

TravelPod's Traveler IQ Challenge on Facebook Reveals Why Men Don't Ask for Directions: They're Better at Geography than Women See Which Schools, Companies, Government Agencies and Locations Have the Best and Worst Geography Knowledge; Ivies Not So Smart; National Geographic Top of News Media Heap

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TravelPod, the first ever travel blogging site, today announced the highest and lowest travel IQs on the web as determined by more than 170,000 people who have tested their knowledge of geography with TravelPod's Facebook application, Traveler IQ Challenge (<http://apps.facebook.com/travelpod-challenge/>). Test scores range from 64 to 142 after a few weeks of play, and the results reveal who's been paying attention in class and in the news. The game's popularity is growing rapidly, and it's at the top of the most recently popular list of travel applications on Facebook. All data presented in this announcement are as of 18:00 ET, July 29, 2007.

The Challenge shows players a map, and then in rapid-fire succession pops names of cities around the world onto the screen. Players then position their cursor and click on their best guess for the location of the city. The 12- round game gets successively more difficult with islands in unmarked areas of the oceans challenging the most ardent geographers. Travel IQs are calculated in the same manner as the generally accepted IQ tests.

"Whether they're bitten by the travel bug, are news junkies or just love maps, it's clear from the results of the Traveler IQ Challenge that a lot of people are passionate, and very competitive, about geography," said Luc Levesque, founder of TravelPod. "Occasionally we'll hear a news report that today's average person (or politician) can't find this or that country on a map. Now there's a place to put that assertion to the test."

"I have a lot of great memories of playing geography games with other avid travelers as we'd wait for buses in far off destinations or pass the time on long train rides through remote regions," Levesque recounted. "The games were wildly addictive and with the new Facebook platform, we thought a Traveler IQ Challenge would be a perfect application that feeds our members' interests."

They don't need directions

Tabulating scores from Facebook users literally around the globe shows that men outscore women on the geography test with average scores of 105.41 compared to 97.99 respectively.

School daze

Reviewing the list of top players who are members of college/university groups on Facebook shows that the French colleges seem to spend more time teaching geography than do colleges in other countries (scores are shown for schools with a minimum of ten Facebook players taking the IQ Challenge).

Ecole Normale Superieure	Paris, France	117.64
ESSEC	Paris, France	115.69
Sciences Po	Paris, France	115.47
INSEAD	Fontainebleau, France	115.20
Principia	Elsah, IL	115.00
Universite de Moncton	Moncton, Canada	114.38
HEI-Graduate Institute of International Studies	Geneva, Switzerland	113.79
Bethel MN	St. Paul, MN	113.56
Princeton	Princeton, NJ	113.28
UChicago	Chicago, IL	113.05

Compared to the Ivies:

Trying to decide if the Ivy League is worth the extra bucks? Are these the schools that are turning out the diplomats of the future?

Brown	111.89
Columbia	109.79
Cornell	108.80
Dartmouth	109.07
Harvard	112.14
Princeton	113.28
UPenn	110.79
Yale	112.21

And the top high schools

Ronald Regan High School	San Antonio, TX, US	116.68
Plano East Senior High School	Plano, TX, US	109.14
Union High School	Tulsa, OK, US	108.40
Eton College High School	Berkshire, England, UK	106.65
South Eugene High School	Eugene, OR, US	106.61
Mira Costa High	Manhattan Beach, CA, US	106.50
Sevenoaks School	Sevenoaks, England, UK	106.38
Phillips Academy	Andover, MA, US	106.29
Highland Park High School	Dallas, TX, US	105.42
Clifton College High School	Bristol, England, UK	105.22

It's news to us

Facebookers who are members of work-affiliated groups or networks in the news and publishing business are all over the map in terms of geography knowledge, with National Geographic, not surprisingly, leading the pack:

National Geographic	116.40
CNN	115.67
The Washington Post	114.00
MTV Networks	110.98
Gannett	110.50
Time Magazine	110.00
Conde Nast	109.06
Dow Jones and Company	108.80
The Economist	108.58
Newsweek	107.33
The AP	107.10
CBC	105.48
Oxford University Press	105.14
The Los Angeles Times	104.80
Reuters	104.60
BBC	103.10
The New York Times	101.75
McGraw Hill	94.00
Fox News	93.50

Welcome to the candidates' debate

Many areas of government and associated bureaucracies are represented among Facebook users who took the challenge. Among presidential hopefuls, the Edwards campaign came out less than one point ahead of Hillary's team. Does that provide a clue into foreign policy skills? We'll keep tabs as the campaign continues.

International Monetary Fund	126.00
U.S. Department of Justice	125.61
U.S. Department of Homeland Security	117.80
National Democratic Institute	116.75
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	115.83
Smithsonian Institution	115.60
U.S. Department of State	115.34
UK Parliament	112.79
Government of Saskatchewan	111.60
John Edwards for President	109.50
Hillary for President	109.20
U.S. Congress	107.97
Parliament of Canada	107.40
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	106.96
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	106.70
U.S. Department of Commerce	106.47
New York City Department of Education	105.93
Obama for America	104.83
Department of Transportation, Kansas	104.00
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration	102.42
U.S. Postal Service	102.00
U.S. Department of Labor	101.71
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	100.56
Richardson for President	92.00

Where am I?

The Traveler IQ Challenge scores can be found by clicking on the "stats" tab (<http://apps.facebook.com/travelpod-challenge/stats>) on the application inside Facebook, and are updated constantly as more players take the challenge and raise or lower the relative scores for their schools, companies, locations and gender.

"It's madness -- everyone wants to challenge me!," said Espen Moe, a faculty member at Norwegian University of Science and Technology who currently holds the number one spot on the Challenge with an IQ of 142. "It's great fun, hugely addictive and you can actually learn something while you play. I even got a Facebook message yesterday from a Hungarian model congratulating me on becoming number one! "

About TravelPod

TravelPod.com was released in 1997 as the Web's first site to enable its members to create online travelogues (travel blogs), which revolutionized the way people travel and share their adventures with the world. Travelers can post travelogues from previous trips or use TravelPod to host ongoing travelogues that they can update while they travel. TravelPod.com (<http://www.travelpod.com/>), based in Ottawa, Canada, was acquired by TripAdvisor in December 2006.

SOURCE: TravelPod

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