

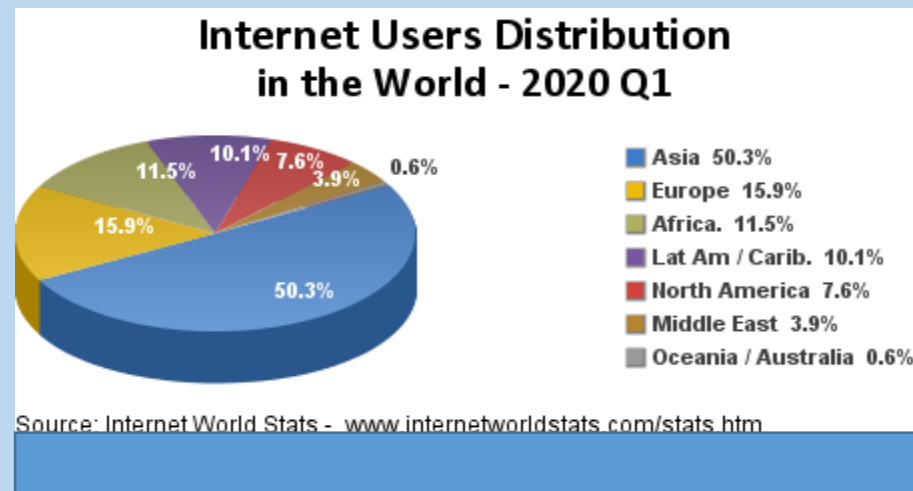
Debate Guidance

TITLE: All Holiday Bookings will be Completed ONLINE in the Future??

Some Guidance Pointers for the Topic:

Supportive Points of Topic:

- In recent years, there has been an exponential improvement in technologies, which has enabled the population to do so much more online (including the booking of holidays).
- More and more people globally are using the internet (Internet World Stats).



Supportive Points of Topic:

- Online Bookings Industry worth \$756 Billion in 2019 - - - this is expected to grow to \$817 Billion by 2020!!!!
- 15.4% Growth in 'Worldwide Online Travel Sales' and 10.3% Growth in 'Online Hotel Bookings'.
- Overall the **online** travel **booking market** share makes up 63% of the \$1.2 trillion the travel **industry** generates every year.

REF: (Online Travel Market Projection 2019)

Supportive Points of Topic:

- According to a recent statistics, 65% of bookings are made online. **"Online Travel Booking Statistics"**, Data says, number of travel bookings made on the internet each year, 148.3 million. Percent of all travel reservations made on the internet, 57 %.
- Circa 700 High Street Travel Agents closed in the UK last year because of competition with Online rivals (Local Data Company --www.travelmediadaily.com 2018)
- 679 High Street Travel Agents closed in 2017! (Local Data Company --www.travelmediadaily.com 2018)
- Travel Agents were the 3rd highest numbers of business closures in High Street sector operators ! (Local Data Company --www.travelmediadaily.com 2018)
- *"Many Millennials.... Have never set foot inside a travel agency" (RSM Group 2018)*
- *"Overwhelming majority preferred the ease and convenience of booking online" (RSM Group 2018)*
- *"Only 1 in 5 travellers or 19% booked their holidays in store" (RSM Group 2018)*

STATISTICS – ONLINE BOOKINGS:

- Online travel bookings expected to hit \$817 billion by 2020.
- 700 million people will be booking their hotel rooms online by 2023.
- 70% of travellers research travel on their smartphone.
- Online digital travel sales in 2019 are worth a massive \$755 billion worldwide.
- 83% of US adults now prefer to book their travel online.
- 33% of consumers say they've used a virtual travel assistant to help organise and plan their next trip.
- Google data shows that travel related searches including 'tonight' and 'today' have grown by more than 519% in the past five years.
- 45% of UK travellers feel comfortable researching, planning and booking trips to new destinations using only their mobile.
- 72% of mobile bookings happen within 48 hours of last-minute Google searches.
- 148.3 million travel bookings are completed online every year.
- Online travel agencies offering customers 'a one stop shop' are expected to own 41% of the online digital travel market by 2020.
- Millennials prefer to book hotels via travel agencies but 52% browse the hotel's website for more information.
- 82% of all travel bookings in 2018 were made online via a mobile app or website, without human interaction.
- (Source: <https://www.condorferries.co.uk/online-travel-booking-statistics>)

Non Supportive Points of Topic:

UK Holiday Booking Figures in Support of Travel Agencies.

- BOOKING METHODS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS shows the use of three main channels for booking holidays (consistent with last year).
- WHILST four in five people booked a holiday online (81% in 2018 vs 83% in 2017) other options of booking (non web based) are still notable!!

- Phone bookings and booking in store have remained steady (both 15% in 2018 vs 16% and 17% in 2017 respectively). This suggests the shift towards booking online has stabilised.
- People over the age of 65 are most likely to book on the phone, with more than one in four (26%) holidaymakers in this age group booking this way. Younger and older families are most likely to book a holiday in person, with 22% of this category booking a holiday in store last year.

Non Supportive Points of Topic:

USA Figures in Support of Travel Agencies.

