

THE ASAP

A LOOK INTO TRAVEL



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POSING ON AN OFF-LIMITS HIKE IN HAWAII



TAKING A SELFIE IN A DANGEROUS OCEAN LOCATION

OMNITRAK FORECAST

BADLY NEEDED: A STRATEGY TO REIGN IN SOCIAL MEDIA'S DEGENERATION OF ICONIC DESTINATIONS AND OFF THE BEATEN PATH LOCALES

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How can a destination ensure that Social Media impacts on its community are "Net Positive", that the positive impacts outweigh the negative? Or, can anything be done to edge the balance toward a Social Media Net Positive direction?

Social media posts are often the lead influence and inspiration for travel to a destination. However, social media can also stimulate travel interest and travel behaviors that negatively impact a community (overcrowding beyond an area's carrying capacity, promotion of areas inappropriate for tourism, environmental damage, trespassing, leave-behind trash).

The vast majority of U.S. travelers (i.e., more than 80% according to our TravelTrakAmerica research) consider themselves mindful travelers, feel a personal responsibility to take care of the places they visit, and aim for a Net Positive impact in their travels. In light of this, overcrowding and unwelcome trailblazing off the beaten path more likely result from a lack of visitor education than a desire for deviant travel behavior.



A SELFIE ON A SUNNY DAY

Given the travelers' predisposition for mindful travel, social media can be used to promote responsible Social Media Net Positive travel behaviors, integrating visitor education messaging throughout the customer journey, from travel inspiration to actual visit. For example, visitors can be educated about timing their visit to have an optimal experience at popular sites, and educated regarding responsible travel behaviors.

The Industry Role

Some destinations have already started down this road. For example, after being overrun by visitors on "Instagram itineraries", city officials in Kyoto, Japan have launched efforts to educate visitors about "traditional morals" in the area. Meanwhile, Nishiki Market in Kyoto, has tapped the power of technology to provide visitors who scan a QR code at the entrance to the market with suggestions for enjoying the market. In this case, messaging has shifted from a list of "don'ts" to a list of "please's".

The travel destination has an obligation to serve its host community and can start by researching its presence on platforms from TikTok to Facebook for an assessment of its current brand positioning, needs for emphasis and strategies for correction.



SHOPPING AT NISHIKI MARKET, KYOTO

The Host Community

Looking inward as travelers, a destination program can include how to make better travelers of its own residents. Heightened awareness, encouraging study, respect, courtesy, and consideration of all sentient beings can encourage a spirit of collaboration between visitors and residents.



COOK ISLANDER AND TOURISTS ENGAGING IN AN ECO TOURISM EXPERIENCE

CAN OMNITRAK HELP YOU

CUSTOMIZE YOUR RESEARCH TO INFORM YOUR STRATEGY?



What is your community's sentiment about travelers and social media?



How can you begin the long process of education in your marketing?



How can a destination and its community encourage respect for certain iconic locations as crowd control and caring for the land?



How can your destination partner with industry and others to adopt a social media philosophy?



How can a destination educate its own travel community and host community at large to be better travelers and adopt guidelines and educate visitors?



What rules and fees can you enforce without alienating visitors but better and more harmoniously controlling the experience?

ABOUT OMNITRAK



Omnitrak, founded in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1981, is a leading strategic research firm with a strong presence in the consumer, travel and retail sectors in North America and Asia. Omnitrak works with some of North America's largest state tourism offices, which subscribe to the company's TravelTrakAmerica™ tracking research, providing timely monthly insights from 12,000+ U.S. households. The company serves a broad array of public- and private-sector clients, helping to grow their markets with Quality of Place/City Pride and Resident Sentiment research. Additionally, destination marketing to develop new products and increase brand loyalty is supported by Omnitrak's TravelTrakAmerica syndicated research and Integrated Marketing Effectiveness insights. For more information, email: chriskam@omnitrakgroup.com

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The Last Tourist (Movie)

<https://thelasttouristfilm.com>

New York Times | *Kyoto Wants You Back, but It Has Some Polite Suggestions*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/travel/kyoto-japan-tourism.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>

Luxury Travel Advisor | *Bhutan Reopens Its Borders With New Tourism Strategy*

<https://www.luxurytraveladvisor.com/destinations/bhutan-reopens-its-borders-new-tourism-strategy>