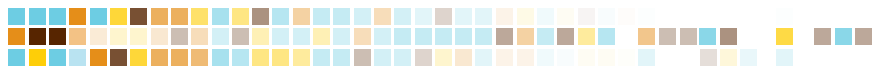


# PERSPECTIVES



A monthly look at what's happening in the ever-changing digital world and beyond.



## From the Editor

Hello and welcome to the July 2011 issue of *Perspectives*!

This month the Digital Integration and Innovation team (Dii) here at RTC Relationship Marketing takes a look at digital trends and technology in the travel business. Carlen Lea Lesser's *Travel as a Trigger for Technology Adoption* explores travel as a motivation to break out of one's technology comfort zone. Michelle Fares's piece, *Travel Photography*, highlights some handy tools to photograph and share your vacation photos. *iTourU: Making Travel Guides Personal*, written by Rebecca Johnson, discusses how to become your own tour guide. In *SpotWorld: Crowd-Sourcing Customized Travel Guides*, David BenBassett provides an analysis of the social network for vacations called SpotWorld. Vacationing without a smart phone? In Sara Weiner's *Google Good for Non-Smartphone Users*, learn some tricks to receive travel information on your mobile phone. And last but not least, Dii intern Michael Sortwell highlights Trapster, a technology that helps the wary traveler avoid speed traps, in *Trapster: Innovative Use of Geo-Location*.



As always, we encourage your feedback. Contribute to the conversation online, where versions of *Perspectives* are available for comment on our website's Sparkblog and on SlideShare, or send me an email letting me know what you think. If you are interested in a custom briefing on any topic in this edition, RTCRM is here for you—just contact your Project Manager or Account Manager. If you aren't a current RTCRM client and would like a custom briefing, contact me and we'll talk. If you are looking for the latest in digital trends with a healthy dose of attitude, visit *Treffpunkt*—the RTCRM Digital Integration and Innovations team blog—at <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com/>.

Thanks and enjoy.

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Photos courtesy of Flickr Creative Commons: P.1 *Airplane* by xlibber, 2009. P.2 *Parmiter Antiques Southsea Luggage* by geishaboy500, 2008



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# Travel as Trigger for Technology Adoption

**Summary:** It's fairly well understood that key moments can trigger people who are not early-adopter types to adopt new technology. Sometimes the trigger can simply be mass media saturation, but often a life trigger is also required. The summer of 2011 has the potential to be the tipping point for check-in and discovery apps, as people find a reason to play with them and discover their utility while traveling on summer vacations.

**Carlen Lea Lesser, VP/Director**  
Digital Integration & Innovation

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## Key Information:

The idea of a "tipping point" is nothing new. Malcolm Gladwell's tipping point into mainstream success was his own book on the subject, which debuted in 2000 and spent 334 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. This summer has the potential to be a tipping point for greatly hyped discovery and check-in apps that have yet to see mainstream adoption. Discovery and check-in apps such as Foursquare, Gowalla, SpotWorld, and even Living Social are one class of apps that may come into their own this summer, and bring "check-in" behavior into the mainstream.

According to a new Pew Internet study,<sup>1</sup> 35% of American adults own a smartphone — generally defined as mobile phones running the iPhone, Android, BlackBerry, or Palm operating systems. Nearly 50% of people between the ages of 18 and 49 now own a smartphone, according to the Pew study, and this is the key to the trend I believe we'll see building this summer and into the fall and winter.

As people who own smartphones — iPhones and Androids in particular — head out on their summer vacations, those phones will be ubiquitously present in their pockets and purses. This is the perfect time for the question, "Isn't there an app for that?" to pop into someone's mind. Even though many people may have walked by stores and restaurants that had a Foursquare window cling in the window, they may never have noticed them. When you are rushing through everyday life focused on the task at hand, you sometimes just don't see things. It's called "intentional blindness."<sup>2</sup> When people are more relaxed on vacation and looking to discover new things and have new experiences, I believe they will be more open to exploring new apps and mobile behaviors, especially if they believe it may enhance their experience in some way. It's logical to assume that someone who may have just walked by QR codes and check-in or deal app window clings, may not only notice them in their relaxed mindset — but take the time to explore them.



## Implications and Action Items

Regardless of whether or not all 50% of people 18-49 who own smartphones adopt "discovery and check-in" behaviors this summer, there will most likely be continued growth in this area. Marketers may now consider Foursquare and check-ins old school, but it's still new territory for most people. Take advantage of people's desire to get the most out of their vacations by leveraging this trend.

