



millennial traveller report

why millennials will shape
the next 20 years of travel



“What I look for when I go on vacation is the comeback feeling of OMG that was the best vacation I’ve ever had!”

Michelle, USA

“Of course I always want to go to some unusual places, like Cuba, because that sounds very cool. And I don’t like to go to places like tourist sites, which make me feel like ‘ordinary people.’”

Cathy, China

“I’m more of a ‘take in the culture and live like a local’ traveller. I really like to experience a culture through dining, their art and, some sightseeing - the big things... I try to keep it low key and just enjoy myself.”

Monica USA

“On holiday I am looking to have a new experience, to do things I’ve never done before, or do things I’ve done before in a new environment.”

Carmen, UK



introduction

The Millennial generation is one of the largest generations in history – even larger than Baby Boomers. We know that they are entering their prime spending years – but are waiting to undertake lifestage landmarks like marriage and mortgage unlike previous generations. Instead, they are turning to travel.

Our Millennial Traveller Report explores how and why Millennials see such value in investing in travel experiences.

We see that through social media, they have grown up with deeper connections to the world than previous generations, and there is a strong desire to enrich their lives through travel – and in turn, they will do so in a host of colourful new ways with challenging new attitudes.

As the industry evolves to meet the demands of the Millennial traveller, our report reinforces that above all else Millennials expect personalisation from their travel brands of choice.

Here at Expedia, we see ourselves as a technology company in the business of travel, and we leverage our powerful data & insights to deliver a better, personalised, customer experience. The next big thing in travel will be the better use of information to make travel more personal and predictive, and Millennials will be the driving force demanding that the travel industry deliver on this promise. We hope that this report will be a step forward in illuminating this ongoing conversation.

Gary Morrison, Brand Expedia Worldwide

who is the millennial traveller?

% of Millennials who expect to do the following in the future:

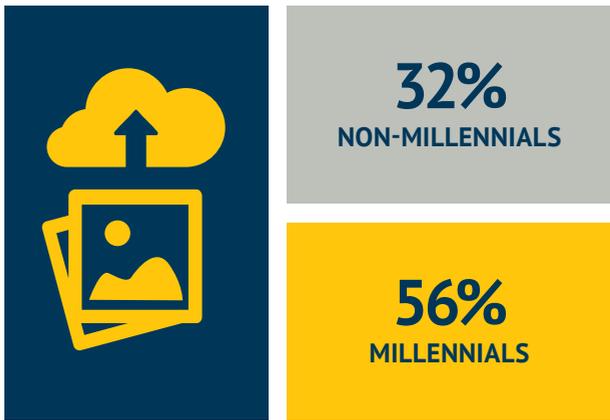


% of Millennials who agree or agree strongly:



Between evolving social values and delayed lifestages, Millennials have very different goals to their predecessors during prime spending years – valuing experiences over possessions.

“I have posted a photo/video of my holiday on a social network while I’m away”



A similar proportion agree to this globally, indiscriminate of age. But Millennials take this attitude to the next level of behaviour and habit – resulting in the group of chronic Googlers and zealous self-trackers we see today.

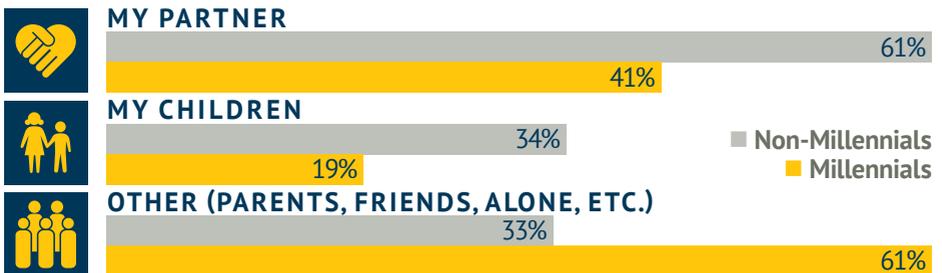
As the first “digitally native” generation, Millennials are highly active social media users. Sharing – and perhaps flaunting – on social media is an integral part of the travel experience.

