

# Travel Decision-Making and Information Sources Used: A Panel Study Approach

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JITT-Workshop on Tourism, Search and the Internet

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## Main concerns

- What can we say about information search behaviour for trip planning purposes in general?
- Which role does the Internet play vis-à-vis traditional information sources?
  - ... given the fact that comprehensive studies on information search are rare
  - ... and web based sources are either considered not at all or in a very undifferentiated way

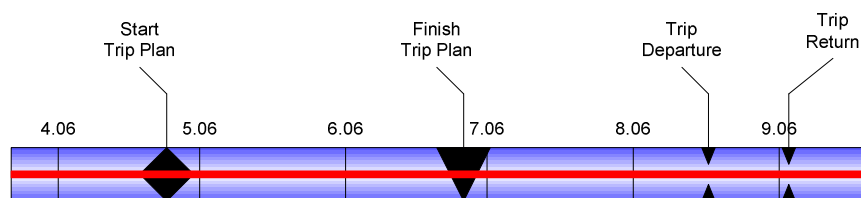
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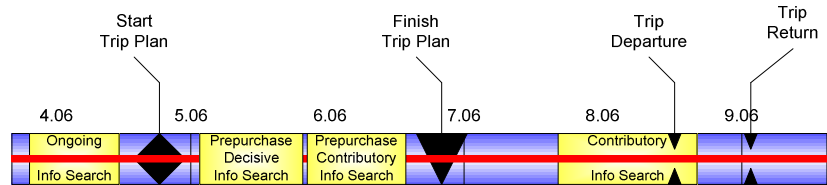
## Key issues of this study

- Sub-decisions in the trip planning process
- Subjective importance of information (sources)
  - Ongoing search
  - Contributory search
  - Decisive search
- Planning types (van Raaij and Francken 1984, Decrop 2006)
  - no generic decision making → vacation trips are routine
  - early generic DM, typical for rational decision making process
  - late generic DM, pragmatic considerations

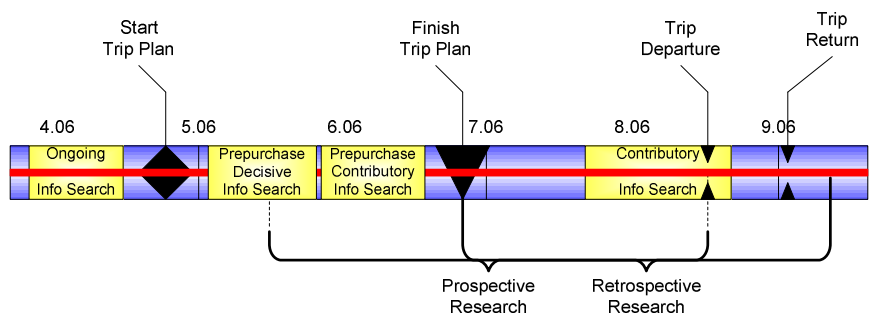
## Research Problem Travel Information Behaviour



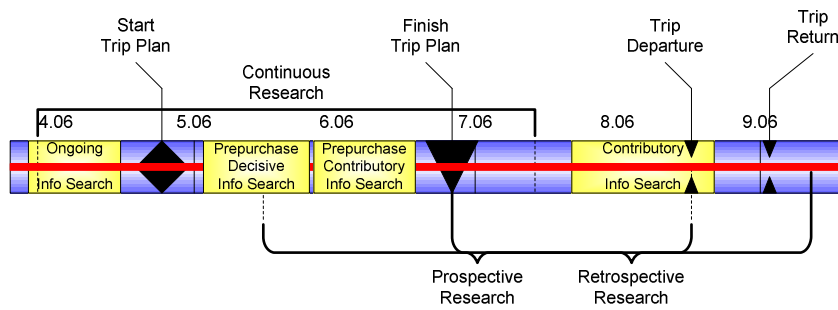
# Research Problem Travel Information Behaviour



