

Roaming Charges Holding Back UK Smartphone Use Abroad High costs make UK travellers least likely to use their mobiles abroad when compared to rest of Europe

5 November - UK travellers are the least likely of any major European nation to use their mobile or tablet devices abroad, according to the [TripAdvisor® TripBarometer Mobile and Social trends survey](#), which polled travellers from 22 different countries around the world ¹.

A quarter of British travellers (25%) said they did not use mobile devices abroad - more than every other nation polled bar Canada. Similarly, less than two in five (39%) British travellers accessed social media networks while away, compared to around nine in ten in Indonesia (91%), Malaysia (87%) and Thailand (86%), where social media use is the highest.

The study revealed that the low adoption of mobile and social trends in the UK was largely attributed to high charges associated with texting and calling (cited by 47% of travellers) and data roaming (39%).

Consequently, nearly two thirds of UK travellers (59%) are now using social media as a cheaper way of contacting people while away.

Social media networks are also a popular research tool both before they travel and while on their trip, with one in six (15%) of Brits using social media to research and plan trips away, and one in four (25%) using it to get recommendations while on the go. Accessing video and photo content of places they plan to visit was cited by UK travellers as the most popular reason for using social media as a travel aid.

Tablets lagging behind smartphones as essential travel tool

The study also found that, despite the concern over high charges, for those that are using smartphones abroad they are fast becoming an invaluable travel gadget. One in three (29%) UK travellers use their phones to navigate while abroad, one in five (21%) use mobiles to find restaurants, and one in six (15%) use them to read online reviews while on holiday.

By comparison, tablet devices are much less likely to be used as a travel aid abroad. Only a fifth (21%) of Brits use a tablet device for travel-related purposes (such as finding a restaurant) while away, with normal daily uses, such as browsing online and playing games still the most popular reasons for using a tablet while abroad.

Always take the weather with you

The most popular travel apps for planning and research among UK travellers are those either delivering weather news, cited by more than two thirds of UK smartphone phone users (70%), or those, such as TripAdvisor's City Guides, which offer travel inspiration tips (71%).

Accommodation-specific apps, such as those created by individual hotels were next popular (59%), followed by currency converter apps (56%).

"The growth in smartphone use worldwide has changed the way many travellers pick and plan where to go while abroad, but for a sizeable number of UK travellers the prospect of facing wallet-busting charges for data roaming is clearly putting them off from accessing apps and information that could improve the travel experience," said **Marc Charron, President of TripAdvisor for Business**. "Mobile network operators need to be doing more to make charges clearer to their customers so that they can have the confidence to use their phones on the go wherever they are".

For the full TripBarometer report and infographic, please visit <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/TripAdvisorInsights/half-uk-hospitality-businesses-marketing-mobile-and-social-media-channels>