



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

We had an exciting few days here in Arizona with the Arizona State University vs. Norte Dame game, the Arizona Cardinals vs. St. Louis Rams game and NASCAR races all happening this past weekend.

It was wonderful to see how these mega events bring people to Arizona, but it was even better to see how the media attention from these events helps put Arizona on the global stage. Vibrant images of Arizona were aired regionally and nationally to viewers throughout the weekend, which helped us promote our state as a great place to live, work and visit.

We have many other upcoming events that will be seen nationally and internationally including Fiesta Bowl, Cactus Bowl, Pro Bowl, Super Bowl, and the Phoenix Waste Management Open all happening within a few weeks of each other. It's going to be exciting to see the phenomenal coverage we'll receive from hosting these great events!

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

AOT Launches Arizona Travel Impacts App!

The app provides data on direct spending, direct earnings, employment, and tax receipts generated by tourism in Arizona by county and region. Visit [Arizona Travel Impacts](#) to download the app.

AOT Announces World Tour 2014!

To give statewide communities a more in-depth educational experience on the state's top international visitor markets, AOT will be bringing our international representatives to you for a series of seminars in northern, central and southern Arizona. The AOT World Tour will take place over three days – **Dec. 2, 3 and 4** – in Flagstaff, Scottsdale and Tucson, respectively. This is an opportunity for DMOs, attractions and hotels to learn from AOT's seven in-market international representatives about the latest visitor trends and statistics to ensure that your promotional efforts are effectively reaching your target market. For more information, contact Kristin Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via email at kswanson@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Arizona Media Marketplace

Date: November 20

Locations: Scottsdale

Travel Classics West

Date: November 20-23

Locations: Scottsdale

AOT's International Representative Road Show

Date: December 2- 4

Locations: Flagstaff, Scottsdale and Tucson

Industry News

Report: Interest in Luxury Travel Rising

A new report by Digital Luxury Group (DLG) indicates interest in luxury travel is growing, and some hotel companies and brands in particular are attracting a good deal of attention.

The report, "The World Luxury Index Hotels 2014," was unveiled recently in partnership with the Chair of Luxury Hospitality of Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), Prof. Samad Laaroussi. It monitored over 485 million web searches throughout the world from July 2013 to June 2014 via major search engines such as Google and China-based Baidu.com. Seventy hotel brands and over 900 international destinations were included in the report.

One of the key findings in the report: Global online searches for the luxury hospitality industry increased by 7.7 percent year-over-year, suggesting travelers are thinking about luxury travel more. About 58 percent of such searches came from the United States, followed by the UK (10 percent) and China (9 percent). China experienced the greatest increase in luxury searches, boasting a 39 percent growth rate year-over-year.

Luxury searches were also broken up into three categories in the report: Upper Upscale, Luxury Major and Luxury Exclusive. The Luxury Exclusive category (including hotel brands such as Four Seasons, Kempinski and Mandarin Oriental) experienced a 9.6 percent rate of growth in searches year-over-year, making up 19 percent of all luxury searches. Upper Upscale (Hilton, Hyatt, etc.) saw a 7.9 percent jump, but received a leading 56 percent of luxury searches. Luxury Major (Sofitel, Ritz-Carlton, JW Marriott) experienced a 5.9 percent rise, taking 25 percent of the pie overall.

The most searched luxury hotel groups in the world were (in order): Hilton Worldwide, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Hyatt. The most searched luxury hotel brands were Hilton, Sheraton and Westin.

However, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts was the hotel group that saw the greatest growth in interest, experiencing 20 percent more web searches over the past year. It ranked first in popularity in China and Singapore, second in Taiwan and fourth in France and Hong Kong.

These searches aren't just empty numbers, either. Via the report, there's an "over 99.9999 percent probability that the evolution of the number of rooms sold (as reported by STR) is statistically correlated with the evolution of online search volume (as reported by DLG)."

The world appears to be rebounding from the recession and yearning for luxury once again. The latest numbers from the World Luxury Index Hotels 2014 report reflect that sentiment.

To buy the full report, email intelligence@digital-luxury.com. (*Travel Pulse*, Oct 22)

How Online Marketing Is Changing Travel

Advertisers no longer interrupt consumers—they complement them. This extends to the travel industry and beyond.