- **Get visible.** The best way to get people to explore websites and apps is often offline and out-of-home. Put up the window cling or make your own signs, and be sure to let people know if there's a deal or bargain for checking in.
- **Co-promotion.** Co-promote your presence on Foursquare, Gowalla, and other apps in your print or display ads.
- **Deals.** Let's be honest, everyone is trying to stretch a dollar these days. Take advantage of all the coupon and deal options that discovery and check-in apps offer. On Foursquare, when someone checks in at a location near you, they see all the deals in the area. Your deal can become a way to bring awareness as well as convert sales.

<sup>1</sup> Smartphone Adoption and Usage. Pew Internet & American Life Project. July 11, 2011. <http://tiny.cc/a1n3c>

<sup>2</sup> Human Perception and the Invisible Gorilla. John Cloud. *Time Magazine*. July 12, 2010. <http://tiny.cc/20pwx>



## Travel Photography

**Summary:** For many summer travelers, taking photos is an integral part of vacationing. A flood of smartphones, apps, online tools, and social networks are making it easier than ever before to take photos, edit them, and share them online with family and friends. However, users should be aware of best practices when editing and uploading vacation photos.

**Michelle Fares, Associate**

Digital Integration and Innovation

Floridian Hoya. Enhancing communication btwn companies and people thru social media, online communities, and cupcakes. Lots of cupcakes. @michellefares

### Key Information

Taking vacation photos allows travelers to remember their trips and share the experiences with others who were not there. Not long ago, the only way to share photos was to take them with a film camera, wait until the roll of film was finished, and print the pictures out for a photo album. However, with the advent of digital cameras, smart phones, social networks, and online tools, amateur photographers have more options available to them than ever before.

#### Photo Editing

Many people use their smartphones to take pictures, and several apps are available for the iPhone and Android that can spice up ordinary vacation photos. **Instagram** is a photo-sharing app for the iPhone that lets users apply color filters and change the lighting to give photos an old-timey, sepia-toned effect. The app also facilitates uploading to Facebook and Twitter. For Android phones, **PicSay** is an app with a simple interface that lets users add texts and sticker-like graphics to their photos, and **FXCamera** lets users apply effects such as ToyCam, Warhol, Poladroid or SymmetriCam to their photos. Users who prefer to take photos with their camera and edit them on their computer later can use the website **Picnik** ([www.picnik.com](http://www.picnik.com)) to add color filters, text, graphics, and frames to their shots. Picnik is also integrated with the photo-sharing site Flickr, so users can upload pictures from their phones and then go back to edit them on the Web.

#### Photo Sharing

Once photos are edited and polished, users want to share them with family or friends. For many, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or Flickr are the fastest and easiest way to share photos. Other users post their pictures to blogs such as Tumblr, Posterous, or Blogger. However, there are best practices that users should follow when sharing photos online:

- **Edit down.** 20 photos of the same park bench or beach umbrella may be fascinating to you, but not necessarily to all your Facebook friends or followers. Post a collection of the best photos from your trip instead.
- **Tag with caution.** While most people assume that photos taken of them may turn up online, it doesn't hurt to check with the subjects of your photos. Get permission before uploading pictures to a public site.
- **Spruce up your pictures.** Instead of uploading straight from your camera, take the time to rotate, crop and remove red eye. Add captions or notes to the photos so that friends and family know what they are looking at.

### Implications and Action Items

Using online tools and social networks can enhance your vacation photos, but travelers should keep the following considerations in mind:

1. **Consider your audience.** While many users of photo-editing apps and social networks are Millennials and Generation X-ers, the audience for these photos is often composed of older parents and grandparents. Travelers should consider which photo-sharing sites are easiest for their audience to use, and which special effects the latter will appreciate.
2. **Use privacy settings.** Instead of sharing photos with all followers on all social networks, consider creating a private album or blog and only inviting close friends and family.
3. **Be safe.** Many smartphones add a GPS location to photos, so uploading photos from your phone may be broadcasting too much information. For more information on safety and geo-location, check out the article on p. 4 of our December 2010 *Perspectives* issue: <http://bit.ly/eLKtkP>.
4. **Consider quality.** Although smartphones are quick, easy, and instant, sometimes the quality can suffer. If you truly want to perfectly record a vacation moment or location, bring a digital camera along on your trip.