Millennials: the global generation of those born between 1982 and 1999. As the first to have grown up with the Internet, social media and the smartphone in turn, they may be the most significantly different generation to that of their parents so far; yet they are also internally diverse as a cohort, in many ways stuck between lifestages. They may not be all-grown-up – but they are extraordinarily self-empowered.

Thinking about the last time you went on holiday, what were your main motivations?



Thinking about the last time you went on holiday, who did you go with?



A significant proportion of Millennials are travelling with people who aren't either partners or children. But whilst this level of variation might be expected of those in their early 20s, we see that Millennials are taking non- family holidays into later lifestages as well.

authenticity

For Millennials, experience is everything.

The ongoing search for authentic travel is hardly new - but when we look at Millennial demand for authenticity, we find a complex portrait that is nevertheless surprisingly precise. Millennials, as it turns out, have a very strong impression of what “authentic” entails.

Authenticity is ultimately whatever which supports their perceptions of value: cultural appreciation and “living like a local”; independence and finding those hidden gems; originality and balancing the iconic with those experiences that are more off the beaten track.

When planning a holiday I always look for new experiences, especially those that are authentic to the country. To me the point of travelling to a different place is to explore and appreciate the lives lived elsewhere apart from the world I'm familiar with ... I see it as a getaway from everyday life to learn about and do colloquial things only possible to experience in the particular place.

Jenny, China

I want to look at places that are of significance to the country for example the Great Wall of China, the bamboo forests in Japan, iconic towers in Kuala Lumpur, the night city view in Hong Kong, the temple ruins in Athens - I want to see these places as they are unique to the place they also make good photographs and memorable occasions.

Carmen, UK

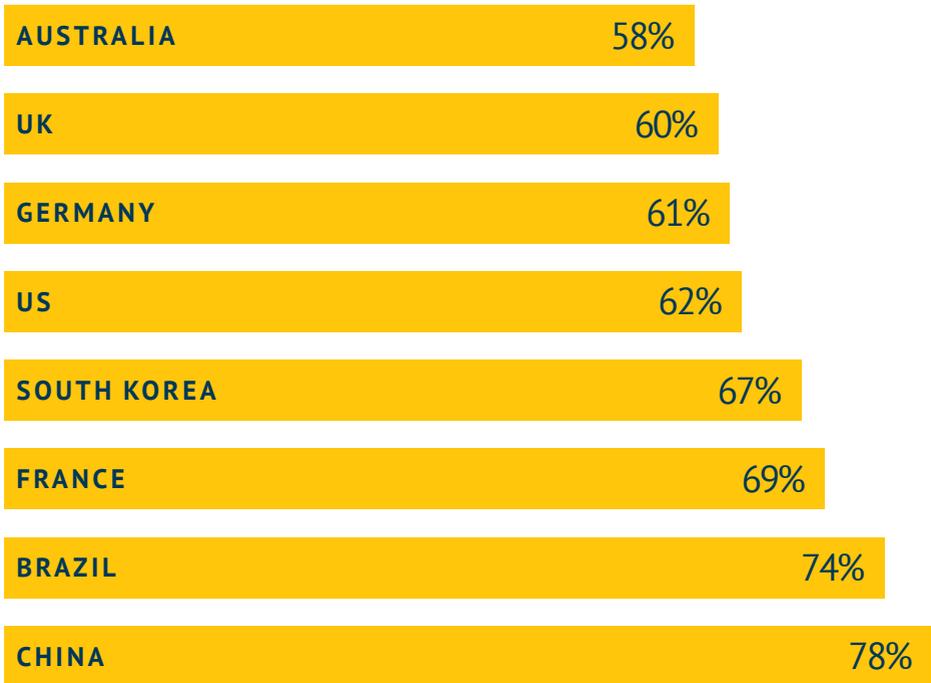
I like to find hidden gems since I feel I have travelled and seen a lot of the places most people suggest.

