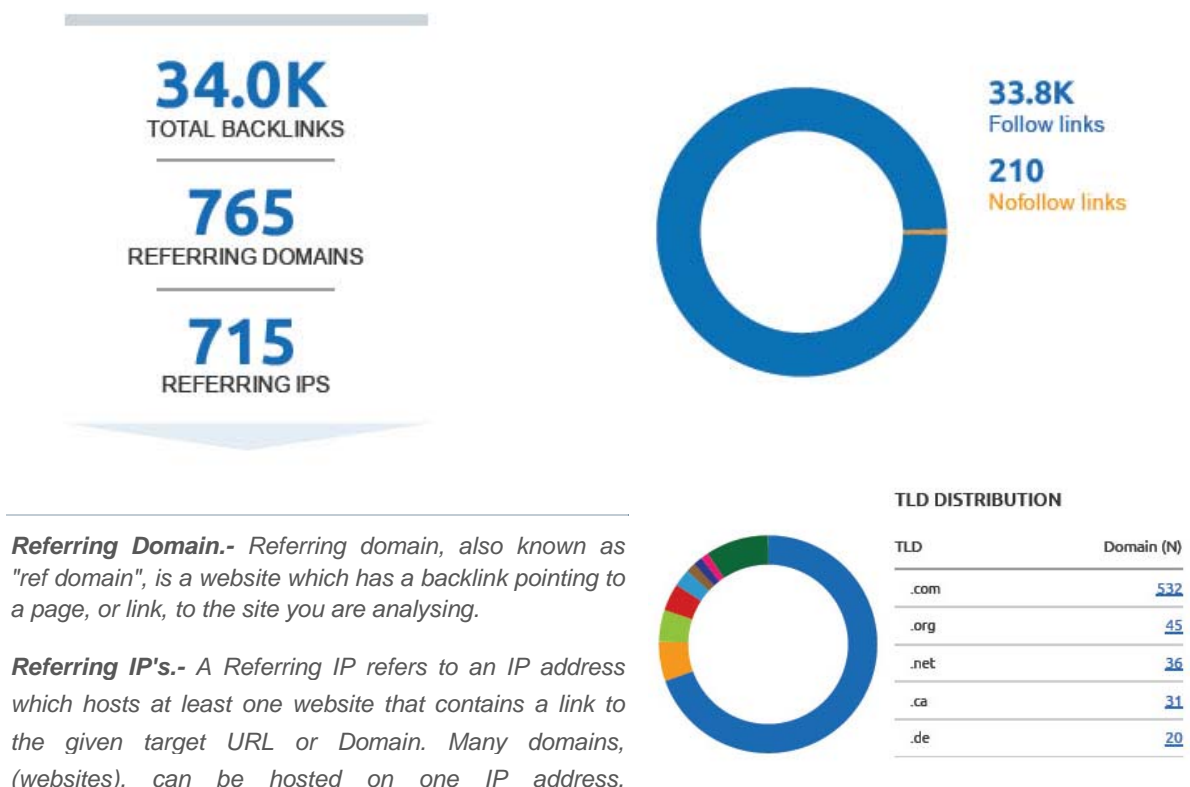
There are various common types of Backlinks: **comments on blogs, web directories, review websites**, articles and news directories, **RSS sites, social networks, forums, videos** and **recommendations**.

To analyze the backlinks for visitbarbados.org we have used the profesional *Semrush, Ahrefs and Moz open Site explorer*.

For off-page Seo, linkbuilding strategy is not related to the number of backlinks achieved, but rather the quality and variety. A good link building strategy should include the following:

1. Achieving links with authoritative Internet sites (social media, digital media, fórums, blog platforms, etc)
2. Achieving a good relation between the number of backlinks and the number of Sources. (Google penalizes sites which receive too many backlinks from few IP's, they consider it black SEO).
3. Achieving links with sites related to the industry via a PR strategy and the generation of valuable content on the site.
4. Achieving benchmark links in source market countries via a strategy of translating valuable information into the primary target customer languages(in this case of Barbados these would be Portuguese and German- in addition to English).
5. Achieving links on the secondary pages of the site through specific content (ticket sales, tourist support information, updated events, contents blog, etc).

6.1.9.1 Backlinks General Data



Links health.- Very healthy in terms of positioning, the majority of the links to Barbados are follow links (33,790 out of a total of 38,000). Follow links count as points, offering "link juice" to the site SEO and improving the page Rank for the linked sites, helping to improve positioning in search engine results.

Referring domains by country:

United States (378) leads this classification with more than half of the referring domains, with Canada a long way back in second place (81), followed by the UK (44) and Germany (40).

We would highlight the position of **Holland** in 5th (27) **and the non-inclusion of Brazil on the list.**

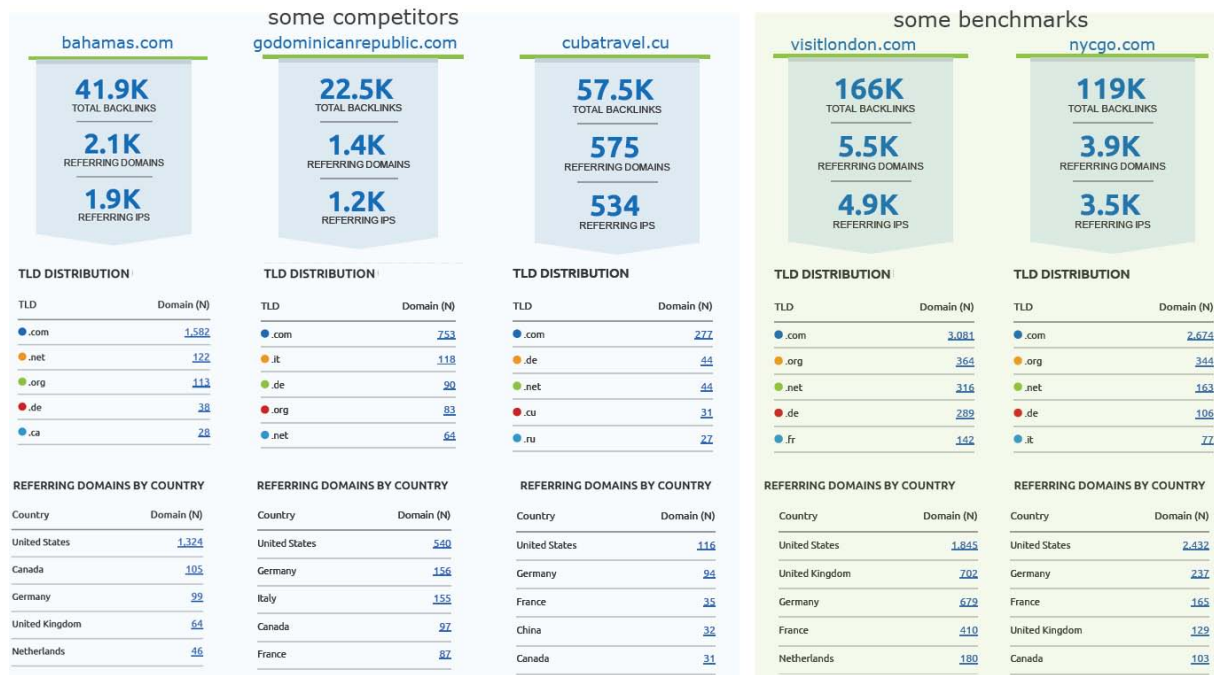
Top-level domain distribution (this is the category for top level domains listed by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). This is visible by Internet users as the suffix at the end of a domain name).

On visitbarbados.org dot com domains predominate with 75% of the total, (figures common when referring to generic Internet domains).

We would highlight the good position of the **Canadian domain** (31) and the German (20), as well the non-inclusion in this list of the **British domain (.uk) or the Brazilian (.br).**

The relation between backlinks and referring domains(40 backlinks/domains) reflects a limited variety of sources generating links.

BACKLINKS OVERVIEW | COMPARISON WITH COMPETITORS AND BENCHMARKS



About competitors in the Caribbean:

- The relation between the number of backlinks and domains and IPs where they are housed is good in the case of Bahamas (20 backlinks/domain) and the Dominican Republic (16 b/d), but not so in the case of Cuba (100 b/d), which has a very high number of backlinks and a limited number of referring domains and IPs.
- The German domain (.de) is well positioned in all countries, confirming the potential of this Market for the development of content generation strategies and the creation of links with authoritative sites in Germany.
- USA holds first position in all cases as source Market generator of backlinks. Germany and Canada are well positioned in all lists.
- Bahamas as a destination presents results very similar to Barbados in all the analyzed aspects.
- It is important to look at the case of Cuba as an emerging competitor in the process of opening its doors to new markets. USA, Germany and Canada are all starting to appear as significant generators of backlinks, confirming their growing interest in Cuba as a tourist destination.

About Benchmarks: with the aim of providing a comparison with other leading destinations, we have included data from visitlondon.com and nycgo.com, which illustrates the following:

- There is clearly a high number of backlinks, but more significant is the number of backlinks against the sources which generate them (30 links by domain). This figure reflects good content strategy on the website encouraging a large range of sources to share content which may be of use to the potential tourist.

6.1.9.2 Principal landing pages for referring domains on visitbarbados.com:

Title and URL	Domains	Backlinks	External links	Internal links
Visit Barbados • Caribbean Vacations • Hotels, Resorts, Weddings & Meetings http://www.visitbarbados.org	1,284	28,632	11	52
Crop Over • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism http://www.visitbarbados.org/crop-over-2011.aspx	1	5,693	13	60
Cuisine • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism http://www.visitbarbados.org/explore/recipes.aspx	4	274	8	54
Visit Barbados • Caribbean Vacations • Hotels, Resorts, Weddings & Meetings http://visitbarbados.org	77	185	9	52
Visit Barbados • Caribbean Vacations • Hotels, Resorts, Weddings & Meetings http://www.visitbarbados.org/Splash.aspx	7	77	9	51
Visit Barbados • Caribbean Vacations • Hotels, Resorts, Weddings & Meetings http://www.visitbarbados.org/default.aspx	17	63	11	52
Accommodations • Visit Barbados • Hotels, Resorts & Villas http://www.visitbarbados.org/accommodations.aspx	5	57	8	58
Events Locator • Visit Barbados • Festivals, Music & Sports http://www.visitbarbados.org/barbados-events-search.aspx?act...	6	55	8	89
Discover Barbados • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism http://www.visitbarbados.org/discover-barbados.aspx	7	44	8	52
Map • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism http://www.visitbarbados.org/map.aspx	5	38	8	51

Conclusions:

As is common in such cases, a large percentage of the backlinks have either the home page as their landing page (www.visitbarbados.org) or the default pages (www.visitbarbados.org/default.aspx or visitbarbados.org).

The presence of other landing pages from the site directly focused on information, applications or particular activities is minimal. This demonstrates **the importance of generating content with specific interest on the official website** (events, news etc.), in order to attract new visits and generate links with other pages of specialized content.

Before going into detail on specific recommendations, we will first compare figures for the landing pages of two of the destination site benchmarks, namely the pages visitlondon.com and nycgo.com.

Principal landing pages for domains related to leading destinations | Benchmarks and recommendations

visitlondon.com

The list of indexed pages shows an equal share of links on non home pages:

- The **blog as a generator of backlinks** in the off-page Seo strategy.
- **Landing pages in different languages** as generators of backlinks
- Importance of **activity and event pages** constantly updated.

Title and URL	Domains	Backlinks	External links	Internal links
visitlondon.com Your Official London City Guide http://www.visitlondon.com	4,160	62,348	38	176
visitlondon.com blog - Enjoy the very best of London http://blog.visitlondon.com	75	8,255	84	145
visitlondon.com - Offizieller Besucherführer http://www.visitlondon.com/de	163	4,775	22	61
visitlondon.com - Guida ufficiale per i visitatori http://www.visitlondon.com/it	88	4,354	20	60
London's Next Big Thing - Things To Do - visitlondon.com http://www.visitlondon.com/events	65	4,055	46	183
http://feeds.visitlondon.com/~r/NextMonthInLondon/~3/DD3PvN...	3	3,617	1	0
http://feeds.visitlondon.com/~r/NextMonthInLondon/~3/cslKfIE...	3	3,617	1	0
http://feeds.visitlondon.com/~r/NextMonthInLondon/~3/LGF5lHe...	3	3,479	1	0
http://feeds.visitlondon.com/~r/NextMonthInLondon/~3/AxOfar2...	3	3,478	1	0
http://feeds.visitlondon.com/~r/NextMonthInLondon/~3/FoyGTAA...	3	3,107	1	0
visitlondon.com - Guide officiel du visiteur http://www.visitlondon.com/fr	194	1,317	23	61

nycgo.com

We found a good share of backlinks on secondary website pages, providing specific information:

Title and URL	Domains	Backlinks	External links	Internal links
The Official New York City Guide to NYC Attractions, Dining, Hotels and Things to Do / nycgo.com http://www.nycgo.com	2,816	33,086	22	131
Free Events in New York City – Things to Do for Free in NYC, Free Kids' Events and More / nycgo.com http://www.nycgo.com/freeweekly	12	12,962	25	94
Broadway Week NYC - 2-for-1 Tickets to Broadway Shows / nycgo.com http://www.nycgo.com/broadwayweek?cid=BW_BI_728x90_static	2	3,155	17	52
New York Online / nycgo.com http://www.nycgo.com/venues/new-york-online	7	2,519	21	58
이것이 뉴욕이다 / nycgo.com http://www.nycgo.com/kr	10	2,167	17	69
Restaurant Week in New York City - Official Information About NYC Restaurant Week Dining Deals / nycgo.com http://www.nycgo.com/restaurantweek	779	2,108	17	92

- Importance of **activity and event pages** constantly updated.as of-page SEO generators.
- Importance of the integration of **ticket booking platforms** on the official website.

Recommendations:

- Regular updating of official website content, both on the home page as well as the subsections, producing specific content to promote the generation of links from other websites.
- Updating, processing and widespread publication of the events pages to generate valuable information which backlinks can provide.
- Translation of the official website into the main source market languages to generate valuable backlinks from all the source markets (barbados.org/ca, barbados.org/br, etc).
- Integration of ticket purchase and booking platforms for all the related tourist activities.

6.1.9.3 Location of Barbados backlinks by page and type of site:

☐ wikipedia.org/

Top Linking Pages

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados
nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados
ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%83%90%E3%83%AB...
eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbado

☐ bbc.co.uk/

Top Linking Pages

news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/11...
www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-18723...
news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/11...

☐ yahoo.com/

Top Linking Pages

finance.yahoo.com/news/barbados-announces-l...
finance.yahoo.com/news/barbados-delta-air-line...

☐ cnn.com/

Top Linking Pages

www.cnn.com/2007/TRAVEL/DESTINATIONS/02...
www.cnn.com/2013/11/28/travel/thanksgiving-isn...

☐ wordpress.com/

Top Linking Pages

caribbeanvegan.wordpress.com/
caribbeanvegan.wordpress.com/2010/12/17/holi...
barbadosfreepress.wordpress.com/2014/05/11/b...
barbadosunderground.wordpress.com/2014/10/1...
caribbeanvegan.wordpress.com/buy-caribbean-v...
caribbeanvegan.wordpress.com/about-me/

☐ aol.com/

Top Linking Pages

news.travel.aol.com/category/beach/rss.xml

☐ tumblr.com/

Top Linking Pages

robertkcole.tumblr.com/
robertkcole.tumblr.com/post/2458378320/recom...

☐ youtube.com/

Top Linking Pages

www.youtube.com/user/BarbadosTourism

☐ constantcontact.com/

Conclusions:

These links correspond to those pages which generate backlinks of greater value thorough their authoritative position on the Internet.

Among these results we will find the pages with greater authority and pagerank on the Internet, such as Wikipedia, news sites such as CNN, AOL or Yahoo and the platforms of bloggers and social network users (wordpress, Tumblr).

These backlinks help sites considerably to improve their positioning on search engines. Within an SEO strategy it is very important to analyze backlinks and develop the means of attracting those which originate from the pages with the most authority and value.

What we seem to lack is a greater presence of pages of authority from the blog communities (blogspot, blogger), the main media sites from source markets (Canada, Brazil and Germany) and a greater presence on the social networks (Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and Instagram).

Recommendations:

To achieve more backlinks, and above all backlinks of higher quality (those originating from websites of greater authority), it is very important to produce quality content on the website, create a network of influencers who echo the message of the content via backlinks on other websites and reinforce the presence and spread of our our content with backlinks created from the official profiles of the social networks (facebook, twitter, youtube), which are great generators of backlinks and visits.

6.1.9.4 Top backlinks generated on social networks:

Historic Top 20

Title URL	# RD	# Date	It	Twitter	f	g+	in	p	Σ
1. Photos • Visit Barbados • Pictures & Beach Photos www.visitbarbados.org	6	8 Aug '13	39	201	3	7	497	747	
2. Visit Barbados • Free Travel Planning Brochure • Travel Guide • Vacation Guide www.visitbarbados.org	2	8 Aug '13	187	344	0	7	0	538	
3. Attractions • Visit Barbados • Attractions • Caribbean Vacations www.visitbarbados.org	5	8 Aug '13	19	184	0	1	0	204	
4. Bajan Culture & Heritage • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism www.visitbarbados.org	3	8 Aug '13	106	83	0	9	0	198	
5. Honeymoons • Visit Barbados • Caribbean Honeymoon Destinations www.visitbarbados.org	4	8 Aug '13	85	56	0	4	0	145	
6. Events Locator • Visit Barbados • Festivals, Music & Sports www.visitbarbados.org	7	8 Aug '13	36	98	0	2	0	136	
7. Plan Your Trip • Tour Operators • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism www.visitbarbados.org	4	8 Aug '13	86	5	0	2	0	93	
8. Shopping • Visit Barbados • Caribbean Shopping Vacations www.visitbarbados.org	2	8 Aug '13	86	1	1	3	0	91	
9. Sports • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism www.visitbarbados.org	3	8 Aug '13	65	10	0	13	0	88	
10. Events Locator • Visit Barbados • Festivals, Music & Sports www.visitbarbados.org	2	8 Aug '13	49	30	0	8	0	87	
11. Cruises • Visit Barbados • Cruises to Barbados www.visitbarbados.org	3	8 Aug '13	41	39	0	4	0	84	
12. Crop Over Festival • Visit Barbados • www.visitbarbados.org www.visitbarbados.org	1	12 Dec '13	25	45	0	0	0	70	
13. Accommodation Locator • Visit Barbados • Hotels, Resorts & Villas www.visitbarbados.org	5	8 Aug '13	54	1	0	5	0	60	
14. Dallas to Barbados www.visitbarbados.org	2	14 Dec '13	11	42	1	0	0	54	
15. Crop Over • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism www.visitbarbados.org	1	9 Aug '13	38	6	1	6	1	52	
16. Aerial Trek Zipline Adventure • Visit Barbados www.visitbarbados.org	1	8 Aug '13	26	20	0	0	0	46	
17. Law Enforcement • Visit Barbados • Travel & Tourism www.visitbarbados.org	0	8 Aug '13	5	28	0	0	0	33	
18. Foursquare Rum Distillery and Heritage Park • Visit Barbados • Attractions www.visitbarbados.org	9	8 Aug '13	6	26	0	0	0	32	
19. Almond Beach Village • Visit Barbados • Accommodation www.visitbarbados.org	4	8 Aug '13	0	31	0	0	0	31	
20. Kadooment Day • Visit Barbados • www.visitbarbados.org www.visitbarbados.org	5	9 Aug '13	2	28	0	0	0	30	

Conclusions:

The 20 pages that have generated the most backlinks correspond to 2013, which would indicate successful activity during this period and less effective action during both the previous and subsequent periods (2014,2015). We would highlight the following:

1. The photo content which generates the highest number of backlinks.
2. The travel guide info and brochure generate plenty of backlinks as users consider them to be valuable sources of information.
3. **The third position of the culture page demonstrates the interest among users in the historic and cultural background of Barbados.**
4. The fifth position of **Honeymoons** indicates a firm level of interest among users for this type of product in relation to Barbados.

5. **Attractions and events** make up many of the backlinks positions.
6. **The absence of Youtube as a generator of backlinks**, due to a lack of integration of the video platform within the visitbarbados page, is a missed opportunity in terms of generating backlinks to improve positioning and increase visits
7. **Facebook** is the ideal platform for the generation of backlinks, followed by **Twitter**.
8. The **lack of regular content updates** over the years has resulted in fewer and less current links being added.

Recommendations:

- Circulation of website graphic content via the social networks to generate visits and backlinks.
- Producing more site content on valued information (guides, contact information etc).
- Producing a greater volume of Barbados history and cultural heritage content on the website to meet the levels of interest already shown.
- To improve and regularly update the events page and calendar.
- To integrate youtube audiovisual content into the website.
- To focus backlink generation efforts towards the Facebook and Twitter programs, given the excellent results they can provide.

Last year backlinks in social media

Title URL	RD	Date	Twitter	Facebook	Google+	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Σ
1. Martin's Bay • Visit Barbados www.visitbarbados.org	2	26 Dec '14	0	4	0	0	0	4
2. Beckles Invitational Classic Bodybuilding Championship • Visit Barbados • www.visitbarbados.org	1	24 Oct '14	0	2	0	0	0	2
3. Six Men Bay • Visit Barbados www.visitbarbados.org	1	26 Dec '14	0	1	0	0	0	1
4. CLOBI Cup World Masters Tournament • Visit Barbados • www.visitbarbados.org	2	13 May '14	0	1	0	0	0	1

Conclusions:

The lack of activity and failure to regularly update the website during 2014, demonstrates an inconsistency in the content strategy and generation of backlinks.

Recommendations:

To address this problem we would suggest the following:

1. Produce and update content for the visitbarbados site.
2. Promote the diffusion of content on the social networks via official profiles.

6.1.10 Campaigns related to the official site.-

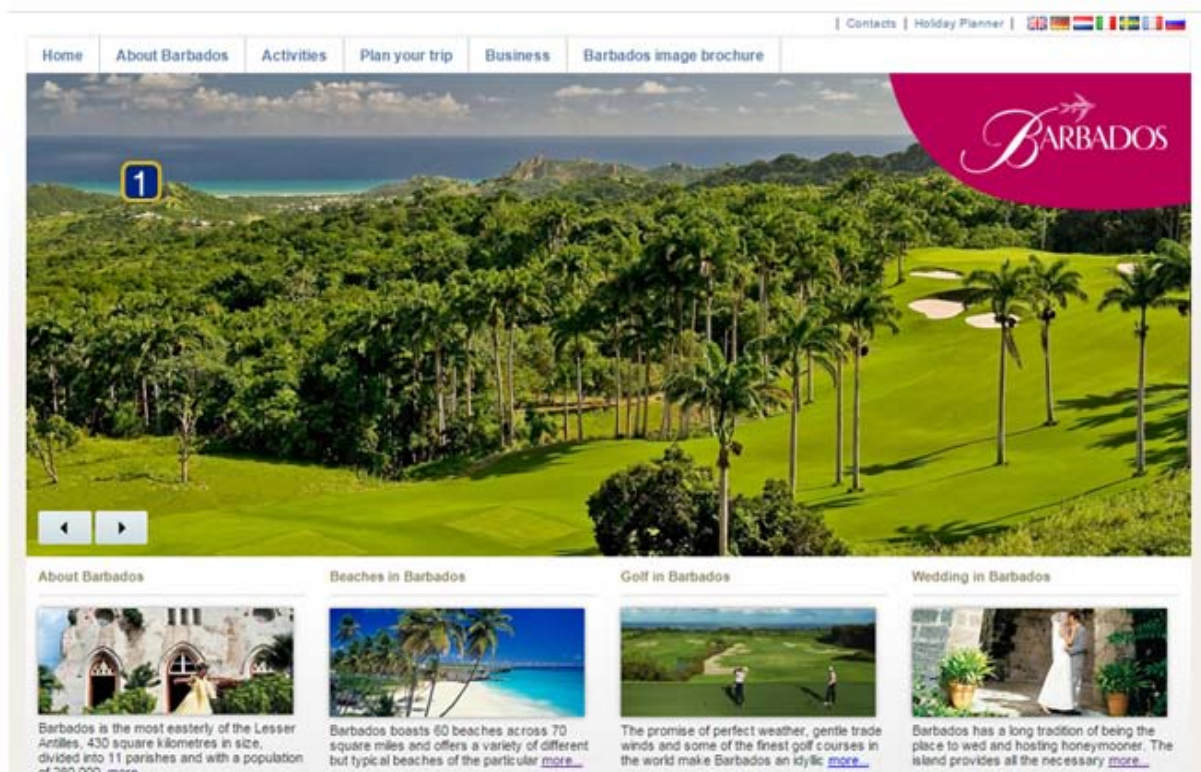
So far we have not had access to official site planning, related campaigns, briefings, goals or Kpis.

To analyze the impact that a campaign might have on Barbados as a destination in terms of Internet activity, we have analyzed the active campaign Brilliant Barbados, for a 10 day period (April 5 to April 15). The idea was to assess its impact on conversation about Barbados, engagement with users on the Internet and the sources and media on which this was generated.

The results of this study can be found in the attached document Brilliant Barbados campaign.

We are now going to analyse both the traffic and the user experience in terms of usability and the visual aspect of each of the official sites.

6.2 Visitbarbados.co



Values analyzed:

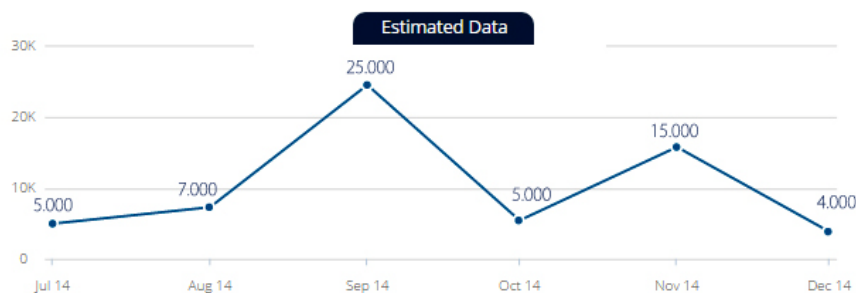
Monthly visits, page views, bounce rate, time on site, direct traffic, search traffic, social traffic, mail traffic, display traffic, geography visitors, referring sites, top destinations, search engines, organic keywords, paid keywords and social media channels traffic.

6.2.1 Traffic overview.-

During the 6 months analyzed (July-December 2014), this page had an average of 4,000 monthly visits and a significant upturn in the month of September (25,000 visit), we imagine this was due to a high profile promotional campaign.

Monthly Visits

On Desktop, in last 6 months



Engagement

On Desktop, in December, 2014

Estimated Visits	4K
Time On Site	00:02:52
Page Views	3.25
Bounce Rate	68.18%

The average time on the website was 2:52, with an average of 3.25 pages viewed, and a high bounce rate of 68.18%. The average time spent browsing the website is not a particular good result either - bearing in mind that the content is clearly designed to be read in detail.

6.2.2 Traffic sources.-

49.59% of visits come from organic traffic, followed by a strong presence of referral traffic (37.27%), with this figure possibly influenced by the September campaign in other media (third-party channels). It should also be noted that there is a low percentage of social media traffic (0.82%), which indicates that the social networks are not contributing to site content strategy (and vice versa).






6.2.3 Geography.-

52% of visits come from Italy, followed by Germany (11.83%), United States (8.31%), Barbados (3.37%) and Switzerland (3.33%).

As this a site initially orientated towards the European market, the high presence of visits from non-European locations (11.6%), reveals a confusion among users in relation to the multi-message on the different pages.

We would highlight the fact that the United Kingdom is not positioned among the leading countries in terms of traffic (in contrast to the official page, visitbarbados.org, where the UK provides 15% of the total traffic of the site). This underlines the fact that duplicity can be counter productive for a destination. There is no other reason why the official website for Europe does not receive more visits from its main regional market, namely the UK.

leading countries

 Italy	52.08%
 Germany	11.83%
 United States	8.31%
 Barbados	3.37%
 Switzerland	3.33%

6.2.4 Visual and usability.-

The page has an outdated design which presents the information in grids and behaves like a directory, the text is hard to read and the small size of the images reduces the user's experience.



Claim example

The upper part lacks a claim reinforcing the Barbados message and presents a slide of images without descriptive titles to support the graphic suggestion.

It is translated into 7 languages, which should provide a high level of penetration in different countries and languages and favour an organic positioning on search engines.

This, combined with its hierarchical content, which provides the user with directions for finding the information they require on the home page, should assist the user experience and the perception that they can find all the information they need on the website. This is not however reflected by the current average time on site (2:52), which ought to be much higher.

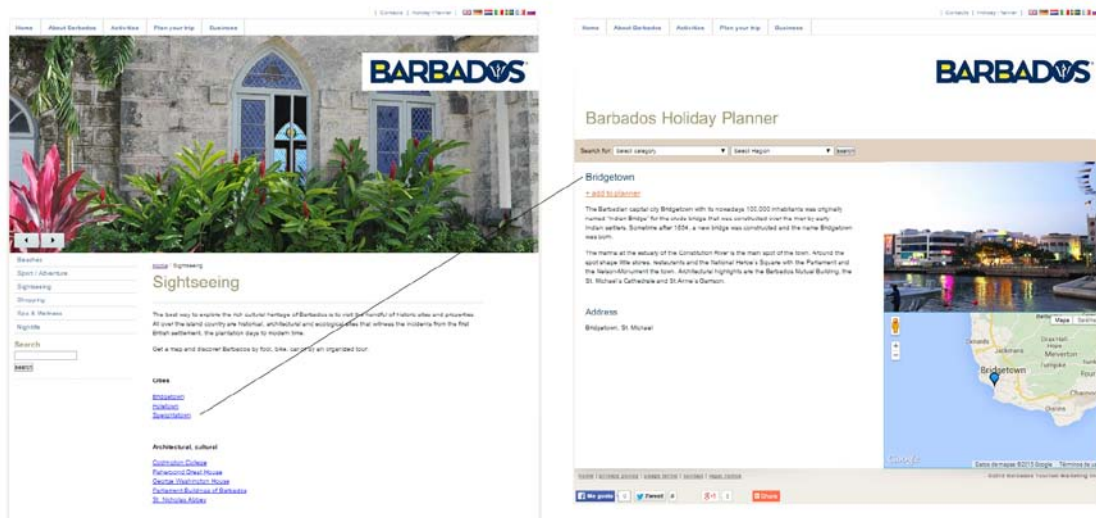
The social networks are well integrated into the home page, although it true that at the second and third layers of browsing these disappear and the buttons for sharing the content are not properly integrated and are found at the footer of each page, which diminishes diffusion and viralization on the part of the users.

The subpages relating to hotels and activities have a good level of information and the contact details come from the various establishments themselves. However, at an aesthetic and usability level they do diminish the users browsing experience.

It is not possible to make reservations directly, and there is no active strategy of redirection to bookbarbadosnow.com as a tool for this purpose.

The page does have a holiday planner. However the purpose of this planner is unclear, given that one can save information but not make reservations during browsing. Its functions are very limited (save and send by E-mail).

6.2.5 Content related to the cultural heritage site Visitbarbados.co.



To access information on history and culture one needs to enter the **About Barbados** tab, which then displays (together with Flora/Fauna) the following options: **History, Bajan Cuisine, Art and Music**. Included in the text of the latter topics are links to various venues and events offering experiences related to Music, Cuisine and Art.

The History section contains a brief summary of the history of the country. It is then necessary to go to the **SIGHTSEEING** section to find a list of the cultural heritage sites ordered by subject: **Cities/Architectural, cultural/ Historic buildings and sites/ Museum, Churches and Synagogue**. On accessing the various options a full list of details (with a directions map) is provided which is both helpful and informative:

- Cities: Bridgetown, Holetown, Speightstown
- Architectural, cultural: Codrington College, Fisherpond Great House, George Washington House, Parliament Buildings of Barbados, St. Nicholas Abbey
- Historic buildings and sites: Cherry Tree Hill, Farley Hill National Park, Grenade Hall Forest & Signal Station, Hastings Rock, The Main Guard, Clock Tower, Morgan Lewis Mill, The National Armory and St. Ann's Fort
- Museum: Arlington House Museum, Barbados Concorde Experience, The Barbados Museum, Sir Frank Hutson Sugar Museum, Sunbury Plantation House & Museum, Tyrol Cot Heritage Village
- Churches and Synagogue: Jewish Synagogue, St. James Parish Church, St. John Parish Church, St. Mary's Church, St. Michael Cathedral

Although this information is well organized and the content is helpful, the presentation is not visually very attractive with a list at the top.

6.3 Visitebarbados.com



6.3.1 Traffic overview.-

Values analyzed:

Monthly visits, page views, bounce rate, time on site, direct traffic, search traffic, social traffic, mail traffic, display traffic, geography visitors, referring sites, top destinations, search engines, organic keywords, paid keywords and social media channels traffic.

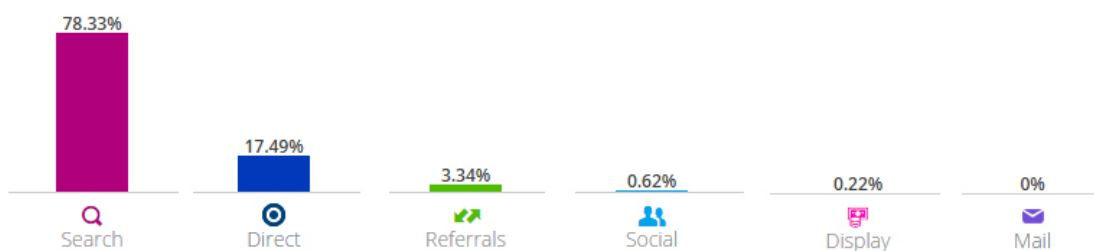
The website has an average of 4,000 monthly visits, with a sharp upturn in the months of August (45,000) and September (20,000), possibly due to a seasonal promotional campaign.

The average time on site is 4:06, with 8.59 page views and a bounce rate of 33.62%. These figures show that the user browses the web in search of information of interest but that the information offered is not very extensive given the ratio between average time on site and number of pages visited (28.6 seconds per page, well short of the top destination nycgo.com with 60.8 seconds per page or visitJamaica with 54.7 seconds per page). The fact that it is a scroll page divided into sections and using pop-ups explains the high number of pages viewed.

The bounce rate is an indicator of the user's level of interest after accessing the website; it also indicates a good promotional strategy given that users deriving from payment actions have also browsed the site.

6.3.2 Traffic sources.

78.33% of traffic comes from search engines, followed by direct traffic (17.49%) which shows offline actions and mailing and 3.34% referral traffic, this figure is low and should be improved by a strategy of positioning on third-party channels. Lastly we would highlight the very low social traffic figure (0.62%) – which indicates little orientation towards social media when attracting users to the website.








6.3.3 Geography.-

78.8% of traffic comes from Brazil, which indicates a good orientation of both the website and its promotional campaigns towards the target audience. This is followed by Spain at 5.16%, Argentina (3.38%), Venezuela (3.24%) and USA (2.20%).



leading countries

 Brazil	78.08%
 Spain	5.16%
 Argentina	3.38%
 Venezuela	3.24%
 United States	2.20%

It should be noted that the website attracts significant interest from Spanish speaking users (12%).

6.3.4 Visuality and usability.-

The website provides a modern scroll design which allows the user to browse almost all the information from the home page, with attractive and high resolution visuality and a good social network presence via the share content buttons which assists with diffusion and viralization by site users.

The information is more limited but very well presented visually. It could do with a video link as part of the information on offer.



There is plenty of content, which provides the user with a full first impression of Barbados, however there is a lack of detail; the descriptions are brief and without links to additional or specific information on many of the activities, attractions or places of interest.

The website is translated into Spanish, but the standard of translation is not good and should have been done by a native Spanish speaker to avoid clear grammatical errors.

The website contains a simple list of hotels, supplied by the establishments themselves with contact details limited to an E-mail and a link to an official website in English. The site lacks a more detailed treatment of the private sector with a better presentation of the hotels (photos, video, description, contact info, etc).

6.3.5 Visitebarbados.com. content related to History and Culture.

The Barbados website aimed at the Brazilian market has scarce reference to the history and culture of Barbados, with the exception of music events such as the Crop Over festival, which appears in the videos section. One can deduce that the market strategy towards Brazilian visitors is more focused on leisure, relaxation and beach holidays.

HISTÓRIA



Quando as Américas foram descobertas pelos portugueses, uma certa ilha chamou a atenção pelas águas cristalinas, a areia levemente rosada, a natureza exuberante e um ponto estratégico perfeito para suas expedições de exploração das novas terras. Esta porta de entrada do Caribe era Barbados, a ilha mais oriental da região, que ganhou o nome por conta das árvores cheias de cipós, que pareciam barbas.

Mas engana-se quem pensa que os europeus foram os primeiros habitantes da ilha, os ameríndios da Venezuela, os índios Arawak e os Carib foram os desbravadores dessas terras paradisíacas antes do século XIII. No entanto, em 1627, alguns exploradores britânicos descobriram que boa parte do território não era habitada e resolveram montar uma colônia. Essa pequena comunidade se desenvolveu e durante 334 anos a Inglaterra comandou a ilha que, em 1966, declarou independência. Esta separação foi amigável, tanto que até hoje há um bom relacionamento entre os dois países e muitas características culturais são compartilhadas.

Há vários lugares que os turistas podem visitar para conhecer melhor esta e outras histórias. Aproveite seus dias de folga, caminhe pela capital de Barbados, Bridgetown, e aprecie o centro histórico, museus e lojas. Acesse o site oficial em inglês do país para descobrir cada um destes locais.

<http://www.visitbarbados.org/discover-barbados.aspx>



CULTURA

Elleza de momentos, a cultura de Barbados é colorida, com muitos ritmos e tempos que surpreendem turistas dos estados Unidos.



ESTILO BAJAN

Tranque a corrente do dia-a-dia pelo jato quente e relaxante que os lugares vivem. Aprenda a unir a vida da rua à festa.

7 SOCIAL MEDIA related Official Site visit Barbados.org

Having analyzed the official visitbarbados.org website and the European and Brazilian landing pages we will go on to analyze how the social networks operate in connection with the site. We will initially look at the principal profiles, namely Facebook, Twitter y Youtube. These 3 social media networks account for 80% of activity, with the secondary channels (instagram, Flickr, etc), working as support tools for the main strategy.

In this study we will use a comparison with other direct competitors in the Caribbean region with a higher ratio of use on each social network, in order to provide a clear picture of activity on the Barbados profiles.

7.1 Facebook.-

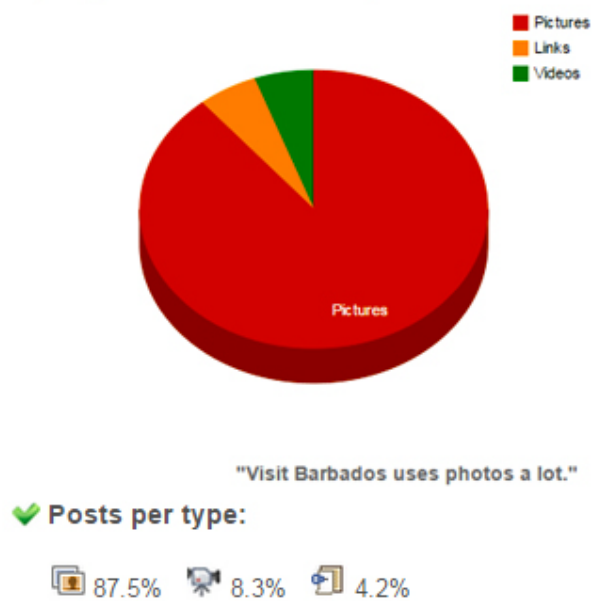


The following KPIs were analyzed:

Values analyzed:

Page information, post type, posting frequency, service level profile, page performance, post type behaviour and post engagement.

This social network shows more than 150,000 likes. The page information is correct, but lacks the addition of Milestones for reinforcing the history of Barbados and helping followers to identify important dates of historical and cultural interest.



By having a bad variety in your posts, your fans get bored

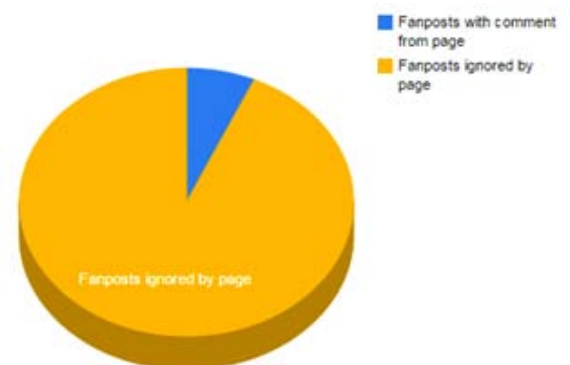
Over the 28 day period of the study, the ratio of engagement (total interaction of users/number of users) was 0.65%, well below the average for this type of page (7%)²⁶.

In terms of content support, 87.5% were photos, 8.3% videos and only 4.2% links. These figures reveal a lack of positioning strategy and content via links from Facebook to other social networks or our website, as well as a limited variety in order to engage followers with the page.

Our profile acts as an occasional poster, with an average of 0.53 posts per day. A page of these characteristics and with this number of likes should be making at least 3 or 4 posts every day with a variety of content and supports, which would increase the likelihood of users finding something of interest (variety) and improve the visibility of the page on the followers' walls and the engagement of the user.

Another worrying figure is the page's rate of response. A Facebook page needs to respond as quickly as possible to all its users; one must remember that social networks are based on interactive conversation.