## iTourU: Making Travel Guides Personal

**Summary:** While many travel guide companies offer pocket-friendly mobile versions that allow users to leave bulky guidebooks behind, iTourU, a new mobile app, takes a new spin on the classic travel guide. The app allows users to create their own virtual audio tours, add them to the iTourU library and access all tours within the library. The app's focus is providing users with an outlet for their inner tourguide, and it gives the chance to experience places from another's point of view — it does both well.

**Rebecca Johnson**, *Strategist*  
Digital Integration and Innovation  
Tradigital marketer. Social media junkie. DC Localvore. Native NYCer. Soccer enthusiast. Aspiring urban homesteader. NPR fiend. @digibec

### Key Information

iTourU, a free smartphone travel app, lets users create their own tours; the tours are audio based, but users accompany their tours with maps marking recommended routes and stops, elaborate text/commentary, and photos. Once created, users share their tours with other app users. These user-generated tours can focus on anything the creator wants, from day-long itineraries to minute-long artwork commentaries, from 30-minute house tours to boat ride narrations. iTourU, similar to other crowd-sourcing and user-generated review platforms (such as Yelp, Trip Advisor, Foursquare, Gowalla and Google Places), taps into the expertise of locals and allows their local knowledge to be recorded and available to anyone who wants to know it.

After download, iTourU provides users with simple instructions and best practices on how to create tours, make use of app features, and access app tours when Wi-Fi may be limited or costly (e.g. when abroad or in a remote location). And while all tours are available to users regardless of location, iTourU can sort tours based on the user's location (via GPS) or by a user-specified destination — a super important and relevant smartphone feature that any app should take advantage of. App users can also rate their favorite tours, get tour recommendations from friends, and earn badges based on contributing and listening to tours.



The app officially launched at the 2011 South By Southwest Interactive Festival (SXSW) and currently houses around 100 tours from around the world. Still in its app infancy, iTourU is available only on the iOS platform and through the iTunes App Store, although the app's developers are working on a version for Androids and other Web browsers.

### Implications and Action Items

iTourU's approach to connecting travelers to each other and to relevant content may be the next step in creating extremely innovative mobile apps and offers key strategies for mobile app creation.

- **Give your users advice on app usage.** Once downloaded, most apps leave it to the user to figure out the app. iTourU provides users with critical advice, such as: "When you download a tour, please be aware there may be carrier charges related to connecting to the Internet" and "We suggest downloading tours at a free Wi-Fi hotspot before you go." Usage tips help users avoid costly data roaming charges and avoid not having access to tours when they most need them.
- **Find the white space.** All travel guides offer credible information, but they often offer the same recommendations. iTourU gives users travel experiences and tours they can't find anywhere else.
- **Tap into the ego.** Generally speaking, locals wholeheartedly believe that they are the *real* experts when it comes to their hometowns. iTourU gives them the opportunity to offer up insightful and off-the-beaten-path recommendations, spontaneous travel tips, and as-real-as-it-comes local experiences. Tour creators get to feel important by sharing their knowledge and users get amazing behind-the-scenes tours.
- **Plan ahead.** While the current live app is free, like any good business iTourU does have a business plan. The app hopes to launch a marketplace section, where established tour guides, attractions, and travel publishers can sell their audio tours with iTourU getting a cut of sales.





## SpotWorld: Crowd-Sourcing Customized Travel Guides

**Summary:** SpotWorld is a new mobile app created to make sightseeing a location-based, social experience. The app lets users create and share itineraries to make the most out of vacations. The mobile format is perfect for finding local favorites on the go, and the interface and visuals make the app a breeze to use. SpotWorld's check-in system and maps work anywhere in the world, so you can stop carrying around that copy of Frommer's in your fanny-pack.

**David BenBassett**, *Coordinator*  
Digital Integration and Innovation

Marketing apprentice. Tennis player. Gadget nerd. Searching the digital world for people and ideas. Fear the Turtle. @benbassett919

### Key Information

SpotWorld is a new app that combines location-based information and social collaboration into a colorful, user-friendly package. Though it competes with giants like Foursquare and Gowalla, SpotWorld may be able to take check-ins to the mainstream by focusing directly on travel. SpotWorld puts a targeted spin on traditional travel guides<sup>1</sup> by allowing users to build their own plan rather than choose from preloaded ones.