Monica, USA

On paper, Millennials do not significantly differ to non-Millennials in how much they claim to prioritise the authentic culture of the places they visit.

However, what they define as ticking the “authenticity” box is likely to be somewhat different; after all, this is the generation which have driven miniature industry revolutions like peer-to-peer accommodation and hashtag-enabled local meet-ups.

% of Millennials who agree or strongly agree: “when I go on holiday, the most important thing for me is to experience the authentic culture of the place”



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

But ultimately, self-determination is the strongest measure of authenticity for this group. For all of those experiences that do not depart from the norm of what previous generations have chosen, it is the perception of having chosen their destinations, activities and companions for themselves which underpins the feeling of authenticity.

social standing

Whilst authenticity may be as crucial to Millennials as it is to older generations, a second aspect of their travel is not so universal. Millennials not only want authenticity of experience, but shareability as well.

“I wish I could be more like the person I describe myself as on social media”



Source: Future Foundation | Base: 1000-5000 online respondents per country aged 16-64 | 2015 February

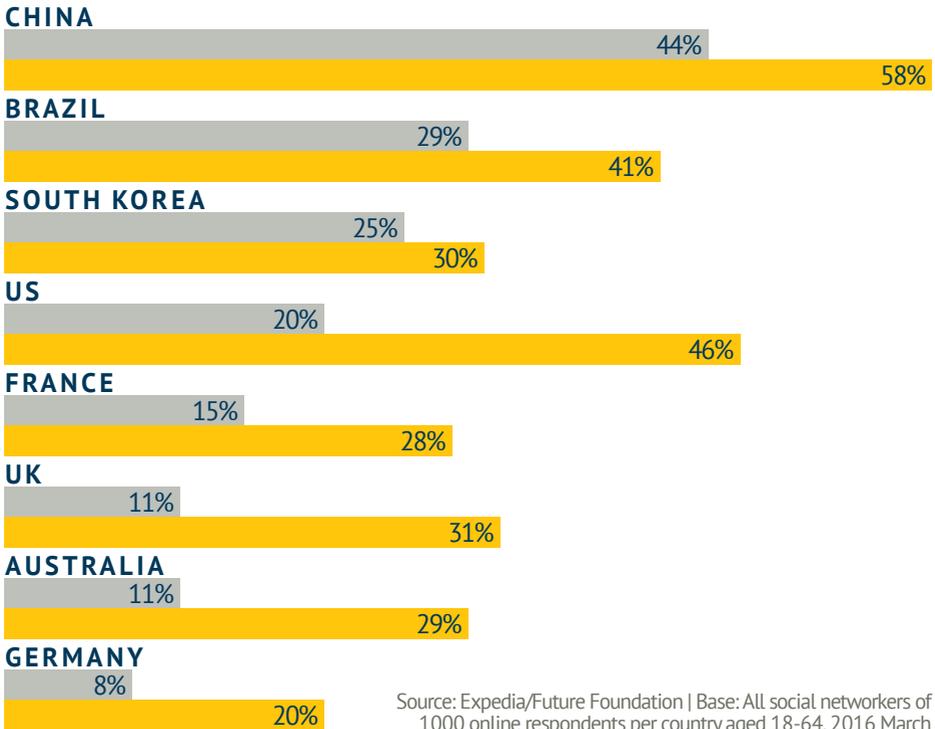
A third of Millennials across the globe report that not only do they describe idealised versions of themselves on social media – already quite a telling admission, and likely an underreported one – but that they wish they were actually more like their social media selves.

This particularly complex self-consciousness holds untold layers of implication – but ultimately will significantly impact how and why Millennials make many of their travel decisions. We see that Millennials who travel internationally at least once a year are even more likely to admit to the above; travel, after all, is almost the perfect #humblebrag.



“It’s important to me that people comment on the holiday photos I post on social media”

■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: All social networkers of 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

We see this reflected in research that specifically references holiday photos. There is clear agreement amongst Millennials that peer response is important – and the difference to non-Millennials here is particularly stark.

