



How Social is Your State DMO?

August 2009



How Social is Your State Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)?

This is the second effort to bench-mark the web presence of state destination marketing organizations beyond web site visits. In July of 2009, Gammet Interactive created the original 12-point algorithm that featured 28 objects of measurement. That algorithm was then used to create a social media assessment and evaluation of the 50 official U. S. tourism office web sites. In August 2009, the algorithm weighting was slightly changed to correspond with social media usage and growth. There was also another criterion of measurement added to the formula in this assessment: web site domain in-links,

After visiting the official web site of each state tourism office/destination marketing organization (DMO), Gammet Interactive utilized the following 13 -points to publish the second “How Social is Your State DMO?” rankings:

- 1) Certified Site Traffic Measurement from Quantcast.com
- 2) Presence of Social Media Icons and Links on the Web Site Home Page
- 3) State Keyword Search in Google
- 4) Facebook Presence
- 5) Twitter Presence
- 6) MySpace Presence
- 7) Flickr Presence
- 8) Panoramio Presence
- 8) YouTube Presence
- 9) Content Sharing Via a Social Media Tool like Add This or Share This
- 10) Blog Presence
- 12) User Generated Content/Review Site
- 13) Domain in-Links via Yahoo

This evaluation was conducted during 4-day period, during the week of August 24th. This study was done in a much shorter time frame than the original one, which was published in July and took place over a 21-day period. The shorter window should provide an assessment that is much more accurate in the realms of social media, as it is a moving target and changes daily. We will continue to conduct future evaluations in the shortest time-period possible. We also extended our best effort to find the “official” presence of each specified DMO on sites like Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, etc. If we did not locate specific social media links on the state tourism web site, we attempted multiple searches on the specific social media outlet. The searches were done methodically with a four-step process which would result in a consistent attempt to locate the official destination presence. Each search began with the state name, then was followed by the web site URL, the state name followed by the word “travel”, and concluded with a either the tagline represented on the website or the state name followed by the word “tourism”. After the four searches, we abandoned the process and recorded the score of “0” for that assessment point.

In effort to present an example of how each point was measured, we have noted a sample of the criteria that we used to determine the score for presence on Twitter:

- a) Presence on the web site= Yes or No
- b) Followers - Assessed on a scale of 0 to more than 15,000 followers
- c) Updates – Assessed on a scale of 100 to more than 3,000 updates
- d) Twitter Grade – Assessed from the Hubspot tool – twitter.grader.com

The state destination marketing organizations are ranked on the following page in descending order, 1 through 50, with the total score on the far right column. Ties are recorded and noted in the scoring. The total scores listed are based on the weighted scale with values that were determined from an assessment of the social media outlets, popularity and importance of brand awareness. We welcome your feedback and responses to our measurement criteria and weighting scale. Please forward any comments and suggestions directly to David Serino, Founder and e-Strategist of Gammet Interactive at dserino@gammet.com or post them publicly on the comments sections at - www.daveserinoblogs.com – to create a conversation with others.