- 75% of Americans would consider asking a travel agent to plan their vacations, while some 27 million travellers plan to do so just within the next year, according to new research into travel agency usage. (Steinmetz, 2018)
- Despite continual advances in technology that allow travellers to plan and book vacations for themselves online, nearly half of Americans (46 percent) feel that working with a travel agent adds value to their trip. (Steinmetz, 2018)

Non Supportive Points of Topic:

- The travel agency industry in the US is likely to make \$17.3 billion USD in revenue by 2020. This has increased from \$15 billion USD in 2015. Research shows travel agents in the US are continuing to report an increase in business. Further research suggests that many people, including over 50% of millennials are inclined to hire experts when planning trips. Customers benefit from the efficient planning and expert knowledge of travel companies and feel that booking this way helps to save time and avoid costly mistakes.
(Source: <https://www.condorferries.co.uk/travel-agency-statistics>)
- From 2014 – 2016 the number of travel agents in the USA increased by over 10%, while travel network Virtuoso reports a 15% year on year increase in advisers in 2019. It looks as though the industry could be making a comeback.
(Source: <https://www.condorferries.co.uk/travel-agency-statistics>)

- **STATISTICS – TRAVEL AGENCY USAGE:**

- By 2020, the US Travel Agency industry is expected to generate \$17.3 billion, which is up from about \$12.2 billion back in 2010.
- When booking air travel, 43% of people prefer to book through agents.
- Over half of those that booked through agencies said their experiences were better than those that were planned alone, without an agent.
- Top travel companies often collaborate with hotels and restaurants to ensure mutual growth.
- For this reason, commission acquired from associates makes up 78% of the revenue in this industry.
- Agencies can save customers on average \$452 per trip as they have access to promotions and deals from suppliers that travellers do not.
- According to the 2015 Census, there are 105,085 travel agencies in the U.S. 66% of travellers say that their agent helped them avoid costly inconveniences and mistakes.
- 55% of travellers have said that they must have sought out information from too many sources before deciding.
- 55% of Millennials are inclined to hire travel experts to help with planning their trips, while only 28% of Baby Boomers say the same.
- 33% of Millennials are planning to hire travel agents in the next two years.

(Source: <https://www.condorferries.co.uk/travel-agency-statistics>)

Non Supportive Points of Topic:

- The number of consumers now booking through a travel company is at its highest point in the last three years, reports the American Society of Travel Agents.
- The proportion of direct website bookings fell from 79.2% in 2017 to 66.7% in 2018, while marketplace bookings increased to 9.1%, from 3.2%.
- In addition, agent, affiliate and local tourist office bookings also increased from 17.5% to 24.3% in the same time period.
- Of those who have been previously been on a cruise, 35% booked their most recent trip through an agent.
- Airline ticket sales through traditional agencies grew by 1.8% from August 2015 through to August 2016
- (Source: <https://www.condorferries.co.uk/travel-agency-statistics>)

• Non Supportive Points of Topic:

- “Whether it’s a once-in-a-lifetime vacation, first time overseas or an annual family getaway, travellers want to make the most of out of any trip and are relying on travel agents to ensure that happens,” said Bill Sutherland, senior vice president of AAA Travel.
- “Although travellers today have myriad ways in which to book their vacations, they recognize the value of working with a professional, experienced travel agent to make sure there is a return on their travel investment and a lifetime of memories to be made.”

(Steinmetz, 2018)

Advantages / Disadvantages ! (Flynn 2020)

Advantages of Booking via Travel Agents

- Face to Face service (Human Element) – Able to discuss at length trip options with experts who are knowledgeable and passionate about travel - (as opposed to interfacing via online chat platform via the web!)
- Can make changes easily to package -pop back into shop
- Ease of Access --Shop on High Street
- Pay in instalments for the trip – Shops have the capacity to offer pricing packages to suit the customer
- Often 'better' deals are offered in store - - travel agents readily made aware of pricing variances and can immediately offer these to the customer, also the customer can negotiate with the travel rep.
- Tailored / Specialised Service – booking unique / unusual locations + excursions
- Safety of payment (in store – receipt) -- more difficult to book a multi centred holiday via online methods - - such as several accommodation types / excursions / transport transfers
- Less stress in researching / booking – Travel expert to give advice and suggestions - - very often the travel agent has been to the location / hotel and can give 'first hand' information on the resort.
- Supports the local High St – maintaining the local economy.
- High Street 'Recognised' Brands (longevity of companies on the High St – (not newer online companies untried and untested!)
- Travel reps to contact / liaise with (by phone / face to face) if something goes wrong – (Not interfacing with an online Robot when things go wrong!)
- Customer protection - Travel Agent Corporate Policies..... Agencies act as advocates for the customer.
- Able to build up a rapport with the customer - - able to book several trips each yr, for the customer for business, domestic / international holidays. Personalised service, as the agent knows on a personal basis the individual and understands their needs and requirements - - solo traveller, disabled access, travelling with a young family, interests, budgets etc.....

Advantages of Booking via the WEB / Online

- Online booking is the way of the future, which will be encouraged by the industry.
- Greater information is available to the consumer online which is argued rivals the 'first hand' information available through via a travel agent – eg; bookers can see a virtual tour of their hotel / read online reviews, pics images....
- Online Travel Platforms are developing all the time and are quickly addressing all areas that the High Street travel agent can offer.
- Most generations are 'tech savy' and the online travel industry is taking full advantage of this, by speedily exceeding the needs of the consumer.
- Online bookings are price competitive – OFTEN CHEAPER, as they have no overheads – (No shopfront rates, 'cut out the middle man' – if booking direct with the hotel / transport provider etc...)
- Bookings can be made very speedily online – by the click of a button holiday is booked.
- Payments have become much more secure in recent years - - also there is greater online protection via banks / credit companies for online purchases.
- Holidays can be booked online with ease and convenience - - without having to leave your own home!
- Online booking allows you to book at time - - day or night. Can book a holiday online to leave the same day - - E tickets - emailed through direct to the consumer.
- Online companies have increased in size in recent years offering diverse product departments – bookings / complaints / queries..... and a range of ways in which you can interface with the company (not just online)
- Online companies are becoming much more diverse - - many niche booking companies developing – eg; Exodus Adventure Travels