This is not to say that Millennials are so superficial that the future of travel is one big generation making decisions based on what’s the most Instagrammable – or that their desire for social acknowledgement online is indeed superficial at all. Social validation and integration are ultimately universal human needs; what makes Millennials remarkable here is how the mechanics of social media require that they fulfil this need.

42% of Millennials think that social media is a better way to record photos than physical albums compared to only a quarter of Non-Millennials; 2 in 5 Millennials use social media to “keep a record of the most important moments in my life” compared to only 1 in 5 of Non-Millennials. The challenge for Millennials is how to negotiate all of this in what is ultimately a very public space.

authenticity or social standing?

We hold that social media does not compete with authenticity – and that any Millennial desire for shareable authenticity doesn't necessarily dilute the authenticity of the experience itself. Authentic experiences are still crucial to Millennial travel – the differentiating factor may simply be that without recognition from their networks, even the most authentic experiences would be for naught.

To understand how the two needs interact with each other between generations, we looked at comparative agreement to the statements below. Remembering that Millennials are just as likely to agree that authentic experiences are the most important factor to them whilst on holiday, the data does not suggest that Millennials care about authentic experiences due to their shareability alone; nevertheless, having some manner of social media response is likely to be a priority for this group.

**“How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
When I go on holiday, the most important thing for me is to experience the authentic culture of the place/It's important to me that people comment on the holiday photos I post on social media.”**

- Social media response is more important
- Equal importance
- Authentic experience is more important
- Neither are important

BABY-BOOMERS



GENERATION X



MILLENNIALS

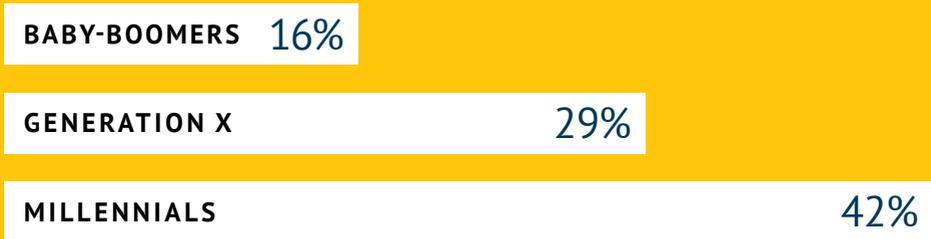


Source: Expedia/Future Foundation| Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

inspiration

Millennials live in a world where inspiration is constant – rather than being a “spark”, inspiration today is more akin to a state of being driven by the perpetual scroll of the newsfeed.

“Holiday photos posted by my contacts on social media influence where I decide to go on holiday” % who agree/agree strongly by generation



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

As we’ve already seen, social media plays a significant part of the Millennial self-concept. 2 in 5 openly acknowledge that their holiday decisions are influenced by what they see on their networks; this influence comes on a day-to-day basis.

“...I’ve gone to Mexico because quite a few friends have been and they post fun photos there, so I guess you can say I have [been influenced by social media contacts].”

Michelle, USA

“I trust my friends the most and am easily influenced/persuaded by them so if they are very enthusiastic about a place, chances are, I will be too.”

Carmen, UK



“On a scale of 1-10, how valuable is this to you in terms of your overall entertainment? Sharing or collecting images online of things I like/ things that represent my lifestyle”

■ Very valuable (7-10) ■ Less valuable (1-6) ■ I never do this

BABY-BOOMERS



GENERATION X



MILLENNIALS



Source: Future Foundation | Base: 1000-5000 online respondents per country aged 16-64, 2015

Millennials also are greater practitioners than other age groups of the inspiration-friendly behaviour often termed the “Pinterest effect”; they are a generation of digital hoarders. As the ultimate crowd for content media – and the generation that brought us the “listicle” (popular articles in list form) – Millennials find inspiration not only in private networks, but on the wider web.

