



Embarc User Research Report

September 2019
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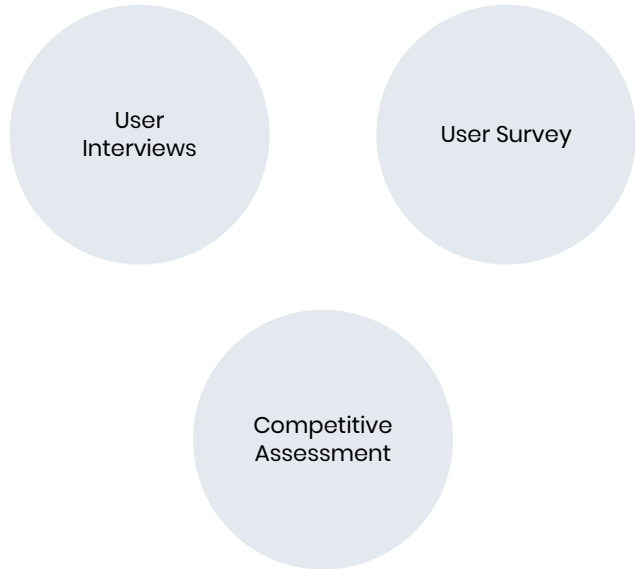


Background Overview

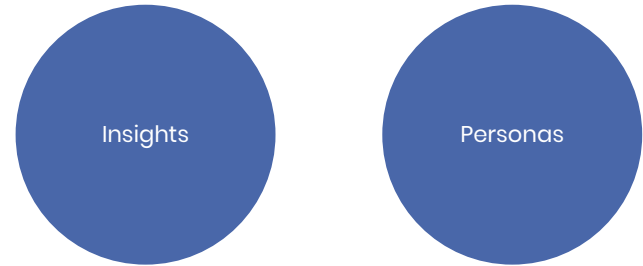
Embarc seeks to transform travel planning and booking into an experience that inspires prospective travelers while providing tools and insight for trip planners.

This brief outlines our understanding of the project goals along with the discovery work that led to them.

Discovery Input



Synthesized Output





Discovery
Input

User Interview Themes

User Research Overview

Through interviews with 10 travelers,

we gained better perspectives on current behaviors surrounding travel booking and planning as well as insight into opportunities that can improve the travel experience.

Travelers draw the most inspiration from stories and visuals

User Research Themes

Blogs, videos, and social media are creative avenues for imagery-heavy documentation. The personal content that creators curate resonate more with prospective travelers seeking information on real experiences.

User Research Themes

It is important to maintain a balance between planning and spontaneity

The level of planning varies among travelers but all agree that structure should also leave some room for spontaneity.

Travelers seek tailored experiences

User Research Themes

Motivators of travel are dependent on emotions, situational contexts, and personal aesthetics. Travelers wish to discover and plan trips that feel tailored to the types of cultures, environments, and activities that they want to experience.

User Research Themes

Existing trip planning and booking sites feel outdated and overwhelming

Travelers read reviews and opinions with a grain of salt as they feel slight skepticism in their validity and knowledge. Within today's overly-saturated websites, people also have difficulty finding new, relevant information geared towards the modern traveler.



Discovery
Input

User Survey Insights

Motivators of Travel

Word of Mouth Suggestions

59.1%

Value for Cost

47.0%

Inspiring Social Media Photos

42.4%

Engaging Travel Blog Posts

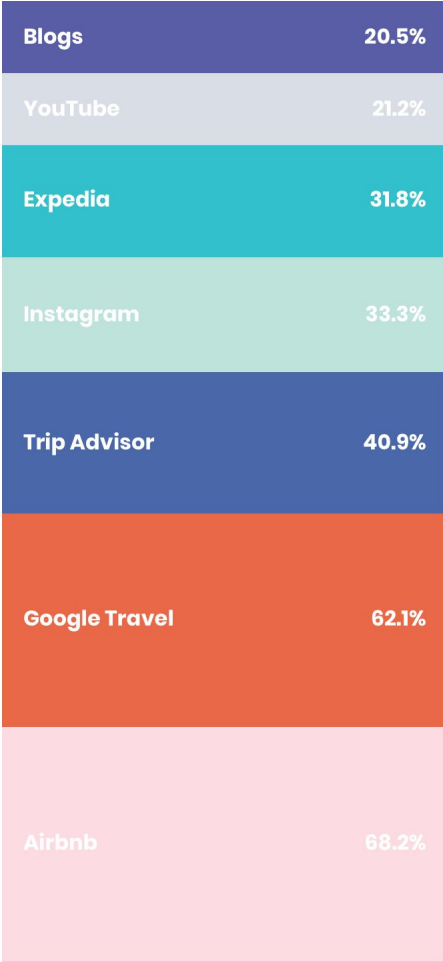
15.9%



Go-to-Applications and Tools

Users favor these apps and tools based on their:

- Simplicity
- Trustworthiness
- Range of ideas offered
- Organization enablement



User Survey Themes

Question Topic:

Favorite Aspect of Planning Trips

- Deep discovery of and learning about cultures incite the most excitement
- Enjoyment of research lies in discovering the unknown and deepening local experiences
- People leverage trustworthy stories and itineraries to build their own unique experiences
- Most respondents consider themselves as planners and find satisfaction in seeing their hard work executed in a great trip
- A travel plan can be enriched by "Planning to Get Lost"

I am not an over-planner - I enjoy getting lost as well

I love the excitement of knowing what I am going to see and experience on the trip - that "something to look forward to" feeling

I enjoy becoming enveloped within a new culture and learning and growing

User Survey Themes

Question Topic:

Least Favorite Aspect of Planning Trips

- Planning logistics and transportation are key anxiety inducers. Travelers may feel insecure about a lack of information or knowledge
- People seek the most optimal uses of their time and resources in fear that they will not take the most value out of a trip
- Travelers hope to avoid missing out on key experiences due to a lack of knowledge or preparation
- Budgeting and spending are daunting as well as limiting to the activities within a budget
- Group travel dynamics challenge consensus and cohesive enjoyment



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With limited time on vacation, it's difficult to figure out logistics of what to do and when. To budget out your days, you must factor in location and distance

I don't make decisions until I've reviewed a couple of times

It takes a lot of time to figure out where to go and how to get there

It is important for me to make sure everyone in a group feels satisfied and happy

User Survey Themes

Question Topic:

Biggest Worry When Planning Trips

- General safety is a major theme - Due to the nature of traveling to unknown places, people travel with the expectation that they will need to take precautions to protect themselves
- People draw anxiety from potential unexpected circumstances that can negatively change the course of the trip - Missing transportations, forgetting something at home, etc.



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I worry I will mess up timing and miss flights or trains

I'm worried I'll lose something valuable

Unforeseen costs cause a lot of anxiety

Personal travel - especially given that I solo travel, I get worried that I might end up in sketchy situations

User Survey Themes

Question Topic:

Thoughts on Improving the Planning Experience

- There was a recurring wish for a one-stop shop tools for planning trips
- Travelers agree that planning around locals' recommendations will lead to an authentic & fulfilling experience
- People seek to weed through over-saturation in existing travel sites and immediately find in-tune and vetted recommendations
- Group travel experiences can improve through a single platform enabling idea-generation, voting, consensus, group planning
- Timing is important to consider. People seek accurate information on duration between activities and recommended amounts of time for each destination



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I wish there were an easier way to review local spots when visiting and find trustworthy and accurate reviews for day trips on international travel, without backpacking

I am looking for something that would organize things together by proximity to each other so I would not have to figure it out myself

Having a central place that brings all these areas together would be great. I'd love to be inspired and be able to book from one spot

I would like if there were recommended itineraries for the day with routes all mapped out



Discovery
Input

Competitive Assessment

Highlights

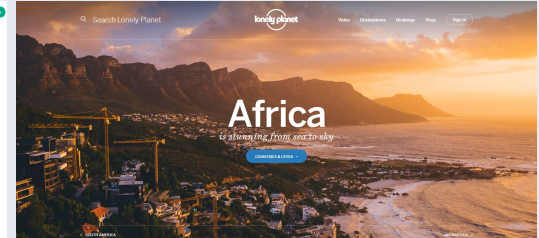
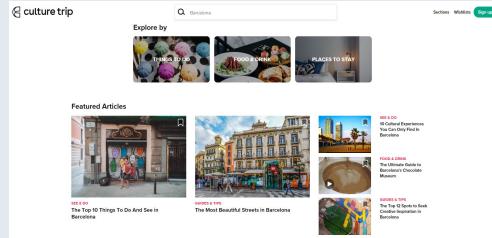
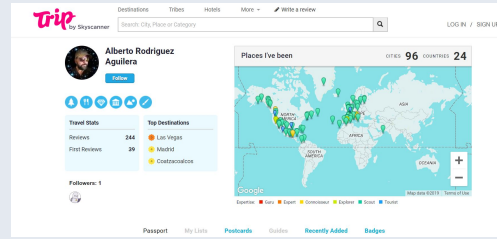
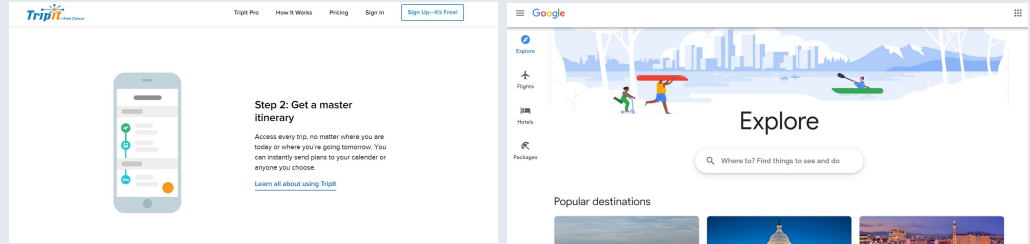
Triplt – One-stop shop for master itinerary. Illustrative brand. Trustworthy Voice.

