

Surge of the digital travel consumer



By Josephine Wawira

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The rise of the digital era has become fundamental in the travel and tourism industry. Digitalisation is increasingly seen to empower travel consumers especially those seeking diversification and personalisation for a remarkable experience. From the very initial stage of travel arrangements, the digital consumer seeks information key in deciding how, where, when to travel, what to expect and even more significantly, why to choose one destination, hotel, airline, or travel agency over another.



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The latter is especially because price comparison as well as customer experience - often available via both offline and online customer reviews - are crucial in determining one's choice. Fascinatingly, the presence of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) enables the provision of most of the looked-for information on one platform, which is easily accessed via smartphones. According to a [Kenyan hospitality report](#) by Jumia Travel, 71% of traffic to the online travel site is through mobile phones, while desktops and tablets are used by 26% and 3% of the visitors respectively.

According to eMarketer, a market research company, an increased appetite for leisure travel among the middle-class consumers will see digital travel expenditures top \$817bn globally by 2020. Combined with their quest for quality and flexible digital services, providers such as hotels, airlines and OTAs are deprived of options that aim for anything less than to meet their digital travel consumers at their points of need.

Catering to the guest experience

No longer is it enough for hoteliers to provide accommodation. They must now consider offering additional amenities most sought after by guests, such as Wi-Fi, a workout facility, swimming pool, a restaurant among others; depending on the target customer, either leisure or business. Getting around their destinations has also never been this convenient. With apps, online maps, translation, packing and even banking apps at the touch of a button, the surge of digital travellers can only be expected grow further as the year swiftly comes to an end.

To further benefit from the growing market, travel agents are also providing a [multiplatform](#) where travellers can receive more than one solution; such as hotels and flights options on one stop. Moreover, the novelty of digital payment solutions is further enticing more digital travellers, not only by simplifying their booking experience but also their payment options from their own comfort.

ABOUT JOSEPHINE WAWIRA

Josephine Wawira is a consultant in communication and public relations with over six years of progressive writing and broadcast experience. She is currently a writer for Africa's online hotel booking portal, Jumia Travel, focusing in the areas of travel, tourism, and hospitality as it relates to Africa.

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