30% of Millennials rate sharing or collecting images of things online as extremely valuable to their entertainment – suggesting that not only is it a functional habit for research or booking purposes, but a veritable pastime.

But rather than being any serious attempt at a definitive bucket list, this constant state of inspiration-seeking is more of a day-to-day mechanism that helps Millennials define their preferences and identities – noncommittal, but important.

“I collect and save all my travel ideas with bookmarks and sometimes I might see something and think about pinning it to Pinterest if the picture is pretty.”

Monica, USA

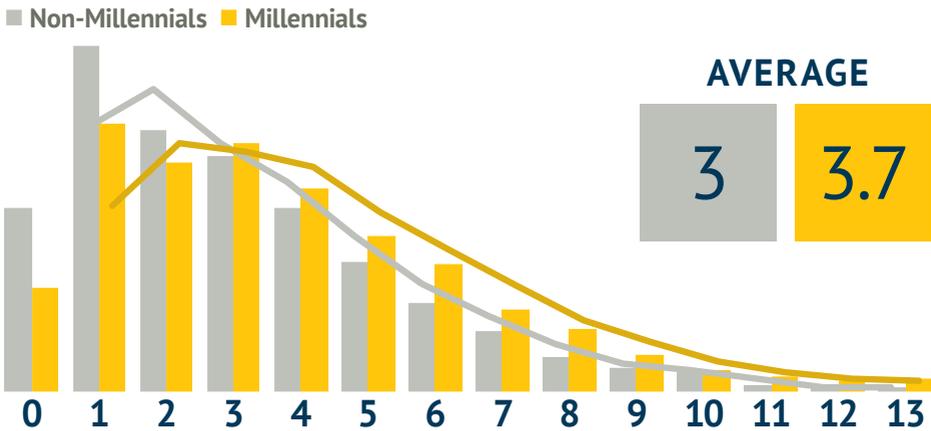
“On Facebook where people have photo albums from after their holiday, sometimes I flick through the album and then I see: That’s somewhere I really want to eat, or somewhere I want to see, and go visit as a tourist... If I know them quite well I’ll message them personally and ask for good places to visit, I’d be like ‘please tell me because your photos look great!’”

Stephanie, UK

And overall, media consumption is higher in this group than any other – as is active seeking of any third opinion or influence.

We’ve already seen a couple of influential sources for Millennials – their social media networks, and the wider world of image-based inspiration available for them to collect. But when it comes to actually choosing and booking holidays, other sources come into play as well – advice from family or friends, travel agents, anonymous reviewers and more. We find that Millennials are reaching out to a much wider variety of sources on average than their older counterparts for both inspiration and beyond.

Number of different source types consulted when booking their most recent holiday:



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

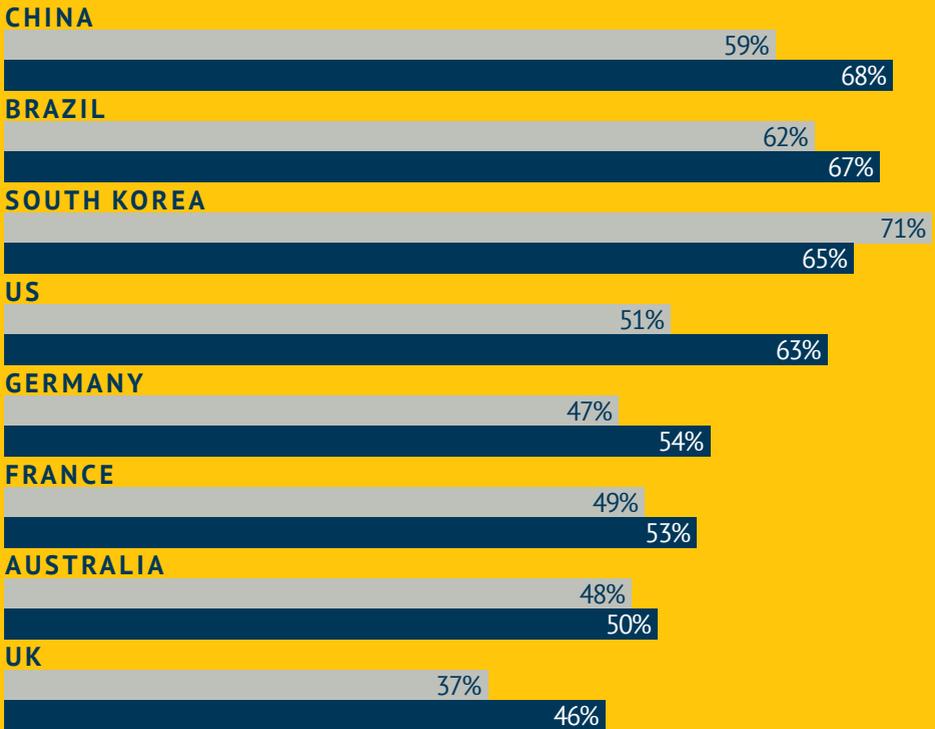
In all 8 countries sampled, Millennials consulted more sources than non-Millennials – rising as high to an average of 5.1 sources consulted by Chinese Millennials (in comparison to 4.6 Non-Millennials) and dropping to 2.8 by French Millennials (in comparison to 2.4 non-Millennials).