Google Travel – Cohesive, organizational tool. Trustworthy information.

Trip by Skyscanner – User-generated content drives the app. Playful. Close competitor regarding social element.

Lonely Planet – Good storytelling. Leverages high quality imagery. Minimal. Intuitive

Culture Trip – Online publication format. Millennial-targeted



Itinerary-Based



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Specialized /
Single-Purpose

All-Encompassing
Platform



Review-Based

Key Findings

Storytelling. Personal narratives and fascinating imagery illustrate and elicit wanderlust.

Exploration. Simple and exciting content categorization enables limitless discovery.

Interactivity. Digital communities enrich the playfulness and persuasiveness of a site.

All-in-one. One-stop location for discovery and booking builds simplicity and dependability.

Visual Design. Enables brand and compelling content to stand out.



Synthesized
Output

User Personas



Novice travelers need the know-how to best prepare for their first adventures

- Includes those with little to no experience in traveling and travel planning
- Feels overwhelmed with the resources at hand and are unsure of where to begin
- Seeking resources that will educate, guide, and support major decision-making in the planning process

Motivations

- Gaining new experiences
- Learning from expert travelers
- Finding inclusive deals that minimize major decision-making
- Feeling more capable to plan their next trips

Key Content / Features

- Story-like itineraries with specific logistical details
- One-stop-shop research and booking for key transportation and hotels
- Intercommunication with experienced travelers
- Practical resources and preparation checklists





Open-minded adventurers seek deep exploration and new learning

- Includes prospective travelers who are excited to experience new cultures and environments
- Cares about core logistics but is otherwise willing to “go with the flow”
- Looking to be inspired by inviting, engaging, relevant travel content
- Open to adapting plans and leaving room for spontaneity
- Tend to assume planning roles for group trips with moving parts

Motivations

- Delving into deep local experiences
- Engaging with people with similar interests
- Discovering cost-effective deals

Key Content / Features

- Social interaction touchpoints to engage with community
- Profile and Highlights
- Compelling content for inspiration
- Personalized discovery experience for inspiration
- One-stop-shop booking for key transportation and hotel details





Informed planners need to plan ahead for ease-of-mind and enjoyment of a trip

- Includes prospective travelers who are eager for new, deeper experiences but have underlying apprehensions
- Will benefit from resources and knowledge that empower preparedness
- Organizing a trip with their desired level of specificity will create a more meaningful experience
- Wish to feel that they have exhausted all possible resources to find the best deals and cut costs

Motivations

- Planning budget-friendly and time-efficient trips
- Selecting destinations with the best bang-for-their buck
- Feeling safe and prepared

Key Content / Features

- Practical resources
- Comprehensive search for hotels, airlines, and amenities
- Personalized discovery experience for activities, destinations, and experiences
- Simple, easy-to-use UX/UI for itinerary building





Experienced travelers seek a platform where they can share their stories and experiences

- Storytellers, looking to create and engage on an accessible platform where they can build their audience
- Looking to build credibility and gain reward for knowledge-sharing
- Will drive much of the initial content and serve as inspiration and gurus for prospective travelers

Motivations

- Knowledge-sharing / Inspiring others
- Building a reputation as an experienced traveler
- Engaging the travel community
- Seeking new, unique trips to embark on with new people

Key Content / Features

- Reward / Benefits system
- Simple, easy-to-use UX/UI trip or itinerary creation
- Personalization within content creation
- Profile and Highlights





Local mentors hope to be a resource to travelers on native experiences and cultures

- Includes those who have grown up in or extensively lived in a certain region or city that people hope to travel to
- Enjoys meeting travelers and providing insight into their location's culture
- Looking to share not only practical knowledge, but also personal favorite spots and experiences

Motivations

- Fostering more realistic and immersive experiences for others
- Connecting with people from around the world
- Becoming certified culture experts

Key Content / Features

- Verification for local mentors
- Intercommunication to connect with prospective travelers and provide knowledge
- Reward system for knowledge-sharing
- "Local Approved" validation of travel itineraries





Thank you!