More than 90% of the posts made by users have been ignored, out of 26 fan posts only 2 have been replied to, (and not even those within an adequate space of time). Compared against 8 of the most active Facebook competitors in the Caribbean zone (Bermuda, Aruba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Curacao, Belize, Bahamas and Jamaica) Barbados is well below the highest figures in terms of the principal KPIs, and fails to reach the average on the most important indicators.



²⁶ Result of the following engagement equation: number of followers multiplied by numbers of publications and divided by number of likes.

7.1.1 FACEBOOK COMPETITORS COMPARISON:

Pages such as the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico present the highest values in the most important KPIs (Engagement, Interaction, Likes, comments and shares), as shown by the following profile comparison with the main competitors in the Caribbean zone (made up of those with the greatest activity on Facebook).

KPIs analyzed:

Fans

Current number of Facebook fans

Growth

Average growth of number of fans during last 28 days

 BEST KPI

 BARBADOS KPI

Posts per day

Average number of posts per day

Engagement

The engagement value shows the engagement of fans for a fan page. It is calculated by the average amount of likes, comments and shares per day, divided by the number of fans

Post Interaction

The post interaction indicates how strong fans react to posts. It is the average number of likes, comments and shares per fan for all posts.

Page Performance

The Page Performance Index (PPI) is a combination of the engagement value and the growth of the fan page (increase of number of fans). It is an indicator for the overall strength of a Facebook fan page.

Service level


































How many posts from fans get a response from this fan page?

Response time

How much time, on average, does it take the fan page to react to fan posts and questions

Name	Page Performance Index	Number of fans	Engagement	Post Interaction	Service Level	Posts per day	Total Likes, Comments, Shares	Number of likes	Number of comments	Number of shares	Posts by fans
 Bermuda Tourism	 80 %	126k	0.9 %	0.8 %	47 %	1.1	30k	26k	907	2.8k	19
 Aruba	 48 %	212k	1.3 %	0.3 %	n.a.	4.6	76k	70k	1.6k	4.1k	0
 Go Dominican Republic	 43 %	21k	1.7 %	1.0 %	0 %	1.7	9.7k	8.8k	117	785	3.0
 See Puerto Rico	 39 %	271k	1.2 %	0.4 %	50 %	2.8	87k	80k	1.5k	5.5k	2.0
 Curacao	 26 %	132k	1.3 %	0.3 %	38 %	4.2	49k	45k	1.4k	2.8k	18
 Belize Vacation	 22 %	141k	0.4 %	0.4 %	0 %	1.0	16k	14k	202	1.4k	11
 Travel Bahamas	 8.0 %	399k	0.2 %	0.1 %	n.a.	1.5	21k	19k	331	1.7k	0
 Visit Jamaica	 7.0 %	837k	0.4 %	0.2 %	5.0 %	1.6	87k	79k	1.5k	6.1k	34
 Visit Barbados	 4.0 %	150k	0.1 %	0.2 %	7.0 %	0.6	5.8k	5.2k	154	473	27
Average values	 31 %	254k	0.8 %	0.4 %	21 %	2.1	42k	38k	875	2.8k	13

30 ideal requirements of a page of this nature were define and analyzed; of these 14 were not satisfied at all (those related to the content and interaction of the profile), 6 showed failings and only 10 were found to be correctly in place – mainly those relating to adequate links with other networks.

legend  No  Low / problems  Yes		
 Events calendar active (3)	 Link to booking site	 Slideshow posts
 Sharing own others social content	 Link to form	 Interaction with users
 Link to twitter	 Link to Flickr	 Status linked to own content
 Link to You tube	 Link to Pinterest	 Respond to users
 Link to Instagram	 Milestones (2)	 Contests
 Link to website	 Video sharing (2)	 Sweepstakes
 Link to newsletter subscription	 Status sharing (2)	 Use of tags
 Link to Google +	 Questions posts	 Landingpage to fans
 Link to website (1)	 Offers posts	 landing pages to no fans
 Link sharing (low)	 Music posts	 Engagement (4)

Areas for improvement:

Updating events calendar: Inactive from July (3 months)

Link to website: Redirected to <http://touristortraveler.visitbarbados.org/> not to visitbarbados.org

Milestones:Very limited use

Video sharing: Very limited use

Status sharing: Very limited use

Engagement:Very low for the number of users

In conclusion, the current Facebook profile was rated as follows:

Does not comply with levels of engagement and interaction with the user.

Does not present a varied activity, or links to valuable content of its own.

Does not work hard enough on its content strategy to offer a clear message aligned with the objectives of the Barbados brand and the interests of its users.

Ignores its users, neither replies or asks questions, fails to seek interaction, and as a result has a low social network profile.

7.2 Twitter.-



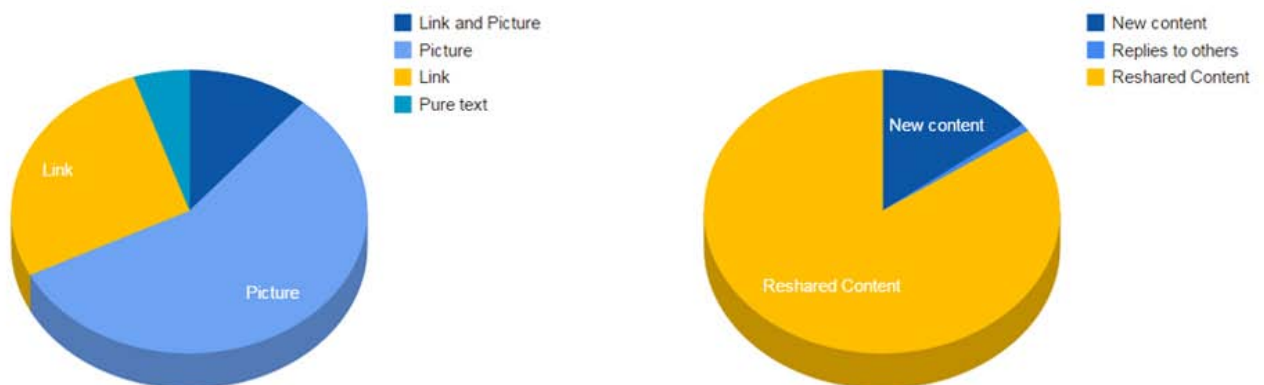
The Barbados page has approximately 26,000 followers, with an interaction of 0.03% and engagement of 0.1% (figures for December 2014).

The principal KPIs were analyzed over the 28 days of the study period.

Followers Current number of Twitter followers	Growth Average growth of number of followers during last two weeks	Profile Performance Profile Performance is a combination of Karma, growth, size and fan-follower-ratio
Friends Current number of Twitter friends	Followers/Friends Ratio of number of followers to number of friends	
Tweets/day Average number of tweets per day		






















In the same way as on Facebook, we found levels well below the average in terms of updating (4.2%/5.2) and level of conversation (0.9%/14%), a low content variety (50% photos) and little original content (85% re-shared content).

In terms of content, the lack of variety and failure to include heritage content, promotional content, awareness content, activities content, as well as the limited Twitter interaction with other Barbados social profiles, reveals a failure to provide 360° social media coverage.



In the same way as on Facebook, Puerto Rico shows the best KPI figures for the important areas; this is demonstrated by the following comparison of the profiles of the leading competitors within the Caribbean region (those with the greatest activity on Twitter).

TWITTER COMPETITORS COMPARISON:

Name ▾	Profile Performance Index ▾	Tweets ▾	Tweets/day ▾	Favorited ▾	Retweets ▾	Engagement ▾	Conversations ▾
 Puerto Rico Tourism	 50 %	559	20	2.1k	1.8k	0.2 %	9.8 %
 Dominican Republic	 49 %	156	5.6	644	584	0.1 %	1.9 %
 Barbados	 34 %	117	4.2	363	445	0.1 %	0.9 %
 Belize Tourism Board	 32 %	51	1.8	128	114	0.09 %	20 %
 Bermuda	 31 %	91	3.2	405	363	0.2 %	59 %
 Aruba Latinoamérica	 29 %	143	5.1	90	94	0.08 %	2.8 %
 The Bahamas	 26 %	28	1.0	176	132	0.06 %	0 %
 Antigua & Barbuda	 24 %	54	1.9	35	57	0.05 %	22 %
 Visit Jamaica Now	 24 %	137	4.9	128	189	0.07 %	3.6 %
 CuracaoTouristBoard	 15 %	133	4.8	32	32	0.04 %	17 %
Average values	 31 %	147	5.2	418	389	0.1 %	14 %

7.2.1.1

In conclusion: No variety, No interlink with other channels, Lack of new content, low levels of replies to others, Too much re-shared content, Low level in rich messages (Link+text+images), No heritage content, No promotional content, No awareness content, Low level of conversations with followers Low level of tweets/day, Low level of re-tweets, Low percentage of engagement, No questions, forms or surveys to collect information.

7.3 You tube.-



KPIs analyzed:

Videos	Video-views	Views/video
Likes	Dislikes	Likes/dislikes
Comments	Subscribers	



The Barbados profile has 640 subscribers, 550 likes, 62 videos and a total of 241 views (figures for December 2014).

The principal KPIs have been analyzed and a comparison made with active profiles in the Caribbean region (Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Bahamas, Curacao, Belize and Aruba).

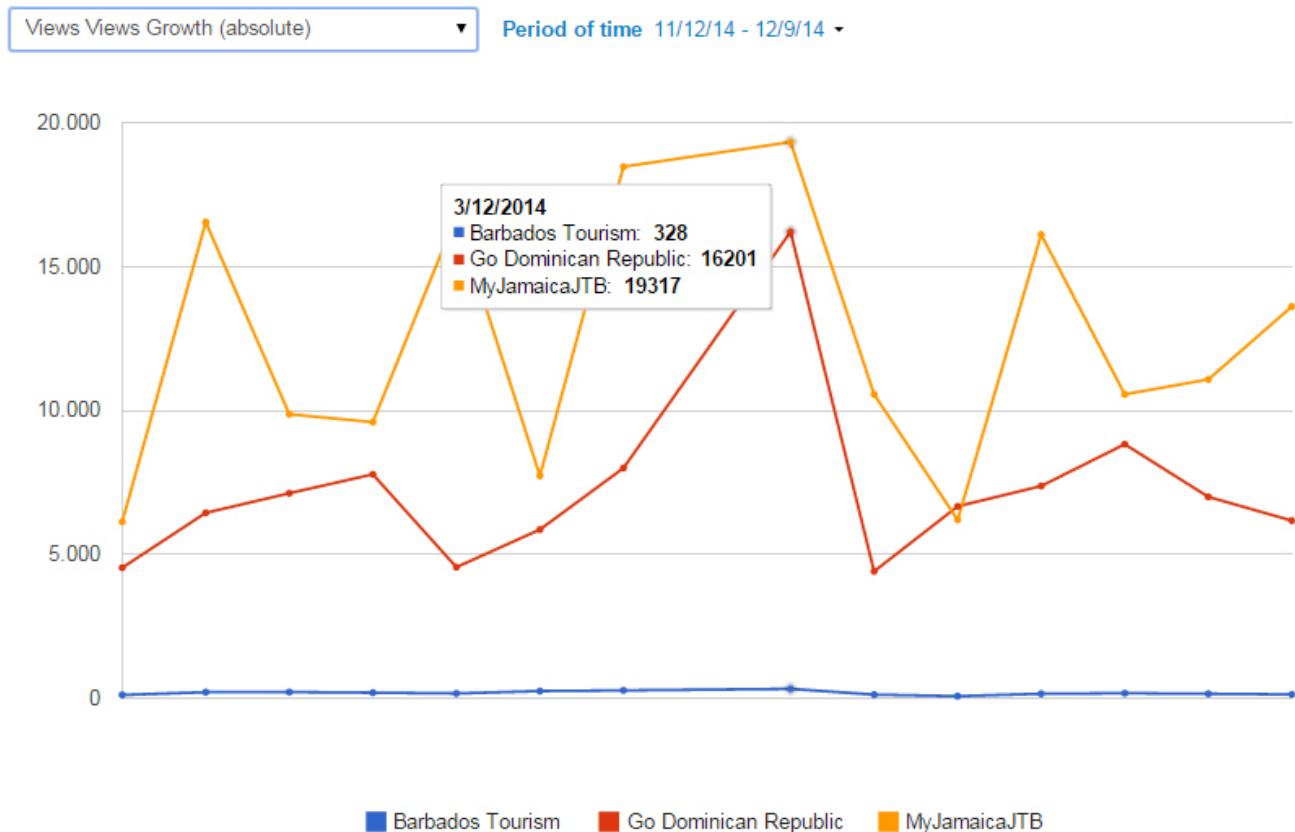
The number of videos on the platform is very low, and it is particularly noticeable that the updating of the platform has been decreasing every year, with 2012 being the year that most videos were posted and 2014 the least. This goes against all current trends in information consumption where video support is becoming ever more valued and playing a major role in communication strategy - especially in tourism marketing.

Videos posted on Youtube in 2012: **30**
 Videos posted on Youtube in 2013: 15
 Videos posted on Youtube in 2014: 4

The small number of video-views reflects an inadequate use of their possibilities; they are not being shared on other networks, integrated into other platforms or being re-sent within a certain time. As an example of the potential success of this strategy, the Dominican Republic only has 17 more videos than Barbados, yet total views exceed 2.1 million - while Barbados scarcely reaches 241,000 views.

Channel ▾	Videos ▾	Video-Views ▾	Views/Video ▾	Likes ▾	Dislikes ▾	Likes/Dislikes ▾	Comments ▾	Subscribers ▾
 Go Dominican Republic	79	2.1M +107k (5.2%)	27k +1.4k (5.8%)	4.9k +57 (1.2%)	189 +17 (11%)	96 % -0.31%	720 +39 (5.7%)	3.2k +64 (2.1%)
 Barbados Tourism	62	241k +2.7k (1.1%)	3.8k +48 (1.3%)	550 +11 (2.0%)	20	96 % +0.07%	123 +4 (3.4%)	640 +6 (1.1%)

Other values such as the number of subscribers, comments and likes, all well below the average, are all signs of a lack of focus on the channel, limited interaction between the various networks and low importance given to video in Barbados communication strategy. As can be seen in the graphic below, the Barbados profile has not changed with time, while competitors such as Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are constantly reactivating their video-views via other social networks and websites.



7.4 Other networks.-

We have initially analyzed the principal social networks, those which offer the greatest possibilities for communication and content strategy when used correctly and together (Facebook, You Tube and Twitter).

However Barbados also offers other social network profiles (Instagram, Google Plus, Pinterest, etc). Current studies indicate that in terms of conversion and performance they do not merit much greater attention in this analysis, although they do play a role in the 360° social network strategy.

8 PRIVATE SECTOR CHANNELS

8.1 BOOKBARBADOS.NOW



This private sector platform for accommodation and activity reservations has an important position within this study as it provides a channel, along with the Internet, in which online travel agents and recommendation and review platforms have a high profile. The development of a solid and reliable booking platform, which actively supports the private sector while promoting the Barbados brand, could provide the ideal medium/long term strategy with a good investment return.

8.1.1 Traffic Overview.-






During the period analyzed (June 14-November 14) Bookbarbadosnow had a average of 7,000 monthly visits, with a peak during September, which could be due to improved offers or a particular promotional and publicity campaign at the time.

The bounce rate (26.70%) indicates that the user is generally interested in what the website offers, however the time on site (5:12) is low for a reservations page given that the average time spent by a user to complete a booking is normally around 20 minutes (Comscore Research. "Online travel consumption" 2014). This low average time would indicate that either the user only enters to compare prices or else there is problem with the purchasing and booking process which is hindering the operation (an error on the booking page, lack of information, a payment method which fails to inspire trust etc). This needs to be analyzed via Google Analytics.

8.1.2 Traffic sources.-

The high percentage of direct traffic (47.70%) and Referrals (47.53%) reflect a very high dependence on paid publicity campaigns for visits to the website. It also represents a worrying absence of organic visits (0.50%) and social media (0%), which translates into an almost total lack of visits generated by its own means, mainly through a lack of search engine optimization (SEO) and social media content strategy.

leading countries

 United States	46.83%
 Argentina	13.92%
 Trinidad And Tobago	11.67%
 United Kingdom	11.32%
 Germany	3.09%

8.1.3 Geography sources.

- 46.83% of visits come from the USA, followed by Argentina (13.92%), Trinidad and Tobago (11.67%), United Kingdom (11.32%) and finally Germany (3.09%).

These figures reflect an opportunity for potential markets and the need to translate the site into other languages (Spanish and Portuguese) to attract more searches.

8.1.4 Visuality and usability.-

The site has a visual design which fixes attention on the action (reserve Hotel or Villa), without offering the user any other valuable information.



1 HEADLINE MISSING

- No claim or call to action. Headline is good for SEO, to increase the click ratio and to guide user. Example:



2 LANGUAGE MISSING

- Every target have to navigate in his own language (portuguese, german, etc.).
- Good for SEO, good for users engagement.



It has an upper screen menu which changes according to the page, which is disorientating for the user. The top menu should be fixed to assist browsing and allow the the user to return to the starting point or move around the website easily.

The main information is presented against a beach background, which does not offer any information on the particular product (hotel, villa, car rental etc.) and there is no text or heading to support the message or incite action.

Before the fold line, the only option available is to search for accommodation by date or click on the top menu for one of the subpages. There is no information on the site designed to promote confidence on the part of the user - no brand trust, reviews, ambassadors, influencers or activity widgets.

The upper bar does not provide a help option or any translation into other languages (Brazil-Portuguese, Germany-German, Spanish speaking Caribbean- Spanish). After the fold line there is a flat text without interlinking with an inadequate font size and content orientated towards organic positioning. There is an event date banner, but on clicking it merely directs you to the reservations page without providing additional information on the event itself - a bad practice in terms of maintaining user interest in the site.

A website orientated towards the sale of activities and services needs a clear commercial profile. In this case a number of functions that would complete the site are missing:

A calendar of important events.

A calendar of forthcoming attractions.

Quality images (apart from the background photo), of adequate size and which allow access to related information.

Integration of the social networks (wigdets, share buttons, etc).

Activity and accommodation offers.

Trust symbols, ambassadors, recommendations, influencers, reviews, etc.

Multimedia (video).

Calls to action (surveys, competitions, forms).

Interactive help.

User ratings of activities/accommodation to promote confidence.

These absences are repeated in the activities and hotel booking subpages.

ACTIVITIES PAGE

1 IRRELEVANT CONTENT ABOVE THE FOLD LINE

- Fold line is the content limit that you see in your screen.
- Actually when you access at activities page, the main information is irrelevant, a beach picture. Activities are secondary information.

2 MENU SYSTEM INADEQUATE

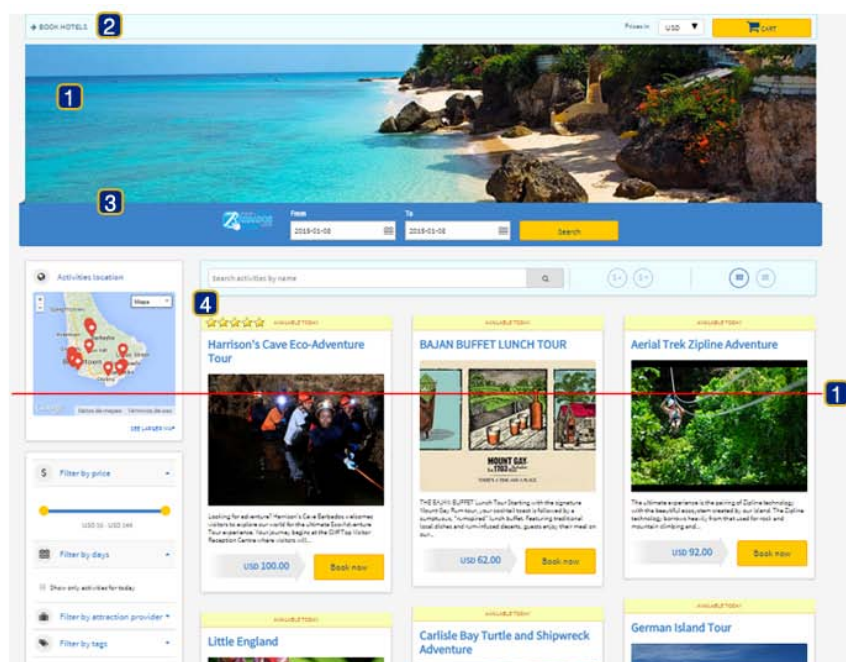
- The website structure is different in each page, creating confusion at user.
- No possibility to return back in menu, and to access all site pages (like car rental page).
- No activities menu above fold line (like tags below fold line in sidebar).

3 NO OFFERS, NO PROMOTIONS

- No space to offers or promotion above the fold line.

4 NO USERS ACTIVITIES, RATINGS

- A simple rating function on activities by users (like a star system) is essential to add trust and transparency at activities on site.



8.1.5 Content related to cultural heritage on bookingbarbados.

In the excursions and activities tourist sales content of the site, it is noticeable that there are hardly any offers related to the cultural heritage of Barbados. Practically everything is centred on the natural or submarine environments, apart from the occasional cultural reference within generic pages such as Explore & Discover Barbados.

8.1.6 Social Media related to bookingbarbados.now

The active profiles on bookingbarbados belong to the BHTA and have a very low posting and following rating.

Facebook: 775 likes

Twitter: 826 followers

Youtube: 6 Subscribers

These figures indicate that there is no social media or content strategy to encourage the necessary engagement. It should be highlighted that the Facebook and Twitter profiles have a high posting activity, although most of the posts lead to members of the Association not the Bookingbarbadosnow page.

An adequate strategy would direct these links to the bookbarbadosnow website, which should be offering much more detailed information on hotels and a link to the official website of each establishment in case the user has more specific questions.

However the current profiles of the members on bookingbarbados lack information and the necessary image quality to encourage the successful closing of a reservation. Furthermore there are no added incentives to make a reservation on the booking page rather than the official website of the particular hotel. The same is true of the activities pages.

With the help of private sector support and added incentives the content of this website is currently being redesigned in order to improve the platform and promote its more effective use.

9 CONCLUSIONS.

- Barbados has put the foundations in place for a strategy based on digital marketing via a whole range of channels in order to position its tourism offer. In this report we have analyzed this digital environment with **the aim of improving presence on all channels, identifying opportunities on the various markets and better orientating the overall destination proposal** around current and future (heritage based) products.
- The conclusions listed below should be understood and applied within a wider context, including aspects such as market figures and trend analysis, as well as the results from specific surveys of tourist visitors to the destination.
- In general, we would conclude that the **current positioning** of Barbados within the digital sphere represents **a good starting point** and reflects efforts made over recent years. However we feel there are a number of areas for improvement and shortcomings that now need to be addressed.
- If we look at an essential aspect such as the **value proposition** which Barbados presents to the World, we will see that it is clearly orientated towards sun and beach tourism. This is understandable given the nature and location of the Island, however it does not in itself set the destination apart from the competition, who are currently presenting a wider range of offers. This is perhaps best exemplified by Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, who are also investing heavily in attractive visual presentation on their websites.
- While it is clear that the traditional sun and beach tourism of the Caribbean region is still very much to the forefront in all destination value offers, we are nevertheless seeing a shift towards **experiential tourism**, with visitors looking for richer and more varied experiences and greater integration into their respective destinations.
- Despite its significance within the region, **cruise tourism** is not given a very high profile on competitors' official websites; this could provide an opportunity for Barbados to position itself as a market leader in the field through good integration with the private sector and the inclusion of more informative content on the website.
- In terms of the **conversation** generated around the term *Barbados* on the internet, the results are generally good, as shown by the *sentiment analysis*, particularly on the traditional source markets where most of the conversation is concentrated.
- The study has looked at the principal spaces where conversation takes place - **the social networks, travel forums and specialist pages**. It is on these channels where communication strategy efforts need to be made with the aim of maximizing the visibility of the official Barbados message and to **actively influence the plans and decisions of potential tourists**.
- The main **competitor** countries (Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Cuba) all have **modern websites, well orientated** towards their value propositions which, although principally focusing on traditional sun and beach appeal, also include good cultural and heritage content. Along the same lines, Barbados now needs to make an effort on all channels to construct a tourism value proposition enriched with heritage and cultural content and accounts of the travellers' experiences based on this offer.
-
- Although we can affirm that the current Barbados digital channels successfully cover many basic parameters, there is nevertheless room for **improvement in terms of content and some technical aspects**. The official website, visitbarbados.org, the main axis for digital communication, could be improved in terms of coding, content optimization, better usability and

user experience. These are all features that need to be corrected and which also affect the positioning (SEO) on the main search engines such as Google.

- Similarly we have identified certain weaknesses in the **content strategy** on the website in terms of the updating of useful and interesting user information, the interaction and diffusion tools and the lack of calls for action which would allow us to gather and assess data and visitor opinions which would help attract more potential tourists. The objective should be to provide the website with more tools designed to achieve a greater spread of information, more interaction and user conversion.
-
- **Website traffic** indicates that, in comparison with the figures for other competitors within the Caribbean region (Jamaica/100,000, Puerto Rico/120,000, Cuba/50,000, and the Dominican Republic), Barbados (25,000) needs to improve significantly in terms of number of visits.
- **The geographical origin of visits to the website**, shows that the traditional Barbados source markets (USA, UK and Canada) are the main generators of traffic, which would indicate the opportunity to provide specific information for each of these countries and offer added value for each one.
-
- In terms of **on-page SEO positioning**, and following the recent update of the Google algorithm, which penalizes the positioning of Google searches on mobile devices which are not correctly optimized, the **official page does not demonstrate the required optimization**. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible.
- In terms of off-page **SEO**, the results of the backlinks study reflect the need to initiate **a strategy of linkbuilding via the generation and constant updating** of website content, specialist blogs and reference pages (comments on blogs and forums, press releases to specialist media, related listings, guest blogging, promotional articles, reciprocal links, PR campaigns and social networks).

In order to improve positioning in both established and potential markets, **the linkbuilding strategy needs to address the integration and generation of content in other languages** such as Spanish. German and Portuguese, and special attention should be given to the integration of more platforms and applications representing private sector products and services.

- Returning to the **private sector**, it is important to underline its role in identifying the needs and trends among tourists at all stages of their visit. The knowledge and experience of the private sector, derived from direct contact with the customer, now needs to be absorbed by public departments via mutual interaction and communication, in a way which will assist in creating value propositions geared to the requirements of all markets and tourist profiles.
- In the case of Barbados, for example, we have **identified limited inclusion of E-booking tools** within the official site, which is perhaps indicative of a general lack of public and private sector cooperation and the coordination of strategy, communication and objectives. This is also demonstrated by some of the shortcomings detected within the positioning strategy, product definition, content and overall communication of the available offer.
- We have also analyzed the **landing pages for the Brazilian and European markets** in terms of content, traffic and usability. From this study, in tandem with analysis of the official website, we have concluded that Barbados is duplicating efforts on a number of channels, where these could be better unified to create greater coherence of image and message, obtain better positioning results and visibility and exploit the good practices from the three platforms to update the official page and achieve a single and powerful official channel.

- In terms of **ANALYSIS OF MARKETS**, the “digital barometer” demonstrates some of the trends reflected in the behaviour of visitors to the Island, for example the USA market which has seen a drop in the number of visitors which is mirrored by a correspondingly fall in internet searches related to the term *Barbados* during the 2004-2014 period. Somewhat worrying, given that direct competitors such as Puerto Rico (+38%), have seen an upsurge through effective promotional campaigns.
- The geographical data on visits to the official site (visitbarbados.org) and internet conversation (which has been positive according to sentiment analysis), still show the American **Market to be the most important in terms of positioning and diffusion**. They also reveal the need to offer personalized information orientated towards specific audiences on all digital channels (websites, social networks, etc.) as a way of achieving greater user engagement.
- The **American market** shows interest in the term “all-inclusive” (the second most popular term on Barbados related searches), which reflects an important trend among browsers, even though figures suggest that the same interest is not mirrored by the purchase of these types of package offers by visitors to the Island.²⁷
- Among the main interests shown by the USA market (motivations) are the themes **heritage, cultural tourism and cruise trips**. This is reflected in various studies conducted within the context of this report and backs up the view that these products have a vital role to play within the overall destination offer for this sector.
- The highlighted interest in **cruise trips** among this market represents **a good opportunity** to integrate Barbados cultural and heritage products, constructing an enriched offer and complete experience for the cruise passenger tourist, and presenting Barbados as something more special than just one more stopover on a cruise itinerary.
- Barbados also seems to be losing interest for the **British market**, although, unlike the USA, this trend seems to extend to the Caribbean region as a whole.
- Search trends from the UK generally indicate an interest in cultural tourism, which would suggest there is an opportunity to broaden the traditional offer and focus more on cultural products and themes with particular emphasis for this market, based on the historic links between Barbados and Great Britain.
- Taking into account the slightly “aging”²⁸ nature of the English market on the Island, it is important to reinvent formulas specifically aimed at the younger generation of tourists (both product and promotion) who are currently being attracted by new and more “exotic” destinations.
- **“All inclusive”** is the most common search term for the UK audience, although it is true that the numbers of tourists arriving on package offers of this type have actually decreased in line with the

²⁷ *All inclusive accommodation has also experienced a slow decline since 2011. USA Market Analysis. Component I.*

²⁸ *There has been a shift in demographics in arrivals from the UK since 2008. Between 2004 and 2007, the majority of British visitors to Barbados were in the 25-34 and the 35-44 age groups. By 2013, this had changed to the 45-54 and the 55-64 age groups. The upward trend in the age profile of the average visitor to Barbados may suggest that the country is losing its appeal with younger Brits. The 'New' British Visitor to Barbados. A Profile of British Visitors Post-2008. Antilles Economics April 2015.*

growth in villa tourism²⁹, which is better adapted to experiential tourism and immersion in Island life (“be like a local”).

- Bearing in mind the strategies for the British market as defined in the 2014-2015 Marketing Plan, we noted a **marked lack of content on the official channels** in relation to certain key events
- (Top Gear Festival, Soccerex Conference) as well as links to strategic partners, for example Liverpool FC or the Club Cricket Conference. This is an example of the type of traditional and digital marketing that needs to be addressed.
- After the USA and Barbados itself, **the UK is the third most significant location in terms of internet conversation about the Island**, and the sentiment analysis shows positive results. The UK is also second (17%) in traffic to the official site (**visitbarbados.org**). These figures stand out when compared with the scarce 3% which the British market contributes to the European landing page (**visitbarbados.co**), demonstrating the relatively low impact of this site specifically directed at the European sector.
- The last of the traditional source markets, **Canada**, is also showing **reduced interest in Barbados** as a destination in related searches (-29 %), in contrast to the increase in certain competitors such as Puerto Rico, and above all Jamaica (up by 119%).
- **Canada** shows considerable interest in cruise travel, below the USA but well above the UK. The same market also demonstrates in cultural and heritage themes, indicating good opportunities to develop **cultural products in conjunction with cruise travel**.
- Once again the search trends for this market indicate an interest in “**all inclusive**”, identified within the Marketing Plan 2014-2015 as a strategic focus for development (island inclusive)³⁰. However the figures in relation to **cultural and heritage** themes would still suggest that presenting a culturally enriched tourism offer is the best way to set Barbados apart from the competitors rather than an emphasis on price.
- Canada, with 10% of traffic, is the fourth country in terms of visits to the official page **visitbarbados.org**. These figures also coincide with conversation generated on the internet around the term *Barbados* - which also shows a positive perception similar to the other markets studied.
- Apart from the traditional markets, Barbados has also been focusing on the opening of **new and potentially interesting markets**, such as Latin America and other European countries. In these regions, particular attention has been given to the Brazilian and German markets which were specifically identified within the Marketing Plan 2014-2015.
- **The Brazilian Market** has seen a steady drop in search trends over recent years, although it has shown signs of recovery in 2014. The BTMI has introduced a promotional campaign with an exclusive landing page for this Market, but so far it has only attracted around 4,000 monthly visits with the exception of seasonal peaks

²⁹ “During the period 2008-2012 there was a moderate increase in the demand for Villas by UK visitors; in 2013 this demand shot up and became the most popular type of accommodation compared with All inclusive and Luxury accommodation which both saw a decline”. General profile of the main markets, trends and general behavior on arrival Barbados Tourism Program.ComponentI

³⁰ Barbados Marketing Plan 2014-2015 | Canadian Focus Strategies.

- The main **generic search terms** recorded for this market are tourism, vacation and Caribbean along with tourist service (resorts, hotel) and tend to confirm market trends in Brazil, which largely focus on leisure activities and are in line with Barbados' principal (sun and beach) offer
- **The German market** is the second largest within the European sector **and current search trends are similar to the sector as a whole with a steady increase over recent years** (2009-2015).
- Nevertheless the European landing page again shows geographical traffic figures in which Germany only represents 125 of visits and scarce participation in overall Barbados related conversation. This again confirms the need to adopt a different strategy for digital marketing within the European market.
- Alongside searches related to tourist services, **Bridgetown** stands out as a particularly popular search term for this market. This coincides with traditional German tourist tastes, which often combine good climate and beaches with an active interest in local culture.
- Attention needs to be given to this interest in the Barbados capital, and reinforced via an effective communications campaign based around the new tourist products and the Cultural Heritage Site listing.

To end our conclusions, we would like to emphasise that digital marketing strategy can play a vital role, always provided that it is effectively combined and coordinated with the key points of the general marketing and promotional policy of the destination.

For this purpose it is essential that digital marketing feeds off the overall decisions and strategies for the definition of the brand, the creation of value propositions, collaboration between public and private sectors and a concentrated focus on specific markets and products.

10 ANNEX

1. Monitoring and analysis of campaign Brilliant Barbados
2. Barbados perception through the standout content research methodology
3. Diagnosis of Internet Conversation related to specific tourism proposals (Cruises, All inclusive and Cultural tourism).
4. Lexicon-BasedMethods for Sentiment Analysis
5. The 2013 Traveler's road to decision: Affluent Insights
6. The anatomy of a perfect landing page
7. Life Above and Beyond the Fold

1. Brilliant Barbados

Monitoring and analysis of campaign Brilliant Barbados

Reporting period: 05/04/15 to 15/04/15

- Objectives of the analysis:

- To carry out a digital frame of the campaign from a user point of view seeking general information about the destination and specific about the campaign through digital content.
- To analyze the presence of the internet campaign, its influence on the period analysed, and its positioning.
- To analyse the content of the campaign on sites developed for it.

Elements analyzed:

1. Presence of the campaign in Google through related searches (Barbados, Barbados Brilliant).
2. SEM Campaigns active
3. Analysis of the official website
4. Analysis of Internet chat

- Mentions
- Sources
- Feeling
- Geographic distribution.

Tools used:

- Google Tools
- Mention
- Own Research

1.1 Brilliant Barbados Campaign: Presence in Google.

The key words "Barbados" and "brilliant barbados" have been analyzed in order to establish the position of the campaign, type of links and the quality of the results and content.

Searches have been carried out on search engines of the United Kingdom, Brazil, Canada and USA.

Search engine: Google United Kingdom

Location: London

Search: Brilliant Barbados

Analysis:

- 1st position for the official website of the campaign and 5th position for the landing page of the Brazilian market, indicating a correct positioning of the official campaign message, and a leadership position for landing page directed to a different market which can lead to confusion.
- No positioning SEM campaign. No advertising related ADWORDS.
- 2nd and 4th position for website reviews (tripadvisor), which position in the firsts places a message uncontrolled by official arguments.
- Other positions on homepage, just for online travel agencies. No cohesion of content or campaign image.
- No impact of social networks on the top positions, little discussion generated about the campaign.
- No results of blogs related to the travel industry, lack of PR campaign, lack of a contents dissemination strategy in blogs of reference, digital media etc.

Brilliant Barbados - Free Hotel Nights and Exclusive Discounts

www.brilliantbarbados.com/ ▼ Traducir esta página

Brilliant Barbados is an exciting promotion with our hotel and attraction partners which aims to give visitors more than ever before when they come to our ...

Brilliant Barbados Promotion? - Barbados Message Board - T...

www.tripadvisor.co.uk > ... > Barbados Travel Forum ▼ Traducir esta página

6 de mar. de 2015 - Answer 1 of 51: Sflcn.com/barbados-minister-of-tourism-sealy... Anyone have details?

Más resultados de www.tripadvisor.co.uk

Brilliant Barbados | Carrier

<https://www.carrier.co.uk/brilliant-barbados/> ▼ Traducir esta página

Brilliant Barbados, get 2 nights FREE on 2015 holidays at Carrier's luxury Barbados hotels. Book before 30 April 2015.

Brilliant Barbados Promotion? - Barbados Forum - TripAdvisor

www.tripadvisor.com > ... > Barbados Travel Forum ▼ Traducir esta página

6 de mar. de 2015 - Sflcn.com/barbados-minister-of-tourism-sealy... Anyone have details?

Más resultados de www.tripadvisor.com

BRILLIANT BARBADOS - More Excitement, More Value!

www.visitbarbados.com/brilliantbarbados/ ▼ Traducir esta página

ASK Realty Barbados ... Accra Beach Hotel & Spa; All Seasons Europa; Anglers Apts; ASK Realty Barbados; Atlantis Hotel; Blue Horizon Hotel; Butterfly Beach ...

Brilliant Barbados Holiday Offers - Virgin Holidays

www.virginholidays.co.uk/brilliant-barbados ▼ Traducir esta página

Barbados, Barbados holidays, Brilliant Barbados. ... Brilliant Barbados. Home - Special Offers - Brilliant Barbados. Complete Holiday; Hotel Only; Flydrive; Cruise ...

Brilliant Barbados Hotels | Travelocity.com

www.travelocity.com/g/u/barbados ▼ Traducir esta página

Get 1 Night FREE (included in price on 4 Nights or longer) Book by April 30, 2015. Travel between May 9, 2015 and December 19, 2015. See Details.

Brilliant Barbados - Overview - Show Total

www.traveledit.co.uk/.../brilliant-barbados.../overview... ▼ Traducir esta página

Barbados epitomises the very best of the Caribbean and sun worshippers will have plenty of opportunity to soak up the rays. The island's clear blue waters and ...

The Holiday Place Proud to Participate in Brilliant Barbados ...

holidayplace.co.uk/.../the-holiday-place-proud-to-pa... ▼ Traducir esta página

31 de mar. de 2015 - The Holiday Place is among 12 UK tour operators participating in the Brilliant Barbados booking offer. This unique promotional offer gives ...

Book Barbados Holidays - British Airways

www.britishairways.com/.../barbados/holidays-in-bar... ▼ Traducir esta página

Book your holiday in Barbados with British Airways. Book together & save on our Barbados flight & holiday packages. Great deals & deposit options available.

Search engine: Google United Kingdom
Location: London
Search: Barbados

Analysis:

- No presence of the campaign in the top search engine positions (1-10).
- No presence of adwords advertising.
- No trace of the European landing page visitbarbados.co results (different in the case of Brazil).

Search engine: Google United Kingdom
Location: London
Search: Caribbean Holidays

No active ADWORDS advertising Caribbean related generic searches that might attract tourists of potential markets.

Search engine: **Canada**
Location: **Toronto**
Search: **Brilliant Barbados**

Analysis:

- 1st position to the official website of the campaign and 3rd place for the landing page of the Brazilian market, indicating correct positioning of the official campaign message and a leadership position for landing page directed to a different market (which may lead to confusion).
- No positioning SEM campaign. No advertising related ADWORDS.
- 2nd and 5th position for website reviews (tripadvisor), which position in the first places a message uncontrolled by official arguments
- Other positions in the first page of the search for online travel agencies. No cohesion of the content, or campaign image.
- No impact of social networks on the top, generated little discussion about the campaign.
- No results of blogs related to the travel industry, lack of PR campaign, lack of a contents dissemination strategy in blogs of reference, digital media etc.


About 351,000,000 results (0.32 seconds)

Barbados Barbados Tourism Encyclopedia. No 1 in content ... ✓
www.barbados.org.uk/ ✓
BARBADOS PURSUITS - TRAVEL TO BARBADOS - ACCOMMODATIONS - ROMANCE IN BARBADOS - EVENTS - CONFERENCES IN BARBADOS ...

Barbados Travel Guide: Barbados.org ✓
www.barbados.org/ ✓
Barbados: All holiday travel information for your vacation! Activities, where to stay, eat and shop. Island events, tours, maps, pictures, stories, people and much ...

Barbados - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia ✓
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados ✓
Barbados is a sovereign island country in the Lesser Antilles. It is 34 kilometres (21 mi) in length and up to 23 kilometres (14 mi) in width, covering an area of ...
Bajan Creole - History of Barbados - Grantley Adams International ... - Christ Church


Visit Barbados • Caribbean Vacations • Hotels, Resorts ... ✓
www.visitbarbados.org/ ✓
Visit Barbados, the official and authorized site of Barbados and the Barbados Tourism Authority. Life didn't begin in Barbados; it was just perfected here.



Images for barbados Report images

More images for barbados

Barbados Holidays 2015/2016 | Virgin Holidays ✓
www.virginholidays.co.uk/destinations/caribbean/barbados-holidays ✓
Book a Barbados holiday with Virgin Holidays. Find out how to Unleash your #mojo with a holiday to Barbados - the Caribbean is waiting for you!
Hotels in barbados - Others - 10 Things To Do In Barbados - Waves Resort and Spa

Barbados - Lonely Planet ✓
www.lonelyplanet.com/barbados ✓
Barbados has it all: beach resorts from humble to grand, smashing nightlife, a Unesco World Heritage capitol, Bridgetown, a beautiful interior dotted with ...