risk

So how do Millennials choose between the wealth of experiences available? We first look at hygiene factors – and find that safety is huge for this generation.

“I worry for my safety on holiday abroad more than I do when I’m on holiday in my own country”

■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

Despite their stated need for authentic experiences – and the associated anti-mainstream mentality they are generally associated with – Millennials are unwilling to have them at cost. Concern for personal safety varies between markets, but it is nearly universal that it is higher amongst Millennials than their forerunners. Whilst far-away (and photogenic) adventures may make it to the Pinterest board, far fewer are realised into actual holidays.

“I would try a few new experiences as long as they are safe and highly rated. However I tend to stick to what I know. [Amazing inspirational] Pinterest posts tend to be what I call ‘out of this world’... They aren’t the easiest to access so I tend to leave those posts as ‘dream places for one day to come.’”

Carmen, UK

“The thought of going on holiday alone intimidates me”



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

The Millennial’s version of an authentic experience is not necessarily Thoreauvian either – global Millennials are much more skittish than their older counterparts about travelling alone.

Instead, we see their social side surfacing again – as well as the fact that they are significantly more international than older generations. As the first generation to have done study abroad en masse, or to have made digital penpals over social media – they are keen to look for friends abroad who they can visit.

“Hawaii seems like a good choice, because I have a close high school friend living there who just married. Linking up with her is one of the biggest incentives of me travelling there.”

Jenny, China

...I will survey my social media network and look for people who have been or lived in the area I am considering travel.

Monica, USA

verified authenticity

But Millennial risk-aversion extends beyond just bodily safety – the “risk” of having a bad time is quite a literal one to this group.

We see that whilst a measure of uniqueness is crucial to authenticity, travel that is truly “untested” is not particularly attractive.

Instead, Millennials seek verified authenticity – experiences which have some peer-led precedent to testify for both safety and success – an almost crowdsourced (and distinctly Millennial) approach to decision making.

“I like untested destinations, but to a certain degree. I want it to be somewhere at least one or two people that I know have been and can at least give me a few suggestions, or tell me what to avoid.”

Monica, USA

“Generally I like to go to places that have been recommended or I know about it myself. I don’t like unusual locations... I guess I’m worried that the money I spend on holiday will be wasted on an area that doesn’t have much I like, I enjoy or appeals to me... It’s a waste if I don’t already know good recommendations or good things to do there... I like to know what there is in the place I’m planning to visit.”

Stephanie, UK





We first see that Millennials are more likely to have consulted their wide range of “peers” than Non-Millennials.

These peers include “Close Contacts” – such as family, friends, or wider contacts on social media. However, Millennials also perceive the wider world of “Fellow Consumers” online to be their peers as well: the collective of reviewers, bloggers, forum posters and so on who define this post-Wikipedia age of crowdsourced research.