SpotWorld comes with the expected functions like location tracking and mapping, but the nicest feature is the ability to tap into a database of previously created itineraries. You can pull bits of information (even just one destination) and add it to your own plan, resulting in a fully customized schedule based on the opinions of other travelers. Each destination has its own guide that features pictures, tips, and a "community article" where users can collaborate, Wikipedia-style, on providing the most important facts about the feature.



Users will find other features to make traveling more fun. SpotWorld incorporates a point-and-ranking system to encourage continued use. Checking in rewards users with "miles" and "city status," and higher status in more cities moves you up a competitive leaderboard. Also included is an applet called "Been There," which maps out the places where you've checked in around the world. Users can share these maps on Facebook and use friends' maps as another tool for finding new hotspots and travel tips.

### Implications and Action Items

SpotWorld is not the only travel platform out there, but it's one of the few that is truly practical. Tools like this exist so vacationers can move away from big tourist traps and into the local favorites that provide a deeper cultural experience. Here are some tips for using SpotWorld and other custom travel apps:

- **Keep checking in.** The beauty of digital travel apps is that they are constantly being updated. Check in often to find events and specials others are taking advantage of as they're happening.
- **Explore.** While you're checking in, see what's nearby that others are talking about. Be flexible; local dives can give you a more authentic cultural experience than tourist traps.
- **Think local.** Exploration and adventure aren't just for when you're abroad. Apps like SpotWorld can help you find hidden gems in your hometown. Check out what travelers recommend for your area and go sightseeing at home.

<sup>1</sup> Mashable. See the World and Plan Your Next Trip with This iPhone App. June 17, 2011. <http://tiny.cc/xzp29>





## Google Good for Non-Smartphone Users

**Summary:** While the majority of travelers rely on smartphones for information, not everyone has one. For those who do not, Google has some not-prominently-advertised services that can help even the un-savviest traveler find his or her way around. By text messaging GOOGLE (466453), a non-smartphone user can receive directions, addresses, phone numbers, flight times, and weather information.

**Sara Weiner, Associate Director**  
Digital Integration and Innovation

Yrs of planning, prodding & implementing digital stuff. Philadelphia born 'n' raised. Geeky, athletic and green. Go Big Red!

### Key Information

When people think about the convenience and information that digital has brought to the travel community, many think of smartphones (iPhones, BlackBerrys, and Androids). Rarely do people think about the power of text messaging. But, for those who do not have a smartphone, text messaging can offer the same access to information that those with smartphones are getting from the Web.

According to Forrester, 22% of Americans age 18 and over use only SMS, MMS or IM, and when you look at age 50 and over, less than 20% own a smartphone. Google has capitalized on this by providing text message services that mimic access to the Internet through a service called SMS Search. This is not a new offering, but not many people know of it. When I showed it to my dad this weekend, he was fascinated by the amount of helpful information he could get on his ancient flip-phone. This information includes restaurant locations, weather, flight updates, and driving directions. So for those that do not want to invest in a smartphone or are simply more comfortable with a feature phone, Google SMS Search can be highly effective in easing the confusion of travel.

Some of the most useful features are:

- **Food and shopping.** Text a food genre and ZIP code or city to Google to receive results similar to that found on Google.com. E.g., text **Sushi 20007** to **GOOGLE** to find a sushi restaurant in Washington, D.C.
- **Flights.** Text **Flight US 300** to **GOOGLE** to get departure and arrival information
- **Weather.** Text **weather Boston** to **GOOGLE** to get the weather forecast.
- **Directions.** Sans GPS? Text **Directions Pasadena CA to Santa Monica CA** to get turn-by-turn directions
- **Language translation.** Text the English word plus "to" and the language you want to translate into: e.g. Text **Translate Food to Spanish** to **GOOGLE**.

### Implications and Action Items

Google SMS Search offers an important lesson for marketers—offering information to consumers based on their technology preferences and usage. With a fast-growing majority of Americans having smartphones, Google doesn't really *need* to provide SMS Search, but by doing so they are allowing consumers across the technology continuum access to much-needed information. For marketers, it's important to recognize that not all consumers have the same technology comfort levels, and that some, especially the older demographic, do not have smartphones. So rather than only building out an iPhone app, consider how a text messaging effort might offer the same content in a different format.





