



HOW SOCIAL IS YOUR DMO?



United States Tourism Office Edition

January 2010



How Social is Your State Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)?

Status: This is the fourth effort to bench-mark the web presence of state destination marketing organizations beyond web site visits.

Background: In July of 2009, Gammet Interactive created the original 12-point algorithm that featured 28 objects of measurement. That algorithm was then used to create a social media assessment and evaluation of the 50 official U. S. tourism office web sites. In August 2009, the algorithm weighting was slightly changed to correspond with social media usage and growth. There was also another criterion of measurement added to the formula: web site domain in-links via the Yahoo network.

After visiting the official web site of each state tourism office/destination marketing organization (DMO), Gammet Interactive utilized the following 13-points to publish the most current “How Social is Your State DMO?” rankings:

- 1) Certified Site Traffic Measurement from Quantcast.com
- 2) Presence of Social Media Icons and Links on the Web Site Home Page
- 3) State Keyword Search in Google
- 4) Facebook Presence
- 5) Twitter Presence
- 6) MySpace Presence
- 7) Flickr Presence
- 8) Panoramio Presence
- 9) YouTube Presence
- 10) Content Sharing Via a Social Media Tool like Add This or Share This
- 11) Blog Presence
- 12) User Generated Content/Review Site
- 13) Domain in-Links via Yahoo

Situation: This evaluation was conducted during 4-day period, during the first week of January 2010. All studies - except for the initial measurement in July of 2009, which was done in a 21-day period – have been completed in a 4-day period. The shorter window provides an assessment that is much more accurate in the realms of social media, as it is a moving target and changes daily. We will continue to conduct future evaluations in the shortest time-period possible. We also extended our best effort to find the “official” presence of each specified DMO on sites like Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, etc. If we did not locate specific social media links on the state tourism web site, we attempted multiple searches on the specific social media outlet. The searches were done methodically with a four-step process which would result in a consistent attempt to locate the official destination presence. Each search began with the state name, then was followed by the web site URL, the state name followed by the word “travel”, and concluded with a either the tagline represented on the website or the state name followed by the word “tourism”. After four searches, we abandoned the process and recorded the score of “0” for that assessment point.

In effort to present an example of how each point was measured, we have noted a sample of the criteria that we used to determine the score for presence on Twitter:

- a) Presence on the web site= Yes or No
- b) Followers - Assessed on a scale of 0 to more than 15,000 followers
- c) Updates – Assessed on a scale of 100 to more than 3,000 updates
- d) Twitter Grade – Assessed from the Hubspot tool – twitter.grader.com

The state destination marketing organizations are ranked on the following page in descending order, 1 through 50, with the total score on the far right column. Ties are recorded and noted in the scoring. The total scores listed are based on the weighted scale with values that were determined from an assessment of the social media outlets, popularity and importance of brand awareness.