Rank	Destination	DMO URL	DMO Site Traffic	Social Media Icons	Google	Yahoo! Inlinks	Facebook	Twitter	MySpace	Flickr	Panoramio	YouTube	Content Sharing	Blog	Reviews	Totals
1	Michigan	michigan.org	0	10	3	10	47	24	0	18	1	23	5	20	8	169
2	Oregon	traveloregon.com	0	10	3	6	19	30	0	18	3	19	5	20	15	148
2	Pennsylvania	visitpa.com	0	10	5	8	25	28	0	17	3	19	5	20	8	148
4	Tennessee	tnvacation.com	0	10	3	8	37	26	7	13	1	17	0	11	8	141
5	New Hampshire	visitnh.gov	0	10	5	4	21	22	7	15	1	19	5	20	8	137
6	Florida	visitflorida.com	3	0	5	8	15	24	4	16	5	23	5	20	8	136
6	Virginia	virginia.org	0	0	3	8	30	28	0	8	5	21	5	20	8	136
8	Arkansas	arkansas.com	0	10	5	8	27	22	7	5	1	16	5	20	8	134
9	Indiana	visitindiana.com	0	10	3	1	24	29	0	17	3	16	0	20	8	131
10	Nevada	travelnevada.com	0	10	5	4	31	17	7	17	1	17	0	20	0	129
10	Wyoming	wyomingtourism.org	0	10	3	6	15	21	0	15	1	16	5	20	8	120
12	North Carolina	visitnc.com	3	10	5	6	26	19	0	7	5	10	5	13	8	117
13	Arizona	arizonaguide.com	0	10	5	8	0	31	7	18	7	10	5	0	15	116
14	Maine	visitmaine.com	3	10	5	6	15	23	0	18	1	16	5	0	8	110
14	Minnesota	exploreminnesota.com	0	10	3	8	19	15	4	7	1	21	0	14	8	110
16	Illinois	enjoyillinois.com	0	10	3	6	17	28	0	18	1	18	0	0	8	109
17	Colorado	colorado.com	0	0	5	6	37	13	7	8	9	9	5	0	8	107
18	North Dakota	ndtourism.com	0	0	5	6	17	18	0	11	1	9	0	20	15	102
19	Kansas	travelks.com	0	10	3	4	28	19	0	7	1	16	5	0	8	101
20	Vermont	vermontvacation.com	3	10	3	4	21	25	7	6	7	14	0	0	0	100
20	New Mexico	newmexico.org	0	0	3	6	33	20	0	6	1	0	5	18	8	100
22	Georgia	exploregorgia.org	0	10	1	4	18	24	0	18	1	9	5	0	8	98
23	Mississippi	visitmississippi.org	0	10	3	2	15	15	7	15	1	16	5	0	8	97
24	Louisiana	louisianatravel.com	3	10	3	2	15	26	0	6	1	10	0	12	8	96
25	Alabama	alabama.travel	0	10	3	4	18	15	0	16	1	13	0	13	0	93
26	Ohio	ohiotourism.com	0	10	1	2	15	20	0	18	3	11	0	0	8	88
26	South Dakota	travelsd.com	0	10	3	4	21	16	0	3	1	17	5	0	8	88
26	Oklahoma	travelok.com	3	10	3	8	22	0	0	13	3	0	0	18	8	88
29	Idaho	visitidaho.org	0	0	5	6	18	25	0	5	3	15	0	0	8	85
30	Utah	utah.com	0	0	5	6	34	13	0	8	3	14	0	0	0	83
31	Rhode Island	visitrhodeisland.com	0	0	5	4	25	0	7	3	9	0	5	13	8	79
31	South Carolina	discoverouthcarolina.com	0	10	5	6	21	14	0	5	5	0	5	0	8	79
33	Kentucky	kentuckytourism.com	0	10	3	4	15	22	0	6	3	10	0	0	0	73
33	New York	iloveny.com	0	0	5	6	0	14	0	10	10	0	0	20	8	73
35	Hawaii	gohawaii.com	0	0	5	6	27	0	0	8	7	0	0	19	0	72
36	Missouri	visitmo.com	0	0	3	4	0	15	0	7	1	16	5	20	0	71
37	Nebraska	visitnebraska.com	0	0	3	1	18	17	0	3	1	16	0	0	8	67
38	Iowa	traveliowa.com	0	10	3	4	15	20	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	66
39	Connecticut	ctvisit.com	0	0	3	4	20	0	0	5	10	0	5	10	8	65
40	Maryland	visitmaryland.org	0	10	3	2	0	21	0	7	10	0	0	0	8	61
41	Montana	visitmt.com	0	10	5	8	0	15	0	7	1	10	0	0	0	56
42	Alaska	travelalaska.com	0	0	3	2	15	0	0	8	1	10	0	0	8	47
43	Massachusetts	massvacation.com	0	0	3	2	15	0	0	7	10	0	0	0	8	45
44	Washington	experiencewa.com	0	0	3	8	0	0	0	16	10	0	0	0	0	37
45	Delaware	visitdelaware.com	0	0	3	6	16	0	0	3	7	0	0	0	0	35
46	California	visitcalifornia.com	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	10	7	0	0	0	0	24
46	Wisconsin	travelwisconsin.com	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	7	3	0	5	0	0	24
48	New Jersey	state.nj.us/travel	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	6	10	0	0	0	0	23
49	Texas	traveltex.com	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	19
50	West Virginia	wvtourism.com	3	0	3	4	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	16

“How Social is your DMO?” – Scoring Parameters

Quantcast

Quantcast is used to determine whether or not a site is Quantcast certified to measure site traffic. This is done for two reasons. First, so DMO’s can legitimize their site traffic in a transparent and public process. These numbers can then be accessed and utilized by stakeholders, legislators, and/or possible site sponsors/advertisers. It can also give a DMO some benchmarks in terms of how they measure up to other organizations in their geographic area, competitive set or budget structure.

Google

Google is used to determine the reach of the site by entering in the location name into the Google search box. Based on where the DMO site ranks on the results page they are awarded a score. Being the first site listed will allow for more points.

Yahoo In-Links

The Yahoo search engine was used to determine how many links are tracked back to the web site domain. The numbers of in-links ranged from more than 200,000 to less than 5,000 per site. This is an important factor to determine the reach of the web site and how well it is being shared. In-links also place a part in the search popularity of the web site.

