

Compete, Inc. Original Research

Smartphone Use in Travel Has Room to Grow

As smartphones get smarter and more powerful, it is likely their use for more complex tasks, including travel research and booking, will increase. But how close are we to that becoming reality? Compete used its ability to field behaviorally targeted surveys to ask smartphone owners about their use of these devices for travel research and booking.

Most respondents said they do not currently use smartphones at all for online research (69% do not) and booking (78% do not). About one in four use both mobile and traditional computing for research and booking, with a greater share doing research on both vs. booking on both. But smartphones remain an additional tool, not a replacement tool as scant few respondents reported that today they do all their research and booking on mobile devices.

As smartphones evolve and applications for them become more tailored, use for travel is certainly likely to increase. However, consumers may be most ready for post-booking help from their smartphones. Previously released [analysis](#) from Compete shows the most desired future applications are for managing travel **after booking**.

This includes being notified of changes in schedules or consolidating disparate reservations. If the fastest growth in smartphone use reflects the desire for new, helpful applications, then post-booking use will evolve faster. This makes sense since it takes advantage of the combination of power and portability inherent in smartphones and needed when away from home. That also means that post-booking needs and related applications to address those needs will influence the ultimate adoption of pre-booking travel smartphone use and set user expectations around ease of use and performance.

And how great would it be to have your location-enabled smartphone tell you where your lost luggage is (assuming your bags were equipped with some kind of tracking device)? Or failing that, an app that allows you to tap into the airline's bag tracking system, much as Federal Express allows me to track packages.

Mobile Phone Use for Travel Research and Bookings

(Behaviorally targeted survey, Jan-Feb 2010, n=1246)