Barbados Tourism: Best of Barbados - TripAdvisor ✓
www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g147262-Barbados-Vacations.html ✓
Barbados Tourism: TripAdvisor has 107933 reviews of Barbados Hotels, Attractions, and Restaurants making it your best Barbados resource.

In the news

Made in Chelsea: Barbados, battles and busts - 15 things we loved
Digital Spy UK - 2 days ago
It's BACK. It feels like forever since we had Made in Chelsea on our screens and it returned ...
Luz Longworth leaves UWI, Western Jamaica Campus for Barbados - Regional - JamaicaObserver.com
JamaicaObserver - 2 hours ago
Bajan accused of US scam
Nation News - 1 day ago
More news for barbados

Barbados
Country in North America
Barbados is a sovereign island country in length and up to 23 kilometres (14 mi) in width, covering an area of 432 square kilometres. Wik
Capital: Bridgetown
Dialing code: +1
Area: 431 km²
Currency: Barbadian dollar
Population: 284,644 (2013)
Points of interest

Harrison's Cave St Nicholas Abbey
Destinations

Bridgetown Saint James Parish

Brilliant Barbados - Free Hotel Nights and Exclusive Discounts
www.brilliantbarbados.com/ ✓ Traducir esta página
Brilliant Barbados is an exciting promotion with our hotel and attraction partners which aims to give visitors more than ever before when they come to our ...

Brilliant Barbados Promotion? - Barbados Forum - TripAdvisor
www.tripadvisor.com > ... > Barbados Travel Forum ✓ Traducir esta página
6 de mar. de 2015 - Sflcn.com/barbados-minister-of-tourism-sealy... Anyone have details?
Más resultados de www.tripadvisor.com

BRILLIANT BARBADOS - More Excitement, More Value!
www.visitbarbados.com/brilliantbarbados/ ✓ Traducir esta página
ASK Realty Barbados ... Accra Beach Hotel & Spa; All Seasons Europa; Anglers Apts; ASK Realty Barbados; Atlantis Hotel; Blue Horizon Hotel; Butterfly Beach ...

Brilliant Barbados | Carrier
https://www.carrier.co.uk/brilliant-barbados/ ✓ Traducir esta página
Brilliant Barbados, get 2 nights FREE on 2015 holidays at Carrier's luxury Barbados hotels. Book before 30 April 2015.

Brilliant Barbados Promotion? - Barbados Forum - TripAdvisor
www.tripadvisor.ca > ... > Barbados Travel Forum ✓ Traducir esta página
6 de mar. de 2015 - Sflcn.com/barbados-minister-of-tourism-sealy... Anyone have details?

Brilliant Barbados Hotels | Travelocity.com
www.travelocity.com/gu/barbados ✓ Traducir esta página
Great Barbados Hotel and Vacation Deals. ... Brilliant Barbados. Flight + Hotel; Hotel only; Flight only. Search Hotels. Please correct the errors below.



Brilliant Barbados - Seaubarbados - Sea-UI! Guest House
www.seaubarbados.com/brilliant-barbados/ ✓ Traducir esta página
3 de abr. de 2015 - Free Nights with the Brilliant Barbados Summer Promotion.

Brilliant Barbados - Divi Resorts
www.diviresorts.com/brilliant-barbados.htm ✓ Traducir esta página
We're proud to introduce Brilliant Barbados, an exciting new promotion that partners Divi Southwinds Beach Resort & Divi Heritage Beach Resort with top ...

Beautiful and brilliant Barbados..... | EVERYWHERE TRAVEL
everywheretravel.co.uk/.../beautiful-and-brilliant-bar... ✓ Traducir esta página
I don't use brilliant lightly, but I would happily use it to describe the scenery, food & drink, culture and people of this breathtaking island paradise. My love of ...

Buscador: **Google Canada**
 Ubicación geográfica: **Toronto**
 Búsqueda: **Barbados**

- No presence of the campaign in the top search engine positions (1-10).
- No presence of adwords advertising

About 351,000,000 results (0.61 seconds)

Barbados - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia ✓
 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados
 Barbados is a sovereign island country in the Lesser Antilles. It is 34 kilometres (21 mi) in length and up to 23 kilometres (14 mi) in width, covering an area of ...
 Bajan Creole - History of Barbados - Grantley Adams International ... - Christ Church

Barbados - Canada Connections - Barbados.org ✓
 www.barbados.org/canada/ ✓
 How to get to Barbados from Canada. Find also contact information for the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. offices in Canada.

Barbados Travel Guide: Barbados.org ✓
 www.barbados.org/ ✓
 Barbados: All holiday travel information for your vacation! Activities, where to stay, eat and shop. Island events, tours, maps, pictures, stories, people and much ...

Visit Barbados - Caribbean Vacations - Hotels, Resorts ... ✓
 www.visitbarbados.org/ ✓
 Visit Barbados, the official and authorized site of Barbados and the Barbados Tourism Authority. Life didn't begin in Barbados, it was just perfected here.



Barbados - Lonely Planet ✓
 www.lonelyplanet.com/barbados
 Barbados has it all: beach resorts from humble to grand, smashing nightlife, a Unesco World Heritage capitol, Bridgetown, a beautiful interior dotted with ...

Barbados Tourism and Travel: Best of Barbados - TripAdvisor ✓
 www.tripadvisor.ca/Destinations-g147262-Barbados-Vacations.html
 Barbados Tourism: TripAdvisor has 107933 reviews of Barbados Hotels, Attractions, and Restaurants making it your best Barbados travel resource.



Barbados

Country in North America

Barbados is a sovereign island country in the Lesser Antilles. It is 34 kilometres in length and up to 23 kilometres in width, covering an area of ...

Capital: Bridgetown
Area: 431 km²
Currency: Barbadian dollar
Population: 284,644 (2013)
Continent: Americas, North

Points of interest



Destinations



Brilliant Barbados Promotion? - Barbados Forum - TripAdvisor ✓
 www.tripadvisor.com › Caribbean › Barbados › Barbados Travel Forum
 Mar 6, 2015 - Sflcn.com/barbados-minister-of-tourism-sealy... Anyone have details?
 More results from www.tripadvisor.com

Brilliant Barbados - TripAdvisor ✓
 www.tripadvisor.com › ... › Calabaza Sailing Cruises
 ★★★★★ Rating: 5 - Review by a TripAdvisor user
 Apr 7, 2015 - Calabaza Sailing Cruises: **Brilliant Barbados** - See 1432 traveler reviews, 689 candid photos, and great deals for Bridgetown, Barbados, ...

Brilliant Barbados Hotels | Travelocity.com ✓
 www.travelocity.com/g/u/barbados
 Great Barbados Hotel and Vacation Deals. ... **Brilliant Barbados.** Flight + Hotel; Hotel only; Flight only. Search Hotels. Please correct the errors below.

Brilliant Barbados - Divi Resorts ✓
 www.diviresorts.com/brilliant-barbados.htm
 We're proud to introduce **Brilliant Barbados**, an exciting new promotion that partners Divi Southwinds Beach Resort & Divi Heritage Beach Resort with top ...

BTMI and BHTA partner to launch Brilliant Barbados ... ✓
 www.eturbonews.com/.../btmi-and-bhta-partner-launch-brilliant-barbado...
 Mar 27, 2015 - The new **Brilliant Barbados** campaign is a value-packed travel deal featuring discounts on hotel stays, attractions, car rental agencies and ...

Book Now! Guests Receive A Free Night On-Island With The ... !
 www.prnewswire.com/.../book-now-guests-receive-a-free-night-on-island...
 Apr 7, 2015 - Book Now! Guests Receive A Free Night On-Island With The **Brilliant Barbados** Offer An Added Value Offer to Gain Access to Local Hot Spots ...

Barbados launches Brilliant Barbados offer - Loop Trinidad ... ✓
 looptt.com/2015/04/13/barbados-launches-brilliant-barbados-offer/
 3 days ago - Caribbean travelers will have another reason to choose **Barbados** as their next vacation spot with the launch of the value-added **Brilliant** ...

Loop Travel: Brilliant Barbados to entice travelers - Loop ... ✓
 looptt.com/2015/03/27/loop-travel-brilliant-barbados-entice-travelers/
 Mar 27, 2015 - Caribbean travelers have been provided with another reason to choose the exciting island of **Barbados** as their next vacation spot.



Take part in the Brilliant Barbados... - Ocean Two Barbados ✓
 https://www.facebook.com/OceanTwo/posts/806525022728904
 Ocean Two Barbados & Sea Breeze Beach Hotel are taking part in the **Brilliant Barbados** campaign. Get two free nights when booking seven (valid on ...

Buscador: **Google USA**
 Ubicación geográfica: **New York**
 Búsqueda: **Brilliant Barbados**

Analysis:

- No presence of the official website www.brilliantbarbados.com in the top 10.
- No SEM positioning campaign. No related ADWORDS advertising.
- 1st position for website reviews (tripadvisor), which position in the first place a message uncontrolled by official arguments
- Other positions on homepage for online travel agencies, hotels and news portals.
- A reference in social networks in the last position, little discussion generated about the campaign.

Search: **Google USA**


Location: **New York**

Search: **Barbados**

- No presence in the results of the search engine among the top positions (1-10).
- No presence of adwords advertising.

Barbados - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia ✓
 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados
 Barbados is a sovereign island country in the Lesser Antilles. It is 34 kilometres (21 mi) in length and up to 23 kilometres (14 mi) in width, covering an area of ...
 Bajan Creole - History of Barbados - Grantley Adams International ... - Christ Church

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Barbados - The World Factbook ✓
 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/00b.html
 6 days ago - Features map and brief descriptions of the geography, people, government, economy, communications, transportation, military and ...

Barbados - Infoplease ✓
 www.infoplease.com › World › Countries › Barbados
 Information on Barbados — map of Barbados, flag of Barbados, geography, history, politics, government, economy, population, culture, religion, languages, ...

Barbados travel guide - Wikitravel ✓
 wikitravel.org/en/Barbados
 Open source travel guide to Barbados, featuring up-to-date information on attractions, hotels, restaurants, nightlife, travel tips and more. Free and reliable advice ...

Barbados - World Atlas ✓
 www.worldatlas.com › North America › Caribbean
 Printable map of Barbados and info and links to Barbados facts, famous natives, landforms, latitude, longitude, maps, symbols, timeline and weather - by ...

Barbados (@Barbados) | Twitter ✓
 https://twitter.com/Barbados
 9215 tweets • 520 photos/videos • 30.2K followers. "Get 2 Nights Free in #Barbados on a 7 Night Getaway!! http://t.co/xjb4TH56L @skift @FathomWaytoGo ...

Sandals Barbados - Sandals Resorts ✓
 www.sandals.com › Resorts › Barbados
 Sandals Barbados, an all-new retreat in the spirited St. Lawrence Gap area, offers undeniable luxury with inventive accommodations spanning three unique ...

Visit Barbados | Facebook ✓
 https://www.facebook.com/VisitBarbados
 Visit Barbados. 148553 likes · 5903 talking about this. Learn about our vibrant culture, view beautiful photos, share your Barbados stories and connect...



Barbados
 Country in North America

Barbados is a sovereign island country in the Lesser Antilles, with a length of 34 kilometres (21 miles) and a width of up to 23 kilometres (14 miles), covering an area of 432 square kilometres (167 square miles).

Capital: Bridgetown
Currency: Barbadian dollar
Population: 284,644 (2016)
Governor-general: Eliott Deschamps
Continent: Americas, I

Points of interest




Destinations




Buscador: **Google Brazil**

Búsqueda: **Barbados**

Analysis:

- 1st position to the official website www.visitbarbados.com/brilliantbarbados/
- No SEM positioning campaign. No related ADWORDS advertising.
- 1st position for website reviews (tripadvisor), which message is uncontrolled by official arguments
- Other homepage positions for online travel agencies and news portals.
- No references of social networks, little discussion generated about the campaign.

BRILLIANT BARBADOS - More Excitement, More Value! ✓
 www.visitbarbados.com/brilliantbarbados/ - Traducir esta página
 ASK Realty Barbados ... Accra Beach Hotel & Spa; All Seasons Europa; Anglers Apts; ASK Realty Barbados; Atlantis Hotel; Blue Horizon Hotel; Butterfly Beach ...

Brilliant Barbados - Azul Profundo ✓
 www.azulprofundo.tur.br/blog/barbados/ - Traducir esta página
 25 de mar. de 2015 - Excelente promoção!!! Noites grátis em hotéis na sua estada em Barbados e descontos nas atrações exclusivas!!! logo-brilliant Barbados.

Promoção garante 2 noites de hotel gratuitas em Barbados ✓
 www.panrotas.com.br/.../promocao-garante-2-noites... - Traducir esta página
 26 de mar. de 2015 - Juntamente ao Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), o Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc (BTMI) lançou a promoção Brilliant ...

Imágenes de brilliant barbados Notificar imágenes



Barbados lança promoção Brilliant Barbados e garante até ... ✓
 www.viagenserotas.com.br/.../barbados-lanca-promo... - Traducir esta página
 26 de mar. de 2015 - Água cristalina, calor o ano inteiro e paisagens paradisíacas, com certeza já são motivos suficientes para querer conhecer Barbados.

Brilliant Barbados | Viagem ✓
 https://viagem.cetracalivre.com.br/.../brilliant-barbados... - Traducir esta página
 Água cristalina, calor o ano inteiro e paisagens paradisíacas, com certeza já são motivos suficientes para querer conhecer Barbados. Nos próximos meses, a ...

Barbados - Brilliant Barbados - Intercontinental ✓
 www.intercontinental.tur.br/index.php?... - Traducir esta página
 Incluso no pacote • 05 + 02 noites FREE de hospedagem com café da manhã; • Descontos nos passeios mencionados abaixo • Traslados de chegada e saída; ...

Brilliant Barbados - ADVtour ✓
 https://advturismo.tur.br/.../promocao-brilliant-barbados... - Traducir esta página
 1 de abr. de 2015 - www.advtour.com.br, ADVtour. faleconosco.sao@advtour.com.br. Ligue grátis: 0800 724 0411 +55 (11) 2167-0633 ...

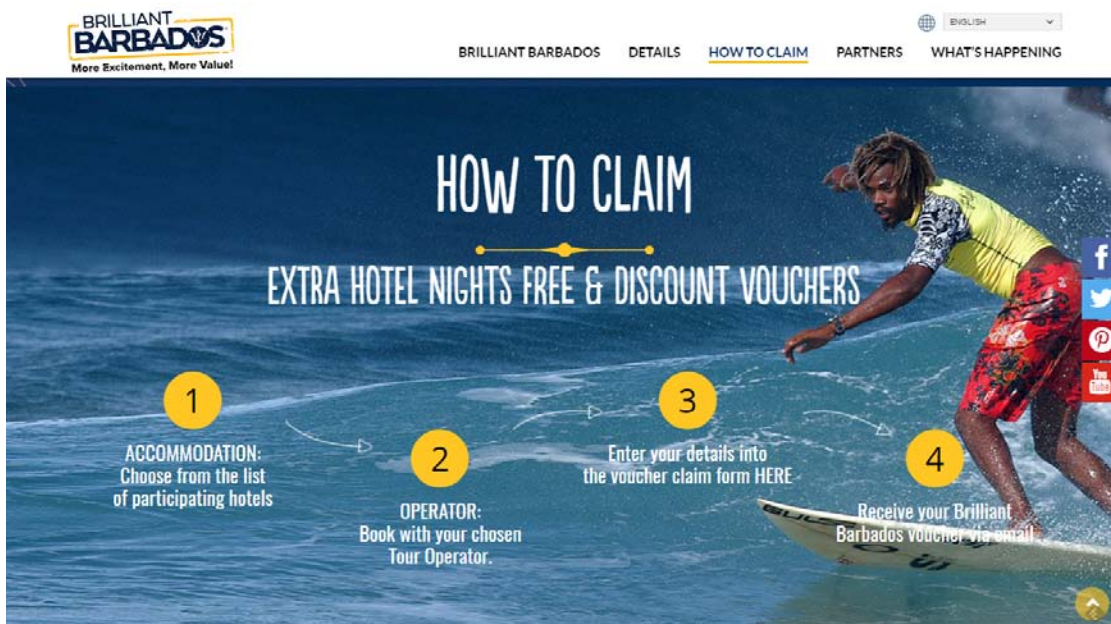
BWT Operadora lança promoção "Brilliant Barbados ... ✓
 jornalturismoeeventos.com.br/.../bwt-operadora-lanc... - Traducir esta página
 BWT Operadora lança promoção "Brilliant Barbados". 26 mar 2015 Posted by Marcos Amuda 0 Comment. 1 Star 2 Stars 3 Stars 4 Stars 5 Stars. Loading .

Promoção Brilliant Barbados - Tablet Tours ✓
 www.tablet.tur.br/.../barbados/roteiros...barbados/... - Traducir esta página
 Barbados é sem dúvida uma ótima opção para fugir do frenesi durante suas férias ou ... Promoção Brilliant Barbados, ao se hospedar por 7 noites consecutivas, ...

The website introduce a modern and attractive design, with an scroll intuitive navigation and a right promotion explanation

The home screen presents relevant content:

- Logo + claim
- Short promotion explanation
- Call to action (Find Out How to claim now button)
- Navigation menu
- Social media buttons



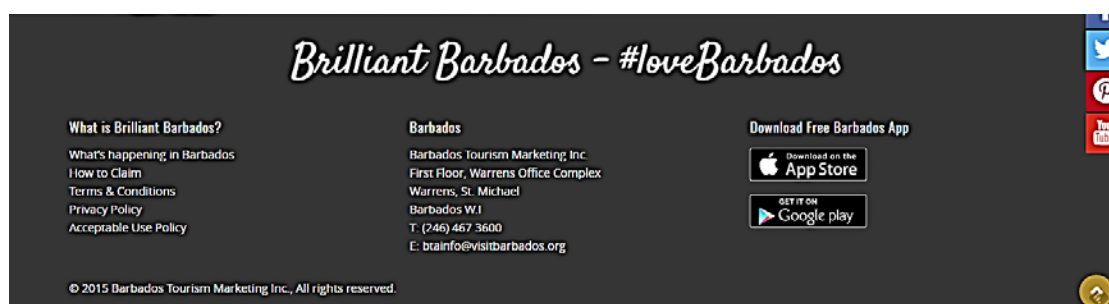
The site is rich in content and well visually supported, with additional sections of attractions and events that show the user all what can be found in Barbados, taking advantage of the promotion.



It has been translated into four languages, but is lacking the Portuguese for the Brazilian market, which is present in the subpage created with the promotion visitebarbados.com/brilliantbarbados/. Same lack for Spanish language, taking into account the potential market in Latin America.



The footer has a site tree, contact information and a link to the Apple and GooglePlay markets of Barbados app to download the application. It would be necessary to have more support and contact information for those users that require it (like a floating button chat customer service or button to send an email with any doubts in the promotion).



Conclusion:

The web duly fulfills the requirements for such pages. Although some improvement points should be emphasized:

- A system for user support.
- Translation into Portuguese and Spanish.
- No duplication of the campaign in the Portuguese site.
- Using video as a format of support and diffusion.

3. Analysis of Internet chat

Reporting period: 5 to April 15, 2015

Keywords analyzed:

- Brilliant Barbados
- #brilliantbarbados
- #lovebarbados

BRILLIANT BARBADOS KEYWORD SETTING

YOUR ALERT		LANGUAGES	
Name	hashtags brilliant	French	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		English	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Spanish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		German	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Italian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Portuguese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Geofiltering (max 10 countries) <input type="checkbox"/> OFF	

AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS	
Keyword	#lovebarbados ×
OR	#brilliantbarbados ×
OR	A single word or expression +
Advanced settings	

You can monitor keywords that are related to you, your brand, or your company and competitors. For more complete searches, try including similar spellings or exclude keywords that are not directly related to your search. For example: exclude common keywords associated with a person that has the same name as you.

#BRILLIANTBARBADOS AND #LOVEBARBADOS KEYWORD SETTING

YOUR ALERT		LANGUAGES	
Name	brilliant barbados	French	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		English	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Spanish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		German	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Italian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Portuguese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Geofiltering (max 10 countries) <input type="checkbox"/> OFF	

AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS	
Keyword	brilliant barbados ×
OR	A single word or expression +
Advanced settings	

You can monitor keywords that are related to you, your brand, or your company and competitors. For more complete searches, try including similar spellings or exclude keywords that are not directly related to your search. For example: exclude common keywords associated with a person that has the same name as you.

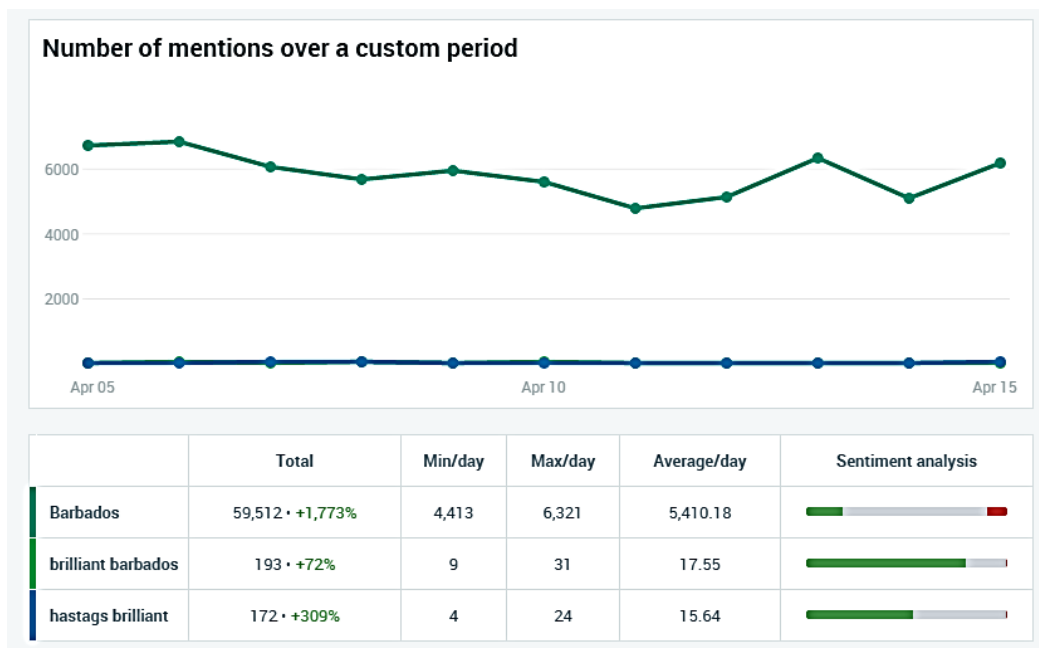
Two alerts have been configured to differentiate those from social media mentions (#hashtag brilliant) with those from other forms of development and content (news, forums, web, etc).

Difference between Barbados mentions in general (green line) and Barbados brilliant mentions (blue line)

Two alerts have been configured to differentiate those from social media mentions (#hashtag brilliant) with those from other forms of development and content (news, forums, web, etc). It has been turned on the monitoring of the campaign in 6 different languages (French, Spanish, English, German, Italian, Portuguese) to analyze the behavior of the campaign according to languages and outbound market and detecting possible opportunities in translating future campaigns.

Difference between Barbados mentions in general (green line) and Barbados brilliant mentions (blue line)

We can see that the campaign does not have a large impact on the general conversation, which consists of 5,410 daily mentions on average, by 33 daily mentions of Brilliant Barbados, which represents less than 0.1% of the conversation.



Campaign mentions statistics and main sources

Brilliant Barbados alert (focused content), has a majority (144 mentions) of sources from web, followed by blogs (22) twitter (20) and news (7).

In hashtags alert predominates, as is usual in these cases, the source of twitter with 116 mentions followed by facebook (23) and the labeling of images (24) and finally the web (9).

In this case attention is drawn to the lack of mentions in news and blogs (have not used the hashtag in PR and communication).



In both cases it is remarkable the lack of mentions in videos (lack of audiovisual content campaign) and forums (has not transcended the hashtag campaign and content to user level).

Analysis of mentions by geographic sources BRILLIANT BARBADOS

Brilliant Barbados Alert:



	Total	Sentiment analysis	Top source	Most active
United Kingdom	183 • N/A		Blogs • N/A	Wed 12 PM-4 PM
United States	64 • N/A		Web • N/A	Wed 4 AM-8 AM
Barbados	11 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 4 AM-8 AM
Italy	9 • N/A		Web • N/A	Fri 8 AM-12 PM
Canada	6 • N/A		Web • N/A	Mon 8 PM-12 AM
Germany	5 • N/A		Web • N/A	Sun 12 PM-4 PM
Trinidad and Tob...	5 • N/A		Web • N/A	Tue 12 PM-4 PM
Australia	3 • N/A		Web • N/A	Mon 8 PM-12 AM
Poland	3 • N/A		Blogs • N/A	Tue 4 PM-8 PM
Brazil	2 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 4 PM-8 PM
France	2 • N/A		Web • N/A	Mon 12 PM-4 PM
India	2 • N/A		Web • N/A	Wed 8 AM-12 PM
Austria	1 • N/A		Web • N/A	Thu 12 AM-4 AM
Cameroon	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Tue 12 PM-4 PM
Ireland	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Tue 4 PM-8 PM
Iran	1 • N/A		Web • N/A	Tue 12 PM-4 PM
Thailand	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Tue 8 PM-12 AM

Statistics

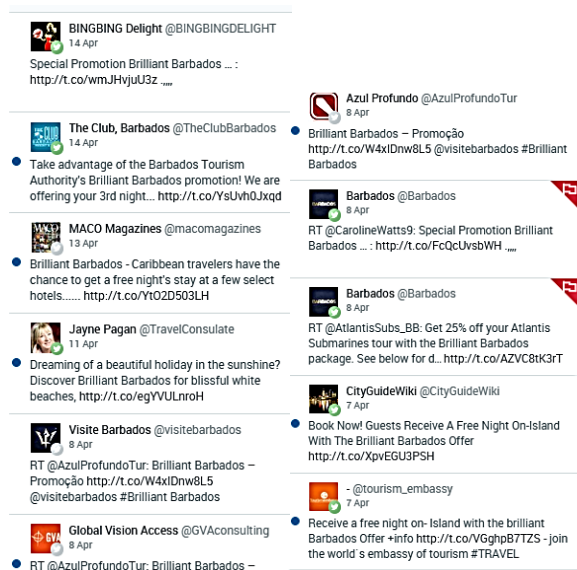
	Total	Min/day	Max/day	Average/day	Sentiment analysis
brilliant barbados	193 • +72%	9	31	17.55	
hastags brilliant	172 • +309%	4	24	15.64	

Sources	
Brilliant Barbados	
Facebook	0 • N/A
Twitter	20 • +233%
News	7 • +133%
Blogs	22 • -78%
Videos	0 • N/A
Forums	0 • N/A
Images	0 • N/A
Web	144 • N/A
Hastags Brilliant	
Facebook	23 • +1,050%
Twitter	116 • +251%
News	0 • N/A
Blogs	0 • N/A
Videos	0 • N/A
Forums	0 • N/A
Images	24 • +242%
Web	9 • N/A

The first source of results is United Kingdom with 183 mentions, leading those mentions with Blogs, followed by USA (64-Web) and Barbados (11-Twitter), the latter from the own campaign (Twitts, RTs, FAVs).

At the top are the main markets, with Canada and Germany in 5th and 6th place respectively and Brazil ranked 10th, with only 2 mentions.

It is worthy to highlight the interest of Italy in the fourth position, which will also be reflected in the subsequent analysis of visitbarbados.co.



The screenshot displays a Twitter feed with several tweets related to Barbados tourism. The tweets include:

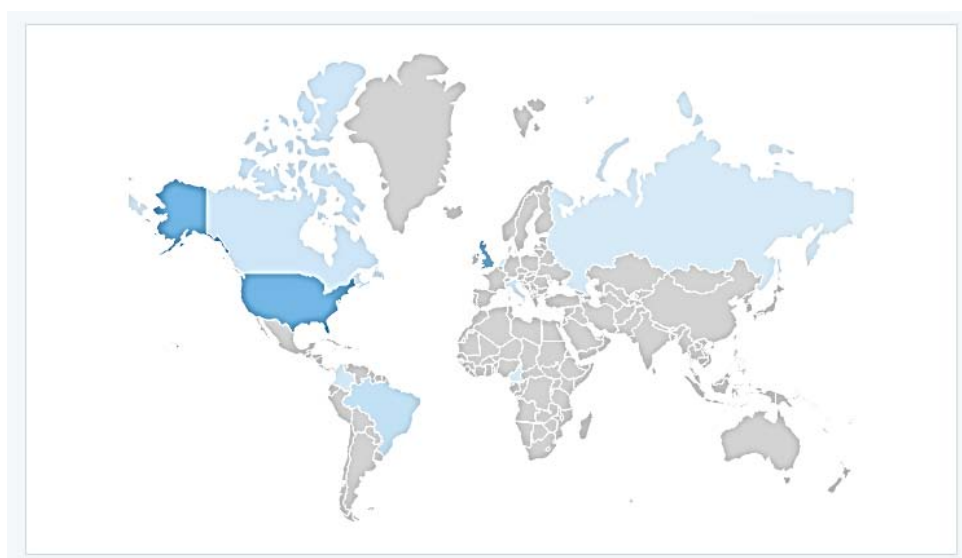
- BINGBING Delight @BINGBINGDELIGHT** (14 Apr): Special Promotion Brilliant Barbados ... : <http://t.co/wmJHvU3z>
- The Club, Barbados @TheClubBarbados** (14 Apr): Take advantage of the Barbados Tourism Authority's Brilliant Barbados promotion! We are offering your 3rd night... <http://t.co/YsUvh0Jxqd>
- MACO Magazines @macomagazines** (13 Apr): Brilliant Barbados - Caribbean travelers have the chance to get a free night's stay at a few select hotels..... <http://t.co/Yt02D503LH>
- Jayne Pagan @TravelConsulate** (11 Apr): Dreaming of a beautiful holiday in the sunshine? Discover Brilliant Barbados for blissful white beaches, <http://t.co/egYVULnroH>
- Visite Barbados @visitebarbados** (8 Apr): RT @AzulProfundoTur: Brilliant Barbados - Promoção <http://t.co/W4xIDnw8L5> @visitebarbados #Brilliant Barbados
- Global Vision Access @GVAconsulting** (8 Apr): RT @AzulProfundoTur: Brilliant Barbados -
- Azul Profundo @AzulProfundoTur** (8 Apr): Brilliant Barbados - Promoção <http://t.co/W4xIDnw8L5> @visitebarbados #Brilliant Barbados
- Barbados @Barbados** (8 Apr): RT @CarolineWatts9: Special Promotion Brilliant Barbados ... : <http://t.co/FcQcUvsvbWH>
- Barbados @Barbados** (8 Apr): RT @AtlantisSubs_BB: Get 25% off your Atlantis Submarines tour with the Brilliant Barbados package. See below for d... <http://t.co/AZVC8tk3RT>
- CityGuideWiki @CityGuideWiki** (7 Apr): Book Now! Guests Receive A Free Night On-Island With The Brilliant Barbados Offer <http://t.co/XpvEGU3PSH>
- @tourism_embassy** (7 Apr): Receive a free night on- Island with the brilliant Barbados Offer +info <http://t.co/VGghpB7TZS> - join the world's embassy of tourism #TRAVEL

HASHTAG BARBADOS (#lovebarbados and #brilliantbarbados)

In this case Twitter is the reference source in 100% of cases. Barbados has the first position and 61 mentions, most probably derived from the activity of the campaign.

It should be highlighted the good positioning of the main markets (USA, UK, Brazil or Canada).

For both alerts, feeling analysis shows very good results, in line with the positive nature of the campaign, but they also reflect that the campaign is well structured, it is understandable, and has a very good reception.



	Total	Sentiment analysis	Top source	Most active
Barbados	61 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 4 PM-8 PM
United States	38 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Tue 4 PM-8 PM
United Kingdom	29 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 8 AM-12 PM
Brazil	8 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Mon 4 PM-8 PM
Canada	4 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 4 PM-8 PM
Colombia	2 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 12 AM-4 AM
Italy	2 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Mon 8 PM-12 AM
Cameroon	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Sun 4 AM-8 AM
Denmark	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Mon 8 PM-12 AM
Netherlands	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Fri 8 AM-12 PM
Philippines	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Sun 12 AM-4 AM
Russia	1 • N/A		Twitter • N/A	Wed 12 PM-4 PM
Undefined	74 • N/A		Images • -100%	Tue 8 PM-12 AM

TOP LANGUAGES AND TOPICS



Dominance of English in the case of both alerts, although it should be noted the interest of Italians and Brazilians for the campaign

Topics	
Brilliant Barbados	
Barbados	
Brilliant	
Win	
Promotion	
Visit	
Hashtags Brilliant	
#Lovebarbados	
#Brilliantbarbados	
Barbados	
#Barbados	
@Barbados	

It should be highlighted as keywords in the Brilliant Barbados alert: win, promotion & visit (which perfectly define the nature of the campaign).

In the case of the hashtag Brilliant alert as usual, the hashtag campaign and the primary user monopolize the top.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

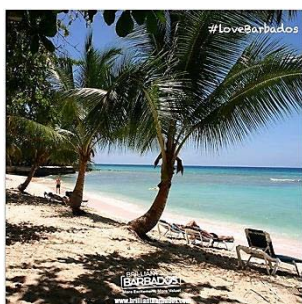
- Usability and aesthetic approach.
- A suitable approach to the campaign. Well finished graphically, the information is clear and concise, it does not lead to confusion and it is presented so that users understand and navigate it without complications.
- Well supported by graphic elements, although lacking the use of video as dissemination element.
- Dissemination and engagement.
- The official social media profiles have developed a proper job in spreading the campaign, creating graphical information, text and interlinked regarding the campaign.



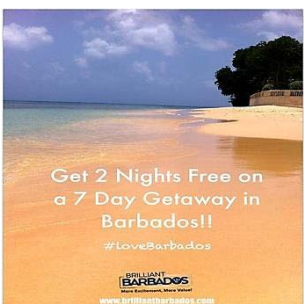
17 shares/172 Likes



4 shares/144 Likes



43 shares/438 Likes



27 shares/178 likes

- However there was a lack in the sense of accompanying the campaign with actions that integrate the user as content generator and (sweepstakes, contests, gaming).
- In general it can be concluded that diffusion was correct although, it would be necessary to analyze data from engagement, broadcast, CPC, CTR, etc.

SEO / SEM / PPC / PTC / Popup / VideoPad

- Particularly striking is the lack of advertising Adwords in Google search engine to position the campaign with related searches on the Caribbean, Barbados and holidays searches, which could attract potential tourists from main markets.
- We have not located within 10 days of monitoring, rich media campaigns or video on the Internet. The banners that have been located belong to the sites themselves or online and OTA's tour operators. But not the own campaign.

Important: The analysis of this campaign is not linked to the evaluation of the objectives or results in any of the supports, since we have no access to information that would allow us to assess comprehensively the campaign (briefing, objectives, KPIs, tools measurement, etc.).

This analysis only focuses on assessing:

- Presence of the campaign on the Internet, from their official site,
- Search engine optimization,
- Analysis of the conversation that is generated around
- Engagement.

2. Methodology about Barbados perception through the standout content research

Date: 5/10th February 2015

Sources: We analyzed those best placed sources in Google searches related to Barbados have been made in relevant forums travel.

Generic search terms:

- Travel forums
- Travel forum Barbados
- Barbados reviews
- Barbados discussion
- Barbados topics

Terms of sources selection:

- Better positioned searches on Google
- better positioned comments in each forum
- Latest Comments in each forum
- more visualized comments in community site.

Sources list

Tripadvisor (20 topics)

Topix (10 topics)

Virtualtourist (18 topics)

Fodors (25 topics)

Lonelyplanet (14 topics)

Barbadosforum (15 topics)

Worldnomads (5 topics)

Total Sources: 107 topics

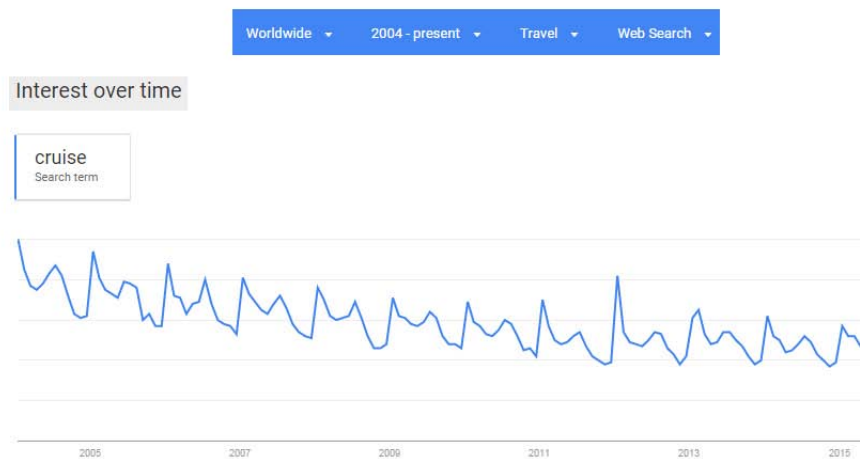
3. Diagnosis of Internet Conversation related to specific tourism proposals (Cruises, All inclusive and Cultural tourism).

When it comes to the promotion or sale of tourism products in the Caribbean region there are certain key aspects that need to be taken into account. Similarly when the digital tourist is planning their trip and searching for information on various destinations, these same aspects may be vital to their decision making.

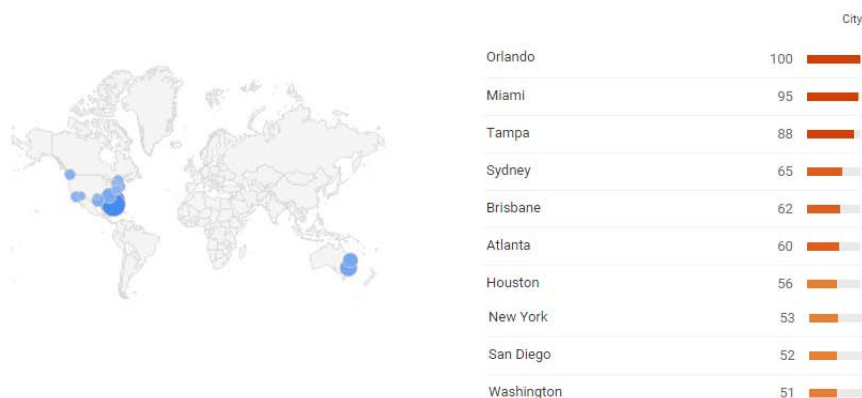
We have analyzed the behaviour of searches on the three terms “Cruises”, “All inclusive” (directly related to sun and beach tourism) and “Culture & Heritage” over the period 2004-2015, in order to measure the specific weight of their history within the destination value propositions.

Cruises

As we can see from the first graph, which shows global interest in the term over the period of time, this has reduced by almost a half between 2004 and the present date.



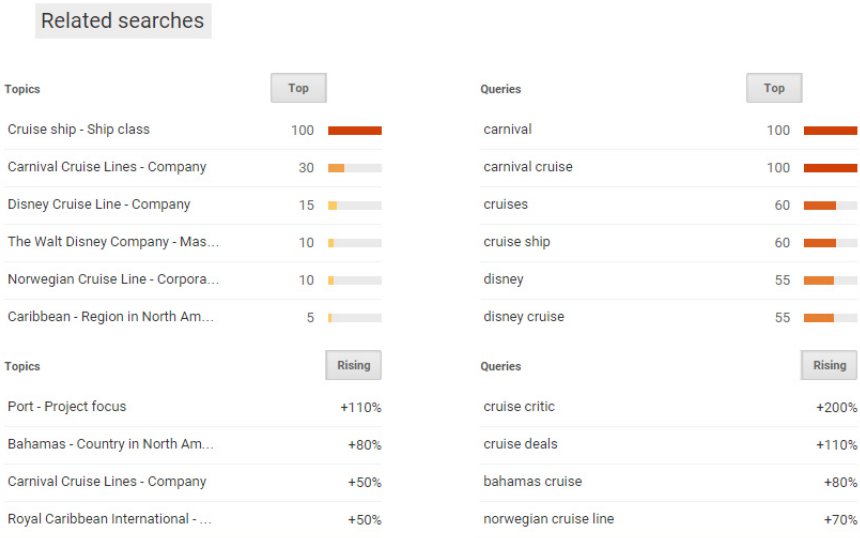
The locations worldwide in relation to which there is a greatest interest are Florida USA (Orlando, Miami and Tampa) and Australia (Sidney, Brisbane)



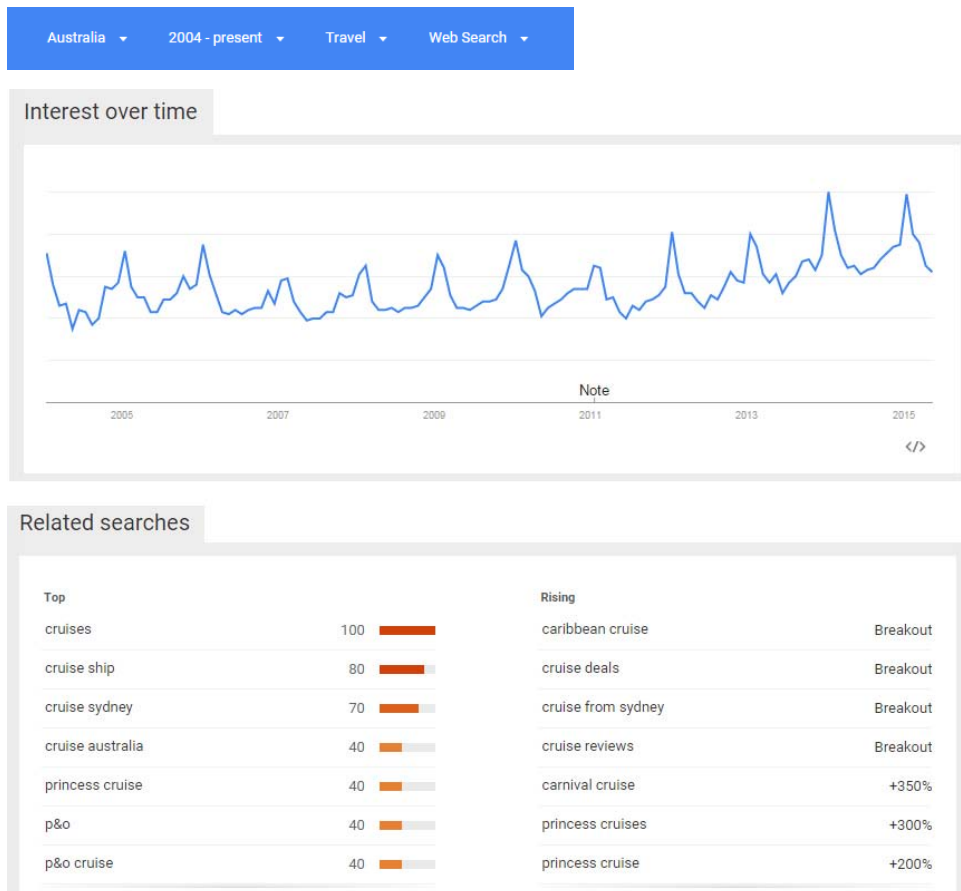
The related searches also offer additional valuable information. The term “Carnival” is the most common in relation to Cruise searches, while “Bahamas cruise” has grown in popularity on searches by 80%.

