

Few go online to book air tickets, hotels

Only about 1 in 10 using Internet for bookings, survey shows

WHEN making travel plans, people in Singapore still prefer to do it the traditional way - with brick and mortar agencies.

Only one in 10 used the Internet to buy their air tickets and 13 per cent use it for booking hotel rooms, according to a study released on Wednesday.

The travellers polled who don't use online services said that some websites were complex and difficult to navigate.

Others simply prefer the personal service that travel agents offer.

Those were the most common reasons given for not booking online, said market research consultancy, Marketshare.

But this could change in the future.



Almost one in four of those surveyed said they already use the Internet to check out if flights and hotel rooms are available and to compare prices.

Said Marketshare's executive director, Mr Anthony Venus: 'This group can be persuaded to go one step further and book online so long as websites become more content rich, user-friendly and offer off-line support as well.'

What's worth noting is that only 9 per cent said they were uncomfortable about giving credit card details over the Internet.

'This means that the Singapore consumer has reached a certain level of trust in e-commerce. It is no longer an impediment,' he said.

Internet bookings should get a boost as budget carriers take off, as such airlines typically sell tickets online to cut costs.

Marketshare expects Singapore's online travel market to be worth about US\$640 million (S\$1 billion) by 2006. In the Asia-Pacific region, this figure should reach US\$16 billion - double last year's - it said.

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