

## Shift in Traveller Behaviour as they Cut Out Internet Middlemen to go Direct to Supplier Sites

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New research shows that savvy travellers are increasingly booking directly with airlines and hotels rather than relying on middlemen such as lastminute.com or wotif.com in a significant shift from the previous trend.

Internet monitors Hitwise has found that while visits to online travel agents remained stable in 2005, visits to hotels' and airlines' own sites grew by nearly 20%.

Hitwise concluded there was an increasing trend of travellers first doing "research on agency websites, then booking directly with suppliers".

totaltravel.com, the number one site for Australian's seeking information about destinations, said it was not surprised by the findings.

"Suppliers are getting better at finding ways to directly access customers, while users are become more sophisticated in seeking better deals," said totaltravel.com spokesman Paul Fisher.

"And this is most pronounced in the accommodation category."

"We are finding that people are going to sites like ours, getting the information they want, and then clicking directly through to the supplier in the hope of saving some money.

"Consumers are becoming more savvy and realising they can get better deals by going direct to suppliers rather than dealing with anyone that is getting a commission or potentially adding margins.

"While totaltravel.com is not a supplier or an agency, our model is complimentary to this trend and we are well positioned to capitalise on it."

totaltravel.com achieved a record month in January with 885,437 visits to the site, up 33% on the previous month.

Mr Fisher said 46% of visitors to the site took the additional step of clicking through to a featured supplier website, retrieving a phone number or sending an email request direct to a supplier.

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The January results confirm totaltravel.com as bigger than Lonely Planet, AAA Tourism and all the State Tourism Authority sites such as Tourism Queensland for Australians seeking information about destinations.

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