



## **Summer Travel in 2010**

*Gearing Up for a Hot Season as More Vacationers Prepare to Get Away*

May 2010



The dog days of summer are right around the corner and the U.S. economy looks to be headed towards greener pastures. Compared to last year, a larger share of web users is using the Internet to plan personal trips and vacations for themselves and for their households – and for most vacationers, getting away from it all doesn't mean getting away from being online. When it comes to taking a break from the rigors of the home and office, people still need to get an Internet fix of one kind or another. Add this fact to a measured boost in consumer confidence, and the door is wide open for online marketers seeking to engage travelers as they make summer plans – and while they're enjoying time off.

To shed light on the upcoming summer travel season, Burst Media surveyed 2,428 adults aged 18 or older in early May 2010 to gain insight into the impacts of a volatile (and recovering) economic landscape on their summer travel plans and identify online consumer trends from previous Burst research on the subject.

### Key Findings:

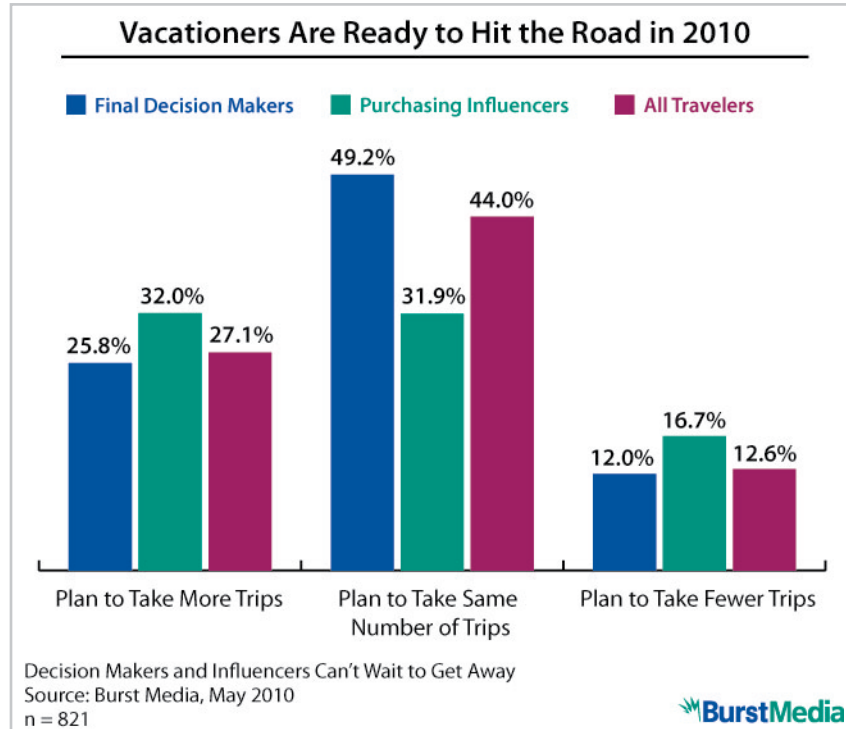
- Nearly nine out of ten summer travelers said they will use the Internet to plan their getaway(s)
- One-quarter of respondents who make final travel purchasing decisions – and nearly a third who influence final decisions – plan to take more vacations this summer compared to 2009
- Nearly three out of every four travelers accessed the Internet when they were last on a personal trip or vacation, and they did so to keep in touch with family, friends, the office and more – but there are significant differences between men and women

### Insight #1: The Internet is Red Hot for Summer Travel Planning

Overall, half (50.0%) of all survey respondents reported they are planning to take a personal trip or vacation this summer. Though this number is still well below peak highs from a few years back (e.g., 79% in 2006<sup>1</sup>), those who are planning to take one trip or more at least 100 miles away from home this summer are turning to the Internet in droves to make their plans: in 2010, nearly nine out of 10 summer travelers (87.9%) said they'll use the web to plan their vacations. This is up nearly 8% from 2009<sup>2</sup> (80.3%) and up 14.2% from 2006<sup>1</sup> (73.6%).