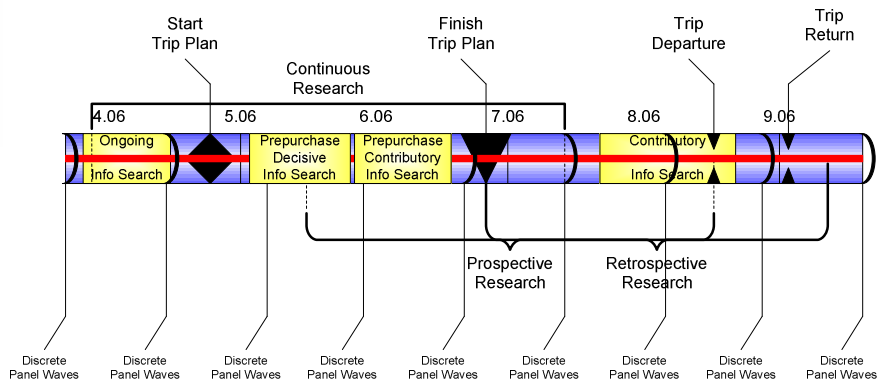
# Research Problem Travel Information Behaviour



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# Longitudinal Approach in Travel Information Behaviour



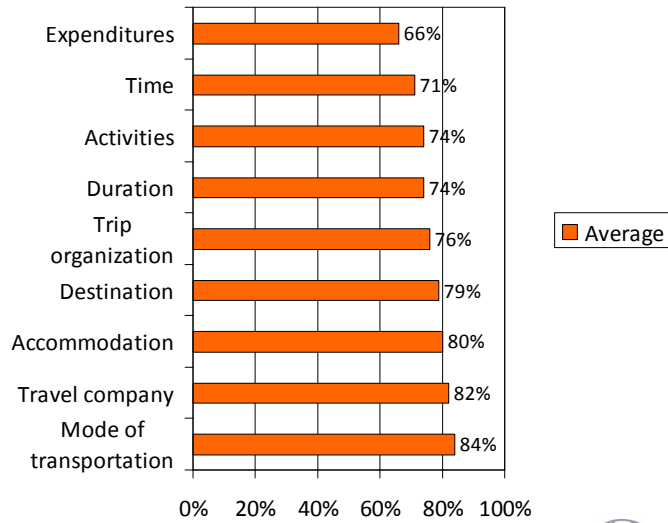
## Research methodology

- Travel panel study: Austrian travelling population
- Duration: 12 months; 06/06 – 06/07
- Panel waves: 10 (every 5 weeks)
- Focus: current trip planning processes
- Individualized questionnaires to support recall
- Panel participants: 768 (at the beginning)  
290 (at the end)  
40% mortality after 1<sup>st</sup> wave
- Records on trip plans: 585 running  
189 started long before 1<sup>st</sup> wave  
219 completed

