

## [Using a travel agent works out cheaper, research shows](#)

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**Australian domestic travellers who use the internet to help decide on a holiday destination end up spending almost 25% more while away than those who depend solely on other information sources such as travel agents to research their holidays.**

That's one of the latest findings of the Roy Morgan Holiday Tracking Survey. It has implications for wholesalers and principals making web-only offers, although an internet presence is still considered essential.

In the year to May 2013, Australians who looked (as opposed to booked) online when deciding on a domestic holiday destination went on to spend an all-inclusive average of AUD 179 per person per night – AUD 35 more than those who used only other information sources such as travel agents, brochures, guidebooks or the advice of friends and relatives.

One quarter of domestic holidaymakers (25%) now use the internet (either alone or combined with traditional information sources) when considering where to go, up from just 4% in 2001, Roy Morgan states. Many observers might consider, given the high penetration of the internet in Australia, that the 25% figure seems very low. The internet is available free in many public libraries, for instance.

Domestic travellers who did not source any information to assist in choosing their destination account for up to 43% of travellers, but spend only AUD 116 per night on average; however many of those people were visiting friends and relatives. Staying for free, in other words.

Roy Morgan Research's international director of tourism, travel & leisure, Jane Ianniello, points out that the one in four domestic holidaymakers who now uses the internet to help pick a destination is more than six times higher than in 2001.

“Although internet researchers may have above-average incomes, the increased daily expenditure by this group still suggests that online destination research is about far more than deals and discounts: it also provides holiday researchers with comprehensive information on how and where to spend their tourist dollars,” she comments.

“Aside from the internet, word-of-mouth and previous experience are also key drivers of destination choice: 22% of domestic holidaymakers said that they used the advice of friends or relatives when choosing their destination and 21% had been to the destination previously and decided to go back again.”

Max Najjar of Axis Travel Centre, a highly regarded and successful Agent in Adelaide, South Australia commented that “a one-time booking via the internet or phonecall rarely gets a better deal than a travel agent that knows the thousands of options, has built up a reputation with a supplier, and a hotel or airline Manager and does this daily. That is business logic and common sense, so the results of this survey do not surprise me, so it is nice to see that it again validates the worth of using a professional Travel Agent!”

The sample size used in the survey was 20,000.