

Passport Online Releases 2020 Half-Year Digital Report Card

Social Media Engagement Steady, Search Shows U.S. and River Cruise Shift

Beaverton, OR (September 16, 2020) – Passport Online Inc., the industry’s leader in travel agency digital technology, completed its half yearly analysis of the travel agency community activity across all digital channels for 2020. Consumer engagement on agency websites and social media confirm a shift toward U.S. searches, a bump in European river cruise searches, and a desire to dream and begin to plan travel as the industry struggled to the end of the first half of a very difficult year.

Year over year, shopping sessions on agency websites certainly took a hit as consumers hunkered down at home. But those who were shopping were digging deeper and staying longer. Unique consumer shopping sessions were just over 15 million; a drop of 25% compared to the first half of last year. But the click through rate to specific travel offers jumped from 11 percent to just under 14%. Those click throughs represent a consumer who does a search, finds an interesting supplier offer and clicks through to view it.

Search activity showed a slight shift toward U.S. travel and river cruises while Mexico and the Bahamas remained at the top of the search list. There was a significant dip in ocean cruise searches and a spike in destinations such as Vienna and Budapest which both leapt into the top ten as consumers explored European river cruise options in the first half of 2020.

An analysis of social media traffic also showed an interest in River Cruising and a return to motivated shopping by the end of the first half of the year. Among the most viewed social media posts was a price oriented river cruise sale promoting a \$1,400 per couple discount for 2021 sailings. This post was part of a newly created “deals” channel of posts for Passport’s ESP customers. “We are thrilled to see our advisor community seeing success in promoting deals through their Facebook business pages,” said Jeanne Colombo, Vice President, Strategic

Partnerships, Passport Online. “We continue to evolve our curated content on ESP as our advisor customers grow their followers and truly become travel influencers for their customers on social media.”

Ironically, the most liked post of the first half of 2020 was actually posted to advisor Facebook pages on New Year’s Day asking travelers to share their travel desires for the coming year. The post said, “What are your top 5 picks for destinations to explore in 2020?” Gamification seems to be the overall winner in agency social media posting. Posts challenging consumers and asking “where in the world” or “Would you Rather” continue to lead in likes, shares and comments.

The post with the most clicks and the most comments was on March 30, a Where in the World post pictured here. The post states, “Time to play a game! You’re going on a vacation but can only visit a location that starts with the same letter as your first name - where are you going?”

Another stand out post, ranking in the top category for likes and shares was a May 24 post asking to pick your mood. “Pick the image that best matches your current mood:

- A. Great Ocean Road, Australia
- B. Carpathian Mountains, Ukraine
- C. Hunts Mesa, Arizona, USA

Passport Online is in the unique position to monitor consumer interaction with their travel agency as the company helps more than 7,500 travel agencies create, expand and diversify their digital footprint through websites, social media and email marketing and works with more than 30,000 agents in partnership with many of the industry consortia and host agencies as well as hundreds of independent advisors.

For more information on the website products, contact Jeanne Colombo at jeannec@passportonlineinc.com.

About Passport Online

Passport Online is the leisure travel industry leader in website, web content, email marketing, and social media solutions. Passport also offers state of the art cruise and tour booking engine solutions for b-to-b and b-to-c needs. A major distribution channel for leisure travel suppliers to connect with the leading consortia, retail agencies, professional home-based agent

networks, and their clients, Passport Online enables millions of consumer shopping sessions on thousands of travel agency websites. For more information, visit www.passportonlineinc.com.

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