% who consulted each type of source during the research stage of their most recent holiday

■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials

**INDUSTRY EXPERTS
(TRAVEL AGENTS, TRAVEL PROVIDERS, EXPERT OPINION WEBSITES)**



**FELLOW CONSUMERS
(REVIEW SITES, BLOGS, TRAVEL FORUMS)**



**CLOSE CONTACTS
(FRIENDS, FAMILY OR SOCIAL NETWORK CONTACTS)**



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

“I contacted a friend who [was near] Tokyo who helped with dates, must see locations and what was okay to skip.... I decided to go in April because of [the] suggestion that this was the time for cherry blossom season and the weather was supposed to be beautiful.”

Monica, USA

This is not to say that Millennials do not consult non-peer groups at all. By sheer volume, Industry Experts – such as travel providers, travel agents, or websites with “expert opinion” – are still the most consulted source across all generations. And it is important to note that Millennials also highly value expertise, particularly in an age where the sheer wealth of peer-led accounts becomes either overwhelming or contradictory.

In order to determine where influence lay, we looked more closely at those who consulted both Industry Experts as well as either Close Contacts or Fellow Consumers – asking which they considered most influential to their final decision.

% who considered each to be the most influential in their decision-making, of those who consulted both peers and experts:

	NON-MILLENNIALS	MILLENNIALS
CLOSE CONTACTS 	20%	21%
FELLOW CONSUMERS 	24%	28%
INDUSTRY EXPERTS 	36%	31%

Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 3500 online respondents (have consulted industry experts as well as either close contacts or consumer peers), aged 18-64, 2016 March

For non-Millennials, Industry Experts were considered the most influential source by a significantly higher proportion than the two peer options. But for Millennials, the proportions are much closer – and significantly, gains in influence are made by Fellow Consumers, rather than Close Contacts.

And in fact, the overall global effect here is considerably muted by figures from the USA and Australia – both anomalous in terms of how low peer-based influence is.

In all other markets, the added combination of Close Networks and Fellow Consumers at least nears Industry Experts; in the East, Fellow Consumers alone outstrip Industry Experts in terms of influence. In Germany and the UK, Close Contacts are strong rivals to experts.

Rather than indicating anything about the quality of any of these sources, we see that this speaks to the extreme importance of peer positioning. To Millennials – savvy, social and risk-averse all in one – peers are influential because they are relatable.

“My favourite fashion bloggers/ icons are usually travelling around the world so to be able to see where they have been in real life is also of interest.”