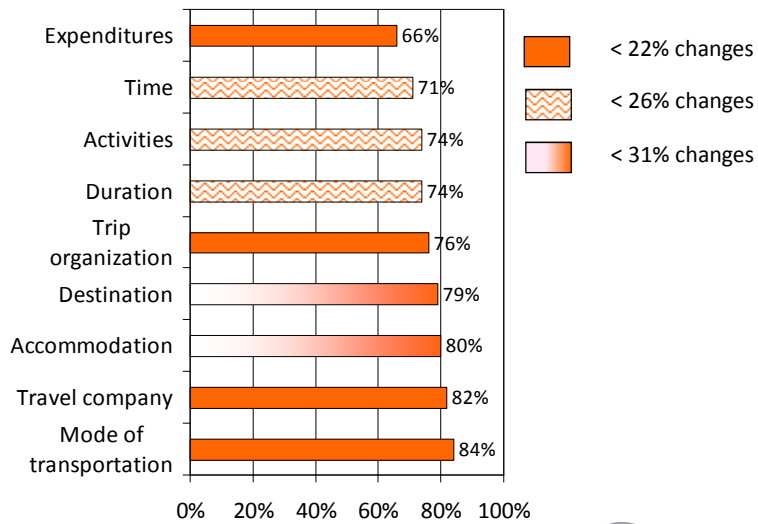
## Sample profile

- age: 42 years [51%: 25 to 44 years]
- gender: 62% female
- education: 30% tertiary level degree
- income: 35% > € 3.000 per household
- household size: 1.65 adult persons, 0.4 children < 18
- internet: 100% experience; 75% daily usage,  
6 years' experience, 43% shopping
- travel behaviour: 5.5 trips per year (3 international)  
12% no domestic, 25% no international
- destination of TP: 16% domestic, 46% European, 38%  
overseas
- TP approach: 39% routine, 32% early generic, 29%  
late generic

