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TIA and USDM.net Issue Internet Travel Report
Leading Travel Industry Consumer Survey Reports
Significantly More Travelers Plan and Book Trips Online
Consumers Responding More to Strategic Marketing than Paid Media

 (Nov. 16, 2005) – While the number of Americans using the Internet appears to have reached a plateau, those who plan and book trips or vacations online continues to climb rapidly, according to the *Travelers' Use of the Internet 2005*, released today by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA).

The annual report, this year issued jointly with TIA co-sponsor and contributor USDM.net, shows that the Internet continues to grow as a dominant channel for both reaching and transacting with today's travel consumers. In fact, while this year's results show that more than half of Americans 18 or older – more than 120 million adults –- use the Internet at home, work or school (roughly the same as in 2004), the number of people who used the Internet to plan trips grew significantly this past year.

Survey results indicate a majority of online travelers (78 percent of respondents, or 79 million Americans) turned to the Internet for travel or destination information in 2005 – much higher than the 65 percent of online travelers in 2004.

Survey findings also indicate that 82 percent of travelers who plan their trips online now also book reservations online. That indicates more than 64 million Americans bought or reserved an airline ticket, hotel room, rental car or package tour online this past year – up from 70 percent in 2004.

Other trends and data to emerge from the *Travelers' Use of the Internet 2005*:

- More than nine out of 10 online travelers said they used the Internet to plan a personal trip last year, and a quarter of trips planned online were related to business travel;

- The most popular types of Web sites used for travel planning are online travel agency Web sites such as Expedia, Travelocity and Priceline (67 percent); search engine Web sites such as Google or Yahoo! (64 percent); and company-owned Web sites for airlines and hotels (54 percent);

- Almost half of online travel planners also use destination Web sites – such as those maintained by convention and visitor bureaus – to plan trips. In addition, one in three online travel planners checks one or more Web sites and then calls a toll-free number for more information;

- With the increases in online travel planning, other planning sources have declined, such as traditional travel agents – down to 31 percent consulting a travel agent for travel plans in the past year from 39 percent last year;

- Today, 34 percent of online travel bookers claim to make all of their travel purchases online. Importantly, nearly eight in ten online bookers (78%) use the Internet to do at least half of all their travel booking.

With so many Americans planning and booking their travel online, TIA and USDM.net expanded a survey category this year to better gauge how consumers respond to the various forms of Internet-based marketing communications.

The 2005 report shows that the most effective online marketing techniques that trigger a consumer response are unsponsored search engine results (36 percent); e-mail recommendations by friends or colleagues (34 percent); links on Web sites (26 percent); and opt-in e-mails or e-newsletters (21 percent).

"As this year's survey results clearly show, consumers are much more responsive to strategic online marketing communications, such as organic search engine returns, than they are to paid media, such as a pop-up or banner ads," said Jennifer Barbee, President of USDM.net.

"While online media is productive and valuable, travel industry suppliers may want to reconsider their budget allotments for online and traditional media versus online marketing," Barbee said. "Those savvy enough to invest more travel marketing dollars in a strategic, online marketing campaign could reap much bigger rewards for their destination, hotel, attraction or other travel business."

For more information or to purchase the full results of the *Travelers' Use of the Internet 2005*, visit the TIA.org web page at http://www.tia.org/pubs/pubs.asp?PublicationID=57

About Travel Industry Association of America
TIA is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the $600 billion travel industry. TIA's mission is to represent the whole of the U.S. travel industry to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States.

About USDM.net
Since its inception in 1993, USDM.net's deep travel industry experience, innovative Internet marketing tactics, and adaptive technology solutions have propelled it to become *the leading interactive agency for the travel industry*, endorsed by the Travel Industry Association of America, Destination Marketing Association International, and the Southeast Tourism Society. Incorporated as U.S. Destination Marketing Inc., and headquartered in Corpus Christi, Texas, USDM.net (www.usdm.net) provides comprehensive Internet strategy, planning and turnkey Internet marketing and technology services to more than 150 Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and other hospitality and tourism organizations. USDM.net owns and manages www.officialtravelguide.com, the travel portal of more than 1,250 destinations worldwide.

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