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Maritz Research Study Ranks Most Trusted Online Review Sites
Consumers trust TripAdvisor and Zagat, skeptical of other online reviews

ST. LOUIS (Sept. 18, 2013) – Do you read online reviews before buying a product, reserving a table at a restaurant or booking a trip? A new study from [Maritz Research](#) shows that while you may not want to believe everything you read, larger, more established ratings sites such as TripAdvisor and Zagat are much more likely to be trusted over smaller, newer sites.

The [2013 Online Customer Review Study](#), which examined 13 high-profile ratings sites, indicates there’s a lack of trust with the feedback shared online and lists the sites with the highest trust levels.

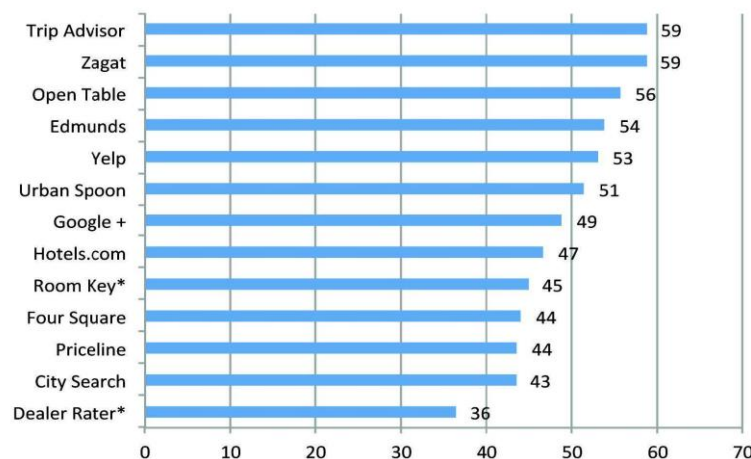
Most Trusted Sites

- 1-TripAdvisor
- 2-Zagat
- 3-OpenTable
- 4-Edmunds.com
- 5-Yelp

The study found that one in four people believe the information available on ratings sites is unfair. And while the older, highly visited sites were generally perceived as more trustworthy, more than a third of visitors were still cautious of information on these sites.

The TRUST Factor

Percentage who trust the sites



*Low sample size due to low number of ratings site visitors

“Many people we surveyed expressed concern over reviews on customer ratings sites being biased or even fake,” said David Ensing, vice president of Voice of the Customer Integration for Maritz Research. “Many site visitors tend to believe that ratings sites select which reviews are posted, that employees post fake positive reviews for the companies they work for, and that raters only share their positive or negative experiences instead of sharing a balanced opinion.”

For those who felt ratings sites were generally fair, many reported they still have to separate trustworthy reviews from non-trustworthy ones based on their own intuition. Specific survey respondents noted that they:

- *“Can usually tell when a review is fake – if it is overly positive.”*
- *“Try to determine if the review is legit or if the writer is out for revenge.”*
- *“Read between the lines to see what the reviewer is really saying and discount reviews that feel unfair.”*
- *“Try to read a range of reviews. If there are not enough reviews, [they] don’t take it seriously.”*

“Our research indicates that there may be a credibility crisis on the horizon for online review sites,” said Ensing. “If the lack of confidence in customer reviews continues, these sites could become obsolete. To address trust issues, companies and ratings sites should consider more secure and credible ways to provide customers with reviews that have been verified and aren’t skewed.”

For more information about the 2013 Online Customer Review Study, including white papers and blogs on this topic visit <http://maritzresearch.com/reviewstudy2013.aspx>.

Methodology

The Maritz Research 2013 Online Customer Review Study surveyed 3,404 people about the use of 13 dedicated customer review and ratings sites, including TripAdvisor, Zagat, OpenTable, Edmunds.com, Yelp, Urbanspoon, Google+, Hotels.com, Room Key*, Foursquare, Priceline.com, Citysearch, and DealerRater*. The online panel study was conducted from April 3 to April 24, 2013. Read more about the study at <http://maritzresearch.com/reviewstudy2013.aspx>.

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About Maritz Research

As one of the world’s largest marketing research firms, Maritz Research, a unit of Maritz, helps many of today’s most successful companies improve performance through a deep understanding of their customers, employees and channel partners. Founded in 1973, it offers a range of strategic and tactical solutions concentrating primarily in the automotive, financial services, hospitality, technology, telecommunications, restaurant, and retail industries. The company has achieved ISO 20252 registration, the international symbol of quality. It is a member of CASRO, ESOMAR and MRA. Check out the Maritz Research blog at www.MaritzResearch.com/SoundCheckBlog. For more information, visit www.MaritzResearch.com or call 877-4MARITZ.

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