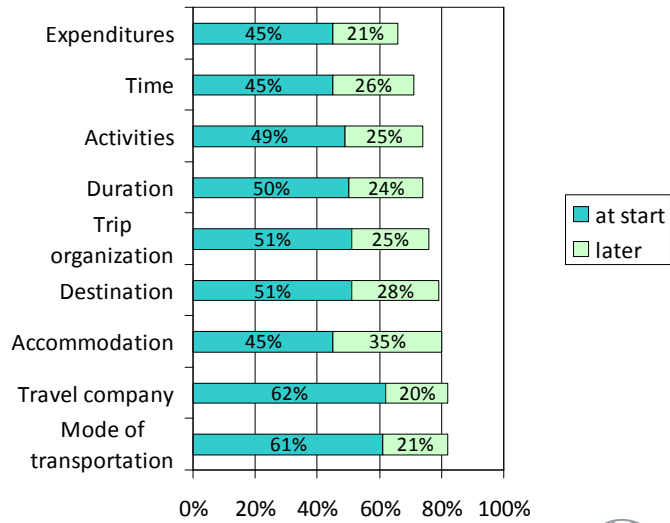
## Trip-planning sub-decisions



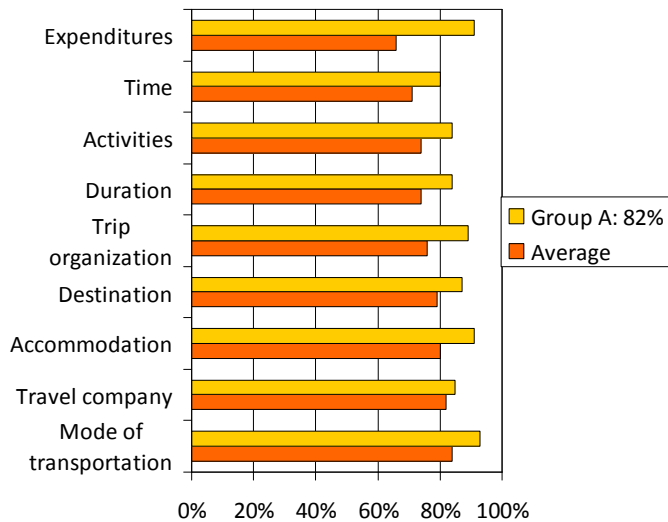
## Sub-decisions: stability



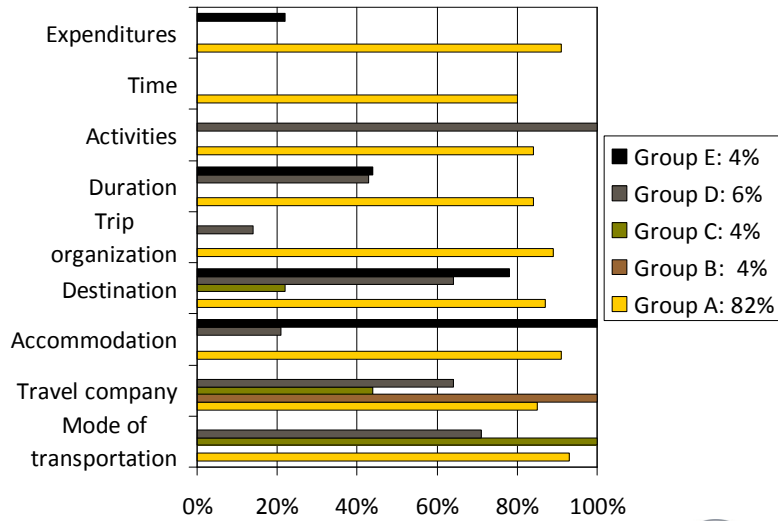
## Sub-decisions: timing



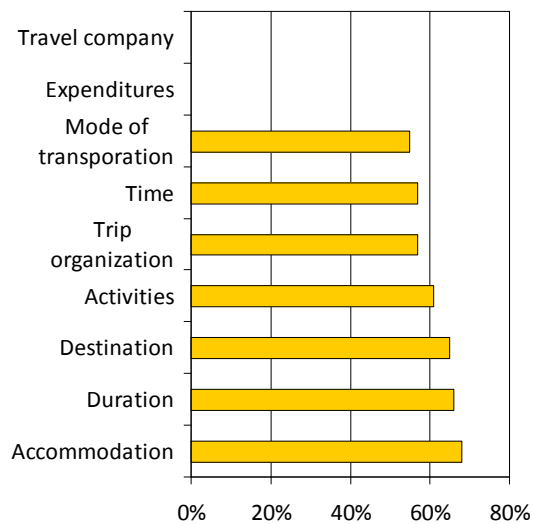
## Sub-decision: patterns



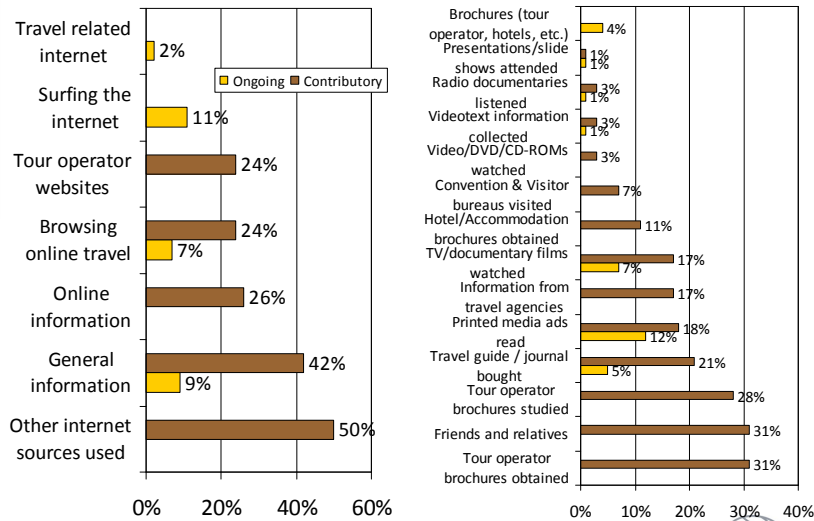
## Sub-decision: patterns



## Sub-decisions: information activities



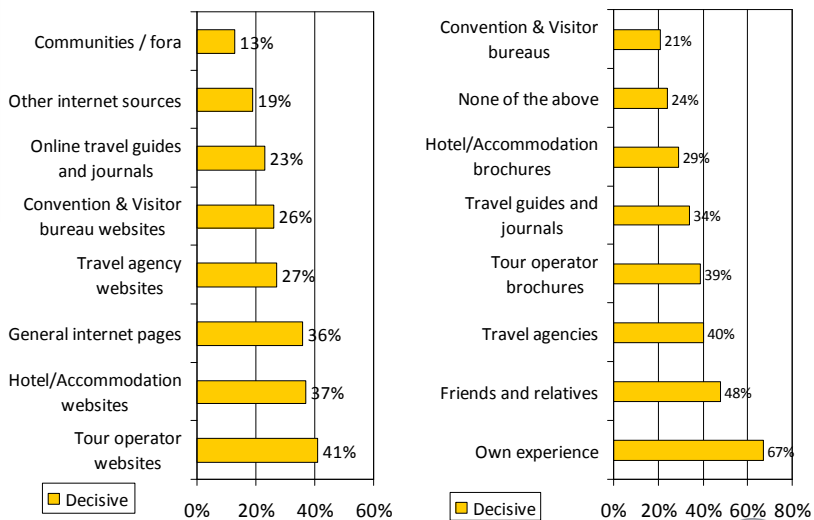
## Ongoing and contributory search



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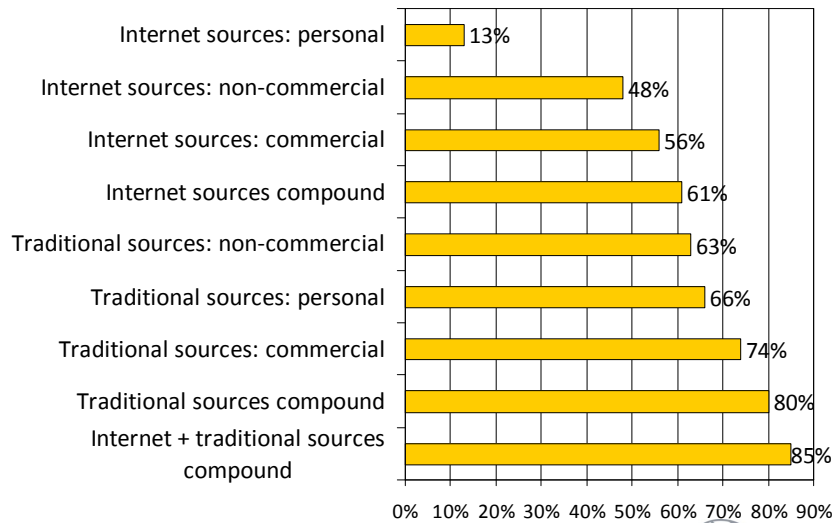
## Decisive search activities



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## Decisive information by category



## Sub-decisions and information search

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• Duration:	travel agency website communiy/fora convention & visitor online general internet pages	
• Destination:	tour operator website travel agency website online travel guide friends/relatives travel guides	
• Time:		convention & visitor bureaus own experience

## Sub-decisions and information search

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• Accommod.:	accommod. website accommod. brochures tour operator brochures	
• Activities:	communities/fora travel guides convention & visitor bureaus and online	
• Transport.:	own experience	accomm. Brochures and website convention b. Online general internet tour operator broch. travel agency

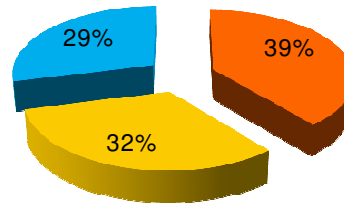
## Sub-decisions and information search

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• Trip organ.:		travel agency website communities/fora friends/relatives travel guides

## Decision making and trip planning

- Three groups almost equally distributed
- ROUTPLAN: no generic decision
- DECPLAN: early generic DM
- PLANDEC: late generic DM
  
- No other trip planning characteristic significant: social and/or organisational conditions responsible

### Decision Making Types



## Additional insights and summaries

- 15% rely on own experience only
- 33% do not use own experience for sub-decisions
- Usage of own experience does not coincide with the perception of travel experience
- Usage of internal and external information is not compensatory
- More own experience is applied for decision making for domestic trip plans and in the case of independent travels
  
- 39% do not use any information from web sources
- 5% rely on web based information only
- Information from web sources are less used for domestic trips plans
- No difference in Internet search activities between independent and tour operator travellers

## Additional insights and summaries

- The more sub-decisions taken the longer the trip planning duration:  
corr = .32
- No difference between destination (distance) and planning duration
- Planning duration and volume of information sources used (.31) highly significant
- Personal experience and information from friends/relatives more frequently used for trips with longer planning periods
- With higher trip expenditures: more information from tour operator brochures, travel guides, online communities, online travel guides, travel agencies
- Overall: more traditional commercial sources used, more traditional non-commercial sources used and more internet personal sources used
- No dominance of web based information sources observable

Questions and remarks are welcome