Respondents who indicated that they solely or jointly make final travel purchasing decisions for their household are quite active online. Of this group, 55.5% plan to take a personal trip or vacation this summer and more than half (51.4%) said the Internet is the primary way they'll plan their summer 2010 vacation. An additional two out of five (40.2%) said they'll use the Internet to supplement their travel planning initiatives. Only 8.5% of final decision makers said they will not use the web to make vacation plans.

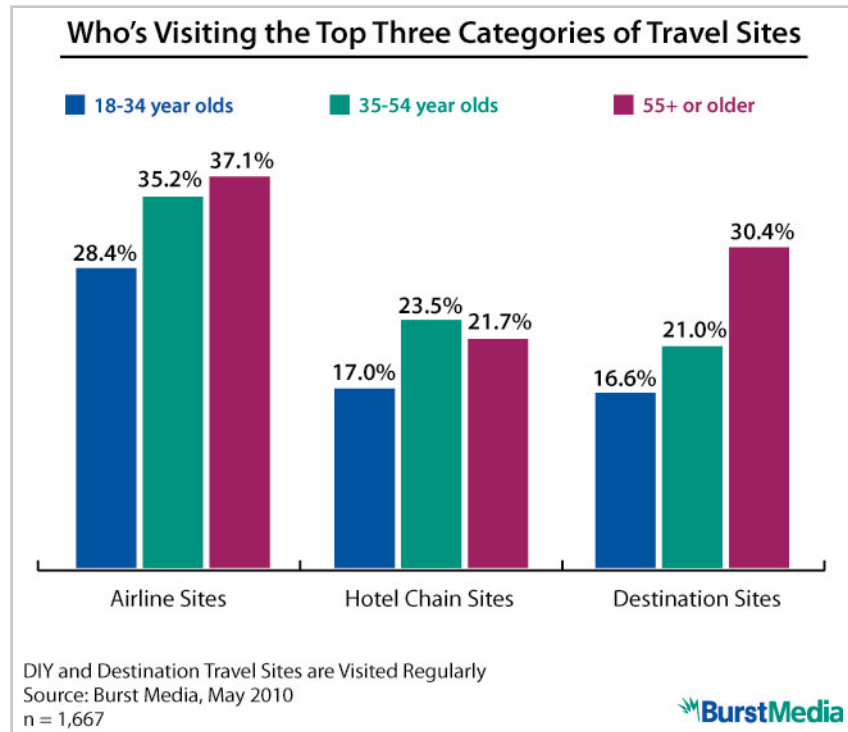
**Insight #2:  
Decision Makers and Influencers Can't Wait to Get Away**



Respondents are generally feeling it's time to take a break in the summer of 2010. Seven out of every ten summer travelers (71.1%) are planning to either take more or at a minimum maintain the same number of trips/vacations this year versus what they took last year. Case in point: in 2009, one third (34.6%) of summer travelers planned to reduce the number of trips or vacations taken when compared to previous years<sup>2</sup>. In 2010, that figure dropped a whopping 22 percentage points to 12.6% who plan to travel less. Moreover, when asked to compare the total number of summer trips or vacations taken in 2009 to summer travel plans for this year, one out of four (25.8%) final decision makers say they plan to take more trips or vacations in 2010. Nearly a third (32.0%) of purchasing influencers plan to take more trips this year versus last year.

Of the nearly three out of ten respondents overall (27.1%) who said they plan to take more trips or vacations this summer, nearly a third cite that they "just need a break" as a deciding factor. Other reasons cited include more time available to take off (28.8%), personal or family finances back on track (19.4%), the need to make up for not taking enough time last year (17.2%) and job security (13.2%). Conversely, of those who said they'd be traveling or vacationing less this summer, deciding factors included personal or family finances (33.4%), economic reasons (27.0%) and employment reasons (24.6%).

