

**W**hat tourists click on and check out online was one of the more interesting studies presented at a recent conference.

During the eighth Travel Internet Marketing Strategy Conference of the Hospitality, Sales and Marketing Association International, Brad King of Yahoo! Inc., senior Director in their travel category, gave a detailed paper on the information tourists looked out for before they booked a hotel or holiday online.

Their studies found that when looking for a hotel, online bookers made a lot of comparisons before booking, often checking out the individual web sites of the hotels for any direct special offers. Travellers looked at an average of 35 web pages in the 90 days before making their booking, almost half of which, are made over a month before the booking is finally made with an increase in the frequency of activity in the week of the booking. For this reason, King underlines the necessity of making sure that hotel web pages are up to date and that hotel offers are published in plenty of time, starting on their own web sites. If the client is looking for a hotel with lots of time in hand, the hotel should be capable of selling them a room at that time. King claims that many hotels have a poor habit of launching special offers at the last minute. He believes



# Online booking trends

Tourism

that given the browsing habits of travellers, this is counterproductive.

When booking holidays, tourists make an average of 10 searches over a particular holiday before booking. Some of the searches are to find accommodation, but others are not. Information on the destination and the necessary transport that is available take up most of the remaining searches.

If a hotel or destination knows the type of searches that travellers are making they can make sure they

position themselves in the path of the prospective customer during the process.

The search for information on a destination is of crucial importance. These are the searches that mark the initial phase of the search for a holiday when the traveller has not yet made up his or her mind what it is they want. King's resumé only goes to show yet again the importance of the destinations having a good position within the search engines. To be present in the mind of the prospective purchaser from

the first moment is a clear and very important advantage over the competition. With a better and clearer online marketing strategy this advantage can only lead to more customers.

To wind up his presentation King affirmed that tourists are using the Internet more and more to programme and book their holidays. Travellers are looking for information well in advance and comparing more efficiently the various options on offer. Whilst on the one hand the customers

are using the Web to obtain the best offer, on the other many hotel owners and chains continue to improvise daily, with no clear idea of using the tools that Internet marketing offers them.

With a tourism market that is daily more demanding, prepared and informed, to believe that hotels and destinations can continue to improvise, as King claims the majority are doing at the moment, is a serious mistake, a mistake that could be very expensive for all concerned.

## Business in Brief

### New tourism

# Stars in their eyes

An initiative by two men from La Palma is set to start a new kind of tourism in the Canaries, astrotourism.

The clear, unpolluted skies of the island and the excellent astronomy facilities on the Roque de Los Muchachos are the perfect base for the new company, Astrotour. Juan Antonio González and Carmelo González offer the chance to watch the night sky from a privileged island for astrophysics, to take photographs of mysterious floating celestial bodies, follow the constellations with binoculars, enjoy computer simulations of star voyages, observe the firmament through a telescope set in unique beautiful natural landscapes or follow the paths of the awara, the ancient tribes of La Palma. Astrotour promise all this and more, bringing the universe to the earth in a different, enjoyable and simple way.

## Power FM schedule

### Weekdays

- 08.00 Bigger Breakfast with Rick Porter
- 11.00 Big Fat Lunch with Val Richardson
- 14.00 Alex in the Afternoon with Alex Mcrae
- 14.00 (Weds) Rock 'n Roll Years with Dion
- 17.00 Drivetime with Fred Dudman
- 20.00 (Fri) Battle of the Bars with Katy Kennedy
- 23.00 Into the Midnight Hour with Maggie Porter
- 02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
- 05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

### Saturdays

- 08.00 Breakfast Show with Gordon King
- 12.00 The Golden Oldies with Katy Kennedy
- 15.00 Saturday Scene with Pete Quilty
- 18.00 Saturday Night with Saturday Power
- 21.00 Love Show with Bernie Simmons
- 23.00 In the Midnight Hour with Virtual Power
- 02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
- 05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

### Sundays

- 08.00 Breakfast Show with Gordon King
- 12.00 Sunday Roast with Katy Kennedy
- 15.00 Love in the Afternoon with Pete Quilty
- 18.00 Ex-Pat Show with Spencer James
- 21.00 BBC Top of the Pops
- 22.00 The Love Show with Bernie Simmons
- 02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
- 05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

**EXCITING TIMES ARE AHEAD!  
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## Business in Brief

### Air safety

# Intimate scan

• Travel agents organisation ABTA have advised members to keep customers informed about the new scanners installed in some airports which show them naked.

Following the attempt by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to blow up a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit over the Christmas holidays, London Heathrow and Manchester airports have introduced full body scanners which some say threaten individuals' privacy. Birmingham will be online soon with the new scanners and other UK airports are sure to follow. Anybody refusing to be scanned will not be allowed to fly. Passengers should be aware that no images will be stored, that the scanner operator cannot see the person in the machine and that travellers can ask for same sex scanner operators.

Mark Tanzer, chief executive of ABTA affirmed, "in the immediate future, only a small proportion of airline passengers will be affected by the new scanners. Passengers need to be confident when they fly. It is important that new security measures are introduced proportionately and correctly so that the privacy and dignity of passengers are not compromised. We will continue to help our members to inform their customers of any new developments, so that they know what to expect when they arrive at airports."