The growth of online marketing, personalized marketing and mobile app use has changed the way travel companies do business. While TV ads and billboards are still relevant, online marketing rules these days.

Just ask Frank Vertolli and Ryan Fitzgerald, co-founders of Net Conversion, a digital marketing and analytics company. Or Evan Schwartz, CEO of ActionX, a mobile app and cross-screen retargeting company.

While online marketing is nothing new, Vertolli, Fitzgerald and Schwartz—who serve a variety of travel companies—all agree that it has reached a new level over the past 12-18 months. The digital marketing world is extremely competitive now, and the best companies have learned that it's not just about following consumers around (or retargeting them) while they search the Internet—it's about being as relevant as possible to targeted consumers.

"The days of interruptive advertising...that's not how it's done anymore," Vertolli said. "Now I think relevance is the new criteria. You don't want to interrupt consumers; you want to complement them with ads that are specific to them. If you want to stand out from the noise, it used to be scream louder. Have a funnier commercial or a more insane offer. Now it's relevance."

Be as relevant as possible to that user and they will reward you with attention to your ad. With the travel industry, as with everywhere else, targeting is key. The stakes just keep getting higher.”

Personalized advertising has taken on a new meaning these days. Hotel companies, airlines, OTAs, tour operators—you name it—enlist the help of companies like Net Conversion and ActionX to learn as much as possible about potential customers as possible. Based on which keywords travelers use when searching, travel companies can tap into travelers’ mindsets (for example, a budget-oriented traveler will use words such as “cheap hotels” or “deals”). They’ll then retarget travelers using, for example, banner ads. Every page the traveler goes to, there’s that same ad or company flashing on the screen.

Different types of ads will cater to different types of travelers. Business travelers will generally see a more straightforward advertising approach, Vertolli said (quick-hit details like rate, destination, proximity, cost, what’s covered, etc.), while leisure travelers will generally see ads that “pull more emotional strings.”

Video marketing has really taken off, especially when it comes to leisure travel. Post a 30-second YouTube clip of travelers enjoying that luxurious hotel stay or a complimentary outdoor activity and watch the interest skyrocket, Fitzgerald said.

“Travel is such an experiential thing,” Vertolli said. “Nothing can tell the story as much as video does. Now with Internet you can have a more specific video with a more specific audience.”
(Travel Pulse, Oct. 24)

UNWTO and the Adventure Travel Trade Association Release Global Report on Adventure Tourism

ATTA, a UNWTO Affiliate Member, has provided key input in this report to help increase awareness among the global tourism sector on the core values of responsible tourism. The report allows all tourism stakeholders to work from a common base of understanding in one of the most progressive forms of tourism, which both organizations believe will develop into the industry standard.

“This report provides critical insight into one of the most dynamic segments driving tourism’s growth,” said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai. “Furthermore, with careful and responsible management, adventure tourism offers effective development opportunities to countries looking for new and sustainable sources of growth.”

The report, an eight chapter overview of the current adventure tourism industry, provides a history of adventure tourism as well as a discussion of current trends and timely issues. Chapters include:

- Industry introduction
- Global Trends in Adventure Tourism
- Adventure Tourism Industry Structure

- Local Economies, Communities and the Environment
- Adventure Tourism Operational Standards and Certifications
- Risk Management in Adventure Tourism
- Sector Challenges, Opportunities and Initiatives

“This report signifies UNWTO's recognition of adventure tourism's contribution to the sustainable future of tourism,” said ATTA President Mr. Shannon Stowell, who provided a summary for the report. “It provides a background underlining the potential for destinations around the globe that are looking for ways to create sustainable economic tourism models protecting people and places.”

Contributors to the report include industry specialists Natasha Martin and Keith Sproule, and Christina Beckmann and Nicole Petrak of ATTA. Also featured are several UNWTO partners and Affiliate Members offering topical perspectives. The report can be downloaded from the UNWTO or the ATTA website.

In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, UNWTO and the ATTA will continue their two-year partnership on regional courses on Adventure Tourism through the ATTA's Adventure EDU program in collaboration with the UNWTO. Themis Foundation.

Download the [report here](#). (*Travel Industry Wire, Nov. 5*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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