It is also important to highlight the significant growth of the private sector on searches (cruise critic, cruise deals), which reflects the importance of promotional campaigns on these leading websites within the cruise sector.

Lastly, we would again highlight the leading role of the term Carnival on searches and its presence within Caribbean region conversational topics.



If we also search for the term “cruise” in Australia, we can see a steady increase in interest over time, as well as a marked growth in search terms related to cruises in the Caribbean region and the sector in general, with the terms “Caribbean cruise” and “Carnival cruise” showing particularly high levels of interest.



This would indicate that Australia is now a significant source market for cruise passengers to Barbados, and this needs to be reflected in terms of visibility and promotion on specific Australian digital channels (specialized websites, digital media, blogs, publicity campaigns, SEM etc.)

From the analysis of the search topics “Caribbean cruise” and “Carnival cruise” we have drawn some important conclusions, and would highlight the following:

- Interest over time:
 - o The term “carnival cruise” has more weight in general searches.
 - o Both terms have sustained interest over the time period, with a slight growth from 2009 onwards.
- Regional interest:
 - o Bahamas leads the ranking for “carnival cruise”, followed at some distance by Barbados. Together with Puerto Rico, Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica, which together make up the Caribbean destinations with the most weight in cruise related searches.
 - o In the case of Caribbean cruise, Puerto Rico leads the ranking as the only country present from the Caribbean region, while in terms of source market

countries we would highlight the second position of Canada, fourth position of the UK and the presence of Scandinavian countries.

- Among source countries, the USA stands out (52), followed by Canada (25).
- Related searches:
 - Both terms are directly related in the most common searches for both topics.
 - The private sector has the majority presence.

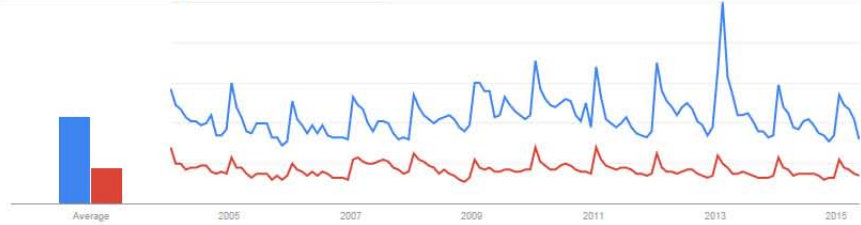
Interest over time

carnival cruise

Search term

caribbean cruise

Search term



Regional interest



carnival cruise

Bahamas	100
Barbados	62
United States	52
Puerto Rico	25
Canada	25
Trinidad & Tobago	22
Jamaica	15



caribbean cruise

Puerto Rico	75
Canada	67
Singapore	60
United Kingdom	39
Ireland	31
Norway	27
Australia	27

Related searches

carnival cruise

Topics	Top	Rising
Carnival Cruise Lines - Company	100	
Cruise ship - Ship class	25	
Royal Caribbean International - ...	5	
Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. - C...	5	
Norwegian Cruise Line - Corpora...	5	
Disney Cruise Line - Company	5	
Princess Cruises - Company	0	

caribbean cruise

Topics	Top	Rising
Cruise ship - Ship class	100	
Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. - C...	95	
Royal Caribbean International - ...	90	
Caribbean - Region in North Am...	65	
Carnival Cruise Lines - Company	35	
Norwegian Cruise Line - Corpora...	15	
Princess Cruises - Company	10	

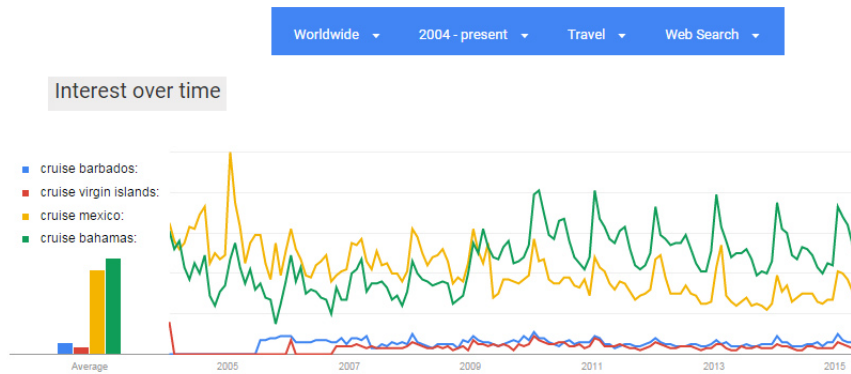
Queries	Top	Rising
carnival cruise lines	85	
caribbean cruise	85	
carnival cruise line	70	
carnival cruise ship	65	
royal caribbean	65	
royal caribbean cruise	65	
norwegian cruise	35	

Queries	Top	Rising
cruise royal caribbean	100	
royal caribbean	100	
cruises	35	
caribbean cruises	30	
carnival	30	
carnival caribbean cruise	30	
carnival cruise	30	

Lastly we have compared the the search behaviour of the Barbados' main competitors, Mexico (Cozumel), the Bahamas and the Virgin Islands.

We would highlight the following:

- The leading position of the Bahamas and Mexico
- The steady figures for Barbados and the Virgin Islands
- The growth of the Bahamas compared with a fall for Mexico



In terms of regional interest for each, we highlight the following:

- The interest in Barbados from the traditional source markets (USA, UK and CANADA)
- The general leading position of the USA.
- The emergence of Australia as a potential source market for Barbados.

Regional interest

cruise barbados



Region	
Barbados	100
United Kingdom	1
Canada	0
United States	0

cruise virgin islands



Region	
United States	100

cruise mexico



Region	
United States	100
Canada	43
Mexico	17
Australia	16
United Kingdom	14

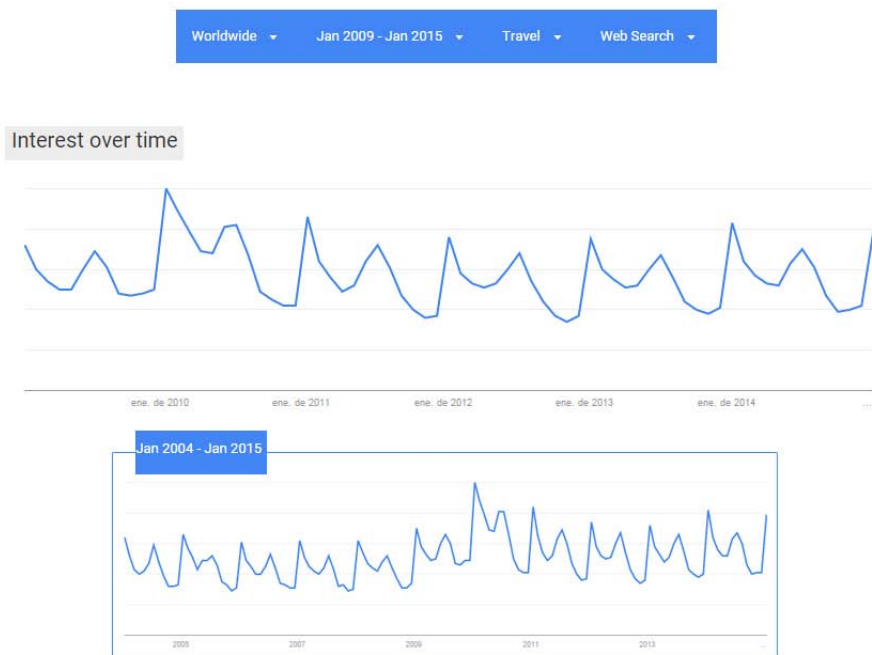
cruise bahamas



Region	
United States	100
Canada	47
Australia	11
United Kingdom	8
Netherlands	7
India	5
Germany	3

All-inclusive

“All inclusive” is a popular search term widely used by the private sector to offer sun and beach orientated products. We considered it important to analyze searches related to this term in order to identify its weighting over time, the regions where it attracts the most interest and some of the related keywords.



As we can see in the first graph, which relates to the period 2009-2015, there has been a slight decrease in interest over recent years, although figures have remained higher than those prior to the economic crisis, as we can see by the 2004-2009 graph. This latter clearly shows the fall in interest in 2009 as a direct result of the global recession.

This generally growing interest over time is especially significant for Barbados when we match the previous figure with regional interest in the term, which is concentrated in the traditional source countries for Barbados (UK, Canada and USA), some of the competitors (Jamaica) and European countries (Denmark, Netherlands)



In regards to keywords and related topics, we would highlight the good positioning of Mexican destinations (Punta Cana, Cancun), as well as the general terms (holidays, cheap vacations, all inclusive vacations) which reflect interest in value for money tourism regardless of the destination.

Related searches

Topics

Rising

Punta Cana - Municipality in Do...	+80%
Thomas Cook Group - Company	+70%
Turks and Caicos Islands - Britis...	+60%
Thomson Holidays - Corporation	+60%
Maldives - Country in Asia	+40%

Queries

Rising

turks and caicos	+130%
thomson all inclusive	+100%
punta cana	+90%
thomas cook	+80%
thomas cook holidays	+80%
tenerife all inclusive	+70%
cheap vacations	+40%

Topics

Top

All-inclusive resort - Industry	100	<div></div>
Vacation - Quotation Subject	20	<div></div>
Holiday - Film genre	15	<div></div>
Resort - Industry	10	<div></div>
Cancún - City in Mexico	5	<div></div>
Caribbean - Region in North Am...	5	<div></div>
Jamaica - Country in North Ame...	5	<div></div>

Queries

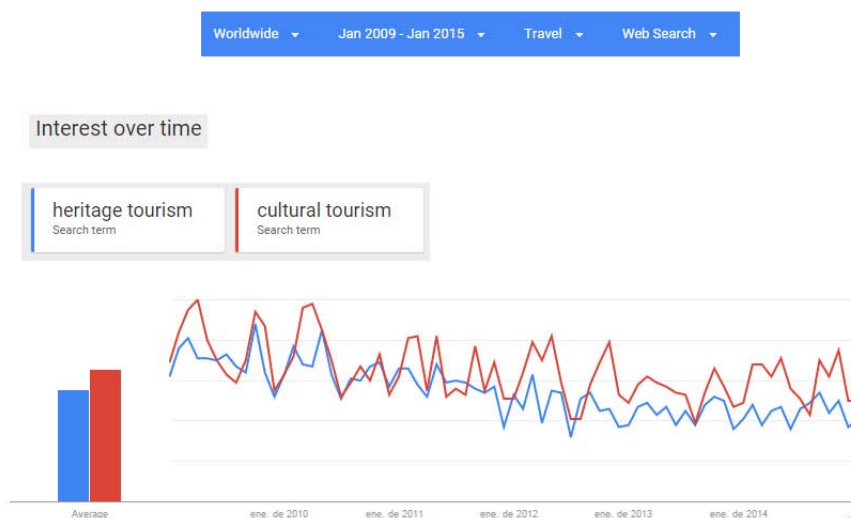
Top

all inclusive resorts	100	<div></div>
holidays	70	<div></div>
all inclusive holidays	70	<div></div>
all inclusive vacations	65	<div></div>
cheap all inclusive	40	<div></div>
all inclusive vacation	40	<div></div>
all inclusive cancun	25	<div></div>

Culture & Heritage

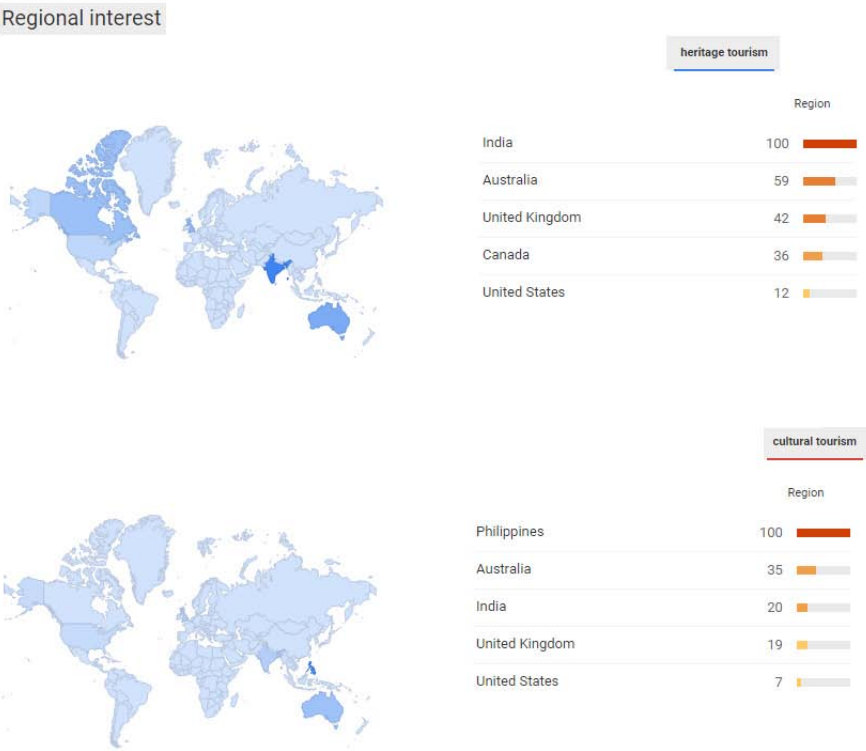
The arrival of the crisis in 2009 put focus on price as a determining factor in the choice of destinations, as we have seen in the analysis of the “all inclusive” concept.

This situation also affected another more specific and experiential form of tourism focused on getting to know and becoming involved in the destination, its culture and heritage. As shown by the graph, the onset of the economic crisis or credit crunch in 2009 saw interest in this type of tourism begin to fall steadily.



This information could be a determining factor when deciding the value proposition for a destination - that is if it weren't for the fact that a slightly closer analysis of the geographical

popularity of both terms shows that the markets still displaying the most interest are the main source markets for Barbados:



This trend would indicate that, in a period of economic stability, this interest could once again translate into tourist visitors from the source markets, provided the destination's value proposition offers these potential travellers relevant and attractive information to assist with their decision making.

Lexicon-Based Methods for Sentiment Analysis

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Julian Brooke**

University of Toronto

Milan Tofiloski†

Simon Fraser University

Kimberly Voll‡

University of British Columbia

Manfred Stede§

University of Potsdam

We present a lexicon-based approach to extracting sentiment from text. The Semantic Orientation CALculator (SO-CAL) uses dictionaries of words annotated with their semantic orientation (polarity and strength), and incorporates intensification and negation. SO-CAL is applied to the polarity classification task, the process of assigning a positive or negative label to a text that captures the text's opinion towards its main subject matter. We show that SO-CAL's performance is consistent across domains and on completely unseen data. Additionally, we describe the process of dictionary creation, and our use of Mechanical Turk to check dictionaries for consistency and reliability.

1. Introduction

Semantic orientation (SO) is a measure of subjectivity and opinion in text. It usually captures an evaluative factor (positive or negative) and potency or strength (degree to which the word, phrase, sentence, or document in question is positive or negative)

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towards a subject topic, person, or idea (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum 1957). When used in the analysis of public opinion, such as the automated interpretation of on-line product reviews, semantic orientation can be extremely helpful in marketing, measures of popularity and success, and compiling reviews.

The analysis and automatic extraction of semantic orientation can be found under different umbrella terms: sentiment analysis (Pang and Lee 2008), subjectivity (Lyons 1981; Langacker 1985), opinion mining (Pang and Lee 2008), analysis of stance (Biber and Finegan 1988; Conrad and Biber 2000), appraisal (Martin and White 2005), point of view (Wiebe 1994; Scheibman 2002), evidentiality (Chafe and Nichols 1986), and a few others, without expanding into neighboring disciplines and the study of emotion (Ketal 1975; Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988) and affect (Batson, Shaw, and Oleson 1992). In this article, **sentiment analysis** refers to the general method to extract subjectivity and polarity from text (potentially also speech), and **semantic orientation** refers to the polarity and strength of words, phrases, or texts. Our concern is primarily with the semantic orientation of texts, but we extract the sentiment of words and phrases towards that goal.

There exist two main approaches to the problem of extracting sentiment automatically.¹ The lexicon-based approach involves calculating orientation for a document from the semantic orientation of words or phrases in the document (Turney 2002). The text classification approach involves building classifiers from labeled instances of texts or sentences (Pang, Lee, and Vaithyanathan 2002), essentially a supervised classification task. The latter approach could also be described as a statistical or machine-learning approach. We follow the first method, in which we use dictionaries of words annotated with the word's semantic orientation, or polarity.

Dictionaries for lexicon-based approaches can be created manually, as we describe in this article (see also Stone et al. 1966; Tong 2001), or automatically, using seed words to expand the list of words (Hatzivassiloglou and McKeown 1997; Turney 2002; Turney and Littman 2003). Much of the lexicon-based research has focused on using adjectives as indicators of the semantic orientation of text (Hatzivassiloglou and McKeown 1997; Wiebe 2000; Hu and Liu 2004; Taboada, Anthony, and Voll 2006).² First, a list of adjectives and corresponding SO values is compiled into a dictionary. Then, for any given text, all adjectives are extracted and annotated with their SO value, using the dictionary scores. The SO scores are in turn aggregated into a single score for the text.

The majority of the statistical text classification research builds Support Vector Machine classifiers, trained on a particular data set using features such as unigrams or bigrams, and with or without part-of-speech labels, although the most successful features seem to be basic unigrams (Pang, Lee, and Vaithyanathan 2002; Salvetti, Reichenbach, and Lewis 2006). Classifiers built using supervised methods reach quite a high accuracy in detecting the polarity of a text (Chaovalit and Zhou 2005; Kennedy and Inkpen 2006; Boiy et al. 2007; Bartlett and Albright 2008). However, although such classifiers perform very well in the domain that they are trained on, their performance drops precipitously (almost to chance) when the same classifier is used in

1 Pang and Lee (2008) provide an excellent recent survey of the opinion mining or sentiment analysis problem and the approaches used to tackle it.

2 With some exceptions: Turney (2002) uses two-word phrases; Whitelaw, Garg, and Argamon (2005) adjective phrases; and Benamara et al. (2007) adjectives with adverbial modifiers. See also Section 2.1. We should also point out that Turney does not create a static dictionary, but rather scores two-word phrases on the fly.

a different domain (Aue and Gamon [2005]; see also the discussion about domain specificity in Pang and Lee [2008, section 4.4]).³ Consider, for example, an experiment using the Polarity Dataset, a corpus containing 2,000 movie reviews, in which Brooke (2009) extracted the 100 most positive and negative unigram features from an SVM classifier that reached 85.1% accuracy. Many of these features were quite predictable: *worst*, *waste*, *unfortunately*, and *mess* are among the most negative, whereas *memorable*, *wonderful*, *laughs*, and *enjoyed* are all highly positive. Other features are domain-specific and somewhat inexplicable: If the writer, director, plot, or script are mentioned, the review is likely to be unfavorable towards the movie, whereas the mention of performances, the ending, or even flaws, indicates a good movie. Closed-class function words appear frequently; for instance, *as*, *yet*, *with*, and *both* are all extremely positive, whereas *since*, *have*, *though*, and *those* have negative weight. Names also figure prominently, a problem noted by other researchers (Finn and Kushmerick 2003; Kennedy and Inkpen 2006). Perhaps most telling is the inclusion of unigrams like *2*, *video*, *tv*, and *series* in the list of negative words. The polarity of these words actually makes some sense in context: Sequels and movies adapted from video games or TV series do tend to be less well-received than the average movie. However, these real-world facts are not the sort of knowledge a sentiment classifier ought to be learning; within the domain of movie reviews such facts are prejudicial, and in other domains (e.g., video games or TV shows) they are either irrelevant or a source of noise.

Another area where the lexicon-based model might be preferable to a classifier model is in simulating the effect of linguistic context. On reading any document, it becomes apparent that aspects of the local context of a word need to be taken into account in SO assessment, such as negation (e.g., *not good*) and intensification (e.g., *very good*), aspects that Polanyi and Zaenen (2006) named contextual valence shifters. Research by Kennedy and Inkpen (2006) concentrated on implementing those insights. They dealt with negation and intensification by creating separate features, namely, the appearance of *good* might be either *good* (no modification) *not_good* (negated *good*), *int_good* (intensified *good*), or *dim_good* (diminished *good*). The classifier, however, cannot determine that these four types of *good* are in any way related, and so in order to train accurately there must be enough examples of all four in the training corpus. Moreover, we show in Section 2.4 that expanding the scope to two-word phrases does not deal with negation adequately, as it is often a long-distance phenomenon. Recent work has begun to address this issue. For instance, Choi and Cardie (2008) present a classifier that treats negation from a compositional point of view by first calculating polarity of terms independently, and then applying inference rules to arrive at a combined polarity score. As we shall see in Section 2, our lexicon-based model handles negation and intensification in a way that generalizes to all words that have a semantic orientation value.

A middle ground exists, however, with semi-supervised approaches to the problem. Read and Carroll (2009), for instance, use semi-supervised methods to build domain-independent polarity classifiers. Read and Carroll built different classifiers and show that they are more robust across domains. Their classifiers are, in effect, dictionary-based, differing only in the methodology used to build the dictionary. Li et al. (2010) use co-training to incorporate labeled and unlabeled examples, also making use of

³ Blitzer, Dredze, and Pereira (2007) do show some success in transferring knowledge across domains, so that the classifier does not have to be re-built entirely from scratch.

a distinction between sentences with a first person subject and with other subjects. Other hybrid methods include those of Andreevskaya and Bergler (2008), Dang, Zhang, and Chen (2010), Dasgupta and Ng (2009), Goldberg and Zhu (2006), or Prabowo and Thelwall (2009). Wan (2009) uses co-training in a method that uses English labeled data and an English classifier to learn a classifier for Chinese.

In our approach, we seek methods that operate at a deep level of analysis, incorporating semantic orientation of individual words and contextual valence shifters, yet do not aim at a full linguistic analysis (one that involves analysis of word senses or argument structure), although further work in that direction is possible.

In this article, starting in Section 2, we describe the Semantic Orientation CALCulator (SO-CAL) that we have developed over the last few years. We first extract sentiment-bearing words (including adjectives, verbs, nouns, and adverbs), and use them to calculate semantic orientation, taking into account valence shifters (intensifiers, downtoners, negation, and irrealis markers). We show that this lexicon-based method performs well, and that it is robust across domains and texts. One of the criticisms raised against lexicon-based methods is that the dictionaries are unreliable, as they are either built automatically or hand-ranked by humans (Andreevskaya and Bergler 2008). In Section 3, we present the results of several experiments that show that our dictionaries are robust and reliable, both against other existing dictionaries, and as compared to values assigned by humans (through the use of the Mechanical Turk interface). Section 4 provides comparisons to other work, and Section 5 conclusions.

2. SO-CAL, the Semantic Orientation CALCulator

Following Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957), the calculation of sentiment in SO-CAL begins with two assumptions: that individual words have what is referred to as **prior polarity**, that is, a semantic orientation that is independent of context; and that said semantic orientation can be expressed as a numerical value. Several lexicon-based approaches have adopted these assumptions (Bruce and Wiebe 2000; Hu and Liu 2004; Kim and Hovy 2004). In this section, we describe the different dictionaries used in SO-CAL, and the incorporation of valence shifters. We conclude the section with tests that show SO-CAL's performance on different data sets.

2.1 Adjectives

Much of the early research in sentiment focused on adjectives or adjective phrases as the primary source of subjective content in a document (Hatzivassiloglou and McKeown 1997; Hu and Liu 2004; Taboada, Anthony, and Voll 2006), albeit with some exceptions, especially more recently, which have also included the use of adverbs (Benamara et al. 2007); adjectives and verbs (Kim and Hovy 2004); adjective phrases (Whitelaw, Garg, and Argamon 2005); two-word phrases (Turney 2002; Turney and Littman 2003); adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (Subrahmanian and Reforgiato 2008); the exclusive use of verbs (Sokolova and Lapalme 2008); the use of *non-affective* adjectives and adverbs (Sokolova and Lapalme 2009a, 2009b); or rationales, words and phrases selected by human annotators (Zaidan and Eisner 2008). In general, the SO of an entire document is the combined effect of the adjectives or relevant words found within, based upon a dictionary of word rankings (scores). The dictionary can be created in different ways: manually, using existing dictionaries such as the General Inquirer (Stone et al. 1966), or semi-automatically, making use of resources like WordNet (Hu and Liu 2004; Kim

and Hovy 2004; Esuli and Sebastiani 2006). The dictionary may also be produced automatically via association, where the score for each new adjective is calculated using the frequency of the proximity of that adjective with respect to one or more seed words. **Seed words** are a small set of words with strong negative or positive associations, such as *excellent* or *abysmal*. In principle, a positive adjective should occur more frequently alongside the positive seed words, and thus will obtain a positive score, whereas negative adjectives will occur most often in the vicinity of negative seed words, thus obtaining a negative score. The association is usually calculated following Turney's method for computing mutual information (Turney 2002; Turney and Littman 2003), but see also Rao and Ravichandran (2009) and Velikovich et al. (2010) for other methods using seed words.

Previous versions of SO-CAL (Taboada and Grieve 2004; Taboada, Anthony, and Voll 2006) relied on an adjective dictionary to predict the overall SO of a document, using a simple aggregate-and-average method: The individual scores for each adjective in a document are added together and then divided by the total number of adjectives in that document.⁴ As we describe subsequently, the current version of SO-CAL takes other parts of speech into account, and makes use of more sophisticated methods to determine the true contribution of each word.

It is important to note that how a dictionary is created affects the overall accuracy of subsequent results. In Taboada, Anthony, and Voll (2006) we report on experiments using different search engines and operators in trying to create dictionaries semi-automatically. We found that, although usable, dictionaries created using the Google search engine were unstable. When rerun, the results for each word were subject to change, sometimes by extreme amounts, something that Kilgarrieff (2007) also notes, arguing against the use of Google for linguistic research of this type. An alternative would be to use a sufficiently large static corpus, as Turney (2006) does to measure relational similarity across word pairs.

Automatically or semi-automatically created dictionaries have some advantages. We found many novel words in our initial Google-generated dictionary. For instance, *unlistenable* was tagged accurately as highly negative, an advantage that Velikovich et al. (2010) point out. However, in light of the lack of stability for automatically generated dictionaries, we decided to create manual ones. These were produced by hand-tagging all adjectives found in our development corpus, a 400-text corpus of reviews (see the following) on a scale ranging from -5 for extremely negative to $+5$ for extremely positive, where 0 indicates a neutral word (excluded from our dictionaries). "Positive" and "negative" were decided on the basis of the word's prior polarity, that is, its meaning in most contexts. We do not deal with word sense disambiguation but suspect that using even a simple method to disambiguate would be beneficial. Some word sense ambiguities are addressed by taking part of speech into account. For instance, as we mention in Section 3.4, *plot* is only negative when it is a verb, but should not be so in a noun dictionary; *novel* is a positive adjective, but a neutral noun.

To build the system and run our experiments, we use the corpus described in Taboada and Grieve (2004) and Taboada, Anthony, and Voll (2006), which consists of a 400-text collection of Epinions reviews extracted from eight different categories: books, cars, computers, cookware, hotels, movies, music, and phones, a corpus we named "Epinions 1." Within each collection, the reviews were split into 25 positive and 25

4 To determine part of speech, we use the Brill tagger (Brill 1992).

negative reviews, for a total of 50 in each category, and a grand total of 400 reviews in the corpus (279,761 words). We determined whether a review was positive or negative through the “recommended” or “not recommended” feature provided by the review’s author.

2.2 Nouns, Verbs, and Adverbs

In the following example, adapted from Polanyi and Zaenen (2006), we see that lexical items other than adjectives can carry important semantic polarity information.

- (1) a. The young man strolled+ purposefully+ through his neighborhood+.
- b. The teenaged male strutted– cockily– through his turf–.

Although the sentences have comparable literal meanings, the plus-marked nouns, verbs, and adverbs in Example (1a) indicate the positive orientation of the speaker towards the situation, whereas the minus-marked words in Example (1b) have the opposite effect. It is the combination of these words in each of the sentences that conveys the semantic orientation for the entire sentence.⁵

In order to make use of this additional information, we created separate noun, verb, and adverb dictionaries, hand-ranked using the same +5 to –5 scale as our adjective dictionary. The enhanced dictionaries contain 2,252 adjective entries, 1,142 nouns, 903 verbs, and 745 adverbs.⁶ The SO-carrying words in these dictionaries were taken from a variety of sources, the three largest being Epinions 1, the 400-text corpus described in the previous section; a 100-text subset of the 2,000 movie reviews in the Polarity Dataset (Pang, Lee, and Vaithyanathan 2002; Pang and Lee 2004, 2005);⁷ and positive and negative words from the General Inquirer dictionary (Stone et al. 1966; Stone 1997).⁸ The sources provide a fairly good range in terms of register: The Epinions and movie reviews represent informal language, with words such as *ass-kicking* and *nifty*; at the other end of the spectrum, the General Inquirer was clearly built from much more formal texts, and contributed words such as *adroit* and *jubilant*, which may be more useful in the processing of literary reviews (Taboada, Gillies, and McFetridge 2006; Taboada et al. 2008) or other more formal texts.

Each of the open-class words was assigned a hand-ranked SO value between 5 and –5 (neutral or zero-value words were excluded) by a native English speaker. The numerical values were chosen to reflect both the prior polarity and the strength of the word, averaged across likely interpretations. The dictionaries were later reviewed by a committee of three other researchers in order to minimize the subjectivity of ranking SO by hand. Examples are shown in Table 1.

One difficulty with nouns and verbs is that they often have both neutral and non-neutral connotations. In the case of *inspire* (or *determination*), there is a very positive meaning (Example (2)) as well as a rather neutral meaning (Example (3)).

- (2) The teacher inspired her students to pursue their dreams.
- (3) This movie was inspired by true events.

⁵ Something that Turney (2002) already partially addressed, by extracting two-word phrases.

⁶ Each dictionary also has associated with it a stop-word list. For instance, the adjective dictionary has a stop-word list that includes *more*, *much*, and *many*, which are tagged as adjectives by the Brill tagger.

⁷ Available from www.cs.cornell.edu/People/pabo/movie-review-data/.

⁸ Available from www.wjh.harvard.edu/~inquirer/.

Table 1
Examples of words in the noun and verb dictionaries.

Word	SO Value
monstrosity	−5
hate (noun and verb)	−4
disgust	−3
sham	−3
fabricate	−2
delay (noun and verb)	−1
determination	1
inspire	2
inspiration	2
endear	3
relish (verb)	4
masterpiece	5

Except when one sense was very uncommon, the value chosen reflected an averaging across possible interpretations. In some cases, the verb and related noun have a different SO value. For instance, *exaggerate* is −1, whereas *exaggeration* is −2, and the same values are applied to *complicate* and *complication*, respectively. We find that grammatical metaphor (Halliday 1985), that is, the use of a noun to refer to an action, adds a more negative connotation to negative words.

All nouns and verbs encountered in the text are lemmatized,⁹ and the form (singular or plural, past tense or present tense) is not taken into account in the calculation of SO value. As with the adjectives, there are more negative nouns and verbs than positive ones.¹⁰

The adverb dictionary was built automatically using our adjective dictionary, by matching adverbs ending in *-ly* to their potentially corresponding adjective, except for a small selection of words that were added or modified by hand. When SO-CAL encountered a word tagged as an adverb that was not already in its dictionary, it would stem the word and try to match it to an adjective in the main dictionary. This worked quite well for most adverbs, resulting in semantic orientation values that seem appropriate (see examples in Table 2).

In other cases—for example, *essentially*—there is a mismatch between the meaning (or usage pattern) of the adverb when compared to the adjective it is based on, and the value was manually corrected.

Although the vast majority of the entries are single words, SO-CAL allows for multi-word entries written in a regular expression-like language; in particular, the verb dictionary contains 152 multi-word expressions (mostly phrasal verbs, e.g., *fall apart*), and the intensifier dictionary, described subsequently, contains 35 multi-word entries (e.g., *a little bit*). Multi-word expressions take precedence over single-word expressions; for instance, *funny* by itself is positive (+2), but if the phrase *act funny* appears, it is given a negative value (−1).

9 Lemmatization is a simple process of stripping any endings from words not in the dictionary, according to their part of speech. After stripping, we perform a new dictionary look-up.

10 The ratio for adjectives is 47:53 positive to negative, and for nouns it is 41:59.

Table 2
Examples from the adverb dictionary.

Word	SO Value
excruciatingly	−5
inexcusably	−3
foolishly	−2
satisfactorily	1
purposefully	2
hilariously	4

It is difficult to measure the coverage of our dictionaries, because there is no direct way to estimate the number of SO-carrying words and expressions in English (although it should probably be larger than 5,000, the rough total of our current dictionaries). Wilson, Wiebe, and Hoffmann (2005) provide a list of subjectivity cues with over 8,000 entries; there are many more neutral, repeated, and inflectionally related entries than in our dictionaries, however, as well as many more nouns, and far fewer adjectives. Automatically generated dictionaries are generally much larger: SentiWordNet (Baccianella, Esuli, and Sebastiani 2010) includes 38,182 non-neutral words (when the polarity of senses is averaged—see discussion in Section 3.4), and the Maryland dictionary (Mohammad, Dorr, and Dunne 2009) has 76,775 words and phrases tagged for polarity. We will see, in Section 3.4, that larger dictionaries are not necessarily better, in some cases because the information contained is not as detailed (the Maryland dictionary is not classified by part of speech), or because, in general, including more words may also lead to including more noise.

Independently of the difference between manually and automatically generated dictionaries, we have evidence that coverage is a double-edged sword: With an earlier version of SO-CAL we extracted 50 texts from the Polarity Dataset (texts from which we had not previously drawn words) and extracted all words judged to have sentiment that were not already in our dictionaries. We found 116 adjectives, 62 nouns, 43 verbs, and 7 adverbs, a small fraction (less than 3%) of the words in our present lexicon. When these words were added, we found that performance in that data set actually dropped (by 4%). We believe this effect is related to the large amounts of description in genres such as movie reviews (see Taboada, Brooke, and Stede [2009] for a way to address the problem of descriptive noise); basically, rarer vocabulary is likely to contain a strong descriptive (semantic) component, and thus be used in a way that is tangential to overall text sentiment. In any case, the best argument for good (and appropriate) coverage is acceptable performance for new texts in new domains, and indeed we will see in Sections 2.8 and 2.9 that there is little difference in performance between texts and domains which were used to build our dictionaries, and others which were not.

2.3 Intensification

Quirk et al. (1985) classify intensifiers into two major categories, depending on their polarity: Amplifiers (e.g., *very*) increase the semantic intensity of a neighboring lexical item, whereas downtoners (e.g., *slightly*) decrease it. Some researchers in sentiment analysis (Kennedy and Inkpen 2006; Polanyi and Zaenen 2006) have implemented

Table 3
Percentages for some intensifiers.

Intensifier	Modifier (%)
slightly	−50
somewhat	−30
pretty	−10
really	+15
very	+25
extraordinarily	+50
(the) most	+100

intensifiers using simple addition and subtraction—that is, if a positive adjective has an SO value of 2, an amplified adjective would have an SO value of 3, and a downtoned adjective an SO value of 1. One problem with this kind of approach is that it does not account for the wide range of intensifiers within the same subcategory. *Extraordinarily*, for instance, is a much stronger amplifier than *rather*. Another concern is that the amplification of already “loud” items should involve a greater overall increase in intensity when compared to more subdued counterparts (compare *truly fantastic* with *truly okay*); in short, intensification should also depend on the item being intensified.¹¹ In SO-CAL, intensification is modeled using modifiers, with each intensifying word having a percentage associated with it; amplifiers are positive, whereas downtoners are negative, as shown in Table 3.

For example, if *sleazy* has an SO value of −3, *somewhat sleazy* would have an SO value of: $-3 \times (100\% - 30\%) = -2.1$. If *excellent* has a SO value of 5, *most excellent* would have an SO value of: $5 \times (100\% + 100\%) = 10$. Intensifiers are applied recursively starting from the closest to the SO-valued word: If *good* has an SO value of 3, then *really very good* has an SO value of $(3 \times [100\% + 25\%]) \times (100\% + 15\%) = 4.3$.

Because our intensifiers are implemented using a percentage scale, they are able to fully capture the variety of intensifying words as well as the SO value of the item being modified. This scale can be applied to other parts of speech, given that adjectives, adverbs, and verbs use the same set of intensifiers, as seen in Example (4), where *really* modifies an adjective (*fantastic*), an adverb (*well*), and a verb (*enjoyed*).

- (4)
- a. The performances were all really fantastic.

b. Zion and Planet Asai from the Cali Agents flow really well over this.

c. I really enjoyed most of this film.

Nouns, however, are modified exclusively by adjectives. We are able to take into account some kinds of modification using our main adjective dictionary; there is a small class of adjectives which would not necessarily amplify or downtone correctly if considered in isolation, however, as seen in the following (invented) examples. Here, adjectives such as *total* do not have a semantic orientation of their own, but, just like adverbial intensifiers, contribute to the interpretation of the word that follows them; *total failure* is presumably worse than just *failure*. Thus, we have a separate dictionary for adjectival intensifiers. When an intensifying adjective appears next to

11 Martin and White (2005, page 139) also suggest that the effect is different according to the polarity of the item being intensified. We have not explored that possibility.

an SO-valued noun, it is treated as an intensifier rather than as a separate SO-bearing unit.

- (5) a. The plot had huge problems.
- b. They have made clear progress.
- c. This is a total failure.
- d. It's an insignificant criticism.

Besides adverbs and adjectives, other intensifiers are quantifiers (*a great deal of*). We also included three other kinds of intensification that are common within our genre: the use of all capital letters, the use of exclamation marks, and the use of discourse connective *but* to indicate more salient information (e.g., *...but the movie was GREAT!*).¹² In all, our intensifier dictionary contains 177 entries, some of them multi-word expressions.

2.4 Negation

The obvious approach to negation is simply to reverse the polarity of the lexical item next to a negator, changing *good* (+3) into *not good* (−3). This we may refer to as **switch negation** (Saurí 2008). There are a number of subtleties related to negation that need to be taken into account, however. One is the fact that there are negators, including *not*, *none*, *nobody*, *never*, and *nothing*, and other words, such as *without* or *lack* (verb and noun), which have an equivalent effect, some of which might occur at a significant distance from the lexical item which they affect; a backwards search is required to find these negators, one that is tailored to the particular part of speech involved. We assume that for adjectives and adverbs the negation is fairly local, though it is sometimes necessary to look past determiners, copulas, and certain verbs, as we see in Example (6).

- (6) a. Nobody gives a good performance in this movie. (*nobody* negates *good*)
- b. Out of every one of the fourteen tracks, none of them approach being weak and are all stellar. (*none* negates *weak*)
- c. Just a V-5 engine, nothing spectacular. (*nothing* negates *spectacular*)

Negation search in SO-CAL includes two options: Look backwards until a clause boundary marker is reached;¹³ or look backwards as long as the words/tags found are in a backward search skip list, with a different list for each part of speech. The first approach is fairly liberal, and allows us to capture the true effects of negation raising (Horn 1989), where the negator for a verb moves up and attaches to the verb in the matrix clause. In the following examples the *don't* that negates the verb *think* is actually negating the embedded clause.

- (7) I don't wish to reveal much else about the plot because I don't think it is worth mentioning.

¹² The discourse connective *but* plays a role in linking clauses and sentences in a rhetorical relation (Mann and Thompson 1988). There are more sophisticated ways of making use of those relations, but we have not implemented them yet.