**Insight #3: DIY and Destination Travel Sites are Visited Regularly**

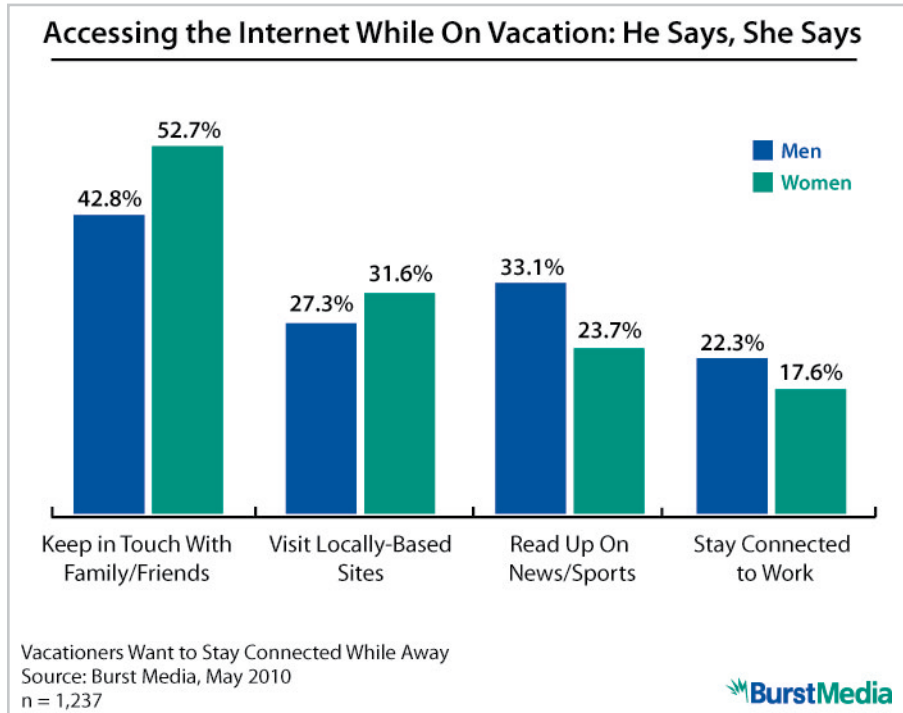


To gauge the popularity of specific kinds of travel sites, we asked respondents to tell us the kinds of online resources they regularly visit. Airline sites (e.g., southwest.com) were cited by 33.3% respondents overall. Following were hotel chain sites (e.g., hilton.com) at 21.9% and destination-specific sites (e.g., vegas.com) at 21.4%. Surprisingly, even with top-of-mind economic and personal finance factors, last-minute deals or discount sites are regularly visited by only 19.0% of the respondent base. Tour operator sites fared the worst, at 9.6% – indicating web users are most interested in do-it-yourself travel resources and providers.

In examining the top three travel site types by age category, older demographics (35-54 year-olds and those 55+) rely more heavily on airline, hotel and destination sites than their younger 18-34 year-old counterparts. The most significant difference is found with destination sites specifically, which attracts a 55 or older online audience that’s nearly double (30.4% versus 16.6%) those aged 18-34.

In addition, travel and related websites should consider the following features identified by respondents to help maintain a steady traffic base: airline flight/hotel room availability and rate (54.4%), travel promotions, specials and bargains (53.3%) and travel bulletins/alerts (24.5%). Overall, web users gave page personalization and opt-in newsletters low “must have” rankings at 11.0% and 10.8%, respectively.

**Insight #4: Vacationers Want to Stay Connected While Away**



In 2009, nearly two thirds (63.3%) of summer travelers used the Internet or checked email when last on vacation away from home<sup>2</sup>. This year, that number has grown even more: nearly three out of four vacationers (72.2%) overall say they accessed the Internet, email and/or social media in one form or another – and they did it via their own computer (42.4%), through a shared computer at a hotel or related location (11.3%), via a friend or family member’s computer (9.9%) or by a mobile device (8.6%). Men are significantly more likely than women to go online while away, with 76.2% of all men accessing the Internet versus 67.7% of all women.

Looking at why vacationers want to stay connected to the web while away on a personal trip or vacation, several reasons were cited in the study – and there are significant differences between men and women. Users want to keep in touch with family and friends (42.8% men; 52.7% women), check out local destination and/or entertainment options (27.3% men; 31.6% women), read up on news, current events and sports-related stories (33.1% men; 23.7% women) and stay connected to the office (22.3% men; 17.6% women).