Rank JAN 2010	Destination	Rank SEPT 09	DMO URL	DMO Site Traffic	Social Media Icons	Google	Yahoo! Inlinks	Facebook	Twitter	MySpace	Flickr	Panoramio Google Maps	YouTube	Content Sharing	Blog	Reviews	Totals
1	Michigan	1	michigan.org	0	10	5	10	39	29	0	18	4	24	5	18	8	170
2	Tennessee	6	tnvacation.com	0	10	5	7	37	28	7	14	2	17	5	20	8	160
3	Oregon	2	traveloregon.com	0	10	5	6	18	34	0	18	4	22	5	20	15	157
4	Virginia	7	virginia.org	0	10	3	10	30	32	0	18	2	21	5	16	8	155
5	Pennsylvania	2	visitpa.com	3	10	3	8	24	32	4	17	2	20	5	18	8	154
6	Colorado	13	colorado.com	0	10	5	6	36	30	7	18	3	13	5	10	8	151
6	Nevada	4	travelnevada.com	0	10	5	3	29	25	7	18	2	21	5	18	8	151
8	Florida	5	visitflorida.com	3	10	5	7	16	29	4	16	3	23	5	20	8	149
9	Utah	12	utah.com	0	10	3	6	32	18	0	18	3	17	5	20	15	147
10	Arizona	9	arizonaguide.com	0	10	5	7	32	32	7	18	3	12	5	0	15	146
11	Illinois	7	enjoyillinois.com	0	10	3	7	20	32	0	18	2	20	5	20	8	145
12	Indiana	10	visitindiana.com	0	10	5	1	26	31	4	17	2	17	5	18	8	144
13	Arkansas	11	arkansas.com	0	10	5	8	25	24	7	5	3	16	5	20	15	143
14	North Carolina	15	visitnc.com	3	10	5	5	23	22	4	7	3	16	5	20	8	131
15	Wyoming	14	wyomingtourism.org	0	10	3	6	15	27	0	15	4	17	5	20	8	130
16	New York	32	iloveny.com	0	10	5	6	19	32	4	10	3	0	5	20	8	122
16	Vermont	19	vermontvacation.com	3	10	3	4	22	29	4	16	1	17	5	0	8	122
18	New Hampshire	16	visithh.gov	0	10	5	4	26	23	4	15	1	19	5	0	8	120
18	North Dakota	17	ndtourism.com	0	0	3	6	18	19	4	13	3	14	5	20	15	120
20	Louisiana	19	louisianatravel.com	3	10	3	3	15	32	0	6	2	10	5	18	8	115
20	New Mexico	25	newmexico.org	3	0	5	6	30	22	4	13	3	0	5	16	8	115
22	Minnesota	21	exploreminnesota.com	0	0	5	8	16	20	4	8	1	21	5	18	8	114
22	South Dakota	17	travelsd.com	0	10	3	3	21	20	0	3	4	19	5	18	8	114
24	Kansas	22	travelks.com	0	10	3	4	26	22	0	14	3	17	5	0	8	112
24	Oklahoma	37	travelok.com	3	10	3	7	21	18	0	13	2	22	5	0	8	112
26	Maine	23	visitmaine.com	3	0	5	6	16	28	4	18	2	16	5	0	8	111
26	Mississippi	25	visitmississippi.org	0	10	3	3	14	15	7	15	2	16	5	13	8	111
28	Ohio	28	ohiotourism.com	0	10	3	2	14	26	0	18	2	21	5	0	8	109
29	Georgia	24	exploregeorgia.org	0	10	1	4	17	30	0	18	2	9	5	0	8	104
30	Alabama	29	alabama.travel	0	10	3	4	15	19	0	16	2	18	5	11	0	103
31	Hawaii	35	gohawaii.com	0	0	5	7	31	20	0	9	1	0	0	14	15	102
32	Wisconsin	42	travelwisconsin.com	0	0	1	6	14	21	4	8	3	15	5	20	0	97
33	Nebraska	34	visitnebraska.com	0	10	3	1	24	18	0	5	3	19	5	0	8	96
34	Massachusetts	46	massvacation.com	0	10	5	6	15	17	4	8	1	0	5	16	8	95
35	Missouri	27	visitmo.com	0	10	3	5	14	16	0	7	3	16	5	14	0	93
36	South Carolina	30	discoversouthcarolina.com	0	10	5	6	23	15	4	5	4	0	5	0	8	85
37	Washington	41	experiencewa.com	0	0	3	8	18	29	0	16	4	0	5	0	0	83
38	Idaho	31	visitidaho.org	0	0	3	6	18	26	0	5	2	13	0	0	8	81
39	Kentucky	32	kentuckytourism.com	0	10	3	5	14	22	0	6	2	13	0	0	0	75
40	Rhode Island	36	visitrhodeisland.com	0	10	5	4	15	0	7	5	1	0	5	11	8	71
41	Maryland	39	visitmaryland.org	0	10	3	2	0	24	0	7	1	10	5	0	8	70
42	Iowa	38	traveliowa.com	0	10	3	3	14	25	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	63
43	Montana	39	visitmt.com	0	10	5	7	0	17	0	7	3	13	0	0	0	62
44	California	42	visitcalifornia.com	0	0	3	6	14	25	0	10	2	0	0	0	0	60
45	Connecticut	44	ctvisit.com	0	0	3	3	18	0	0	5	3	0	5	10	8	55
46	Alaska	45	travelalaska.com	0	0	3	3	14	0	0	8	3	11	0	0	8	50
47	Delaware	47	visitdelaware.com	0	0	3	6	16	0	0	5	1	0	0	11	0	42
48	West Virginia	50	wvtourism.com	0	0	1	4	0	0	4	3	2	0	5	13	0	32
49	Texas	48	traveltex.com	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	9	3	0	0	0	0	21
50	New Jersey	49	visitnj.org	3	0	1	4	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	0	17

“How Social is Your DMO?” – Scoring Parameters

Summary: Below you will find an explanation of how we came up with scoring parameters. Our statement saying that “social media is continually changing and evolving” was validated again this month. So, in response to that evolution, we did some adaptation. Panoramio changed the way that they count photos and display search results. In response to that, we incorporated Google maps and the images displayed during a state search into our formula on this report—replacing the original Panoramio scoring. There were also some difficulties with the Hubspot Facebook Grader tool and we could not get consistent results. Because we didn’t have an alternative, we eliminated it from the formula—hopefully for this month only.

Scoring Parameter Definitions:

Quantcast

Quantcast is used to determine whether or not a site is Quantcast certified to measure site traffic. This is done for two reasons. First, so DMO’s can legitimize their site traffic in a transparent and public process. These numbers can then be accessed and utilized by stakeholders, legislators, and/or possible site sponsors/advertisers. It can also give a DMO some benchmarks in terms of how they measure up to other organizations in their geographic area, competitive set or budget structure.

Google

Google is used to determine the reach of the site by entering in the location name into the Google search box. Based on where the DMO site ranks on the results page they are awarded a score. Being the first site listed will allow for more points.

Yahoo In-Links

The Yahoo search engine was used to determine how many links are tracked back to the web site domain. The numbers of in-links ranged from more than 200,000 to less than 5,000 per site. This is an important factor to determine the reach of the web site and how well it is being shared. In-links also place a part in the search popularity of the web site.