¹³ Clause boundary markers include punctuation and sentential connectives, including some ambiguous ones such as *and* and *but*.

- (8) Based on other reviews, I don't think this will be a problem for a typical household environment.

The second approach is more conservative. In Example (7), the search would only go as far as *it*, because adjectives (*worth*), copulas, determiners, and certain basic verbs are on the list of words to be skipped (allowing negation of adjectives within VPs and NPs), but pronouns are not. Similarly, verbs allow negation on the other side of *to*, and nouns look past adjectives as well as determiners and copulas. This conservative approach seems to work better, and is what we use in all the experiments in this article.¹⁴

Another issue is whether a polarity flip (switch negation) is the best way to quantify negation. Though it seems to work well in certain cases (Choi and Cardie 2008), it fails miserably in others (Liu and Seneff 2009). Consider *excellent*, a +5 adjective: If we negate it, we get *not excellent*, which intuitively is a far cry from *atrocious*, a -5 adjective. In fact, *not excellent* seems more positive than *not good*, which would negate to a -3. In order to capture these pragmatic intuitions, we implemented another method of negation, a polarity shift (**shift negation**). Instead of changing the sign, the SO value is shifted toward the opposite polarity by a fixed amount (in our current implementation, 4). Thus a +2 adjective is negated to a -2, but the negation of a -3 adjective (for instance, *sleazy*) is only slightly positive, an effect we could call "damning with faint praise." Here are a few examples from our corpus.

- (9) a. She's not terrific ($5 - 4 = 1$) but not terrible ($-5 + 4 = -1$) either.
 b. Cruise is not great ($4 - 4 = 0$), but I have to admit he's not bad ($-3 + 4 = 1$) either.
 c. This CD is not horrid ($-5 + 4 = -1$).

In each case, the negation of a strongly positive or negative value reflects a mixed opinion which is correctly captured in the shifted value. Further (invented) examples are presented in Example (10).

- (10) a. Well, at least he's not sleazy. ($-3 \rightarrow 1$)
 b. Well, it's not dreadful. ($-4 \rightarrow 0$)
 c. It's just not acceptable. ($1 \rightarrow -3$)
 d. It's not a spectacular film, but ... ($5 \rightarrow 1$)

As shown in the last example, it is very difficult to negate a strongly positive word without implying that a less positive one is to some extent true, and thus our negator becomes a downtoner.

A related problem for the polarity flip model, as noted by Kennedy and Inkpen (2006), is that negative polarity items interact with intensifiers in undesirable ways. *Not very good*, for instance, comes out more negative than *not good*. Another way to handle this problem while preserving the notion of a polarity flip is to allow the negative item to flip the polarity of both the adjective and the intensifier; in this way, an amplifier becomes a downtoner:

$$\text{Not good} = 3 \times -1 = -3$$

$$\text{Not very good} = 3 \times (100\% + 25\% \times -1) \times -1 = -2.25$$

¹⁴ Full parsing is also an option, but the speed of the parser could pose problems if the goal is to process text on-line. Parsing would still produce ambiguities, and may not be able to correctly interpret scope. Another option is to use parser results to learn the scope (Council, McDonald, and Velikovich 2010).

Compare with the polarity shift version, which is only marginally negative:

$$\text{Not good} = 3 - 4 = -1$$

$$\text{Not very good} = 3 \times (100\% + 25\%) - 4 = -0.25$$

The problems with polarity shift could probably be resolved by fine-tuning SO values and modifiers; the polarity flip model seems fundamentally flawed, however. Polarity shifts seem to better reflect the pragmatic reality of negation, and is supported by Horn (1989), who suggests that affirmative and negative sentences are not symmetrical.

One other interesting aspect of the pragmatics of negation is that negative statements tend to be perceived as more marked than their affirmative counterparts, both pragmatically and psychologically (Osgood and Richards 1973; Horn 1989, chapter 3). This markedness is true in terms of linguistic form, with negative forms being marked across languages (Greenberg 1966), and it is also manifested as (token) frequency distribution, with negatives being less frequent (Boucher and Osgood 1969).¹⁵ Negation tends to be expressed in euphemistic ways, which makes negative sentiment more difficult to identify in general.

In our treatment of negation, we consider mostly negators, but not negative polarity items (NPIs), such as *any*, *anything*, *ever*, or *at all*. In some cases, searching for an NPI would be more effective than searching for a negator. NPIs occur in negative sentences, but also in nonveridical contexts (Zwarts 1995; Giannakidou 1998), which also affect semantic orientation. For instance, *any* occurs in contexts other than negative sentences, as shown in Example (11), from Giannakidou (2001, page 99), where in all cases the presence of *any* is due to a nonveridical situation. Using NPIs would allow us to reduce semantic orientation values in such contexts. We address some of these issues through irrealis blocking, as we explain in the next section.

- (11) a. Did you find any interesting books?
 b. Pick any apple!
 c. He might come any moment now.
 d. I insist you allow anyone in.

Similarly, negation calculation does not include what Choi and Cardie (2008) term “content word negators,” words such as *eliminate*. Most of those are included in the respective dictionaries (i.e., the verb dictionary for *eliminate*) with negative polarity. When they occur in a sentence, aggregation with other sentiment words in the sentence would probably yield a result similar to the compositional approach of Choi and Cardie or Moilanen and Pulman (2007).

2.5 Irrealis Blocking

There are a number of markers that indicate that the words appearing in a sentence might not be reliable for the purposes of sentiment analysis. We refer to these using the linguistic term *irrealis*, usually applied in non-factual contexts. English does not make extensive use of the subjunctive for this purpose, as opposed to other languages, such as Spanish, which tend to use the subjunctive mood to indicate that what is being

¹⁵ Some researchers argue that there is a negative bias in the human representation of experience (negative events are more salient), and the positive bias found by Boucher and Osgood is the result of euphemisms and political correctness in language (Jing-Schmidt 2007).

expressed is not factual. However, English has a few other mechanisms to convey irrealis. Word order, modal verbs, and private-state verbs related to expectation fulfill that function. The imperative mood also conveys that the action expressed has not occurred.

Irrealis markers can change the meaning of sentiment-bearing words in very subtle ways. In some cases, such as Example (12), the right approach is to reverse the SO of *good*, which is in the scope of the modal verb *would*. This interpretation is supported by the contrast in the *but* clause. In Example (13), on the other hand, the modal should not reverse the positive evaluation conveyed by *best*.

(12) I thought this movie would be as good as the Grinch, but unfortunately, it wasn't.

(13) But for adults, this movie could be one of the best of the holiday season.

The approach currently implemented consists of ignoring the semantic orientation of any word in the scope of an irrealis marker (i.e., within the same clause). In Example (14), the positive value of *great* is simply ignored.

(14) This should have been a great movie. (3 \rightarrow 0)

Our list of irrealis markers includes modals, conditional markers (*if*), negative polarity items like *any* and *anything*, certain (mostly intensional) verbs (*expect*, *doubt*), questions, and words enclosed in quotes (which may be factual, but not necessarily reflective of the author's opinion).

There is good reason to include NPIs as irrealis blockers rather than as full-fledged negators: NPIs often appear in embedded alternatives which are not generally marked with question marks and where negation would not be appropriate. In the following example, *any* is part of the complement of *wonder*, which has an implicit alternative (*whether there are going to be any problems with that ... or not*).

(15) I wonder whether there are going to be any problems with that.

There is one case, at least, where it is clear that the SO value of a term should not be nullified by an irrealis blocker, as in Example (16), where the question mark currently blocks the negative orientation of *amateurish crap*. The question is rhetorical in this case, but we have no way of distinguishing it from a real question. Although not very common, this kind of off-hand opinion, buried in a question, imperative, or modal clause, is often quite strong and very reliable. SO-CAL looks for markers of definiteness within close proximity of SO-carrying words (within the NP, such as the determiner *this*), and ignores irrealis blocking if an irrealis marker is found.

(16) ... he can get away with marketing this amateurish crap and still stay on the bestseller list?

2.6 Text-Level Features

Lexicon-based sentiment classifiers generally show a positive bias (Kennedy and Inkpen 2006), likely the result of a universal human tendency to favor positive language (Boucher and Osgood 1969).¹⁶ In order to overcome this problem, Voll and Taboada (2007) implemented normalization, shifting the numerical cut-off point between positive and negative reviews. In the current version of SO-CAL, we have used a somewhat

¹⁶ On average, there are almost twice as many positive as negative words in our texts.

different approach, instead supposing that negative expressions, being relatively rare, are given more cognitive weight when they do appear. Thus we increase the final SO of any negative expression (after other modifiers have applied) by a fixed amount (currently 50%). This seems to have essentially the same effect in our experiments, and is more theoretically satisfying.

Pang, Lee, and Vaithyanathan (2002) found that their machine-learning classifier performed better when a binary feature was used indicating the presence of a unigram in the text, instead of a numerical feature indicating the number of appearances. Counting each word only once does not seem to work equally well for word-counting models. We have, however, improved overall performance by decreasing the weight of words that appear more often in the text: The n th appearance of a word in the text will have only $1/n$ of its full SO value.¹⁷ Consider the following invented example.

- (17) Overall, the film was excellent. The acting was excellent, the plot was excellent, and the direction was just plain excellent.

Pragmatically, the repetition of *excellent* suggests that the writer lacks additional substantive commentary, and is simply using a generic positive word. We could also impose an upper limit on the distance of repetitions, and decrease the weight only when they appear close to each other. Repetitive weighting does not apply to words that have been intensified, the rationale being that the purpose of the intensifier is to draw special attention to them.

Another reason to tone down words that appear often in a text is that a word that appears regularly is more likely to have a neutral sense. This is particularly true of nouns. In one example from our corpus, the words *death*, *turmoil*, and *war* each appear twice. A single use of any of these words might indicate a comment (e.g., *I was bored to death*), but repeated use suggests a descriptive narrative.

2.7 Other Features of SO-CAL

Two other features merit discussion: weighting and multiple cut-offs. First of all, SO-CAL incorporates an option to assign different weights to sentences or portions of a text. Taboada and Grieve (2004) improved performance of an earlier version of the SO calculator by assigning the most weight at the two-thirds mark of a text, and significantly less at the beginning. The current version has a user-configurable form of this weighting system, allowing any span of the text (with the end points represented by fractions of the entire text) to be given a certain weight. An even more flexible and powerful system is provided by the XML weighting option. When this option is enabled, XML tag pairs in the text (e.g., `<topic>`, `</topic>`) can be used as a signal to the calculator that any words appearing between these tags should be multiplied by a certain given weight. This gives SO-CAL an interface to outside modules. For example, one module could pre-process the text and tag spans that are believed to be topic sentences, another module could provide discourse information such as rhetorical relations (Mann and Thompson 1988), and a third module could label the sentences that seem to be subjective. Armed with this information, SO-CAL can disregard or de-emphasize parts of the text that are less relevant to sentiment analysis. This weighting feature is used in Taboada, Brooke, and

¹⁷ One of the reviewers points out that this is similar to the use of term frequency (tf-idf) in information retrieval (Salton and McGill 1983). See also Paltoglou and Thelwall (2010) for a use of information retrieval techniques in sentiment analysis.

Stede (2009) to lower the weight of descriptive paragraphs, as opposed to paragraphs that contain mostly commentary.

Secondly, SO-CAL allows for multiple cut-offs. Most work in sentiment analysis has focused on binary positive/negative classification. Notable exceptions include Koppel and Schler (2005) and Pang and Lee (2005), who each adapted relevant SVM machine-learning algorithms to sentiment classification with a three- and four-class system, respectively. Because SO-CAL outputs a numerical value that reflects both the polarity and strength of words appearing in the text, it is fairly straightforward to extend the function to any level of granularity required; in particular, the SO-CAL grouping script takes a list of n cut-off values, and classifies texts into $n + 1$ classes based on text values. The evaluative output gives information about exact matches and also near-misses (when a text is incorrectly classified into a neighboring class). This allows SO-CAL to identify, for instance, the star rating that would be assigned to a consumer review, as shown in Brooke (2009).

2.8 Evaluation of Features

To test the performance of all of SO-CAL's features, we used the following data sets:

Epinions 1:

Our original collection of 400 review texts (Taboada and Grieve 2004), used in various phases of development. The collection consists of 50 reviews each of: books, cars, computers, cookware, hotels, movies, music, and phones.

Epinions 2:

A new collection of 400 texts from the epinions.com site, with the same composition as Epinions 1.

Movie:

1,900 texts from the Polarity Dataset (Pang and Lee 2004).¹⁸

Camera:

A 2,400-text corpus of camera, printer, and stroller reviews, taken from a larger set of Epinions reviews; also used in Bloom, Garg, and Argamon (2007).

All corpora contain equal numbers of positive and negative texts, and the last three were completely new test corpora.¹⁹ We include our development Epinions 1 corpus in part to show how similar the performance on "familiar" text is to that for unseen texts. In corpus-based or statistical methods, it is essential that training and testing be carried out on separate corpora, because a classifier will often learn to classify its training set too well, using features that are irrelevant to the actual task; for this reason, testing data is usually set aside, or cross-validation used. This is, however, not such an important concern for a lexicon-based model, provided that the dictionary values are assigned to words based on their real-world prior polarity, and not the polarity of the text in which they appear (which is how an SVM classifier would learn its weights). There is, of course, the danger that the words chosen for the dictionaries are reflective of the domain in question. Our dictionaries do contain words that are more frequent or mostly present in review domains, and Epinions 1 influenced our choice of words to include

¹⁸ One hundred reviews of the Polarity Dataset were used for development, and thus those are excluded from our testing. The performance difference between using the full 2,000 texts or 1,900 is negligible.

¹⁹ The development corpus (Epinions 1) and two annotated versions of it, for rhetorical relations and Appraisal, are available from the project's Web site: www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/research/nserc-project.html.

in the dictionaries. The performance is constant across review domains, however, and remains very good in completely new domains, which shows that there was no over-fitting of the original set.

Table 4 shows a comparison using the current version of SO-CAL with various dictionary alternatives. These results were obtained by comparing the output of SO-CAL to the “recommended” or “not recommended” field of the reviews. An output above zero is considered positive (recommended), and negative if below zero.

The Simple dictionary is a version of our main dictionary that has been simplified to 2/−2 values, switch negation, and 1/−1 intensification, following Polanyi and Zaenen (2006). Only-Adj excludes dictionaries other than our main adjective dictionary, and the One-Word dictionary uses all the dictionaries, but disregards multi-word expressions. Asterisks indicate a statistically-significant difference using chi-square tests, with respect to the full version of SO-CAL, with all features enabled and at default settings.

These results indicate a clear benefit to creating hand-ranked, fine-grained, multiple-part-of-speech dictionaries for lexicon-based sentiment analysis; the full dictionary outperforms all but the One-Word dictionary to a significant degree ($p < 0.05$) in the corpora as a whole. It is important to note that some of the parameters and features that we have described so far (the fixed number for negative shifting, percentages for intensifiers, negative weighting, etc.) were fine-tuned in the process of creating the software, mostly by developing and testing on Epinions 1. Once we were theoretically and experimentally satisfied that the features were reasonable, we tested the final set of parameters on the other corpora.

Table 5 shows the performance of SO-CAL with a number of different options, on all corpora (recall that all but Epinions 1 are completely unseen data). “Neg w” and “rep w” refer to the use of negative weighting (the SO of negative terms is increased by 50%) and repetition weighting (the n th appearance of a word in the text has $1/n$ of its full SO value). Space considerations preclude a full discussion of the contribution of each part of speech and sub-feature, but see Brooke (2009) for a full range of tests using these data. Here the asterisks indicate a statistically-significant difference compared to the preceding set of options.

As we can see in the table, the separate features contribute to performance. Negation and intensification together increase performance significantly. One of the most important gains comes from negative weighting, with repetition weighting also contributing in some, but not all, of the corpora. Although the difference is small, we see here that shifted polarity negation does, on average, perform better than switched polarity negation. We have not presented all the combinations of features, but we know from other experiments, that, for instance, basic negation is more important than basic

Table 4
Comparison of performance using different dictionaries.

Dictionary	Percent correct by corpus				
	Epinions 1	Epinions 2	Movie	Camera	Overall
Simple	76.75	76.50	69.79*	78.71	75.11*
Only-Adj	72.25*	74.50	76.63	71.98*	73.93*
One-Word	80.75	80.00	75.68	79.54	78.23
Full	80.25	80.00	76.37	80.16	78.74

*Statistically significant using the chi-square test, $p < 0.05$.

Table 5
Performance of SO-CAL using various options.

SO-CAL options	Percent correct by corpus				
	Epinions 1	Epinions 2	Movie	Camera	Overall
All words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs)	65.50	65.25	68.05	64.70	66.04
All words + negation (shift)	67.75	67.25	70.10	67.25*	68.35*
All words + neg (shift) + intensification	69.25	71.50	73.47*	70.00*	71.35*
All words + neg (shift) + int + irrealis blocking	71.00	71.25	74.95	71.37	72.66*
All words + neg (shift) + int + irrealis + neg w	81.50*	78.25*	75.08	78.24*	77.32*
All words + neg (shift) + int + modals + neg w + rep w	80.25	80.00	76.37	80.16*	78.74*
All words + neg (switch) + int + modals + neg w + rep w	80.00	80.00	75.57	80.04	78.37

*Statistically significant compared to the preceding set of options (Table 4) $p < 0.05$.

intensification, as also shown by Kennedy and Inkpen (2006). In summary, it is the combination of carefully crafted dictionaries and features inspired by linguistic insights that we believe makes SO-CAL a robust method for sentiment analysis.

Table 6 shows the accuracy of the SO-CAL system across different review types in Epinions 1 and Epinions 2 (the latter unseen data), including the F-measure for classification of positive and negative texts. The table shows that SO-CAL’s performance on positive reviews is generally better than on negative reviews (run with all options and shifted negation). This is despite the fact that all of our dictionaries contain far more negative words than positive ones. As noted already by Boucher and Osgood (1969), there is a strong preference for avoiding negation and negative terms even when expressing negative opinions, making the detection of text sentiment difficult for systems which depend solely on these indicators (also see results in Dave, Lawrence, and Pennock 2003, Turney 2002). The exception are books and movies, where performance is more even across positive and negative, or often better in negative reviews. We hypothesize this is because consumer product reviews contain more factual information that the reader is required to interpret as positive or negative (for instance, the range for a cordless phone or the leg room in the back seat of a car). Some of that factual information may be implicitly negative, and therefore missed by SO-CAL.

The breakdown for the Polarity Dataset (Movies in Table 5) is 89.37% precision for negative reviews and 63.2% for positive ones, with an overall accuracy of 76.37%. A number of other papers have used the Polarity Dataset created by Bo Pang, most of them following statistical methods. Pang and Lee’s own results show an overall accuracy of 87.15% for polarity classification of whole reviews (Pang and Lee 2004). Fletcher and Patrick (2005) used bags-of-words that included Appraisal features, and obtained 83.7% accuracy in that same data set, whereas Whitelaw, Garg, and Argamon (2005), using bags-of-words combined with Appraisal groups achieved 90.2%. In all cases, the accuracy reflects a single domain and data set. Andreevskaja and Bergler (2008) show, however, that cross-domain performance drops significantly. They used a hybrid

Table 6
Performance across review types and on positive and negative reviews.

Subcorpus	Epinions 1			Epinions 2		
	Pos-F	Neg-F	Accuracy	Pos-F	Neg-F	Accuracy
Books	0.69	0.74	0.72	0.69	0.77	0.74
Cars	0.90	0.89	0.90	0.80	0.75	0.78
Computers	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.90	0.89	0.90
Cookware	0.74	0.58	0.68	0.79	0.76	0.78
Hotels	0.76	0.67	0.72	0.80	0.70	0.76
Movies	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.76	0.79	0.78
Music	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.83	0.81	0.82
Phones	0.81	0.78	0.80	0.85	0.83	0.84
Total	0.81	0.79	0.80	0.81	0.79	0.80

method, combining statistical and lexicon-based approaches, on reviews (the Polarity Dataset and product reviews), news, and blogs, with an average accuracy across all domains of 71.1% (on sentences, not full texts).

We will, in Section 3.4, provide a more detailed comparison of SO-CAL’s dictionaries to other dictionaries. Although the results presented in this section are below those of some statistical methods, we argue that our system performs more evenly across domains, and can be enhanced with contextual sources of information. We show performance in non-review domains in the next section.

We defined, in the introduction, sentiment as polarity plus strength, although the results presented here evaluate only the polarity accuracy. Space precludes a full discussion of SO-CAL’s measure of strength, but Brooke (2009) shows that SO-CAL’s output correlates well with star ratings in reviews.

2.9 Evaluation of SO-CAL in Other Domains

Reference to domain portability, in this article and in other work, is usually limited to portability across different types of reviews (Aue and Gamon 2005; Blitzer, Dredze, and Pereira 2007; Andreevskaia and Bergler 2008). This section shows that SO-CAL’s performance is maintained across domains other than reviews, and across different types of text structures. Even though SO-CAL was primarily designed to determine the sentiment of texts roughly a paragraph or longer, the evaluations reported in this section demonstrate comparable performance when applied to shorter texts such as headlines and sentences extracted from news and blogs.

We tested SO-CAL with four different data sets: the Multi-Perspective Question Answering (MPQA) corpus, version 2.0 (Wiebe, Wilson, and Cardie 2005); a collection of MySpace.com comments from Mike Thelwall (Prabowo and Thelwall 2009); a set of news and blog posts from Alina Andreevskaia (Andreevskaia and Bergler 2008); and a set of headlines from Rada Mihalcea and Carlo Strappavara (Strappavara and Mihalcea 2007).²⁰

The first set of data is the MPQA corpus (version 2.0), a collection of news articles and other documents (texts from the American National Corpus and other sources) annotated for opinions and other private states (beliefs, emotions, speculation, etc.). We

20 We thank them all for sharing their data with us.

extracted all the sentences that contained subjective positive and negative expressions, in all levels of intensity (low, medium, high, and extreme). The extracted set contains 663 positive and 1,211 negative sentences.

The data from Mike Thelwall consists of comments posted on MySpace.com. The annotation is done on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 indicates “no emotion.” As a consequence, we focused on the comments with scores of 4 and 5. Because each comment had both a positive and negative label, we labeled “positive” those with a higher positive score and vice versa for negative labels, and excluded comments with the same score for both (i.e., neutral). This yielded a total of 83 comments (59 positive, 24 negative).

The data from Alina Andreevskaia consist of individual sentences from both news and blogs, annotated according to whether they are negative, positive, or neutral. We used only the negative and positive sentences (788 from news, and 802 from blogs, equally divided between positive and negative).

The Affective Text data from Rada Mihalcea and Carlo Strappavara was used in the 2007 SemEval task. It contains 1,000 news headlines annotated with a range between −100 (very negative) and 100 (very positive). We excluded six headlines that had been labeled as 0 (therefore neutral), yielding 468 positive and 526 negative headlines. In addition to the full evaluation, Strappavara and Mihalcea (2007) also propose a coarse evaluation, where headlines with scores −100 to −50 are classified as negative, and those 50 to 100 as positive. Excluding the headlines in the middle gives us 155 positive headlines and 255 negative ones.

Table 7 shows the results of the evaluation. Included in the table is a baseline for each data set, assigning polarity to the most frequent class for the data. These data sets include much smaller spans of text than are found in consumer reviews, with some sentences or headlines not containing any words from the SO-CAL dictionaries. This ranged from about 21% of the total in the MySpace comments to 54% in the headlines.²¹ Two approaches were used in this cross-domain evaluation when SO-CAL encountered texts for which it found no words in its dictionaries (SO-empty texts). First, the back-off method involves using the most frequent polarity for the corpus (or positive, when they are equal), and assigning that polarity to all SO-empty texts. This method provides results that can be directly compared to other results on these data sets, although, like the baseline, it assumes some knowledge about the polarity balance of the corpus. The figures in the first section of Table 7 suggest robust performance as compared to a most-frequent-class baseline, including modest improvement over the relevant cross-domain results of Andreevskaia and Bergler (2008).²² Moilanen, Pulman, and Zhang (2010) also use the headlines data, and obtain a polarity classification accuracy of 77.94% below our results excluding empty.²³

21 By default, SO-CAL assigns a zero to such texts, which is usually interpreted to mean that the text is neither positive nor negative. However, in a task where we know a priori that all texts are either positive or negative, this can be a poor strategy, because we will get all of these empty texts wrong: When there are a significant number of empty texts, performance can be worse than guessing. Note that the problem of how to interpret empty texts is not a major issue for the full text reviews where we typically apply SO-CAL, because there are very few of them; for instance, out of the 2,400 texts in the Camera corpus, only 4 were assigned a zero by SO-CAL. Guessing the polarity or removing those four texts entirely has no effect on the accuracy reported in Table 5.

22 Their ensemble classifier had 73.3% accuracy in news, but only 70.9% in blogs, and their performance in the Polarity Dataset was 62.1%, or over 14% lower than ours.

23 Our results are not comparable to those of Thelwall et al. (2010) on the MySpace comments, as they classify the comments on a 1–5 scale (obtaining average accuracy of 60.6% and 72.8% in positive and negative comments, respectively), whereas we have a much simpler two-point scale (positive or negative).

Table 7
Performance of SO-CAL in other domains.

SO-CAL options	Percent correct by corpus					
	MPQA	MySpace	News	Blogs	Headlines	Headlines (coarse)
SO-CAL (back-off)	73.64	81.93	71.57	75.31	62.17	74.63
Baseline (most frequent class)	64.64	71.08	50.00	50.00	52.92	62.20
SO-CAL (excluding empty)	79.38	78.69	77.76	82.33	79.83	88.98
Baseline (most frequent class, excluding empty)	66.94	69.93	51.10	50.00	59.87	67.37
% SO-empty	28.61	21.12	25.25	21.70	54.00	43.98

The second method used in evaluating SO-CAL on SO-empty texts is to only classify texts for which it has direct evidence to make a judgment. Thus, we exclude such SO-empty texts from the evaluation. The second part of Table 7 shows the results of this evaluation. The results are strikingly similar to the performance we saw on full review texts, with most attaining a minimum of 75–80% accuracy. Although missing vocabulary (domain-specific or otherwise) undoubtedly plays a role, the results provide strong evidence that relative text size is the primary cause of SO-empty texts in these data sets. When the SO-empty texts are removed, the results are entirely comparable to those that we saw in the previous section. Although sentence-level polarity detection is a more difficult task, and not one that SO-CAL was specifically designed for, the system has performed well on this task, here, and in related work (Murray et al. 2008; Brooke and Hurst 2009).

3. Validating the Dictionaries

To a certain degree, acceptable performance across a variety of data sets, and, in particular, improved performance when the full granularity of the dictionaries is used (see Table 5), provides evidence for the validity of SO-CAL’s dictionary rankings. Recall also that the individual word ratings provided by a single researcher were reviewed by a larger committee, mitigating some of the subjectivity involved. Nevertheless, some independent measure of how well the dictionary rankings correspond to the intuitions of English speakers would be valuable, particularly if we wish to compare our dictionaries with automatically generated ones.

The most straightforward way to investigate this problem would be to ask one or more annotators to re-rank our dictionaries, and compute the inter-annotator agreement. However, besides the difficulty and time-consuming nature of the task, any simple metric derived from such a process would provide information that was useful only in the context of the absolute values of our –5 to +5 scale. For instance, if our re-ranker is often more conservative than our original rankings (ranking most SO 5 words as 4, SO 4 words as 3, etc.), the absolute agreement might approach zero, but we would like to be able to claim that the rankings actually show a great deal of consistency given

their relative distribution. To accomplish this, we focus on relative comparisons rather than absolute ranking.

In retrospect, the use of a 10-point scale is somewhat arbitrary, and so another goal of our explorations is to test whether we can validate our choice of granularity of scale. Generally, our concerns are general patterns, not individual words, and to what extent those patterns coincide with the discrete, linear model that we have assumed; however, we also hope to obtain information that might show some inconsistencies for particular, commonly used words.

In this section, we perform two types of validation. First, we compare the dictionary scores to scores provided by human annotators, recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk service. Second, we compare our dictionaries and their performance to a few other available dictionaries. In both cases, the results show that our dictionaries are robust.

3.1 Data Collection

To collect data on the validity of our dictionary, we made use of Amazon's Mechanical Turk service,²⁴ which provides access to a pool of workers who have signed up to perform small-scale tasks that require human intelligence. Mechanical Turk is quickly becoming a popular resource among computational linguists, and has been used in sentiment, emotion, and subjectivity tasks (Akkaya et al. 2010; Mellebeek et al. 2010; Mohammad and Turney 2010; Yano, Resnik, and Smith 2010), although there are mixed reports on its reliability (Snow et al. 2008; Callison-Burch 2009; Zaenen to appear).

In short, the Mechanical Turk service acts as a marketplace that connects Requesters, people who have tasks that require human intelligence, and Workers, or "Turkers," people who will perform such tasks for a small payment. Typical tasks include tagging images, transcribing spoken data, or finding information on the Web. Payments for each individual task may be as low as \$0.01. Quality is controlled through several measures, which include the request of Turkers with specific qualifications, or with high approval ratings for previously completed tasks. Requesters may also reject a Turker's work if it has been incorrectly completed, in which case they are not paid, also bringing their approval rating down.

Our early testing suggested that if we restricted our task to those Turkers who had an extremely high approval rating (99%), the results were mostly acceptable, with a certain amount of noise inherent in the use of anonymous Turkers. Under the circumstances, keeping the task simple was important. Note that, although we have six sets of results for each data set, this is not analogous to having six annotators, since each set included work by multiple Turkers. We can, however, be sure that no Turker provided an answer to the same question twice, and for the purposes of this study a more diverse set of responses may actually be viewed as a positive.

Carrying out an evaluation on all five dictionaries (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and intensifiers) would have been somewhat redundant, because most verbs have a (synonymous) noun counterpart, and most adverbs are derived from an adjective. Here, we focus mostly on the adjective dictionary, which is the primary dictionary in terms of overall size as well as frequency of occurrence. We began with our full adjective dictionary (minus multi-word expressions), but filtered using word counts from our two large corpora (the 2,000 text Polarity Dataset and 3,000 text Camera

²⁴ www.mturk.com/.

corpus), including a word in the analysis only if it appeared at least five times in both corpora. That gave us a collection of 483 commonly occurring adjectives; these, as well as our intensifier dictionary, were the focus of our evaluation. We also investigated a set of nouns chosen using the same rubric. In most cases, the results were comparable to those for adjectives; however, with a smaller test set (only 184 words), the data were generally messier, and so we omit the details here.

The basic premise behind our evaluation technique can be described as follows: The distributional spread of answers in a simple, three-way decision task should directly reflect the relative distance of words on an SO (semantic orientation) scale. In particular, we can validate our dictionaries without forcing Turkers to use our 11-point scale (including zero), making their task significantly less onerous as well as less subject to individual bias. We chose to derive the data in two ways: one task where the goal is to decide whether a word is positive, negative, or neutral; and another where two polar words are presented for comparison (Is one stronger, or are they the same strength?). In the former task, we would expect to see more “errors,” that is, cases where a polar term in our dictionary is labeled neutral, in words that are in fact more neutral (SO value 1 versus SO value 5). Similarly, in the second task we would expect to see more “equal” judgments of words which are only 1 SO unit apart than those which are 3 SO units apart. More formally, we predict that a good ranking of words subjected to this testing should have the following characteristics:

- The percentage of “equal/neutral” judgments should be maximized at exactly the point we would expect, given the SO value assigned to the word(s) in question. The number of polar responses should be relatively balanced.
- As we move away from this point (SO = 0) in either direction, we would expect a linear increase in the appropriate polar response, and a corresponding drop in the other responses.
- The percentage of polar responses may hit a maximum, after which we would expect a consistent distribution (within a small margin of error; this maximum might not be 100%, due to noise in the data).

For the first task, that is, the neutral/negative/positive single word decision task, we included neutral words from our Epinions corpus which had originally been excluded from our dictionaries. Purely random sampling would have resulted in very little data from the high SO end of the spectrum, so we randomly selected first by SO (neutral SO = 0) and then by word, re-sampling from the first step if we had randomly selected a word that had been used before. In the end, we tested 400 adjectives chosen using this method. For each word, we solicited six judgments through Mechanical Turk.

Preparing data for the word comparison task was slightly more involved, because we did not want to remove words from consideration just because they had been used once. Note that we first segregated the words by polarity: We compared positive words with positive words and negative words with negative words. This first test yielded a nice wide range of comparisons by randomly selecting first by SO and then by word, as well as by lowering the probability of picking high (absolute) SO words, and discounting words which had been used recently (in early attempts we saw high absolute SO words like *great* and *terrible* appearing over and over again, sometimes in consecutive queries). Though the odds of this occurring were low, we explicitly disallowed duplicate

pairs. Once we settled on a method, we created 500 pairs of positive adjectives and 500 pairs of negative adjectives. Again, for each pair we solicited six judgments.

In addition to our “standard” pair comparison data sets, we also created, using the same method, four data sets which compared negated words to words of opposite polarity (i.e., *not bad* and *good*). The primary goal here was not to evaluate the ranking of the words, but rather to see how well our two models of negation (switch and shift) correspond to human intuition across a wide variety of cases. To do so, we assume that our dictionary is generally correct, and then use the SO values after negation as input.

Finally, we wanted to evaluate the intensifier dictionary, again using pair-wise comparisons of strength. To this end, we selected 500 pairs of adverbial modifiers (e.g., *very*). Similar to the main dictionary pairs, we randomly selected first by modifier value, and then by word, discounting a pair if one of the words had appeared in the 10 most recently selected pairs. These words were presented with a uniform adjective pairing (*likeable*), to assist the Turkers in interpreting them.

3.2 Evaluation

Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses by SO value in the single-word identification task. The graph is very close to what we predicted. Neutral judgments peak at 0 SO, but are also present for those SO values in the neighborhood of 0, decreasing as we increase our SO distance from the original. The effect is not quite linear, which might reflect either on our scale (it is not as linear as we presume) or, more likely, the fact that the distance between 0 and 1/−1 is simply a much more relevant distance for the purposes of the task; unlike words that differ in strength, the difference between 0 and 1 is theoretically a difference in kind, between a word that has a positive or negative connotation, and one that is purely descriptive. Another limitation of this method, with respect to confirming our dictionary rankings, is the fact that it does not illuminate the edges of the spectrum, as the distributions hit their maximums before the 5/−5 extreme.

Because we asked six Turkers to provide responses for each word, we can also calculate average percentage of pairwise agreement (the number of pairs of Turkers who agreed, divided by the total number of possible pairings), which for this task was 67.7%, well above chance but also far from perfect agreement. Note that we are not trying to establish reliability in the traditional sense. Our method depends on a certain

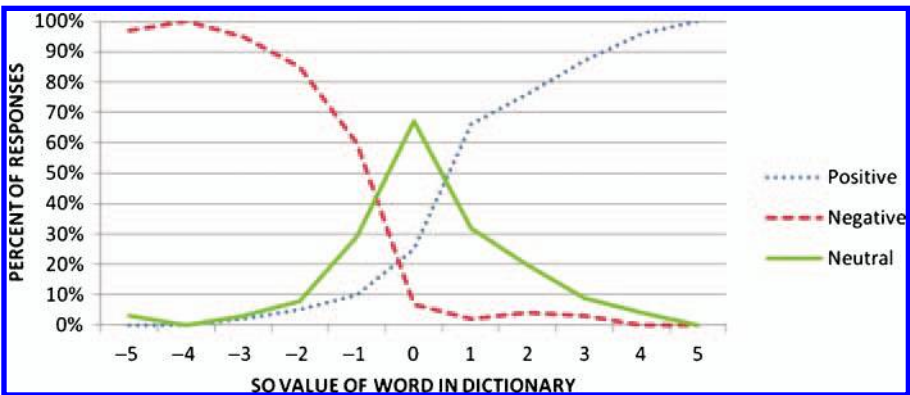


Figure 1
Distribution of responses by SO value, single-word task.

amount of disagreement; if it were simply the case that some -1 words were judged by all rankers as neutral (or positive), the best explanation for that fact would be errors in individual SO values. If Turkers, however, generally agree about SO $5/-5$ words, but generally disagree about SO $1/-1$ words, this “unreliability” actually reflects the SO scale. This is indeed the pattern we see in the data: Average pairwise agreement is 60.1% for $1/-1$ words, but 98.2% for $5/-5$ (see Andreevskaja and Bergler [2006] for similar results in a study of inter-annotator agreement in adjective dictionaries).²⁵

Interestingly, although we expected relatively equal numbers of positive and negative judgments at $SO = 0$, that was not the result. Instead, words with $SO = 0$ were sometimes interpreted as positive, but almost never interpreted as negative. This is mostly likely attributable to the default status of positive, and the marked character of negative expression (Boucher and Osgood 1969; Horn 1989; Jing-Schmidt 2007); neutral description might be taken as being vaguely positive, but it would not be mistaken for negative expression.²⁶

For the word-pair task, we categorize the distribution data by the difference in SO between the two words, putting negative and positive words in separate tables. For instance, a -4 difference with negative adjectives means the result of comparing a -1 word to a -5 word, and a $+2$ difference corresponds to comparing a -5 with a negative -3 , a -4 with a -2 , or a -3 with a -1 . (We always compare words with the same sign, i.e., negative to negative.) In early testing, we found that Turkers almost completely ignored the *same* category, and so we took steps (changing the instructions and the order of presentation) to try to counteract this effect. Still, the *same* designation was underused. There are a number of possible explanations for this, all of which probably have some merit. One is that our scale is far too coarse-grained, that we are collapsing distinguishable words into a single classification. The trade-off here is with ease of ranking; if we provided, for instance, 20 SO values instead of 10, it would be more difficult to provide confident rankings, and would probably yield little in the way of tangible benefits.²⁷ Another potential confounding factor is that words within the same SO category often vary considerably on some other dimension, and it is not natural to think of them as being equivalent. For instance, we judged *savory*, *lush*, and *jolly* to be equally positive, but they are applied to very different kinds of things, and so are not easily compared. And, of course, even assuming our 10-point scale, there are words in our dictionary that do not belong together in the same category; our focus here is on the big picture, but we can use this data to identify words which are problematic and improve the dictionary in the next iteration.

The results in Figures 2 and 3 for the adjective word pair task are otherwise very encouraging. Unlike the single word task, we see a clear linear pattern that covers the entire SO spectrum (though, again, there is noise). At SO value difference = 0, *same* reaches a maximum, and positive and negative judgments are almost evenly distributed. The average pairwise agreement on this task was somewhat lower, 60.0%

25 Note also that another drawback with pairwise agreement is that agreement does not change linearly with respect to the number of dissenters. For example, in the six-rater task, a single disagreement drops agreement from 100% to 66.7%; a second disagreement drops the score to 40% if different than the first agreement, or 46.7% if the same.

26 This is the opposite result from the impressions reported by Cabral and Hortaçsu (2010), where, in an evaluation of comments for eBay sellers, neutral comments were perceived as close to negative.

27 Other evidence that suggests making our scale more fine-grained is unlikely to help: When two words were difficult to distinguish, we often saw three different answers across the six Turkers. For example, for -3 SO words *fat* and *ignorant*, three Turkers judged them the same, two judged *ignorant* as stronger, and one judged *fat* as stronger.

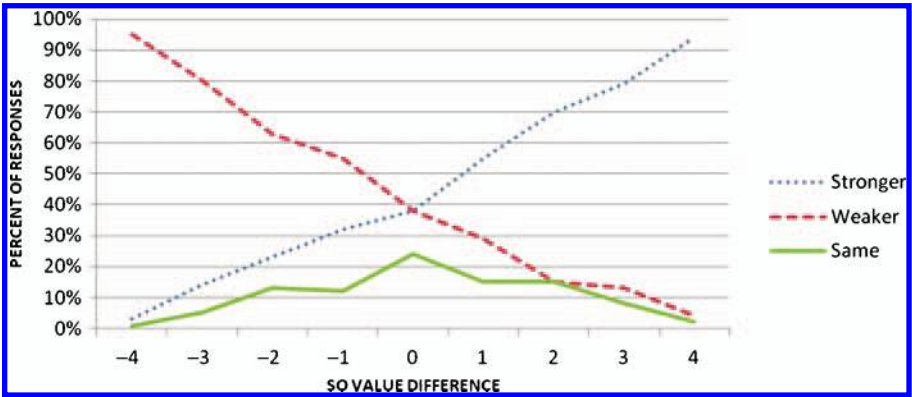


Figure 2
Distribution of responses by SO difference for positive adjectives, word-pair task.

and 63.7% for Figure 2 and Figure 3, respectively. This is not surprising, because the vast majority of the data come from the difficult-to-judge range between +2 and -2. Outside of this range, agreement was much higher: Both experiments showed roughly 50% agreement when the SO value of the two words was the same, and an increase of approximately 10% for each point difference in SO value.

Figure 4 shows the results for adverbial intensifiers. Pairwise agreement here was higher, at 68.4%. The basic trends are visible; there is, however a lot of noise throughout. This is the drawback of having a relatively fine-grained scale, and in retrospect we perhaps should have followed the model for adjectives and split our words further into downplayers and amplifiers. The other reason for fluctuations, particularly at the extremes, was our inclusion of comparative and pragmatic intensifiers like *more*, *less*, *the most*, *barely*, *hardly*, *almost*, and *not only*, which, unlike regular scalar intensifiers (*very*, *immensely*), are very difficult to interpret outside of a discourse context, and are not easily compared.