Across both genders and all age categories, social media is a significant consideration: while last on vacation, nearly a quarter (24.6%) of respondents said they accessed the Internet to stay current with social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

## How You Can Use This Information

Consumers who plan to travel in the summer of 2010 are very ready and willing to do so, as they are feeling more confident with their personal finances and their jobs. With the U.S. economy on the road to recovery, summer travel decision makers and influencers are moving forward with “guarded optimism” and are spending time online to research and book their vacations.

### **Leverage Geographic Targeting Before and During Consumer Vacations**

Geographic targeting targets advertisers’ campaigns to visitors coming from specific locations and through placements on local content sites. Geographic targeting creates efficient distribution by reducing “spill” into unwanted areas for regional advertisers, supporting national advertisers’ regional promotions or improving performance by identifying the most responsive areas to a campaign and focusing on these locations.

### **Make the Most Out of Behavioral Best Practices**

Behavioral targeting solutions give advertisers broad reach to qualified audiences and the ability to target consumers throughout the vacation researching and travel purchasing processes. Whether it’s remarketing (i.e., the ability to reconnect with consumers who have previously visited an advertiser’s site or landing page), creative retargeting (i.e., sequencing a series of ads in a specific order to present alternative offers to visitors who did not act on a previous message or prevent an ad from displaying to a visitor who has already seen your message) or interest/intent retargeting (i.e., leveraging data to target users who have shown active interest in a product or service), behavioral-based tactics have proven to be very effective for travel and tourism marketers and advertisers.

## Burst Sites to Check Out

Burst is always adding quality, content-rich sites to its networks. All sites are subject to a rigorous screening process before being accepted into our networks. Burst also regularly reviews sites to ensure they continue to meet our standards. Our continuous auditing process guarantees your advertising message is placed in a high quality content environment, and receives the maximum exposure it deserves.

Below are just a few of the many interesting Burst sites focused on travel, tourism and vacation planning:



The Family Travel Forum (FTF) community is for those who Have Kids, Still Travel. You'll find expert and family-written stories including first-hand reviews of tropical and ski resorts, reunion destinations, attractions, holiday weekends, family festivals, cruises and all kinds of vacation ideas. [FamilyTravelForum.com](http://FamilyTravelForum.com) also offers a trip-planning consultation service, discounts from preferred vendors for individual families, content licensing to other media and family travel consulting services to the travel industry.



Every day, [RealAdventures.com](http://RealAdventures.com) helps thousands of travelers find great accommodations, plan relaxing vacations and pursue exciting adventures. From romantic bed & breakfasts to luxury vacation rentals, from bungee jumping to safaris, and from Alaska to Zimbabwe, [RealAdventures.com](http://RealAdventures.com) is a comprehensive resource for travelers around the world.



[Everywhere Magazine](http://Everywhere Magazine) celebrates the belief that travel is all around you. Designed for people looking for authentic world experiences, [Everywhere Magazine](http://Everywhere Magazine) gives a voice to travelers worldwide who wish to tell their stories and share their favorite places.

## About Burst Media

An online media and technology company founded in 1995, Burst Media ([www.BurstMedia.com](http://www.BurstMedia.com)) is a leading provider of advertising representation, services and technology to independent Web Publishers. Burst Media enables advertisers to reach finely segmented, engaged consumers as they visit Burst's extensive number of interest-based sub-channels. Through its Burst Network and Burst Direct units, the company represents one of the broadest and deepest offerings of interest-based web sites online. Burst also markets its ad management platform, adConductor™, which empowers content web sites, online ad networks, and web portals to manage the complete process of ad sales and service. Burst Media is headquartered in Burlington, Massachusetts, with offices throughout the United States and in London, U.K. For more information, visit [www.BurstMedia.com](http://www.BurstMedia.com) or call 781.272.5544.

## About Online Insights

Trends in Internet use and consumers' online purchasing behaviors are constantly evolving and often difficult to detect. That's why Burst Media publishes *Online Insights*—our monthly newsletter that highlights emerging trends in online media and eCommerce. Findings reported in *Online Insights* are based on an online survey fielded across its Network of more than 6,000 websites. Data from the survey is weighted based on age and gender to ensure findings are representative of the U.S. internet audience.

### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>1</sup>Online Insights, Burst Media, June 2006

<sup>2</sup>Summertime and the Online Travel Planning is Easy, Burst Media, June 2009

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