Facebook

First, we check to see if the DMO has a Facebook presence represented on their homepage. If it is located on their site they will receive points. On the Facebook site, we look for a Fan Page specifically for the DMO and assign points based on whether or not they have a Fan Page, and how it is utilized. Items measured are the number of fans, DMO photos, fan photos and videos. Each of these categories receives points based on the amount of participation. Finally, we run the Facebook Fan Page through Hubspot’s Facebook Grader, www.facebook.grader.com and input their ranking into the scoring formula.

Twitter

The first step is to determine if there is a Twitter presence recognized on your web site with an icon or link to your Twitter stream. We then review your Twitter stream and measure the number of followers you have and how many updates were made. The final step is to run the Twitter user name through Hubspot’s Twitter Grader – www.twitter.grader.com to see your official grade. After we collect all of this data, it is placed in a grading scale and scored based on the point system we have developed.

Myspace

We check to see if the DMO has a presence on Myspace. The more activity on Myspace the more points they will receive overall. We also recognize that MySpace plays less of a part in the travel planning process, so the ranking carries less weight in the total formula.

Flickr

If the DMO has a branded account on Flickr, it receives points. If there is an account for the destination, the more photos within the set will receive more points. A DMO would need to have created an account for all users to upload photos of the destination. There are many groups and sets that may have the same name as a destination; however, this would have to be administered by a DMO member in order to receive points.

Panoramio

Panoramio is used to measure the amount of photo traffic of a destination online as these images feed into Goggle Maps and Google Earth. We entered the destination name into the site and recorded the number of photos that have been uploaded. With Panoramio, and a destination account is not necessary as we look for photos with destination related tags uploaded by consumers.

YouTube

In order to receive points for YouTube, the DMO will have had to create an account for destination and upload videos to create viral buzz. We measure the score based on the number of videos on their YouTube page and the number of subscribers to that specific page.

Content Sharing

While examining the DMO's website, we check for the use of sharing tools. If there is a place on the page that makes it easy for the user to share the information with their friends using this tool, there will be points awarded.

Blogging

The use of blogs are also very important in the formula. The score is based on recognition of the blog on the website and/or if there is a news or information feed frequently updated, along with an area designated consumer/user comments. There will also be more points awarded if the blog had been updated frequently with consistent content.

Review Sites

The last thing we look for within the DMO site is the use of any user generated content or reviews. Testimonials or user generated content are recognized and scored accordingly. Also, any branded review site for the destination will allow for additional points. This includes integrated independent review sites.

After all of these numbers are counted, they are placed into a spreadsheet and then applied to measurement set. Each organization is then ranked in order from highest to lowest.

“How Social is your DMO?” – Glossary

Quantcast- www.quantcast.com – Quantcast is a web site that is based on viewing the statistics of other Web sites. Quantcast Corporation's prime focus is to analyze the internet's Web sites in order to obtain accurate statistics. Quantcast rates Web pages by ranks. Participating websites voluntarily insert Quantcast HTML code inside Web pages they wish to have included in statistics. This code allows Quantcast to keep track of the traffic directed towards those Web sites. (Source: Wikipedia)

Facebook- www.facebook.com - Facebook is a popular, free-access social networking website that is operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profile to notify friends about themselves. (Source: Wikipedia)

Twitter- www.twitter.com - Twitter is a free social networking and *micro-blogging service* that allows its users to send and read other users' updates (otherwise known as tweets), which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends. (Source: Wikipedia)

MySpace- www.myspace.com - MySpace is a social networking website with an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music, and videos for teenagers and adults internationally. (Source: Wikipedia)

Flickr- www.flickr.com - Flickr is an image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community platform. It was one of the earliest Web 2.0 applications. In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository. (Source: Wikipedia)

Panoramio- www.panoramio.com - Panoramio is a geolocation-oriented photo sharing website. Currently, some of the photos uploaded to the site can be accessed as a layer in Google Earth and Google Maps, with new photos being added at the end of every month. The site's goal is to allow Google Earth users to learn more about a given area by viewing the photos that other users have taken at that place. The website is available in several languages. (Source: Wikipedia)

YouTube- www.youtube.com - YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips. Unregistered users can watch the videos, while registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos. (Source: Wikipedia)

Gammet Interactive - www.gammet.com - Gammet Interactive is a marketing technology advisor that offers e-travel insight to members of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries. The company assists organizations with the process of assessing their internet marketing needs along with providing services to develop, implement and manage cost effective online and social media marketing programs. The organization was founded by tourism industry veteran David Serino in 2000.

For more information, please contact David Serino at dserino@gammet.com or 734-878-8800.