For the negation evaluation task, we can state directly the result of comparing a positive word with a negated negative word: Outside of colloquial expressions such as *not bad*, it is nearly impossible to express any positive force by negating a negative; the percentage of negated negatives that were ranked higher than positives was about 5%

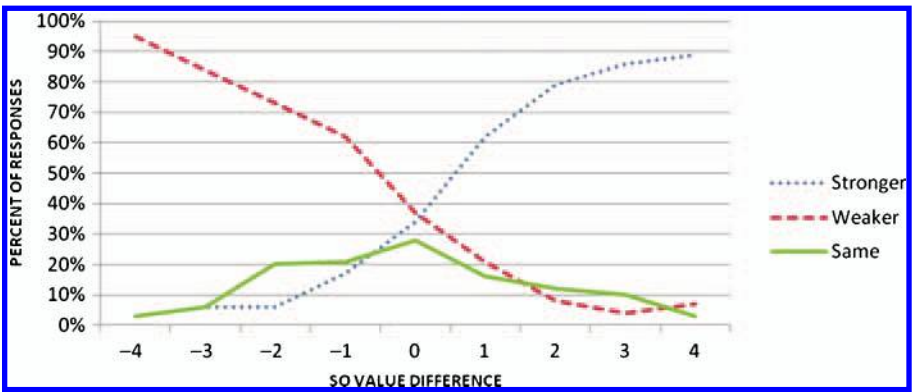


Figure 3
Distribution of responses by SO difference for negative adjectives, word-pair task.

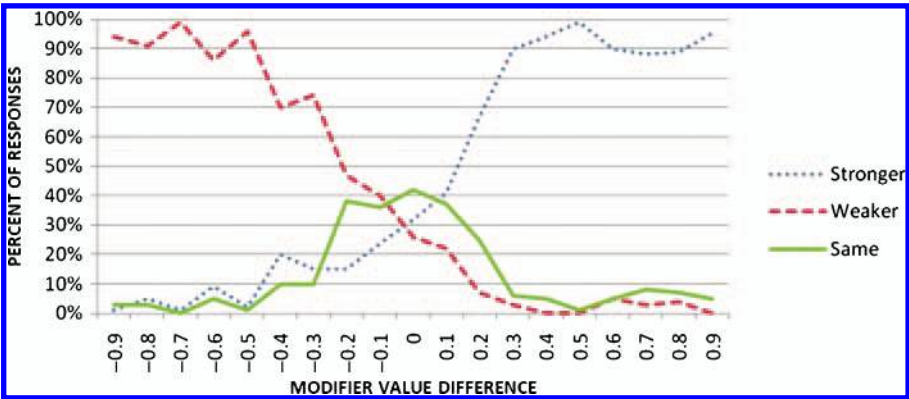


Figure 4
Distribution of responses by modifier value. Difference for adverbial intensifiers.

Table 8
Distribution percentages for the negative/negated positive SO comparison task.

Word SO	-1			-2			-3			-4			-5		
	pos	neg	neu	pos	neg	neu	pos	neg	neu	pos	neg	neu	pos	neg	neu
1	50	19	32	16	54	30	8	78	14	4	82	14	0	95	5
2	47	32	21	11	66	23	7	67	27	8	72	20	4	86	11
3	39	26	35	17	67	17	10	84	5	3	95	3	0	9	10
4	36	36	29	31	45	23	20	68	12	12	82	5	0	93	7
5	25	45	30	25	58	17	17	61	22	0	95	5	6	72	22

(a result that was duplicated for noun negation), concentrated mostly on SO 1 positive words (which, as we have seen, are sometimes viewed as neutral). This result is not predicted by either of our models of negation (switch and shift), but it may be somewhat irrelevant because negated negatives, being essentially a double negative, are fairly rare. The main use of negation, we have found, is to negate a positive word.

Table 8 shows the distribution percentages for the negative/negated positive SO comparison task. Here, *pos* refers to the percentage of people who rated the negated positive word as being stronger, *neg* refers to the percentage of people who rated the negative word as being stronger, and *neu* refers to a judgment of *same*. Pairwise agreement across raters on this task was only 51.2%, suggesting that the comparisons involving negatives are the most difficult of our tasks.²⁸

As the SO value of the negative word increases, we of course expect that it is judged stronger, a pattern visible from left to right in Table 8. The more interesting direction is from top to bottom: If the switch model is correct, we expect increasing judgments in favor of the (negated) positive word, but if the shift model is correct, we would see the opposite. The results in Table 8 are not conclusive. There are aspects of the

²⁸ We in fact saw even lower agreement than this after our initial data collection. We investigated the low agreement, and attributed it to a single Turker (identified by his/her ID) who exhibited below-chance agreement with other Turkers. A visual inspection of the data also indicated that this Turker, who provided more responses than any other, either did not understand the task, or was deliberately sabotaging our results. We removed this Turker’s data, and solicited a new set of responses.

table consistent with our shift model, for instance a general decrease in *pos* judgments between *pos* SO 3 and 5 for lower *neg* SO. However, there are a number of discrepancies. For instance, the shift model would predict that a negated +1 word is stronger than a -2 word (+1 becomes -3 under negation), which is often not the case. Note also that the shift trend seems somewhat reversed for higher negative SOs. In general, the shift model accounts for 45.2% of Mechanical Turk (MT) judgments (see our definition of MT correspondence, in the following section), whereas the switch model accounts for 33.4%. Negation is clearly a more complicated phenomenon than either of these simple models can entirely represent, although shifting does a somewhat better job of capturing the general trends.

3.3 Dictionary Comparisons

We now turn to using the data that we have collected to evaluate other dictionaries and scales. We use the same Mechanical Turk judgments as in the previous section, with six Turkers per word or pair. For simplicity, we look only at the single-word task and pairwise comparison of negative adjectives. We chose negative words because they are better distinguished by our automatic classifiers. Note that our definition of negative adjective is tied to our original SO ratings, and has been integrated into the selection of pairs for Mechanical Turk. At this stage, we hope to have shown that the adjective dictionary does a sufficiently accurate job of distinguishing positive, negative, and neutral words, and provides a good range of words within those categories, with which other dictionaries can be tested. Here, we will use the term **Mechanical Turk (MT) correspondence** as follows:

$$MT\ correspondence = \frac{\text{Mech. Turk judgments predicted by dictionary}}{\text{Total Mech. Turk judgments}}$$

For example, if one rater thought A was more positive than B, and the other thought they were of the same strength, then an SO dictionary which predicts either of these results would have 50% MT correspondence (on this word), whereas a dictionary where the SO value of B is greater than A would have 0% MT correspondence. As an absolute measure, correspondence is somewhat misleading: Because there are disagreements among Turkers, it is impossible for a dictionary to reach 100% MT correspondence. For instance, the highest possible MT correspondence in the single-word task is 79%, and the highest possible MT correspondence for the negative adjective task is 76.8%. MT correspondence is useful as a relative measure, however, to compare how well the dictionaries predict MT judgments.

Our first comparison is with the dictionary of adjectives that was derived using the SO-PMI method (Turney 2002), using Google hit counts (Taboada, Anthony, and Voll 2006). The SO values for the words tested here vary from 8.2 to -5.74. We have already noted in Section 2 that using this dictionary instead of our manually-ranked one has a strongly negative effect on performance. Because the Google dictionary is continuous, we place the individual SO values into evenly spaced buckets so that we can graph their distribution. For easy comparison with our dictionary, we present the results when buckets equivalent to our 11-point SO scale are used. The results for the single-word task are given in Figure 5.²⁹

²⁹ When bucketing for the single word task, we used a neutral (zero) bucket that was twice the size of the other buckets, reflecting the fact that zero is a more significant point on the scale in this context.

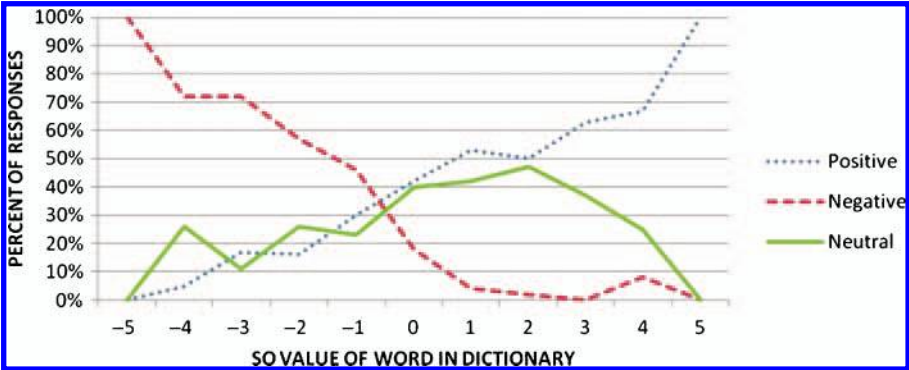


Figure 5
Distribution of responses by adjective SO value for Google PMI dictionary, single-word task.

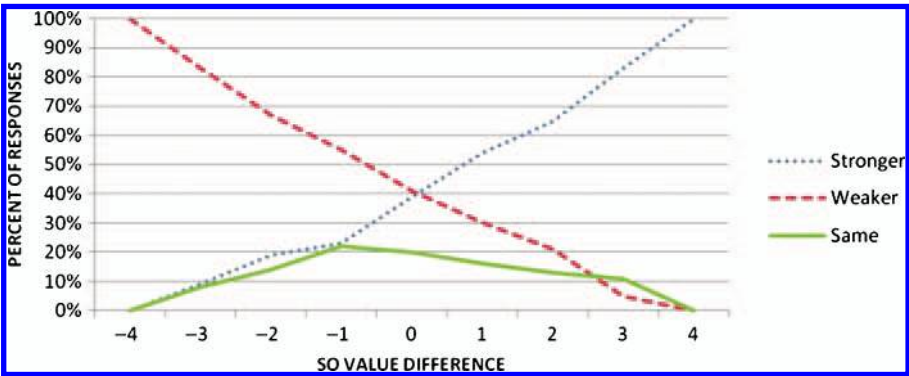


Figure 6
Distribution of responses by adjective SO value for Google PMI dictionary, negative word-pair task.

As compared to the manually ranked SO dictionary, the Google PMI dictionary does not maximize as quickly, suggesting significant error at even fairly high SO values. Interestingly, the graph shows a striking similarity with the manually ranked dictionary in terms of the asymmetry between positive and negative words; negative words are almost never ranked as positive, although the reverse is not true. The neutral curve peaks well into the positive SO range, indicating that neutral and positive words are not well distinguished by the dictionary.³⁰ Overall, the SO-PMI dictionary correctly predicts 48.5% of the Mechanical Turk rankings in this task, which places it well below the manually ranked adjective dictionary (73.7%).

Figure 6 shows the results for the negative adjective comparison task using the Google PMI dictionary. Here, the Google PMI dictionary performs fairly well, comparable to the manual rankings, though the overall MT correspondence is somewhat lower, 47% to 64%. This is partially due to bunching in the middle of the scale. Recall that the highest possible MT correspondence for this task is 76.8%. MT correspondence of

³⁰ Distinguishing neutral and polar terms, sentences, or texts is, in general, a hard problem (Wilson, Wiebe, and Hwa 2004; Pang and Lee 2005).

nearly 55% is possible if the number of buckets is increased significantly, an effect which is due at least partially to the fact that the *same* designation is so underused that it is generally preferable to always guess that one of the adjectives is stronger than the other. Along with the results in the previous figure, this suggests that this method actually performs fairly well at distinguishing the strength of negative adjectives; the problem with automated methods in general seems to be that they have difficulty properly distinguishing neutral and positive terms.

Our next comparison is with the Subjectivity dictionary of Wilson, Wiebe, and Hoffmann (2005). Words are rated for polarity (positive or negative) and strength (weak or strong), meaning that their scale is much more coarse-grained than ours. The dictionary is derived from both manual and automatic sources. It is fairly comprehensive (over 8,000 entries), so we assume that any word not mentioned in the dictionary is neutral. Figure 7 shows the result for the single word task.

The curves are comparable to those in Figure 1; the neutral peak is significantly lower, however, and the positive and negative curves do not reach their maximum. This is exactly what we would expect if words of varying strength are being collapsed into a single category. The overall MT Correspondence, however, is comparable (71.8%).

The negative adjective pair comparison task (shown in Figure 8) provides further evidence for this (Strong/Weak means a weak negative word compared with a strong negative word).

The MT correspondence is only 48.7% in this task. There is a clear preference for the predicted judgment in weak/strong comparisons, although the distinction is far from unequivocal, and the overall change in neutrality across the options is minimal. This may be partially attributed to the fact that the strong/weak designation for this dictionary is defined in terms of whether the word strongly or weakly indicates subjectivity, not whether the term itself is strong or weak (a subtle distinction). However, the results suggest that the scale is too coarse to capture the full range of semantic orientation.

Another publicly available corpus is SentiWordNet (Esuli and Sebastiani 2006; Baccianella, Esuli, and Sebastiani 2010), an extension of WordNet (Fellbaum 1998) where each synset is annotated with labels indicating how objective, positive, and negative the terms in the synset are. We use the average across senses for each word given in version 3.0 (see discussion in the next section). Figure 9 gives the result for the

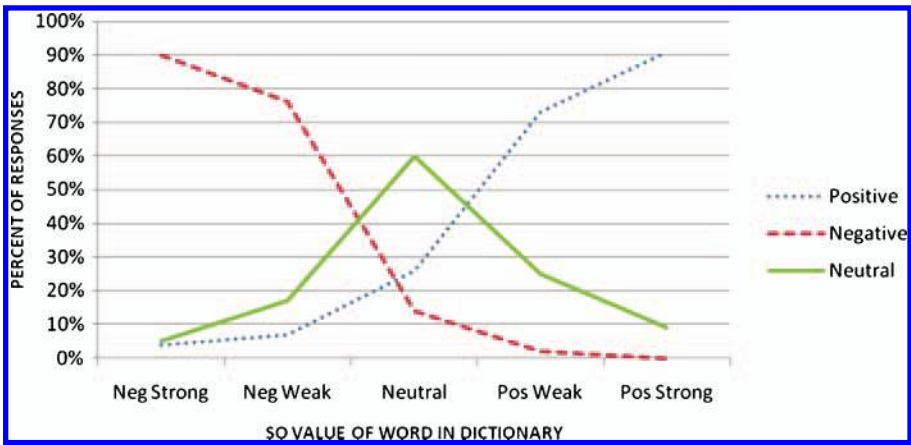


Figure 7
Distribution of responses by adjective SO value for Subjectivity dictionary, single-word task.

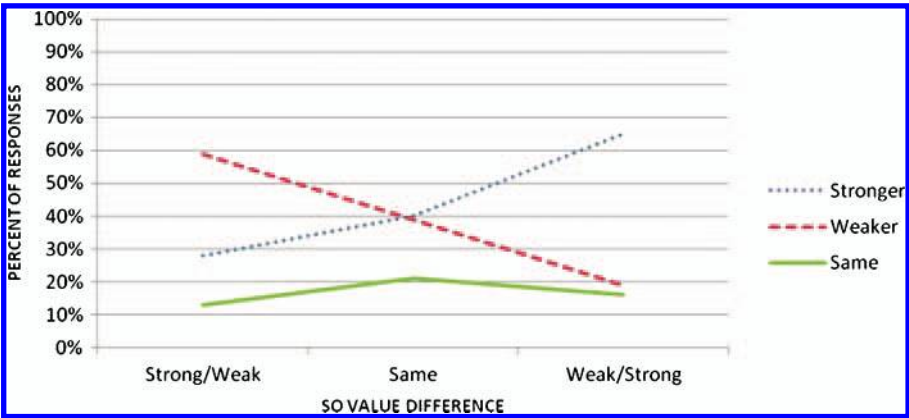


Figure 8
Distribution of responses by adjective SO value for Subjectivity dictionary, negative word-pair task.

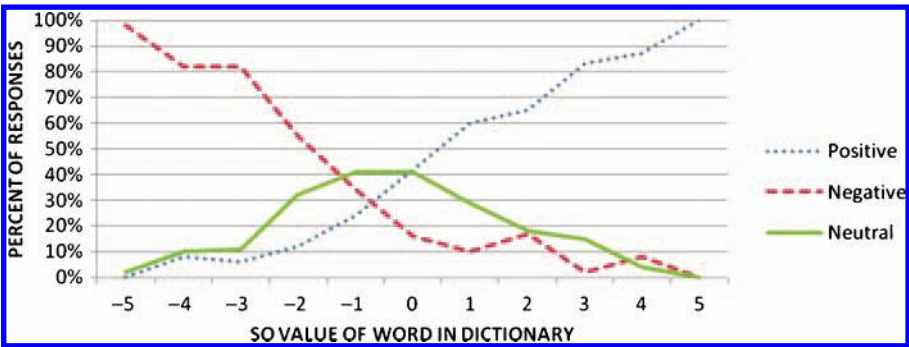


Figure 9
Distribution of responses by adjective SO value for SentiWordNet, single-word task.

single-word task. Like the Subjectivity dictionary, this dictionary is an improvement over the fully automatic Google dictionary,³¹ with overall MT correspondence of 57.8%, although still well below the manual dictionaries.

Figure 10 shows the curve for the negative adjective comparison. The general trends are visible, but there is significant error at the edges of the spectrum, and a much less pronounced neutral curve. The MT correspondence with 5 SO buckets is 48.3%, although this can be boosted to around 52% by drastically increasing the number of buckets, which overall suggests it is roughly equivalent or slightly worse than the Google dictionary with respect to correctly identifying relative strength.

In summary, we have shown that our dictionaries are robust in comparison to scores provided by human raters, and that they show higher agreement with human raters than other publicly available dictionaries. More words may be added, and the scores may be changed, but the dictionary comparisons show that creating dictionaries

31 Although the values in SentiWordNet itself are calculated automatically, they are based on the knowledge from WordNet. This is why we believe it is not a fully automatic dictionary. In addition, version 3.0 includes the possibility of user feedback.

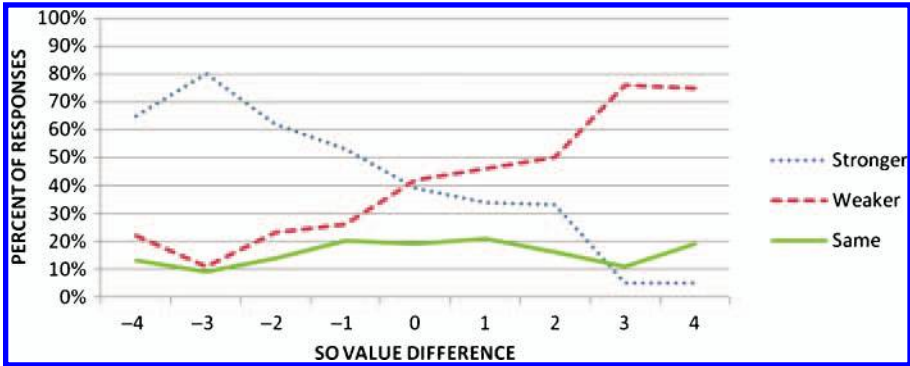


Figure 10
Distribution of responses by adjective SO value for SentiWordNet, negative word-pair task.

by hand is not necessarily a subjective task. Reflecting on our experience, we can say that the manually created dictionaries are superior for two main reasons. First of all, we tended to exclude words with ambiguous meaning, or that convey sentiment only in some occasions, but not in most. Secondly, judicious restraint is necessary when expanding the dictionaries. We found that adding more words to the dictionaries did not always help performance, because new words added noise. The type of noise that we refer to is that deriving from problems with word sense disambiguation, part-of-speech tagging, or simply strength of the word itself. Words with stronger positive or negative connotations tend to be more informative. We made a decision to exclude, of course, all neutral words (those that would have a value of 0), but also words with only a mild sentiment orientation, although there are some 1 and -1 words in the dictionaries.

3.4 SO-CAL with Other Dictionaries

The previous section provided comparisons of our dictionary to existing dictionaries. In this section, we use those lexicons and others to carry out a full comparison using SO-CAL. For each of the dictionaries discussed below, we used it instead of our set of manually ranked dictionaries as a source of SO values, and tested accuracy across different corpora. Accuracy in this case is calculated for the polarity identification task, that is, deciding whether a text is negative or positive, using the author’s own ranking (“recommended” or “not recommended,” or number of stars).

In our comparisons, we tested two options: *Full* uses all the default SO-CAL features described in Section 2, including intensification and negation.³² *Basic*, on the other hand, is just a sum of the SO value of words in relevant texts, with none of the SO-CAL features enabled.

The first dictionary that we incorporated into SO-CAL was the Google-generated PMI-based dictionary described in Taboada, Anthony, and Voll (2006), and mentioned earlier in this article.

32 Except for tests with the Maryland dictionary, where we disabled negative weighting because with weighting the performance was close to chance (all negative correct, all positive wrong). We believe that this is because the dictionary contains a disproportionately large number of negative words (likely the result of expanding existing dictionaries, which also tend to include more negative than positive words).

The “Maryland” dictionary (Mohammad, Dorr, and Dunne 2009) is a very large collection of words and phrases (around 70,000) extracted from the Macquarie Thesaurus. The dictionary is not classified according to part of speech, and only contains information on whether the word is positive or negative. To integrate it into our system, we assigned all positive words an SO value of 3, and all negative words a value of -3 .³³

We used the same type of quantification for the General Inquirer (GI; Stone et al. 1966), which also has only positive and negative tags; a word was included in the dictionary if any of the senses listed in the GI were polar.

The Subjectivity dictionary is the collection of subjective expressions compiled by Wilson, Wiebe, and Hoffmann (2005), also used in our Mechanical Turk experiments in the previous section. The Subjectivity dictionary only contains a distinction between weak and strong opinion words. For our tests, weak words were assigned 2 or -2 values, depending on whether they were positive or negative, and strong words were assigned 4 or -4 .

The SentiWordNet dictionary (Esuli and Sebastiani 2006; Baccianella, Esuli, and Sebastiani 2010), also used in the previous section, was built using WordNet (Fellbaum 1998), and retains its synset structure. There are two main versions of SentiWordNet available, 1.0 and 3.0, and two straightforward methods to calculate an SO value:³⁴ Use the first sense SO, or average the SO across senses. For the first sense method, we calculate the SO value of a word w (of a given POS) based on its first sense f as follows:

$$\text{SO}(w) = 5 \times (\text{Pos}(f) - \text{Neg}(f))$$

For the averaging across senses method, SO is calculated as

$$\text{SO}(w) = \frac{5}{|\text{senses}|} \sum_{x \in \text{senses}} (\text{Pos}(x) - \text{Neg}(x))$$

that is, the difference between the positive and negative scores provided by SentiWordNet (each in the 0–1 range), averaged across all word senses for the desired part of speech, and multiplied by 5 to provide SO values in the -5 to 5 range. Table 9 contains a comparison of performance (using simple word averaging, no SO-CAL features) in our various corpora for each version of SentiWordNet using each method. What is surprising is that the best dictionary using just basic word counts (1.0, first sense) is actually the worst dictionary when using SO-CAL, and the best dictionary using all SO-CAL features (3.0, average across senses) is the worst dictionary when features are disabled. We believe this effect is due almost entirely to the degree of positive bias in the various dictionaries. The 3.0 average dictionary is the most positively biased, which results in degraded basic performance (in the Camera corpus, only 20.5% of negative reviews are correctly identified). When negative weighting is applied, however, it reaches an almost perfect balance between positive and negative accuracy (70.7% to 71.3% in the Camera corpus), which optimizes overall performance. We cannot therefore conclude definitively that any of the SentiWordNet dictionaries is superior for our task; in fact,

33 We chose 3 as a value because it is the middle value between 2 and 4 that we assigned to strong and weak words in the Subjectivity Dictionary, as explained subsequently.

34 A third alternative would be to calculate a weighted average using sense frequency information; SentiWordNet does not include such information, however. Integrating this information from other sources, though certainly possible, would take us well beyond “off-the-shelf” usage, and, we believe, would provide only marginal benefit.

Table 9
Comparison of performance of different dictionaries derived from SentiWordNet.

SWN Dictionary			Percent correct by corpus				
Ver.	Method	Test	Epinions 1	Epinions 2	Movie	Camera	Overall
1.0	Average	Basic	59.25	62.50	62.89	59.92	61.18
	Average	Full	66.50	66.50	61.89	67.00	65.02
	First	Basic	60.25	62.75	62.00	60.79	61.35
	First	Full	65.00	64.50	62.89	66.67	64.96
3.0	Average	Basic	56.75	60.25	60.10	58.37	59.03
	Average	Full	67.50	71.50	66.21	71.00	68.98
	First	Basic	61.50	60.75	59.58	61.42	60.69
	First	Full	64.50	69.25	65.73	67.37	66.58

it is likely that they are roughly equivalent. We use the top-performing 3.0 average dictionary here and elsewhere.

Table 10 shows the performance of the various dictionaries when run within SO-CAL. For all dictionaries and corpora, the performance of the original SO-CAL dictionary is significantly better ($p < 0.05$). We have already discussed the Google dictionary, which contains only adjectives, and whose results are not reliable (see also Taboada, Anthony, and Voll 2006). The Maryland dictionary suffers from too much coverage: Most words in a text are identified by this dictionary as containing some form of subjectivity or opinion, but a cursory examination of the texts reveals that this is not the case. In some cases, the problem is part-of-speech assignment (the Maryland dictionary is not classified according to part of speech). For example, the noun *plot* was classified as negative when referring to a movie’s plot. We imagine this is negative in the dictionary because of the negative meaning of the verb *plot*. Similarly, *novel* as a noun is classified as positive, although we believe this ought to be the case in the adjective use only. More problematic is the presence of words such as *book*, *cotton*, *here*, *legal*, *reading*, *saying*, or *year*.

Table 10
Comparison of performance using different dictionaries with SO-CAL.

Dictionary	Percent correct by corpus				
	Epinions 1	Epinions 2	Movie	Camera	Overall
Google-Full	62.00	58.50	66.31	61.25	62.98
Google-Basic	53.25	53.50	67.42	51.40	59.25
Maryland-Full-NoW	58.00	63.75	67.42	59.46	62.65
Maryland-Basic	56.50	56.00	62.26	53.79	58.16
GI-Full	68.00	70.50	64.21	72.33	68.02
GI-Basic	62.50	59.00	65.68	63.87	64.23
SentiWordNet-Full	66.50	66.50	61.89	67.00	65.02
SentiWordNet-Basic	59.25	62.50	62.89	59.92	61.47
Subjectivity-Full	72.75	71.75	65.42	77.21	72.04
Subjectivity-Basic	64.75	63.50	68.63	64.83	66.51
SO-CAL-Full	80.25	80.00	76.37	80.16	78.74
SO-CAL-Basic	65.50	65.25	68.05	64.70	66.04

SentiWordNet performs better than either the Google or Maryland dictionaries, but it is still somewhat low; again, we believe it suffers from the same problem of too much coverage: Potentially, every word in WordNet will receive a score, and many of those are not sentiment-bearing words. The General Inquirer lexicon (Stone et al. 1966), the only other fully manually dictionary considered here, does comparably quite well despite being relatively small. Finally, the Subjectivity dictionary, with the added strong/weak distinctions, is the closest in performance to our dictionary, though significantly worse when all features are enabled. The comparison is not completely fair to the Subjectivity dictionary, as it was built to recognize subjectivity, not polarity.

We must note that the comparison is different for the Maryland dictionary, where we turned off negative weighting. This resulted in anomalously high performance on the Movies corpus, despite poor performance elsewhere. In general, there is significantly less positive bias in the movie review domain, most likely due to the use of negative terms in plot and character description (Taboada, Brooke, and Stede 2009), thus the negative weighting that is appropriate for other domains is often excessive for movie reviews.

Comparing the performance of various dictionaries with or without SO-CAL features, two facts are apparent: First, SO-CAL features are generally beneficial no matter what dictionary is used (in fact, all Overall improvements from Basic to Full in Table 10 are statistically significant); the only exceptions are due to negative weighting in the movie domain, which for most of the dictionaries causes a drop in performance.³⁵ Second, the benefit provided by SO-CAL seems to be somewhat dependent on the reliability of the dictionary; in general, automatically derived SO dictionaries derive less benefit from the use of linguistic features, and the effects are, on the whole, much less consistent; this is in fact the same conclusion we reached in other work where we compared automatically translated dictionaries to manually built ones for Spanish (Brooke, Tofiloski, and Taboada 2009). Interestingly, the Subjectivity dictionary performs slightly above the SO-CAL dictionary in some data sets when no features are enabled (which we might attribute to a mixture of basic reliability with respect to polarity and an appropriate level of coverage), but its lack of granularity seems to blunt the benefit of SO-CAL features, which were designed to take advantage of a finer-grained SO scale, an effect which is even more pronounced in binary dictionaries like the GI. We can summarize this result as follows: When using lexical methods, the effectiveness of any linguistic enhancements will to some extent depend on the characteristics of the underlying lexicon and, as such, the two cannot be considered in isolation.

4. Other Related Work

The SO-CAL improvements described in this article have been directly inspired by the work of Polanyi and Zaenen (2006), who proposed that “valence shifters” change the base value of a word. We have implemented their idea in the form of intensifiers and downtoners, adding a treatment of negation that does not involve switching polarity, but instead shifting the value of a word when in the scope of a negator.

The bulk of the work in sentiment analysis has focused on classification at either the sentence level, for example, the subjectivity/polarity detection of Wiebe and Riloff (2005), or alternatively at the level of the entire text. With regard to the latter, two major

³⁵ When negative weighting is excluded (for example, the results for the Maryland dictionary in Table 10), SO-CAL features have a positive effect on performance in the movie domain.

approaches have emerged: the use of machine-learning classifiers trained on n -grams or similar features (Pang, Lee, and Vaithyanathan 2002), and the use of sentiment dictionaries (Esuli and Sebastiani 2006; Taboada, Anthony, and Voll 2006). Support Vector Machine (SVM) classifiers have been shown to outperform lexicon-based models within a single domain (Kennedy and Inkpen 2006); they have trouble with cross-domain tasks (Aue and Gamon 2005), however, and some researchers have argued for hybrid classifiers (Andreevskaia and Bergler 2008). Although some of the machine-learning-based work makes use of linguistic features for training (Riloff and Wiebe 2003; Mullen and Collier 2004; Wiebe et al. 2004; Kennedy and Inkpen 2006; Ng, Dasgupta, and Niaz Arifin 2006; Sokolova and Lapalme 2008), it nonetheless still suffers from lack of cross-domain portability. The results presented here suggest that a lexicon-based system could outperform pure or hybrid machine-learning methods in cross-domain situations, though further research would be necessary to establish this point conclusively.

Ours is not the only method that uses linguistic information or dictionaries. Many other systems make use of either the Subjectivity dictionary of Wiebe and colleagues, or of SentiWordNet (Devitt and Ahmad 2007; Thet et al. 2009), and some work relies on Appraisal Theory (Whitelaw, Garg, and Argamon 2005; Bloom, Garg, and Argamon 2007), a theory developed by Martin and White (2005). We also discuss, in Section 2.4, work on incorporating linguistic insights for the treatment of negation (Moilanen and Pulman 2007; Choi and Cardie 2008).

5. Conclusions and Future Research

We have presented a word-based method for extracting sentiment from texts. Building on previous research that made use of adjectives, we extend the Semantic Orientation CALCulator (SO-CAL) to other parts of speech. We also introduce intensifiers, and refine our approach to negation. The current results represent a statistically-significant improvement over previous instantiations of the SO-CAL system.

Additionally, we show that a manually built dictionary provides a solid foundation for a lexicon-based approach, one that is necessary to get full benefit from a system like SO-CAL. We compare our dictionaries to other, manual or automatic, dictionaries, and show that they are generally superior in terms of performance. This we attribute to our criteria for selecting and ranking words, which include excluding ambiguous words and including fewer rather than more words. Furthermore, we show that the dictionary rankings are in agreement with human judgments collected through the use of the Mechanical Turk interface. More importantly, we show that SO-CAL has robust performance across different types of reviews, a form of domain-independence that is difficult to achieve with text classification methods.

The existing SO-CAL can be enhanced with many other sources of information. In Taboada, Brooke, and Stede (2009) we built classifiers to distinguish among paragraphs that contained mostly description, mostly comment, a combination of the two, or meta-information (such as titles, authors, review ratings, or movie ratings). Weighting paragraphs according to this classification, with lower weights assigned to description, results in a statistically-significant improvement in the polarity classification task.

The classification of paragraphs into comment and description is but one of the many ways in which contextual information can be incorporated into a robust approach to sentiment extraction. In previous work (Voll and Taboada 2007), we showed a prototype for extracting topic sentences, and performing sentiment analysis on those only. We also showed how a sentence-level discourse parser, developed by Soricut and Marcu (2003), could be used to differentiate between main and secondary parts of the text. At

the sentence level, exploring the types of syntactic patterns that indicate subjectivity and sentiment is also a possibility (Greene and Resnik 2009). Syntactic patterns can also be used to distinguish different types of opinion and appraisal (Bednarek 2009).

Our current work focuses on developing discourse parsing methods, both general and specific to the review genre. At the same time, we will investigate different aggregation strategies for the different types of relations in the text (see also Asher, Benamara, and Mathieu [2008, 2009] for preliminary work in this area), and build on existing discourse parsing systems and proposals (Schilder 2002; Soricut and Marcu 2003; Subba and Di Eugenio 2009).

The main conclusion of our work is that lexicon-based methods for sentiment analysis are robust, result in good cross-domain performance, and can be easily enhanced with multiple sources of knowledge (Taboada, Brooke, and Stede 2009). SO-CAL has performed well on blog postings (Murray et al. 2008) and video game reviews (Brooke and Hurst 2009), without any need for further development or training.

In related work, we have also shown that creating a new version of SO-CAL for a new language, Spanish, is as fast as building text classifiers for the new language, and results in better performance (Brooke 2009; Brooke, Tofiloski, and Taboada 2009). SO-CAL has also been successfully deployed for the detection of sentence-level polarity (Brooke and Hurst 2009).

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January 2014

The 2013 Traveler's Road to Decision: Affluent Insights



WHAT WE FOUND



Affluent travelers rely on digital for travel inspiration as well as research and booking.



Affluents comparison shop for travel, and half anticipate shopping around more in the next year.



Affluent travelers move across devices for all types of travel activities, from research to booking and check-in.



Online travel video usage is increasing among affluents.



Affluents are increasing their enrollment in loyalty programs, which impacts their likelihood to book.



Affluent travelers rely on **digital** for travel inspiration, research and comparison shopping.

ATTITUDES ABOUT VACATIONS IN THE NEXT YEAR

70%

I generally begin **researching** online before I decide where or how I want to travel.

59%

Search engines will be my go-to sources for travel ideas and information.

52%

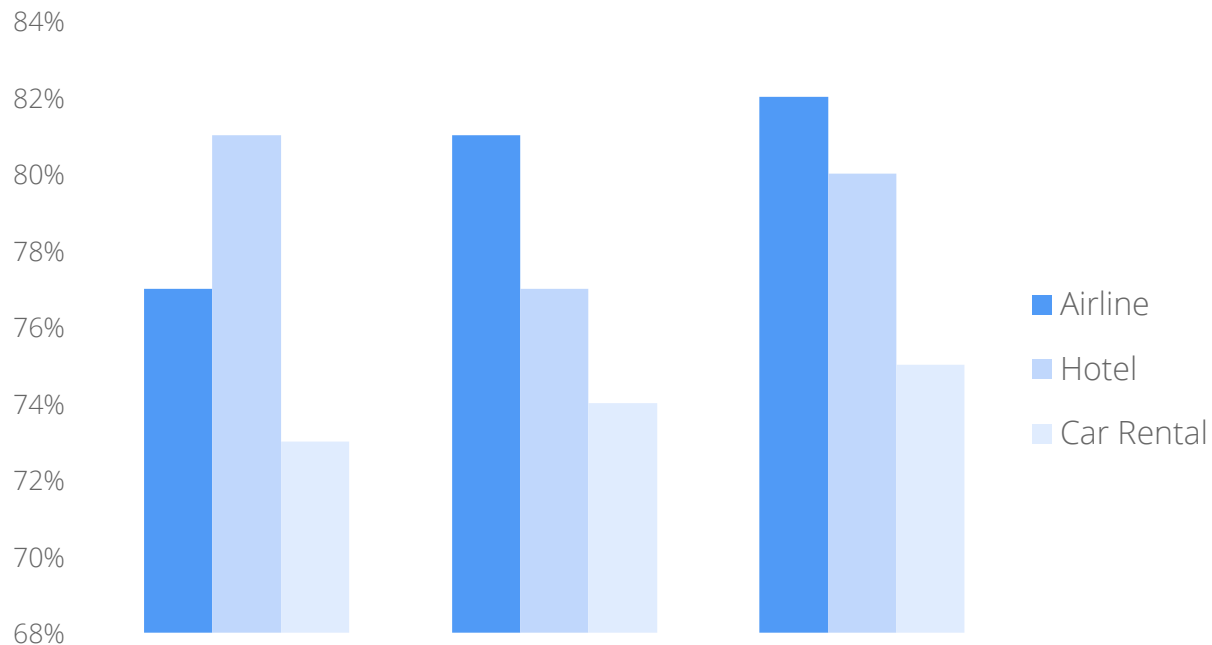
I plan to spend more time **shopping around/ researching** before booking travel because finding value for my money is important to me.

Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.
Base: Affluent cut, N=1532

Q21: Here are some (more) statements that may or may not describe your attitudes and opinions related to travel. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement; Q23: Using the scale below, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about traveling for personal/ leisure purposes in the next year. (Select ONE for each statement).

Affluents continue to **comparison shop** for all components of travel, especially for hotels.

PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WHO ALWAYS/FREQUENTLY COMPARISON SHOP



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

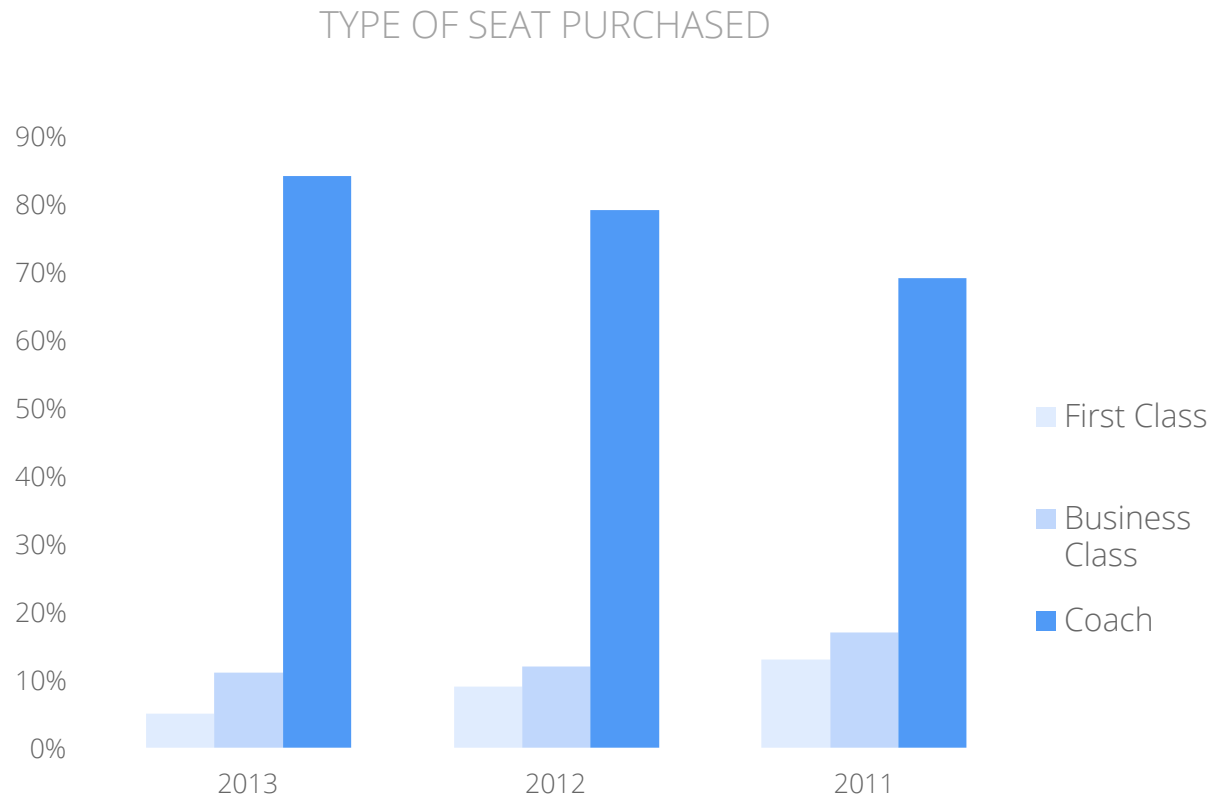
(Q23/Q26) Using the scale below, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about traveling for [personal/leisure/business] purposes in the next year. (Select ONE for each statement.)

Air quotas: 2013 N=316; 2012 N=383; 2011 N=823

Hotel quotas: 2013 N=310; 2012 N=379; 2011 N=804

Car quotas: 2013 N=322; 2012 N=390; 2011 N=852

Affluents are **flying coach** more often than in the past.



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study (Waves 3, 4 and 5), April to May 2011, April to May 2012 and May to June 2013.

