

Active senior travelers have different approaches to technology

September 28 2015

Are you an Adventurous Experimenter, a Meticulous Researcher or a Fumbling Observer? These are the three groups active senior travellers can be divided into on the basis of how they use tourism-related information and communication technology, according to a recent University of Eastern Finland and Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences study.

The importance of senior travellers as a [travel](#) segment for the [tourism](#) industry is continuously growing as the number of pensioners increases in the Western world. Today's pensioners are also very different from those a decade ago.

"Today's pensioners are familiar with computers and [information technology](#), as they have used them when they were active in working life. Moreover, today's pensioners are more affluent and more experienced travellers than earlier generations. We refer to them as active senior travellers, because they have time, money, skills, interest and health to travel," says Research Manager Juho Pesonen of the University of Eastern Finland Centre for Tourism Studies.

The study analysed how active senior travellers use tourism-related information technology prior, during and after their trip.

"Earlier research has found that senior travellers are a very heterogeneous group, and senior travellers also have different approaches to using information technology."

Independent senior travellers on the rise

The study is based on nine interviews with senior travellers, selected by snowball sampling, i.e. existing interviewees recommending future ones. The interviews were used to create matrices on the use of technology and tourism, allowing the respondents to be divided into three groups: the Adventurous Experimenters, the Meticulous Researchers and the Fumbling Observers.

"The Adventurous Experimenters are confident both in choosing their destination and using information technology. They are independent travellers who like to try out new destinations and avoid ready-made travel packages. The Meticulous Researchers, on the other hand, use technology mainly to search for information, and they appreciate safety and user-friendliness both when it comes to technology and their destination. The Fumbling Observers, however, are less keen to use technology and they often require assistance in using it. This group is the one that prefers ready-made travel packages and familiar destinations," Pesonen explains.

An interesting observation of the study was that the use of technology is closely linked to travel behaviour. Furthermore, senior travellers should not be seen as a homogeneous group preferring ready-made packages; instead, they have varying preferences.

"The share of independent [senior](#) travellers, in particular, seems to be on the rise. For the [tourism industry](#), this group is very important in, for example, creating balance between the low and the high season, as they have the possibility and also interest in travelling outside the high season."

The findings were published in *Information Technology and Tourism*.

More information: Typology of senior travellers as users of tourism information technology. J Pesonen, R Komppula, A Riihinen - *Information Technology & Tourism*, 2015. [DOI: 10.1007/s40558-015-0032-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-015-0032-1)

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

Citation: Active senior travelers have different approaches to technology (2015, September 28) retrieved 19 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-09-senior-approaches-technology.html>

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