Facebook

First, we check to see if the DMO has a Facebook presence represented on their homepage. If it is located on their site they will receive points. On the Facebook site, we look for a Fan Page specifically for the DMO and assign points based on whether or not they have a Fan Page, and how it is utilized. Items measured are the number of fans, DMO photos, fan photos and videos. Each of these categories receives points based on the amount of participation. Finally, we run the Facebook Fan Page through Hubspot’s Facebook Grader, www.facebook.grader.com and its ranking into the scoring formula.

Twitter

The first step is to determine if there is a Twitter presence recognized on your web site with an icon or link to your Twitter stream. We then review your Twitter stream and measure the number of followers you have and how many updates were made. The final step is to run the Twitter user name through Hubspot’s Twitter Grader – www.twitter.grader.com to see your official grade. After we collect all of this data, it is placed in a grading scale and scored based on the point system we have developed.

Myspace

We check to see if the DMO has a presence on Myspace. The more activity on Myspace the more points they will receive overall. We also recognize that MySpace plays less of a part in the travel planning process, so the ranking carries less weight in the total formula.

Flickr

If the DMO has a branded account on Flickr, it receives points. If there is an account for the destination, the more photos within the set will receive more points. A DMO would need to have created an account for all users to upload photos of the destination. There are many groups and sets that may have the same name as a destination; however, this would have to be administered by a DMO member in order to receive points.

Panoramio

Panoramio is used to measure the amount of photo traffic of a destination online as these images feed into Goggle Maps and Google Earth. We entered the destination name into the site and recorded the number of photos that have been uploaded. With Panoramio, and a destination account is not necessary as we look for photos with destination related tags uploaded by consumers. In the September 2009 rankings, due to a change in the way Panoramio displayed the number of images, we used the Google Maps integration of Panoramio and scored the destination based on photos present following a state search.

YouTube

In order to receive points for YouTube, the DMO will have had to create an account for destination and upload videos to create viral buzz. We measure the score based on the number of videos on their YouTube page and the number of subscribers to that specific page.

Content Sharing

While examining the DMO's website, we check for the use of sharing tools. If there is a place on the page that makes it easy for the user to share the information with their friends using this tool, there will be points awarded.

Blogging

The use of blogs are also very important in the formula. The score is based on recognition of the blog on the website and/or if there is a news or information feed frequently updated, along with an area designated consumer/user comments. There will also be more points awarded if the blog had been updated frequently with consistent content.

Review Sites

The last thing we look for within the DMO site is the use of any user generated content or reviews. Testimonials or user generated content are recognized and scored accordingly. Also, any branded review site for the destination will allow for additional points. This includes integrated independent review sites.

After all of these numbers are counted, they are placed into a spreadsheet and then applied to measurement set. Each organization is then ranked in order from highest to lowest.

“How Social is Your DMO?” – Glossary

Quantcast- www.quantcast.com – Quantcast is a web site that is based on viewing the statistics of other Web sites. Quantcast Corporation's prime focus is to analyze the internet's Web sites in order to obtain accurate statistics. Quantcast rates Web pages by ranks. Participating websites voluntarily insert Quantcast HTML code inside Web pages they wish to have included in statistics. This code allows Quantcast to keep track of the traffic directed towards those Web sites. (Source: Wikipedia)

Facebook- www.facebook.com - Facebook is a popular, free-access social networking website that is operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profile to notify friends about themselves. (Source: Wikipedia)

Twitter- www.twitter.com - Twitter is a free social networking and *micro-blogging service* that allows its users to send and read other users' updates (otherwise known as tweets), which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends. (Source: Wikipedia)

MySpace- www.myspace.com - MySpace is a social networking website with an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music, and videos for teenagers and adults internationally. (Source: Wikipedia)

Flickr- www.flickr.com - Flickr is an image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community platform. It was one of the earliest Web 2.0 applications. In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository. (Source: Wikipedia)

Panoramio- www.panoramio.com - Panoramio is a geolocation-oriented photo sharing website. Currently, some of the photos uploaded to the site can be accessed as a layer in Google Earth and Google Maps, with new photos being added at the end of every month. The site's goal is to allow Google Earth users to learn more about a given area by viewing the photos that other users have taken at that place. The website is available in several languages. (Source: Wikipedia)

YouTube- www.youtube.com - YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips. Unregistered users can watch the videos, while registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos. (Source: Wikipedia)

Yahoo – www.yahoo.com – Yahoo is best known for its web portal, search engine, Yahoo! Directory, Yahoo! Mail, Yahoo! News, advertising, online mapping, video sharing, and social media websites and services. In May of 2009, it was the second most trafficked web domain in the world. (Source: Wikipedia)

Gammet Interactive - www.gammet.com - Gammet Interactive is a marketing technology advisor that offers e-travel insight to members of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries. The company assists organizations with the process of assessing their internet marketing needs along with providing services to develop, implement and manage cost effective online and social media marketing programs. The organization was founded by tourism industry veteran David Serino in 2000.

For more information, or to forward any comments and/or suggestions, contact David Serino directly at dserino@gammet.com or post them publicly on the comments sections at - www.daveserinoblogs.com – to create a conversation with others.