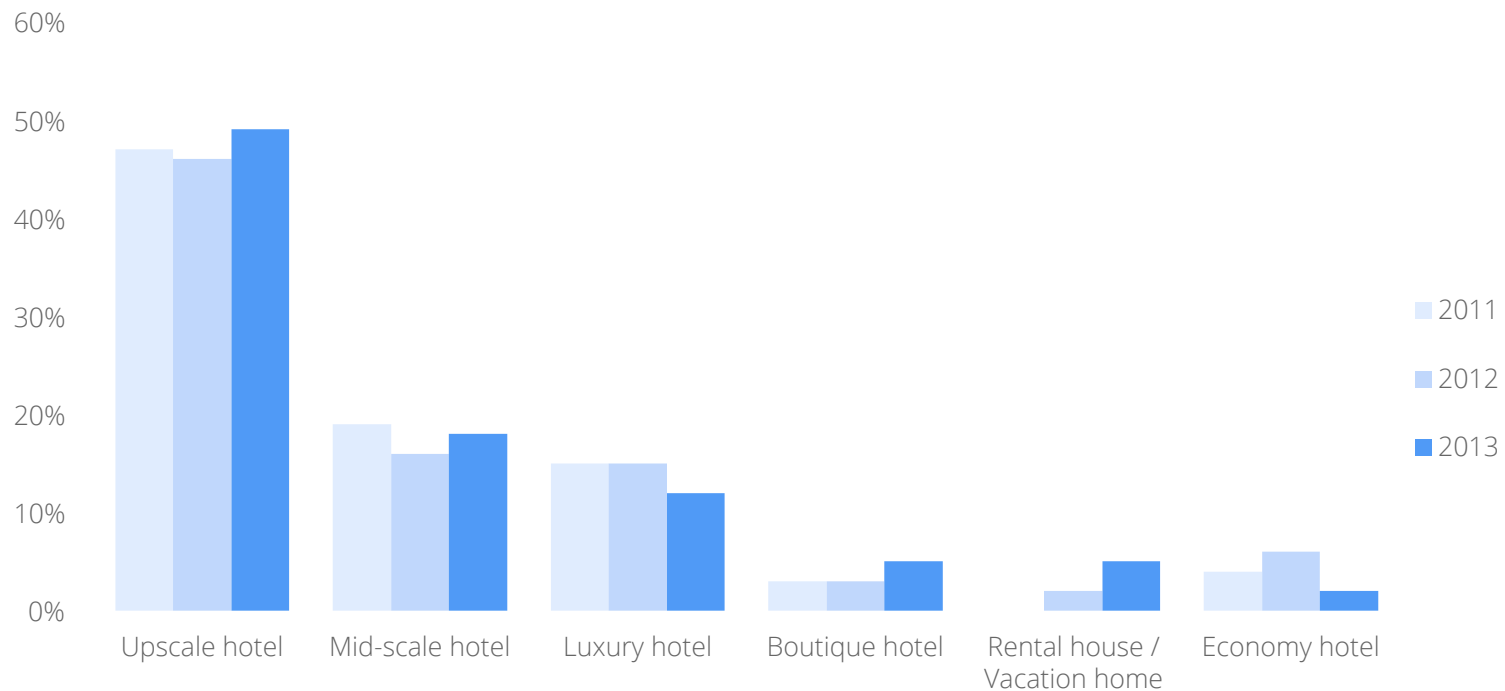
Base: Airline Quota

QA6: When flying for **personal or leisure/business** reasons, which type of seat do you **typically** purchase? (Select ONE).

Letter indicates a significant difference from comparable group at the 95% confidence level. Only significant differences from 2013 are noted.

While affluents continue to **prioritize upscale hotels**, boutique and vacation rental interest is growing.

TYPE OF LODGING ESTABLISHMENTS TYPICALLY STAYED IN BY AFFLUENTS



New trend: nearly **half of affluents** consider less traditional methods of lodging and transportation.

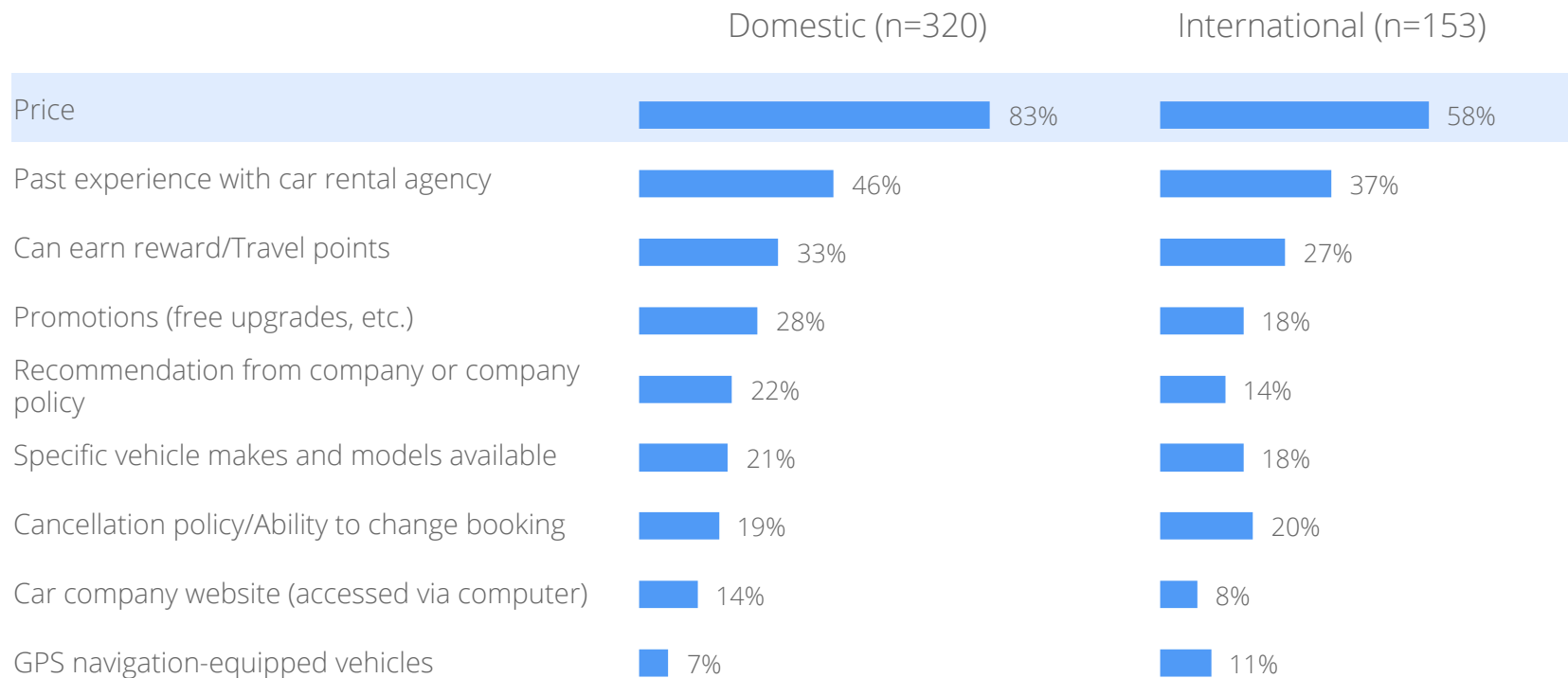


48%

plan to research or use **peer-to-peer sharing alternatives** to traditional hotels or car rental services, such as Airbnb or Zipcar, when traveling for business in the next year.

For affluents, **price is more important** in domestic than international car rental selections.

MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES WHEN CHOOSING RENTAL CARS

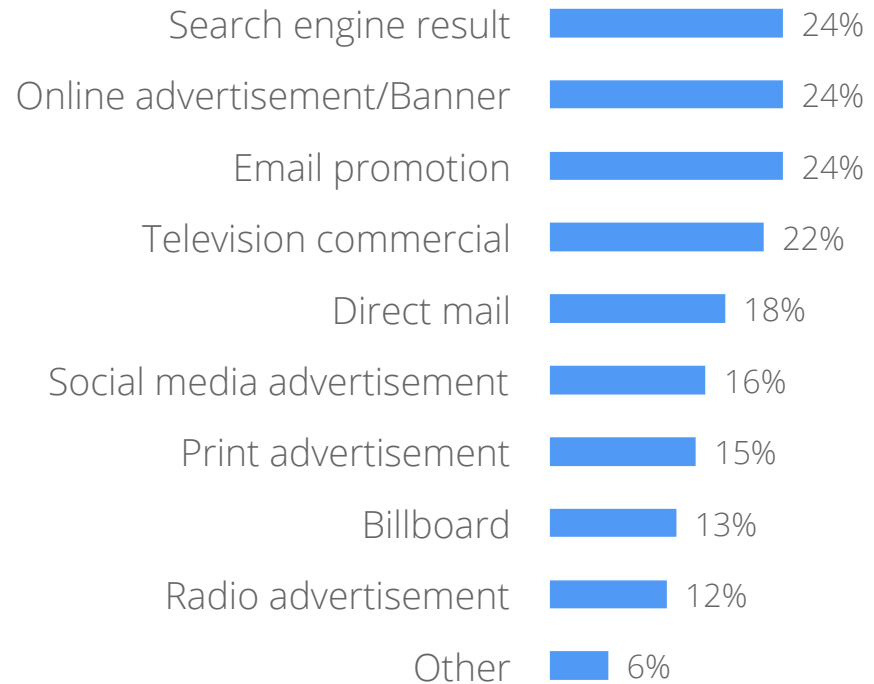


Online ads, including search engine results, are most likely to influence affluent cruise bookings.

68%

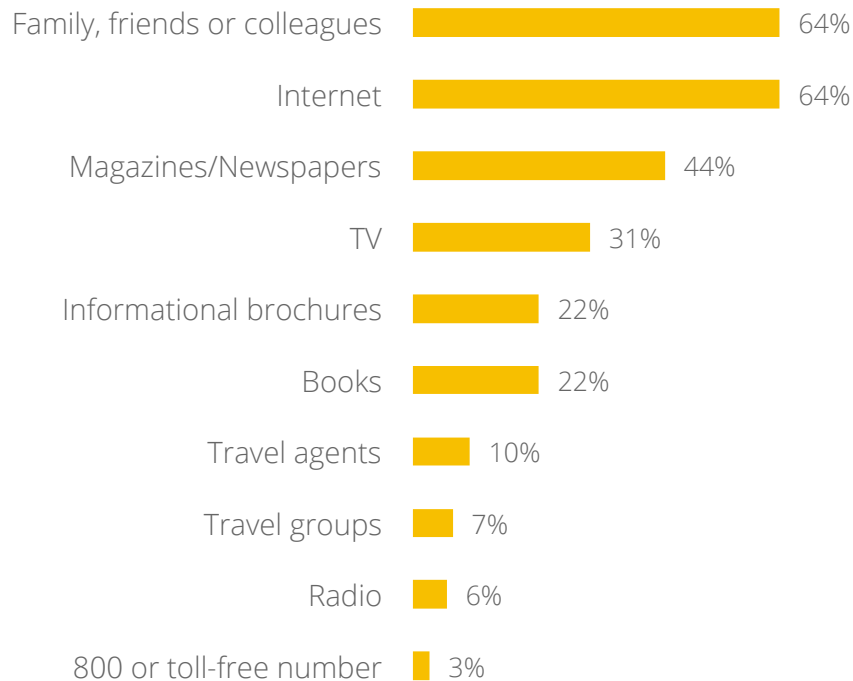
of affluents are influenced to book by some **type of ad**.

ADVERTISEMENTS THAT INFLUENCED BOOKING

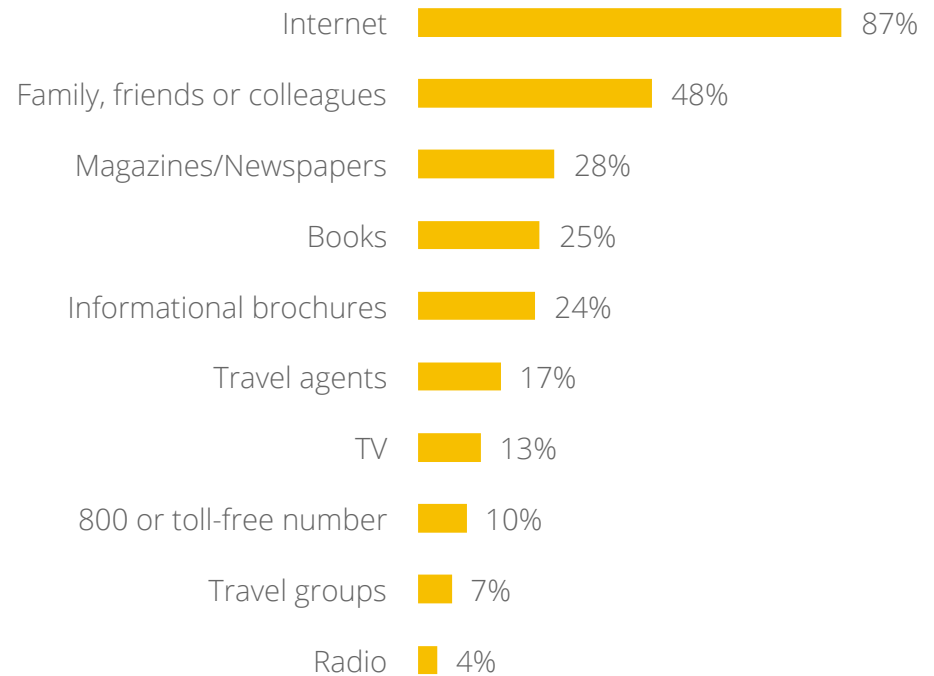


The **internet** is as essential for inspiring new travel as it is for planning travel.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION



TRAVEL PLANNING SOURCES

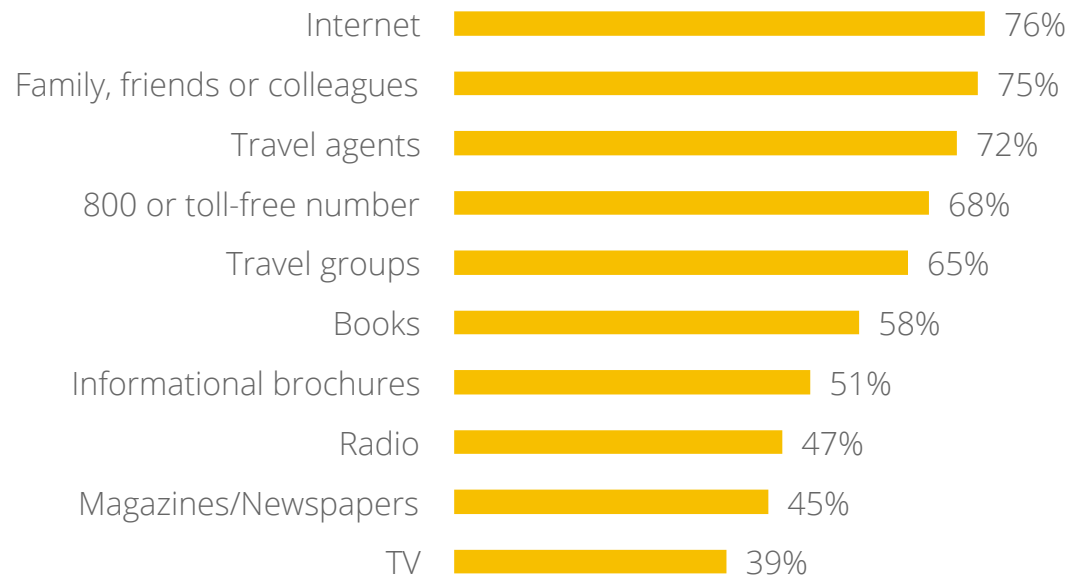


Affluents equally value the **internet and word of mouth** as sources of inspiration.

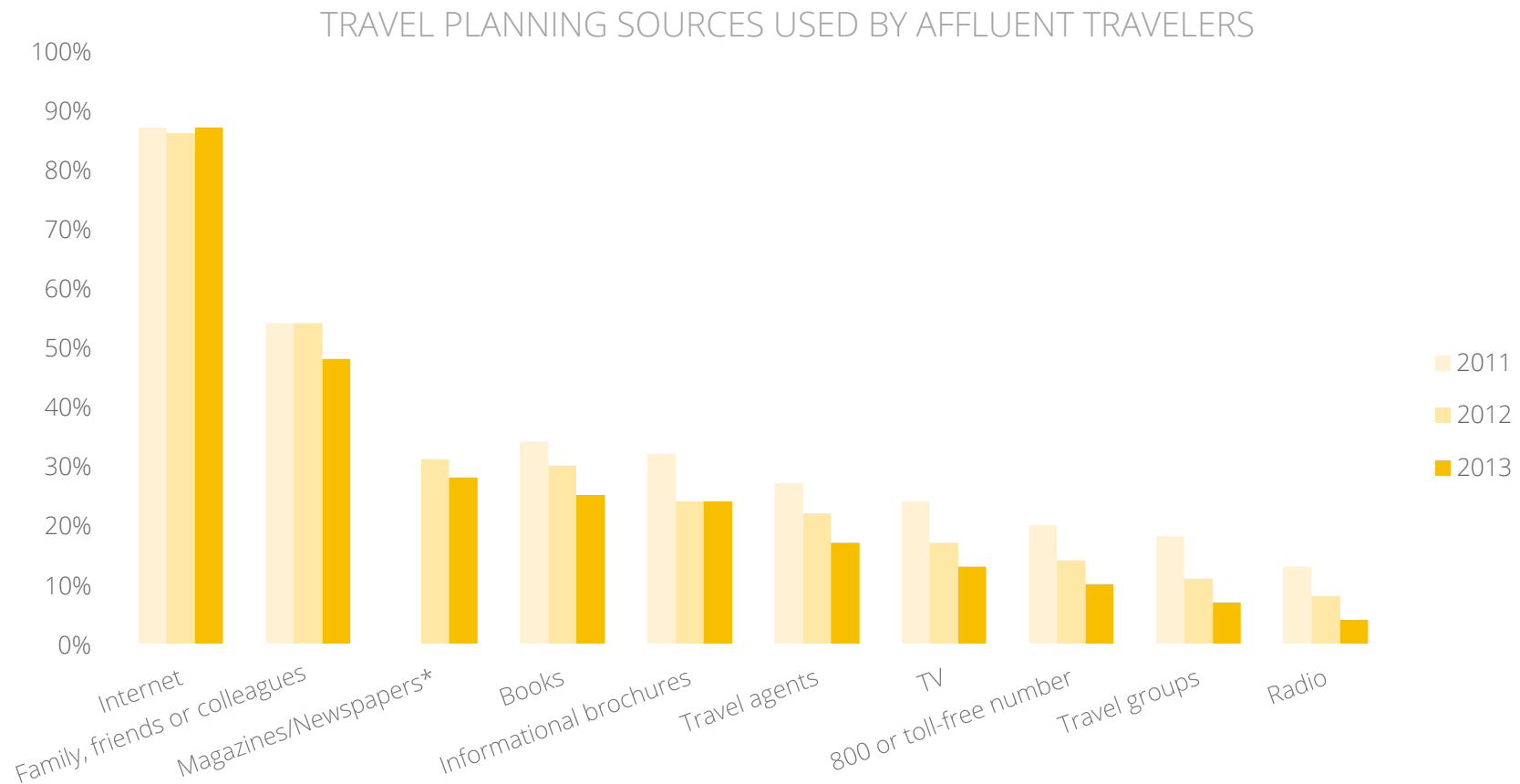


Magazines, traditionally viewed as a leading source for inspiration, are not viewed as **important** compared to other sources.

IMPORTANCE OF SOURCES FOR INSPIRING PERSONAL TRAVEL (EXTREMELY/VERY IMPORTANT)



Affluent travelers are **relying less on offline sources** for planning every year.



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study (Waves 3, 4 and 5), April to May 2011, April to May 2012 and May to June 2013.

Total Respondents: 2013 N=1563; 2012 N=1637; 2011 N=1655

Q7: Which of the following sources do you typically use to **plan personal or leisure/business trips**? (Select ALL that apply).

*Magazines/Newspapers combined in 2012; 2011 excluded from report.

Affluents engage in **travel activities** across the web.



One in three affluent travelers **watch** travel videos (consistent with 2012).

ONLINE TRAVEL ACTIVITY



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

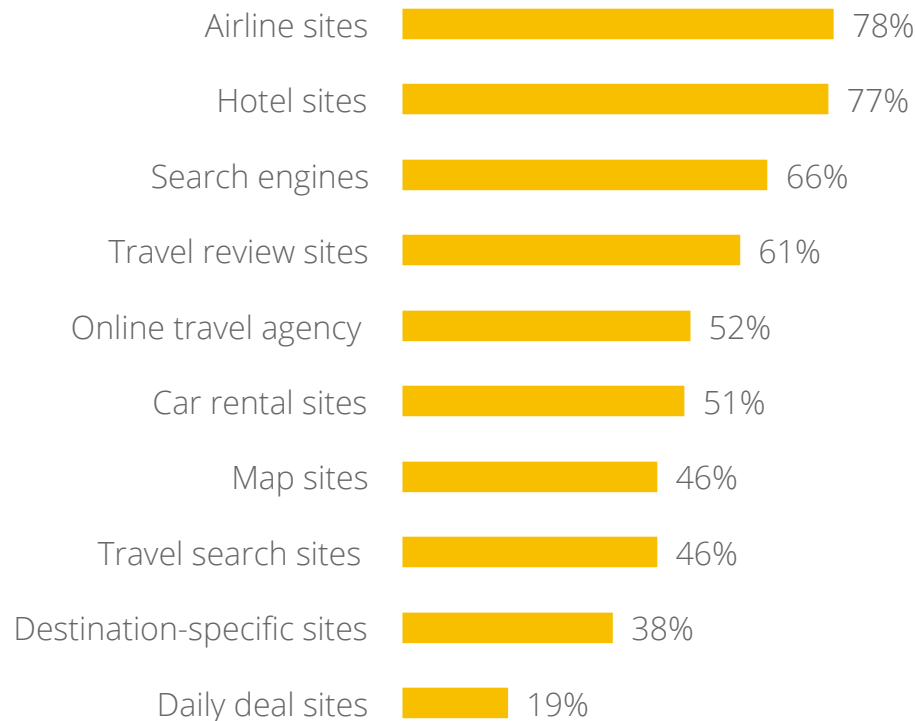
Base: Total Respondents, Affluent 2013 N=1563

Q4: Which of the following have you done **online** in the **past 6 months**? (Select ALL that apply.)

Letter indicates a significant difference from comparable group at the 95% confidence level. Only significant differences from 2013 are noted.

Affluents rely on **brand.com**, search and OTAs the most for planning, consistent with last year.

TOP ONLINE SOURCES USED BY AFFLUENTS



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study (Waves 3, 4 and 5), April to May 2011, April to May 2012 and May to June 2013.

Base: Affluent 2013 N=1357

Q10 Base: Use Internet to plan trips

Q10: Which of the following **online sources** do you typically use to **plan personal or leisure/business trips**? (Select ALL that apply.)

Q10F: When you typically visit **online travel agency websites** (for example, Expedia, Travelocity, Priceline, Orbitz, etc.) to plan your personal or leisure trips, how far along are you in deciding where to go? (Select ONE.)

Affluents rely on **brand.com**, search and OTAs the most for planning, consistent with last year. (cont.)

SINCE 2011...

+5 pts.

Reliance on **hotel sites**

-5 pts.

Reliance on **OTAs**

-8 pts.

Reliance on **destination-specific sites**

Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study (Waves 3, 4 and 5), April to May 2011, April to May 2012 and May to June 2013.

Base: Affluent 2013 N=1357

Q10 Base: Use Internet to plan trips

Q10: Which of the following **online sources** do you typically use to **plan personal or leisure/business trips**? (Select ALL that apply.)

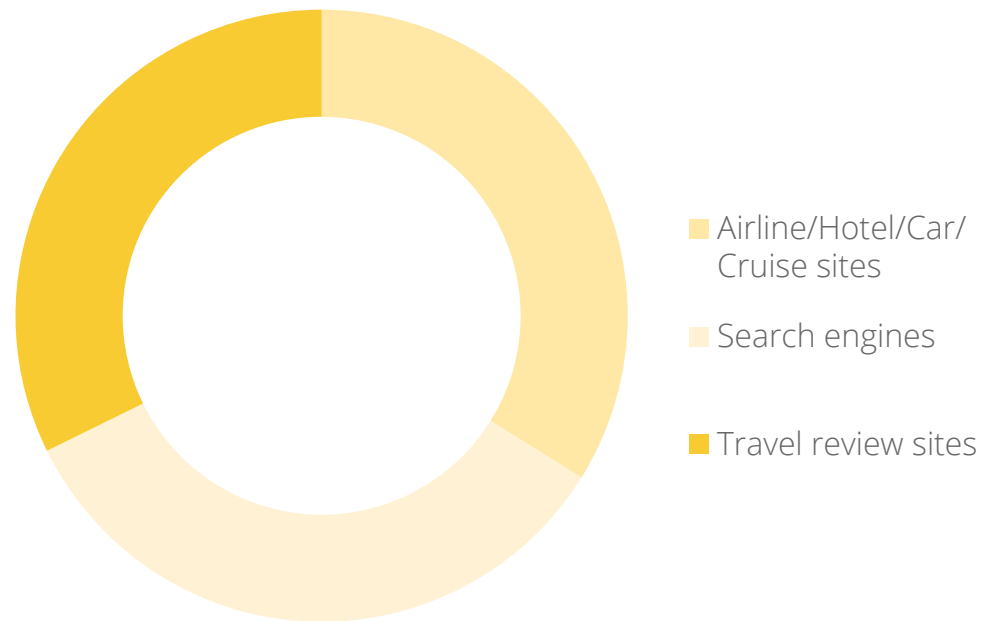
Q10F: When you typically visit **online travel agency websites** (for example, Expedia, Travelocity, Priceline, Orbitz, etc.) to plan your personal or leisure trips, how far along are you in deciding where to go? (Select ONE.)

Travelers consider **search** just as important as brand sites in travel planning.

66%

of affluent travelers rely on **search** to plan leisure travel, up from 65% in 2012.

ONLINE SOURCES DEEMED MOST IMPORTANT FOR PLANNING
(EXTREMELY/VERY IMPORTANT)



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

Base: Affluent 2013 N=1357

Q10 Base: Use Internet to plan trips. Q: Which of the following online sources do you typically use to plan personal or leisure/business trips? (Select ALL that apply.)

Q10D: Base: Use specific sites for planning (N=154-1234) Q: And, how important do you consider each online source in **planning your personal or leisure trips/business trips**?



Affluents turn to **OTAs** for destination inspiration.

STAGE OF PLANNING WHEN AFFLUENT TRAVELERS VISIT OTAS

50%

are considering a **few**
destinations.

46%

know **exactly** where
they're going.

4%

are considering **many**
destinations.

Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

Q10 Base: Use Internet to plan trips / Q10F Base: Personal quota and plan using an OTA (N=699)

Q10: Which of the following **online sources** do you typically use to **plan personal or leisure/business trips**? (Select ALL that apply) / Q10F: When you typically visit **online travel agency websites** (for example, Expedia, Travelocity, Priceline, Orbitz, etc.) to plan your personal or leisure trips, how far along are you in deciding where to go? (Select ONE.)

Affluent travelers **prioritize destinations** that offer activities of interest to them.

TOP FEATURES CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT WHEN CHOOSING DESTINATION
(EXTREMELY/VERY IMPORTANT)

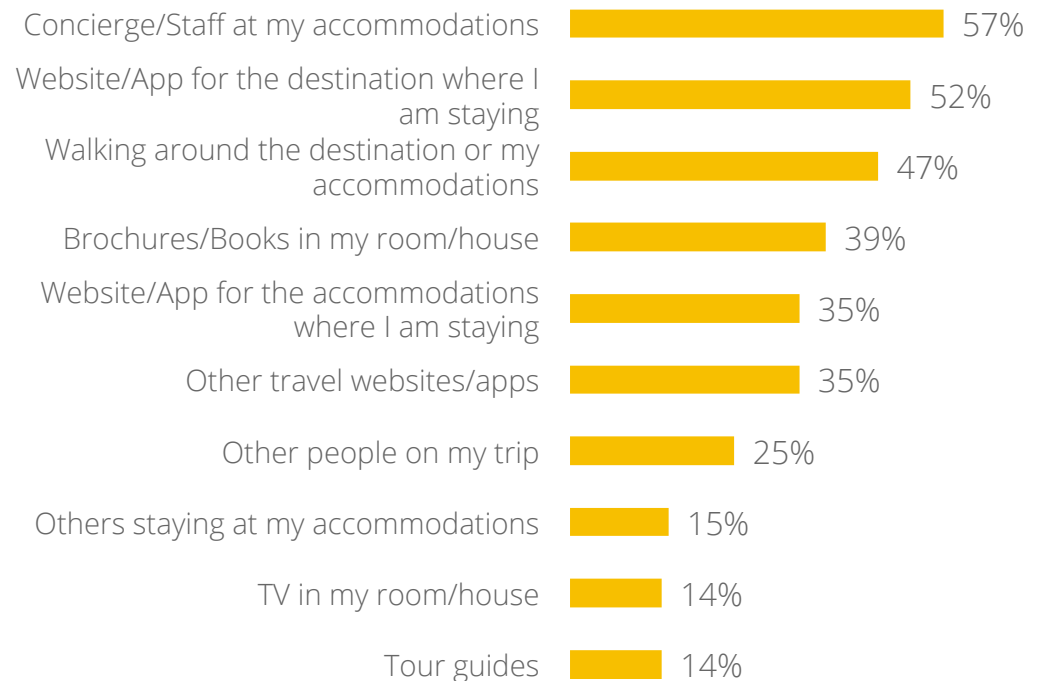


Affluents rely on both **online sources** and **on-site staff** to decide on activities once on their trip.

68%

of affluent travelers rely on **online sources** for ancillary information.

TOP SOURCES USED FOR ACTIVITIES/EXCURSIONS



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

QD11 Base: Personal Quota (n=1532)

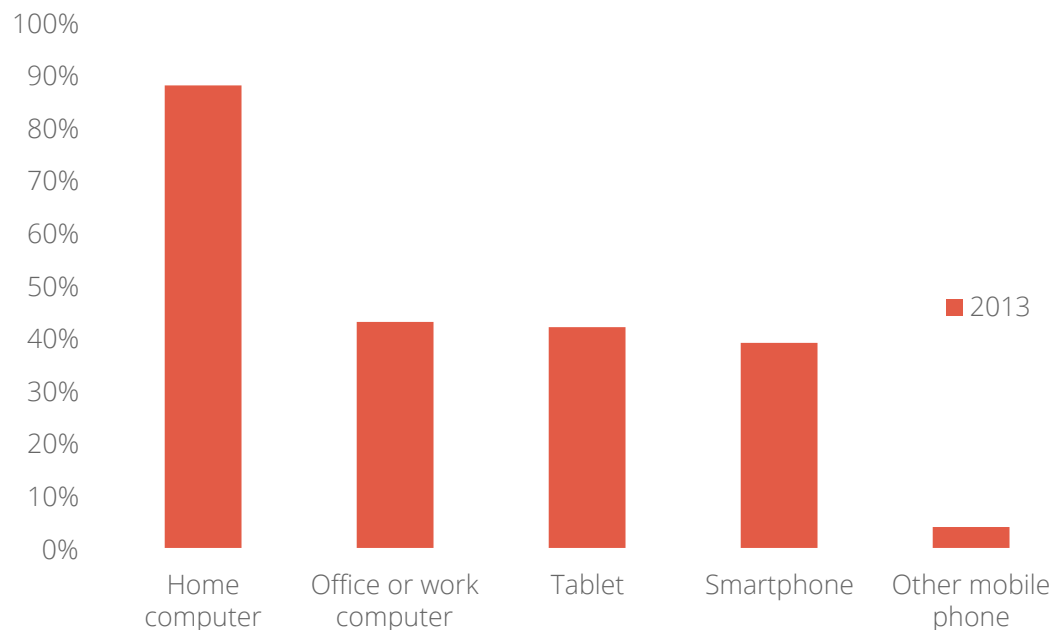
QD12 Base: Personal Quota and use Internet-related sources to decide on activities/excursions at destination (N=1044)

QD11: When you are on a **personal or leisure** trip, which sources do you typically use to decide on **activities/excursions** to participate in once you have **arrived** at your destination? (Select ALL that apply.)

QD12: And, when deciding on **activities/excursions** to participate in once you have **arrived** at your destination, on which device(s) are you accessing the information? (Select ALL that apply.)

More than half of affluent travelers (55%) access travel info on their **smartphones** or **tablets** for planning.

DEVICES USED TO ACCESS INTERNET FOR TRAVEL INFO
(AMONG THOSE WHO USE THE INTERNET TO PLAN TRIPS)



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study (Waves 3, 4 and 5), April to May 2011, April to May 2012 and May to June 2013.

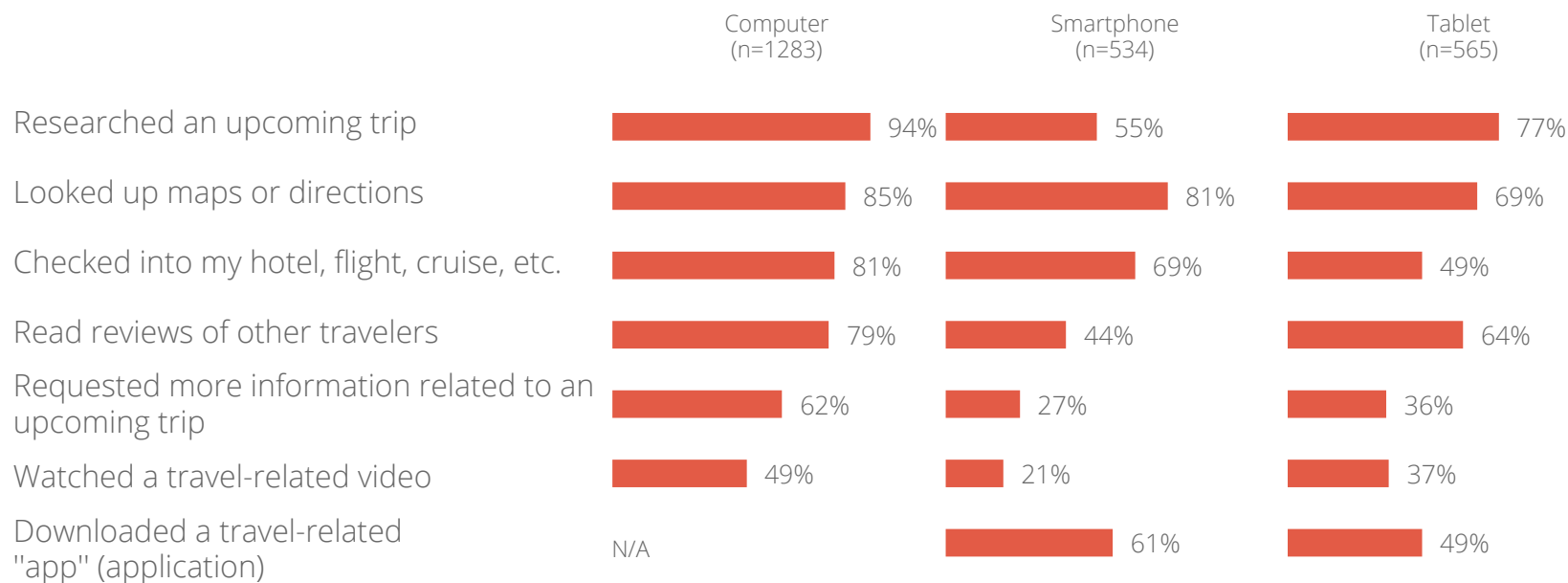
Base: Use Internet to plan trips; 2013 N=1357

Q9N: From which of the following do you access the Internet for travel-related information when planning your **personal or leisure trips/business trips**? (Select ALL that apply).

*Differentiated between "Smartphone" and "Mobile phone" in 2012 **Wording changed from "Mobile Device/Tablet" in 2011 to "Tablet" in 2012

Affluent travelers use **all screens** to engage in travel-related activities.

TRAVEL ACTIVITIES DONE ON DEVICES



TIP

A multi-device strategy is no longer optional

Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

Base: Use specific device for travel research (floating)

DEVICE1: Thinking about your **personal or leisure travel** in the **past six months**, on which device(s) have you done each of the following travel-related activities? (Select ALL that apply for each activity.)

Affluent travelers booking on **smartphones** do so via both browser and mobile applications.

SMARTPHONE BOOKING METHODS

	Via the Internet using the browser	Used smartphone "apps" (applications)	Used smartphone to make a phone call to book	Not sure/Can't recall
Any component (Net)	67%	64%	48%	1%
Air travel	57%	67%	37%	1%
Car rental	56%	56%	38%	4%
Overnight accommodations	59%	55%	37%	4%
Vacation activities	64%	39%	50%	10%



TIP

Smartphone apps are more commonly used for bookings by affluent travelers than by personal travelers

Convenience is the top reason that affluent travelers book on **smartphones**. Many affluents also book last minute with their smartphones.

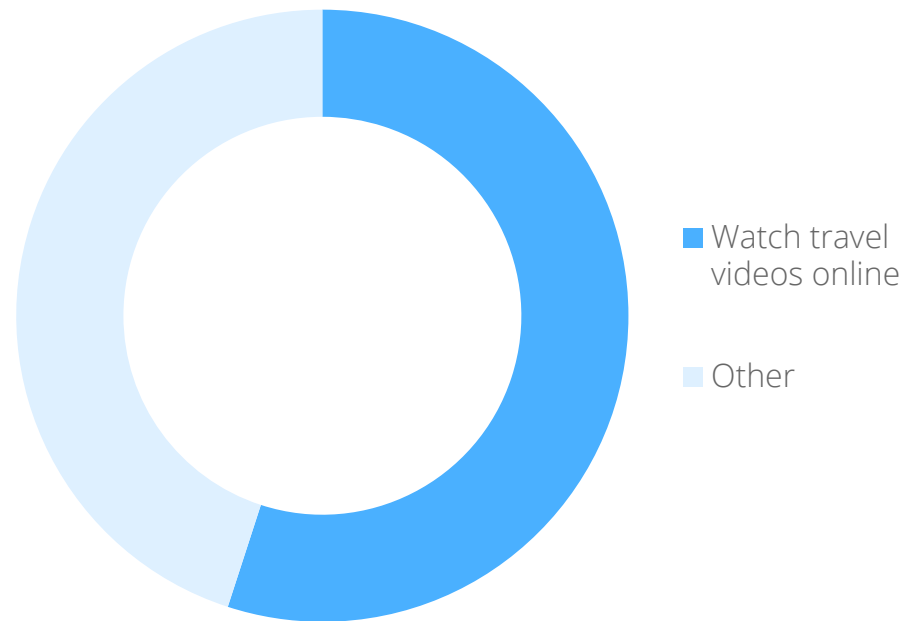
REASONS FOR BOOKING ON SMARTPHONE

	Convenience/ Device was at hand	I use my smartphone for everything	Last minute— before the trip	Last minute— while en route to my destination	Last minute— at my destination
Air travel	62%	36%	17%	15%	13%
Car rental	58%	35%	12%	13%	12%
Overnight accommodations	55%	30%	12%	23%	16%
Vacation activities	51%	39%	14%	20%	21%

Online travel video usage is **increasing** among affluent travelers.

55%

watch travel videos online
+5 pts. since 2012



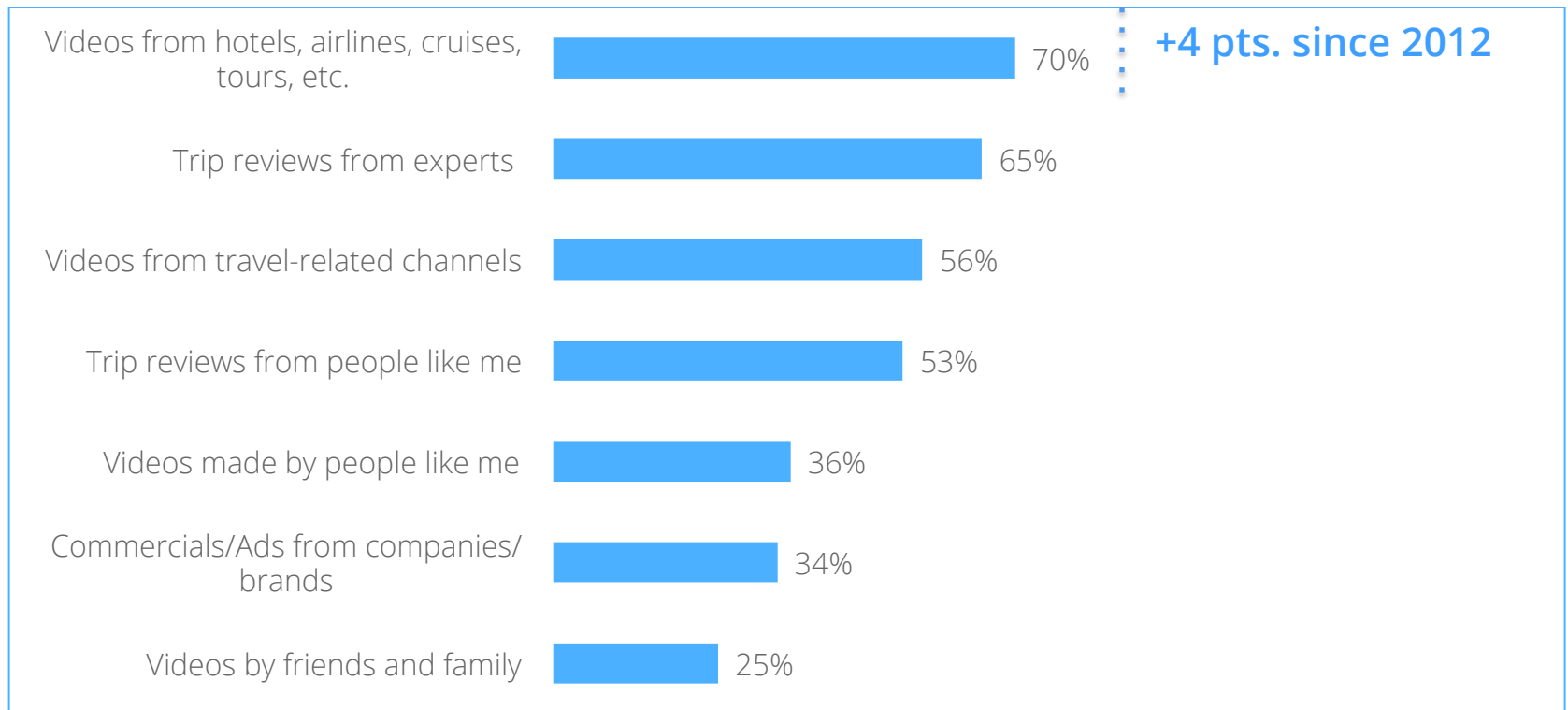
Affluent travelers turn to **online video** throughout all stages of travel.