## Trapster: Innovative Use of Geo-Location

**Summary:** Trapster is a free application that utilizes crowd sourcing to alert drivers as they approach speed traps. Trapster is compatible with most smartphones, including iPhones, BlackBerrys, and Androids. The app alerts drivers using information provided by fellow travelers. Trapster demonstrates that crowd sourcing and geo-location technologies have a wide range of applications.

**Michael Sortwell, Intern**  
Digital Integration and Innovation

Student of all things digital. Avid golfer.  
Daily deals enthusiast. Hoya hoops fan  
for life.

### Key Information

When a Trapster user passes a speed trap, he/she can record its location with the simple push of a button. When other users pass by that spot later, they'll be alerted to the presence of a speed trap, and will be prompted to either confirm or deny that the trap is still there. Because the app is so easy to use, 40% of users actively report speed traps (an important statistic considering the app becomes more effective as more users report traps).<sup>1</sup> Although the application's central value proposition is to warn users when they approach speed traps, Trapster has a variety of features that make it a great app for even the most cautious drivers. The app allows users to report and view everything from dangerous road conditions to convenient locations to charge their electric cars. By adding these additional features, Trapster is further capitalizing on the power of geo-location, and adding significant value to the app. Trapster was even listed #1 on *Wired Magazine's* list of "10 Applications That Make the Most of Location" in 2009.<sup>2</sup>

Trapster currently has over 12 million users and is growing rapidly. While using the app is completely legal, it has sparked a heated debate. Even though most police officers argue the app is facilitating illegal activity and is a distraction to drivers, many others claim that Trapster is causing drivers to slow down, which is the ultimate goal of the speed traps themselves.<sup>3</sup> Still, apps like Trapster that may be seen as enabling illegal activity continue to be scrutinized and have even been the subject of recent U.S. Senate hearings.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of the controversy, Trapster demonstrates that geo-location is a powerful tool with a variety of applications.



### Implications and Action Items

- **Create simple applications.** Today there's an app for almost anything imaginable, and many of them don't function very well. Marketers looking to develop apps for their customers should keep in mind that sometimes the best apps are the most basic.
- **Add features... but do it slowly.** Trapster became established as a reliable app for detecting speed traps, and then began to add more features, such as locations to charge electric cars. By being patient, and taking the time to discover consumers' actual needs, Trapster was able to successfully add value to its app by adding features.
- **Be Creative with Technology.** Trapster shows that geo-location can be used for more than just navigation and check-in apps. Trapster was able to develop a powerful and popular app simply by applying existing technology in a creative way.

<sup>1</sup> CNET. Trapster Turns Your Phone Into a Police Detector. February 27, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Wired Magazine. Inside the GPS Revolution: 10 Applications That Make the Most of Location. January 19, 2009

<sup>3</sup> Daily Tribune. Local Police Trying to Stay Ahead as Apps Alert Drivers to Potential Speed and DUI Stops. July 1, 2011

<sup>4</sup> Associated Content. Apple Sidelines DUI/Speedtrap iPhone Apps But They're Still in iTunes. June 18, 2011

## About RTCRM

RTC Relationship Marketing (RTCRM) is a full-service direct marketing and relationship marketing agency based in Washington, D.C., in the heart of Georgetown, with an additional office in New York. RTCRM boasts more than 40 years' worth of innovative, targeted solutions that grow its clients' brands and help them forge lasting, valuable relationships with their customers. What distinguishes RTCRM is its unique ability to analyze data and research on both a rational and emotional level. RTCRM's clients include major brands in the telecom, technology, pharmaceutical, and other business sectors such as AARP, Eli Lilly, and Novo Nordisk.

To learn more about RTCRM, please visit [www.rtcrm.com](http://www.rtcrm.com) or follow the Twitter feed @rtcrm.

## About the Digital Integration and Innovation Team

The RTCRM Digital Integration and Innovation team is tasked with keeping track and making sense of the ever-changing digital world. It's our job to understand the nuances of how and why different types of people use technology and what that tells us about them. More importantly, it's our job to help our clients apply this knowledge to better communicate with their customers. We help clients translate business goals into marketing campaigns that build relationships with customers. In the 21st century, understanding how and why someone uses technology is as important as understanding where they live, what gender they are, and how old they are. That's where we come in. From ensuring that technographics are considered in the research phase, to tactical plans that align digital, print and broadcast tactics, we work with clients and internal partners to make sure it all works.

It's not about what's cool. It's about what's smart.

**Treffpunkt**, Digital Integration and Innovation Team Blog: <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com>

