

Web searches for popular holiday terms and destinations suffer significant drop

LONDON, UK: As the Easter getaway approaches, some tour operators in the UK are reporting an impromptu boom in holiday bookings to warmer destinations including the Mediterranean, triggered by March's extreme weather.



Not a minute too soon, as quarterly data from leading independent digital marketing agency, Greenlight, '[Holidays - Issue 16](#)', which profiles consumer search behaviour in this vertical, found that in February, a key selling period for the travel sector, UK consumer online searches for holidays totalled 1.2 million, down significantly on November's 2.9 million.

Generic holiday terms including 'last minute holidays' 'all inclusive holidays', 'cheap all inclusive holidays' and 'package holidays', made up 55% (695,000) of all holiday-related queries.

'Cheap holidays', which in July 2012 peaked at 1 million searches, was the most popular holiday-related search time February. However, it accounted for just 165,000 (13%) queries.

Dubai tops holiday searches to long-haul destinations

There were 372,872 searches for holidays to long-haul destinations. Dubai proved the most popular draw. Combined, search volumes for 'Dubai holidays' and 'Holidays to Dubai' totalled 26,200 constituting a 7% share of holiday searches to long-haul destinations.

New York followed with the terms 'New York Holidays' and 'Holidays to New York' cumulatively making up 6% of searches (22,900). It was likewise for holidays to Thailand.

Turkey most popular short-haul holiday hot spot

Turkey, Malta and Cyprus proved to be the most popular short-haul holiday hot spots. The keyword 'Turkey holidays' was queried 9,900 times, accounting for 5% of all searches made for the sub-sector whilst searches pertaining to Malta and Cyprus each accounted for 4% of searches - 8,100 apiece.

In fact from both a financial and currency perspective, the Mediterranean is expected to be a popular destination for British holidaymakers for the duration of 2013, according to the 2012/2013 Post Office [Holiday Money Report](#) (large file).

Post Office Head of Travel Money Andrew Brown commented: "If sterling holds its value and resort costs in Turkey and Greece stay at current levels, there will be plenty for UK holidaymakers to look forward to in the eastern Med this year. By contrast, rising prices mean Bulgaria, Portugal and Italy could feel the pressure as families look carefully at holiday finances."

First Choice the most prominent site to holiday searchers

Greenlight's report analysed the most visible websites and advertisers on Google UK in the Natural Search listings* and Paid Media space**.

Overall, Thomas Cook was the most visible website in the [Natural Search](#) listings, achieving a 60% share of voice.

On The Beach was the most visible advertiser in the Paid Media space, achieving a 77% share of visibility.

However, First Choice ranked at the top of Greenlight's Integrated Search league table, as it achieved a sizable share of visibility for holiday-related searches across both the Natural Search and [Paid Media](#) space.

Interestingly, Greenlight's report found that almost half (nineteen) of the forty most prominent sites in Integrated Search had no visibility in the organic listings relying solely on their prominence in paid listings to secure their visibility to searches. They included brands like Saga, Butlins, exclusive members only travel club Secret Escapes and leading online pan-European travel agency, Ebookers.

Notes:

***Natural /organic Search** - Listings in search engine results pages that appear because of their relevance to the search terms

****Paid Media** - an Internet advertising model used on websites, in which advertisers pay their host only when their ad is clicked. With search engines, advertisers typically bid on keyword phrases relevant to their target market.

Greenlight's independent 'Holidays - Issue 16' report, profiles search behaviour in this sector. It assesses which brands, websites and review sites are the most visible in natural search, paid media, and social media and hence have the greatest share of consideration when UK-based searchers go to Google UK to look for holidays.

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