WHEN TRAVEL VIDEOS ARE VIEWED BY AFFLUENTS



Affluent travelers engage with **all types** of videos.

TYPES OF TRAVEL VIDEOS VIEWED

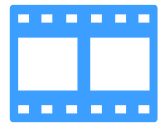


Videos that affluent watch **extend beyond travel**.
Affluents engage with news content more than the
typical traveler.

TOP 10 TYPES OF TRAVEL VIDEOS EVER WATCHED ONLINE
BY AFFLUENT TRAVELERS



63%
News



61%
Movie clips and
trailers



60%
Full-length
TV shows



56%
Music



56%
Humor



49%
Full-length
movies



49%
Food



49%
Sports



47%
Weather

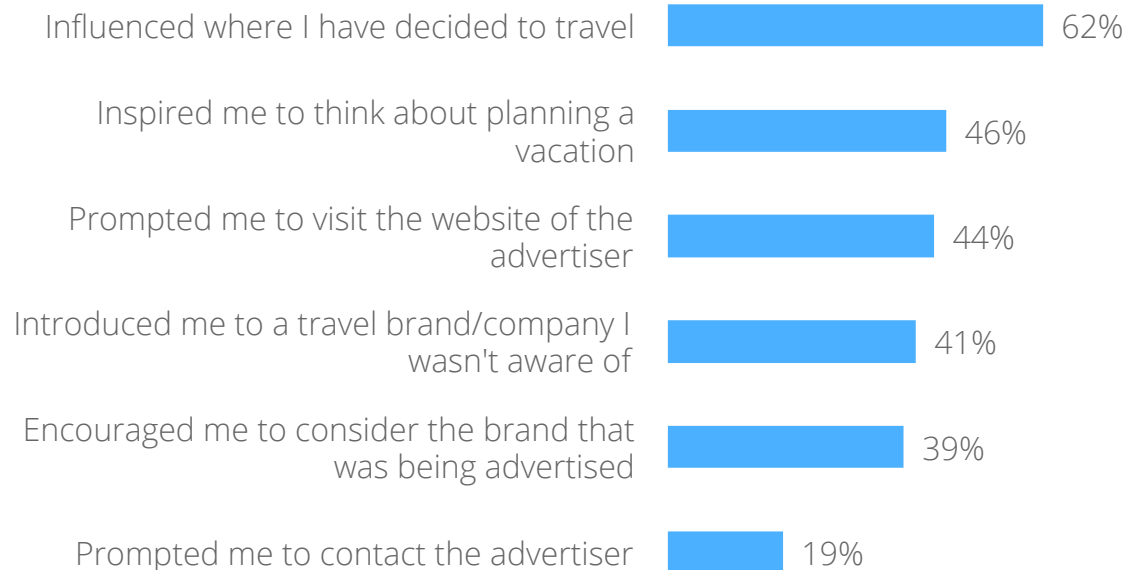


41%
Celebrity

Travel videos **influence** and prompt action.

90%

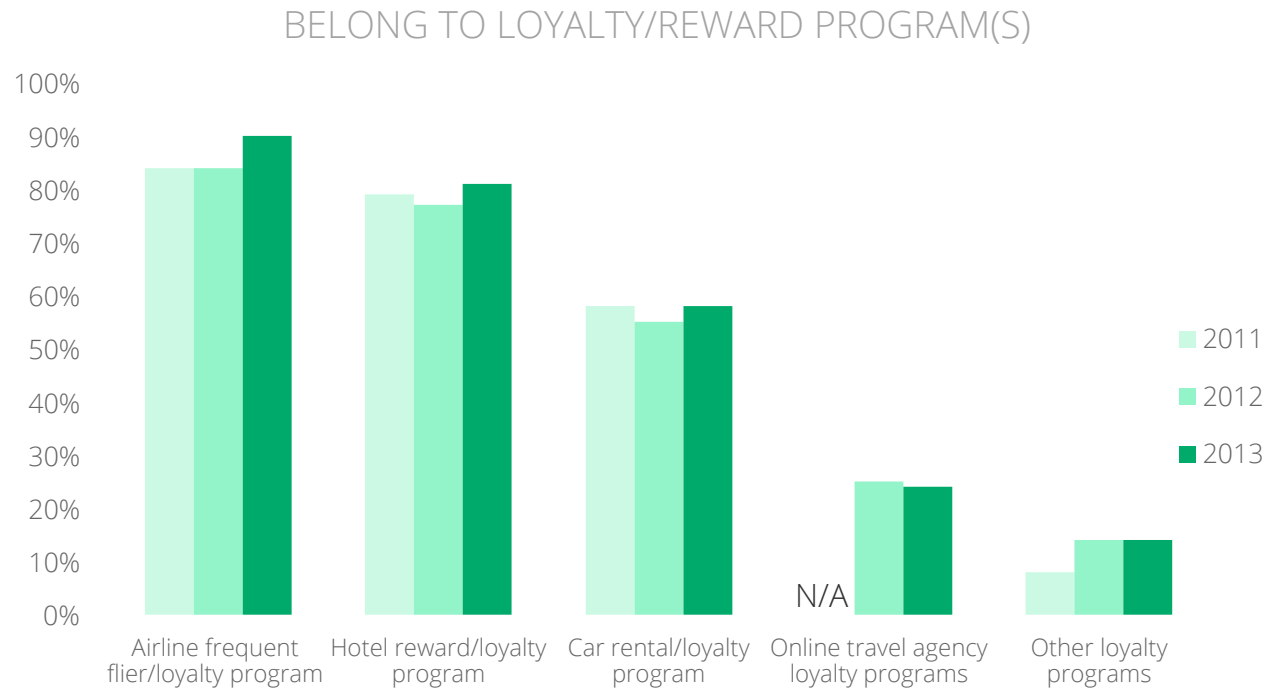
of affluent travelers take
some type of action after
**viewing an online travel
video.**



Loyalty programs are **growing** in popularity among affluents.

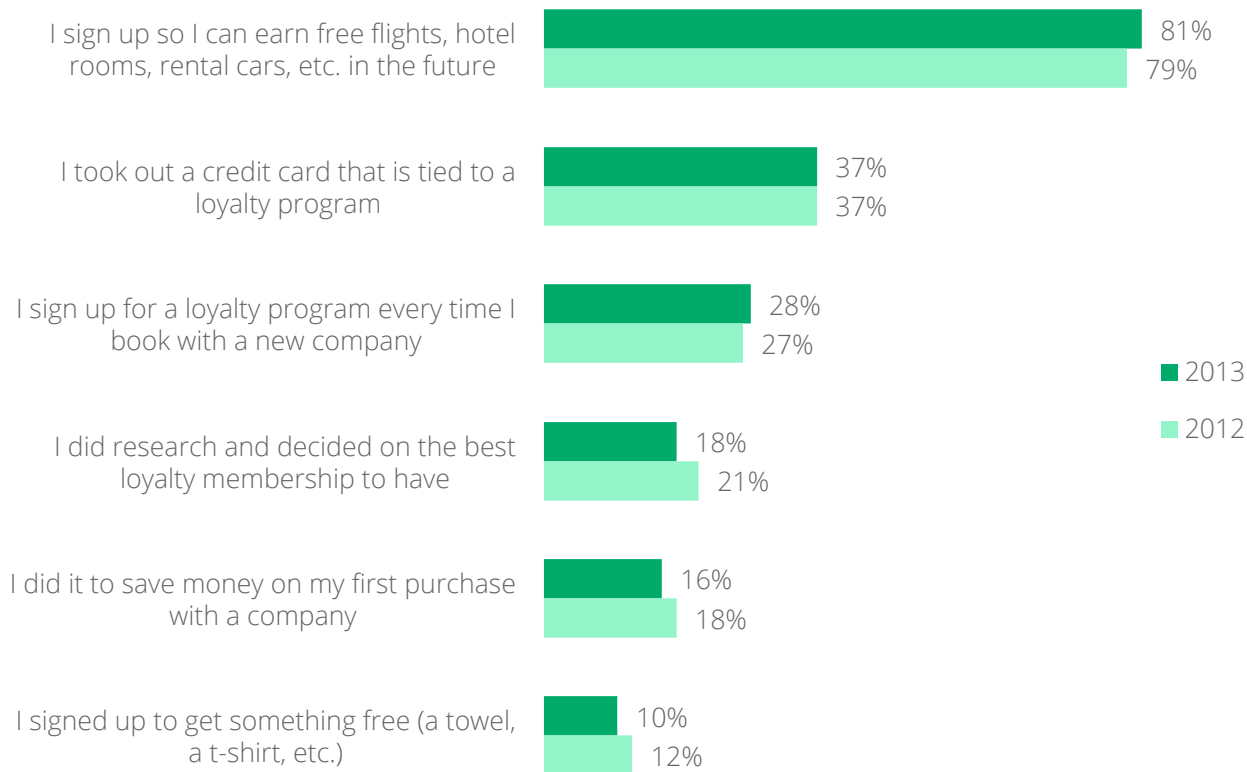
96%

of affluent travelers belong
to a loyalty program
(+2 pts. since 2012).



Affluent travelers continue to **join loyalty programs** for financial and future perks.

REASONS FOR JOINING LOYALTY?REWARD PROGRAM(S)



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study (Waves 3, 4 and 5), April to May 2011, April to May 2012 and May to June 2013.

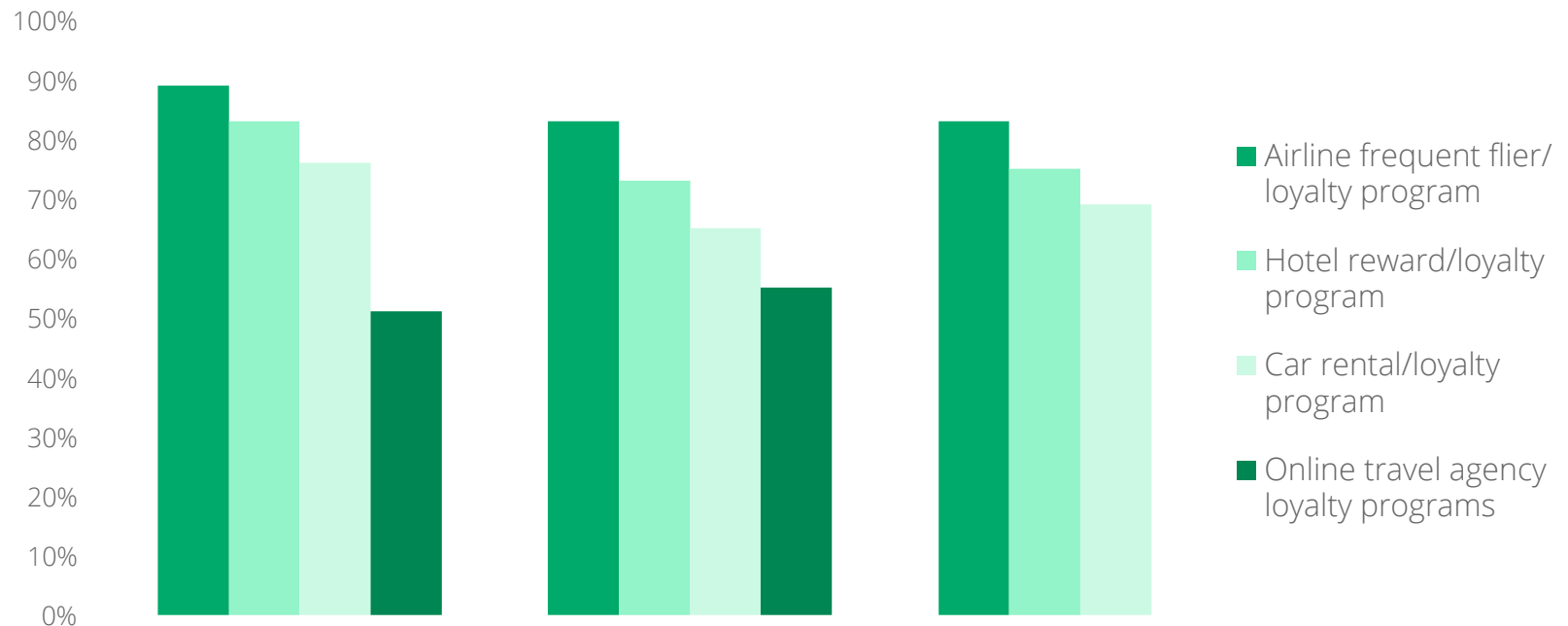
Base: Loyalty/reward program members

LOY3: In general, why do you sign up for travel-related loyalty/rewards programs? (Select ALL that apply)

Letter indicates a significant difference from comparable group at the 95% confidence level. Only significant differences from 2013 are noted.

Affluents are **increasingly likely** to book based on loyalty program membership.

MOST LIKELY TO BOOK WITH A PARTICULAR COMPANY

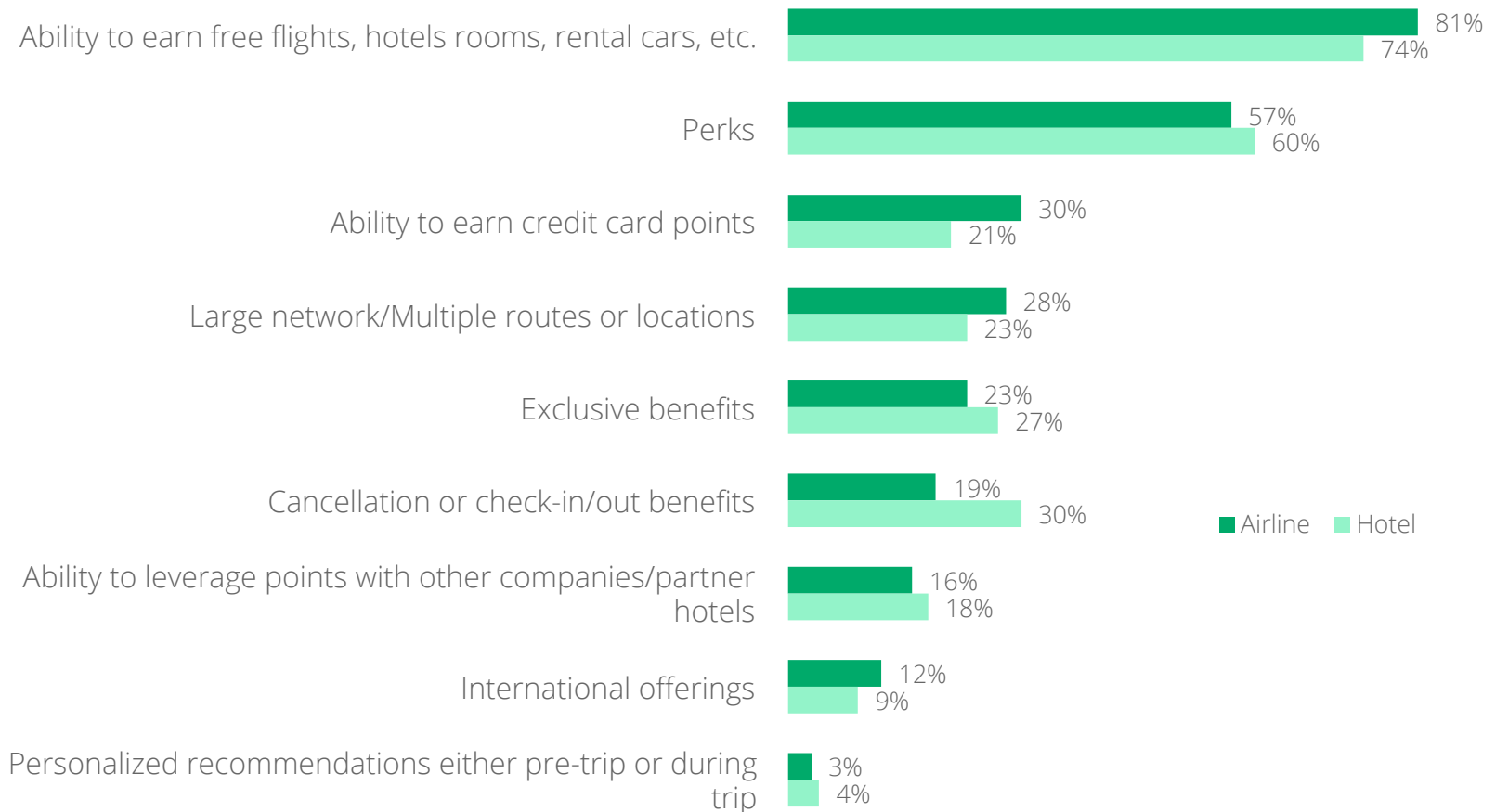


TIP

Ensure that your loyalty program is marketed to the right audiences

Affluents value a variety of **benefits** in airline and hotel loyalty programs.

MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES IN LOYALTY/REWARDS PROGRAMS



Source: Ipsos MediaCT, Google Travel Study, May to June 2013.

Airline N=1403; Hotel N=1272

Base (L): Airline loyalty/rewards program members

Base (R): Hotel loyalty/rewards program members

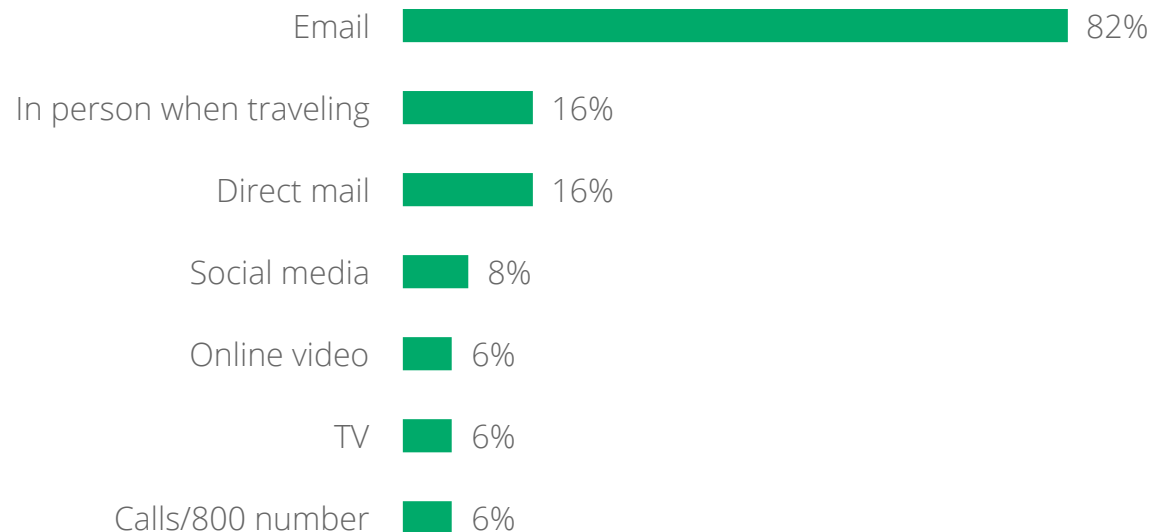
LOY5: Which of the following features are most important to you in each type of loyalty/rewards program? (Select up to three features for each program.)

Affluent travelers overwhelmingly **prefer** to get updates from loyalty programs by email.

86%

of affluent travelers prefer some type of online contact/outreach.

PREFERRED SOURCES FOR STAYING CONNECTED TO LOYALTY/REWARDS PROGRAMS



WHAT WE DID

Google commissioned Ipsos MediaCT, an independent marketing research company, to conduct a travel tracking study to better understand the role that travel plays in the lives of U.S. consumers.

Respondents completed a 20-minute attitude and usage survey on their travel habits. If qualified, users were routed to one of five in-depth sections: Airline, Cruise, Lodgings, Car Rental and Vacation Packages. Total sample size was 5,000 (3,500 personal and 1,500 business travelers). One segment was also recruited, consisting of 1,500 affluent (with \$250K+ household income) travelers.

Respondents had to be 21 to 54 years old, live in the U.S., go online at least once per month and have traveled at least once for personal reasons (or a minimum of 3x for business purposes) in the past six months.



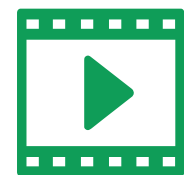
How has travel **planning** changed this year?



What role does the **Internet** play in travel inspiration and planning



How have **mobile devices** influenced our behavior?



How is **online video** used in the travel planning process?

Demographics

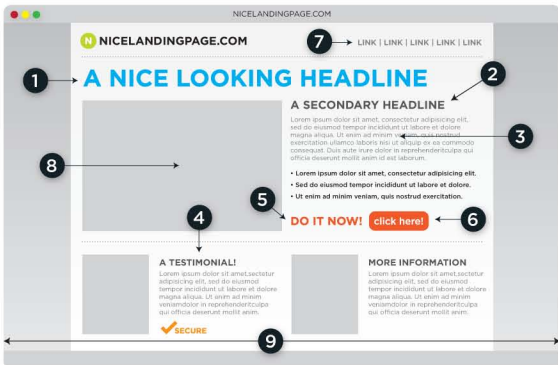
Demographics – Affluent Travelers

	Affluent Travelers		Affluent Travelers
Base	(1563)	Base	(1563)
<u>Age</u>		<u>Employment</u>	
21-24	4%	Employed	82%
25-34	14%	Retired	5%
35-44	31%	Homemaker	8%
45-54	27%	Student	2%
55-64	23%	Unemployed	3%
<u>Gender</u>		<u>Marital Status</u>	
Male	48%	Married	79%
Female	52%	Single, never married	11%
<u>Education</u>		Living with partner	7%
Less than College Grad	10%	Divorced/Separated	3%
College Grad+	90%	Widowed	1%
<u>Children Ages 0-17</u>		<u>Ethnicity</u>	
Yes	38%	White	81%
No	62%	Black	2%
		Hispanic (Net)	4%

THE ANATOMY OF A PERFECT LANDING PAGE

HOW DESIGN TRANSLATES TO USERS

TEN KEY LANDING PAGE FEATURES THAT DRAW IN USERS



1 PAGE HEADLINES AND AD COPY

- The landing page headline and advertisement wording should compliment each other.
- Your AdWords score allows a site to discover the cost-per-click. This score can be improved by having consistent content between the ad message and landing page text.

2 CLEAR AND CONCISE HEADLINES

- Being one of the first things a visitor will read, the landing page headlines should not confuse or bore, but compel a visitor to take a closer look.
- Addressing a specific point that is related to the content of the website will catch a reader's attention more than having a vague and uninteresting headline.

3 IMPECCABLE GRAMMAR

- In the example of an online retailer who is asking for visitors to purchase and provide personal and billing information, the trust of the customer will be risked if there are spelling errors and sloppy grammar.

4 TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TRUST INDICATORS

- For an effective way of building trust, incorporate testimonials, press mentions, guarantee seals, and 3rd party trust and security certification (Better Business Bureau, VeriSign, etc.).
- When eye glasses and lens company ACLens began using VeriSign, they saw a 41% increase in conversions and a 58% increase in revenue per transaction. The same can happen with any online landing page.

5 USE A STRONG CALL TO ACTION

- After a visitor reads the landing page headline, it is crucial that they know what to do next.
- In the case of Mozilla Firefox, when they changed their call-to-action from "Try Firefox 3" to "Download Now - Free", it outperformed the original call-to-action by 3.6% and had a confidence level of over 99%, resulting in 500 more downloads during the time of the test.

6 BUTTONS AND CALL TO ACTIONS SHOULD STAND OUT

- Identify the keywords people interested in your service might be searching for and use words such as "free", "new", "buy" or "download now".
- A conversion button should stand out and be placed right below a call-to-action or have the call-to-action as the button. Nonetheless, the button should be big, bright, and above where a user would have to scroll to it.
- Orange or yellow buttons for a call to action help to catch a viewer's eye.

7 GO EASY ON THE LINKS

- Links connecting the user to too many other sites or pages will distract them and have a negative impact on conversions.
- Lots of links may make sense on a regular homepage, but on a landing page simplicity is key.

8 USE IMAGES AND VIDEOS THAT RELATE TO COPY

- Implementing motivational speeches, videos of user testimonials, and product images into a home page can have a positive impact on viewers, as well as give shoppers an extra push to look further into a product.

9 KEEP IT ABOVE THE FOLD

- The space a visitor sees without having to scroll is where the most important parts of the webpage should be.
- Place the call-to-action button above the fold and in a location where the viewer's eye will scan to. Never have the button in a place where it has to be searched for.

10 ALWAYS BE TESTING

- Optimize a landing page for conversion over time. Run A/B tests, change copy, images, and call-to-actions to see what resonates most with users.
- In addition to A/B testing, testing two completely different site designs against each other will be beneficial in the long run. (A/B testing is where a baseline control sample is compared to a variety of single-variable test samples in order to improve response rates.)

WHAT TYPES OF COLORS ARE GOOD FOR DIFFERENT SITES?

Colors that will entice a viewer will vary among different sites. Applying the right colors might draw in traffic, bore viewers, or scare some away. They set the mood of a landing page and influence viewer's actions.

YELLOW

- Optimistic and youthful
- Often used to grab a viewer's attention

ORANGE

- Aggressiveness
- Used as a call-to-action and attention grabber

RED

- Energy
- Increases heart rate and creates urgency
- Often seen with clearance sales and references to food

PINK

- Romantic and feminine
- Used to market products and services for woman and young girls

BLUE

- Creates the sensation of trust and security
- Often used by banks and businesses

PURPLE

- Soothing and calm
- Often relates to beauty or anti-aging products and services

GREEN

- Associated with wealth
- The easiest color for the eye to process and used with finance or entertainment websites

BLACK

- Powerful and Sleek
- Seen as luxurious and sophisticated

Tim Allen. Users experience consultant – Distilled company (London)

Life Above and Beyond the Fold

For many years we used content above the fold as a gateway for users to access pretty much anywhere on our sites. We would fill these 600 or so pixels of valuable space with **all** the important sections of our site we wanted our users to know about.

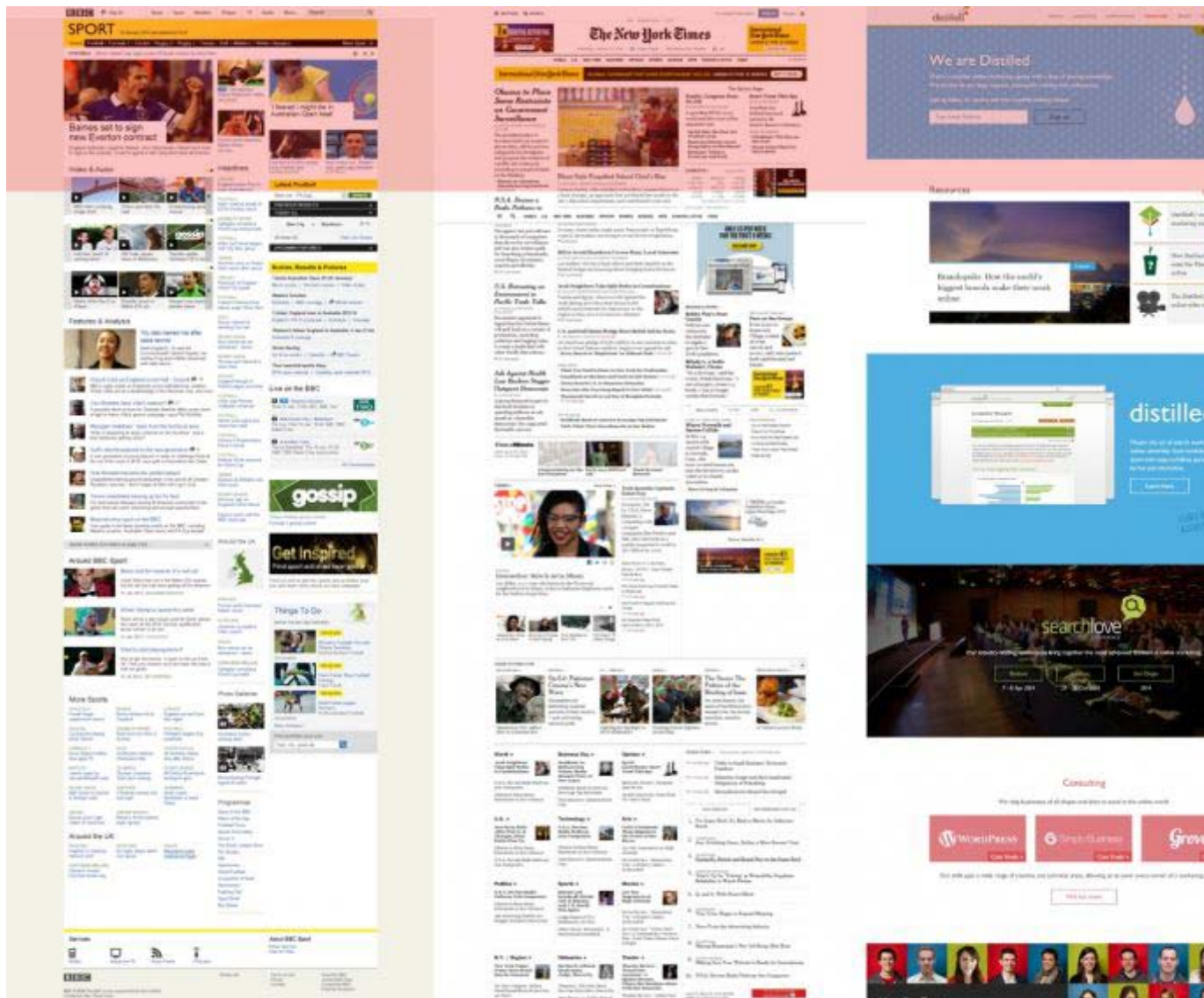
However, the arrival of smartphones and tablets has forever changed the way people consume information and navigate around the web. Smartphones taught users how to scroll and swipe, and as such have reinvented the way webpages are designed. So, what about the fold? How has this changed in this multi-screen world?

Space above the fold is still hugely important, but instead of just sharing everything there, the fear centers around the idea that users may not want to scroll. Instead, we now need to narrow down our focus, using space above the fold to share our main ideas that will make people want to read the rest of the page.

History of the fold

The term "[above the fold](#)" originates from the world of newspapers; papers are generally shown to customers folded in half, therefore only the top half of the page is visible. Editors would use this space to grab attention using important stories, powerful headlines and strong imagery to encourage users to buy the paper.

On a webpage, the fold is the area of a page displayed to the user without them having to scroll. Based on a 1366x768 pixel screen resolution (a little more on this choice later), the area highlighted in red is generally how content is presented to users on a landing page (i.e. above the fold)



Is space above the fold still valuable in 2014?

At the end of 2013, [Peep Laja](#) spoke at SearchLove about the [Principles of Persuasive Web Design](#). He had observed that despite it being 2013 (now 2014) and us living in a much more scroll-oriented world, content placed above the fold was still grabbing 80% of our attention.



80%

20%

[*Image source*](#)

This continues to make above-the-fold space highly valuable to capture a user's attention. The main difference today is that **users no longer have the patience they once had**. This is due to the high volume of content users have access to, making earning their attention increasingly competitive.

Therefore, this space should no longer be filled with clutter and overwhelming amounts of information. Instead, above the fold content needs to contain a [strong value proposition](#) that explains to the user exactly what the page can offer.

With so many devices, how can you possibly design for above the fold?

The [multi-screen world](#) we now live in has changed the face of above-the-fold space. With such a range of devices and responsive designs the fold will appear in different places dependent upon numerous factors (such as screen resolution, thickness of the user's toolbar, and whether the page is zoomed).

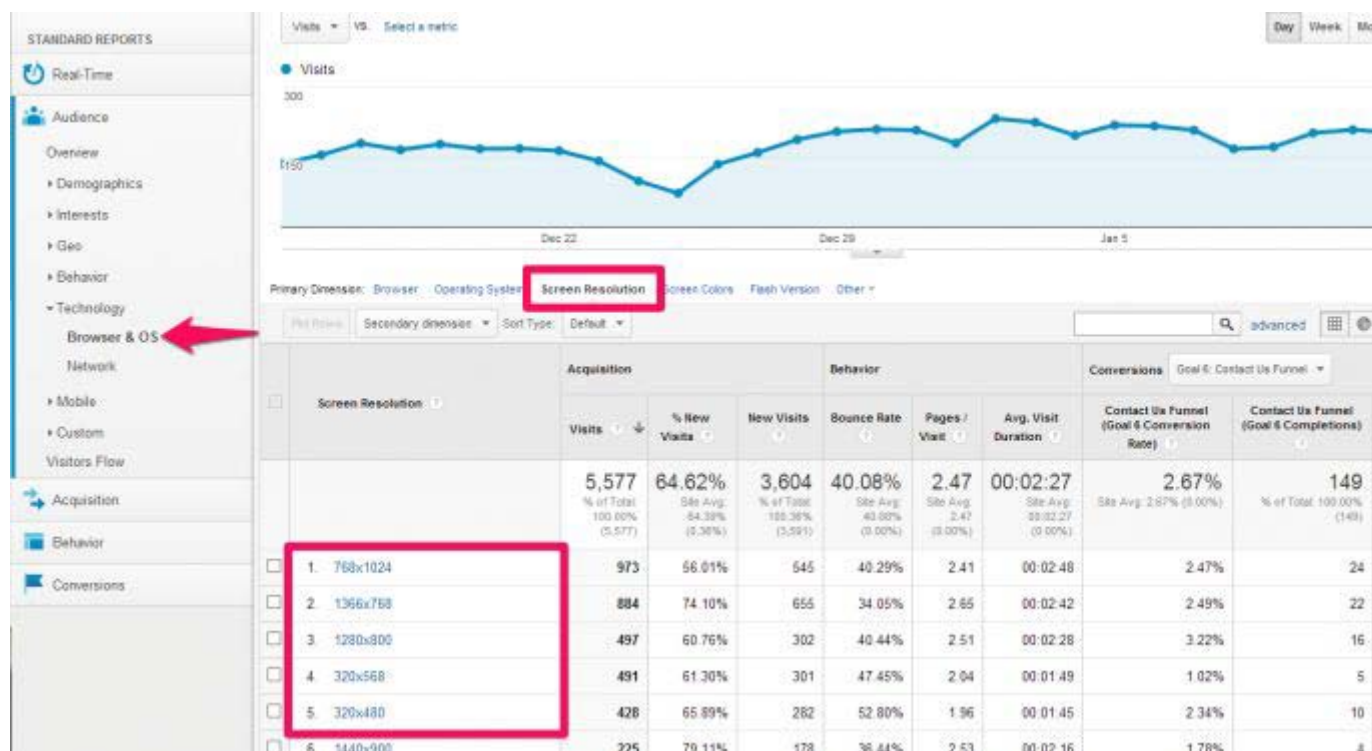
How do we design for this? There is no one-size-fits-all solution to this problem, but what we can do is ensure our important content is towards the top of the page and is optimised to serve the majority of our users.

To find out which screen resolutions the majority of your users use on your site, complete the following steps:

1. Open Google Analytics

2. In the "Audience" tab, view "Technology" and select "Browser & OS"

3. Choose "Screen Resolution"



Designing for beyond the fold

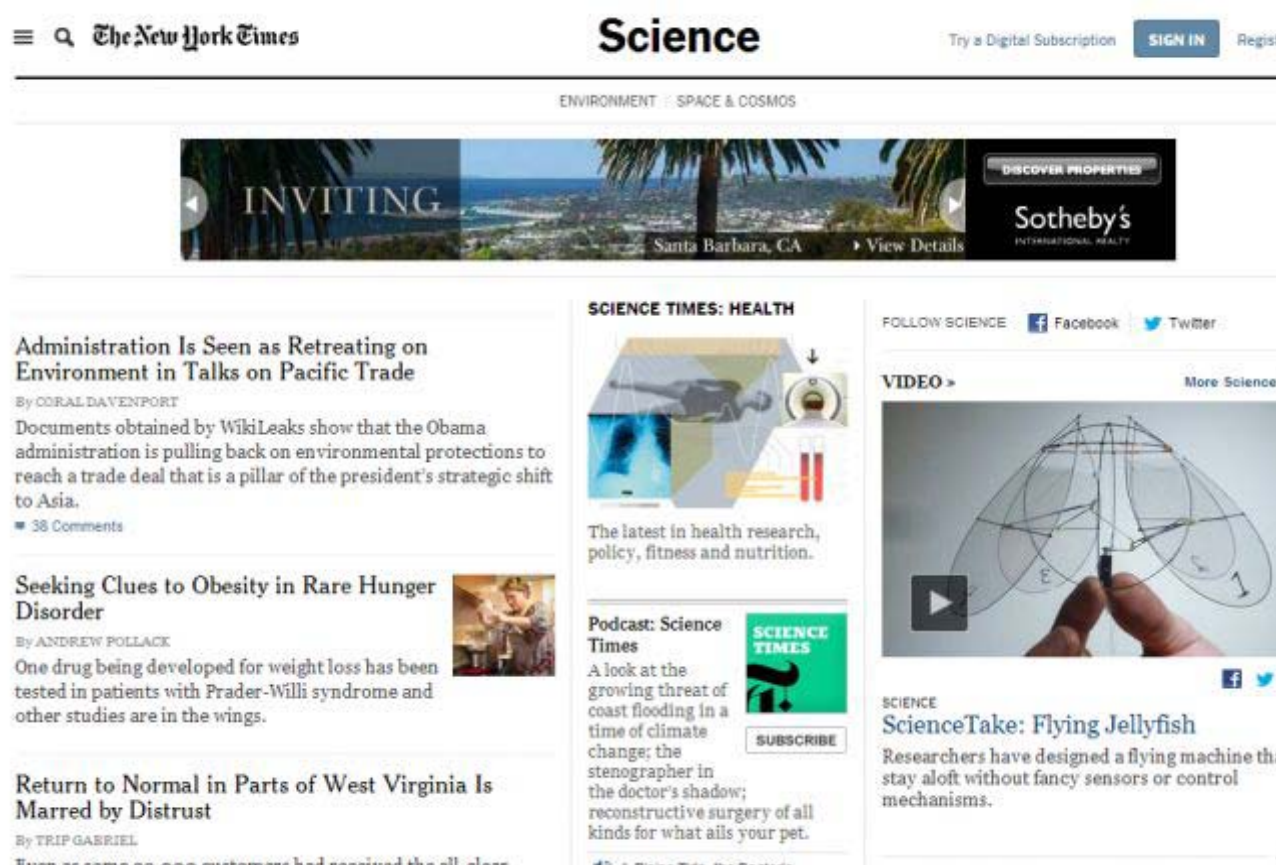
Okay, so we know that space above the fold is still incredibly important for engaging user attention. What about the rest of our beautifully created content? [A study by Clicktale](#) shows that if a page has a scroll bar it will be used by 76% of users to at least some extent. 22% will scroll to the bottom of the page. So, as pointed out by [Usability Expert Jakob Nielsen](#), space above the

fold still grabs the majority of attention and people do scroll, but we should make sure that we are designing to encourage that scrolling.

While mobile devices have developed scrolling as natural user behavior we have to ensure that our page layouts are designed to showcase all our content. So what should the fold line look like? Ideally, we want to make content on the fold line draw the users eyes down the page.

Three ways in which we can encourage scrolling

1. Staggered content columns



By making content different lengths in each column we prevent the issue of having empty space across the width of the page, making it seem like the page has ended. One paragraph or image is always broken by the fold, encouraging the user to scroll down to see more information. This is a style often used by newspaper websites such as the [New York Times](#) and the [BBC](#).

2. Page trails



Using a footpath that walks users through the page is a great way to encourage users to scroll. The fold simply dissects the path, which the user will naturally continue to follow. A great example of this in action is the [Guide to Wordpress by Simply Business](#).

3. Sometimes you just have to tell them



[Image source](#)

Sometimes rather than trying to use subtle visual cues to guide users down the page it can be beneficial to simply tell the user there is more content for them to see. This is the approach [Put Things Off](#) uses to introduce further features of their mobile app.

Key takeaways

- The fold still matters. While space above the fold used to serve as a portal to explore all the sections of a site, its purpose is to now grab attention and introduce the user to your brand/product.
- We live in a multi-screen world and [scrolling is now habitual](#). If we are building pages that require scrolling we need to ensure we encourage this behaviour through visual prompts and remind the user there is deeper content below the fold.
- Continue to monitor user behaviour particularly in relation to the most commonly used screen resolutions in order to ensure valuable content remains above the fold.