Carmen, UK

USA



18%



22%



41%



13%



30%

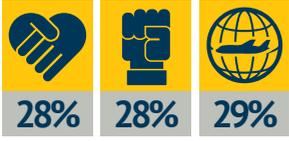


33%

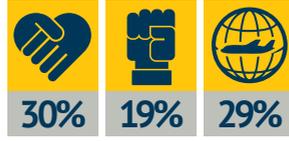


BRAZIL

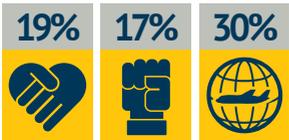
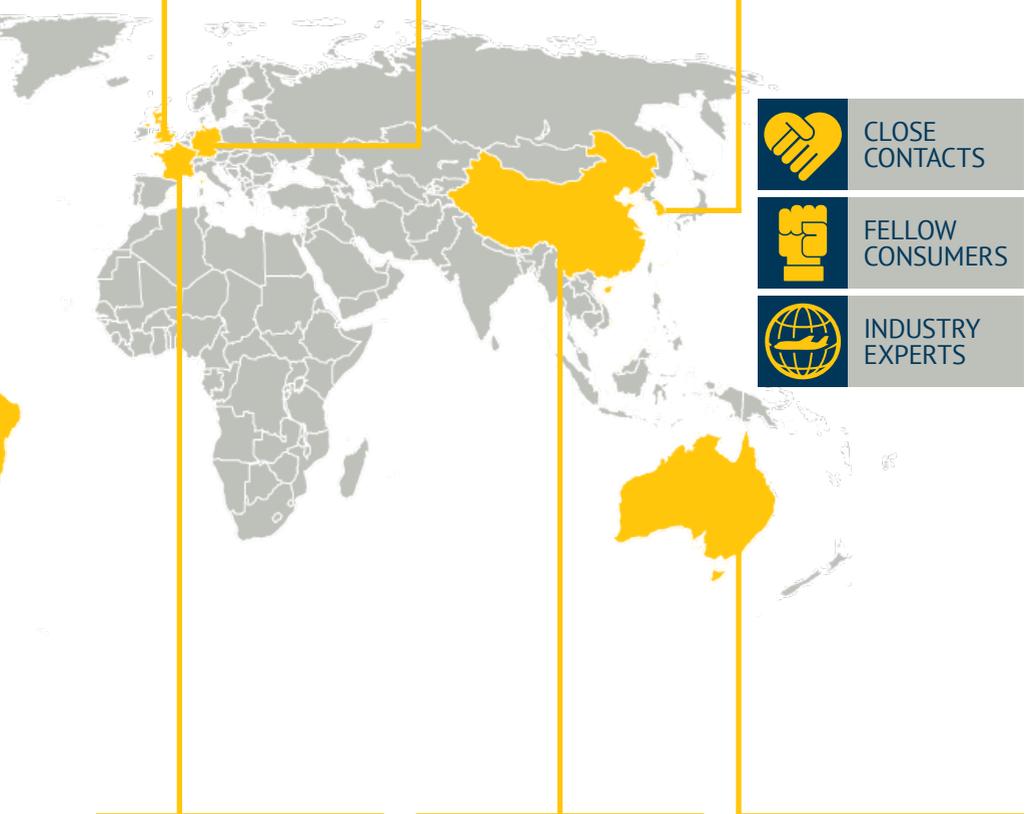
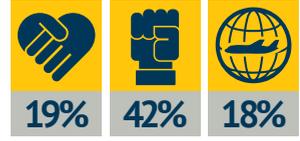
UK



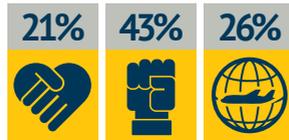
GERMANY



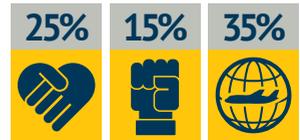
SOUTH KOREA



FRANCE



CHINA



AUSTRALIA

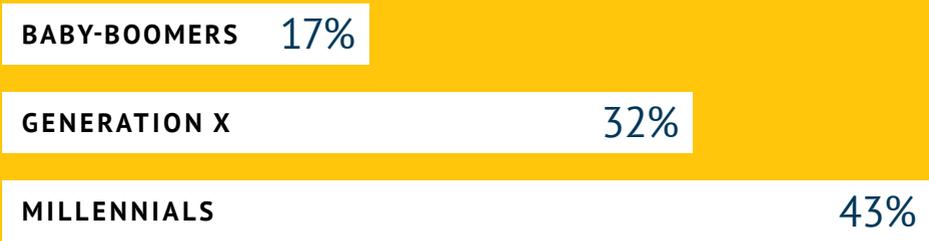
Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: Millennials of 3500 online respondents (have consulted industry experts as well as either close contacts or consumer peers), aged 18-64, 2016 March

convenience

Convenience has been a driver of consumption for all time – but to look at how Millennials are coming to perceive what convenience is, we must first look to underlying attitudes around control.

All consumers want control; it is approximately 2 in 3 across age groups who agree that they “try to appear in control of [their] life at all times”. However, Millennials are nothing if not the poster generation for today’s technology-solves-all mentality – and this close association of technology as an enabler of greater control is what ultimately determines convenience for this group. Notorious for leading smartphone addiction worldwide – and often the butt of this ongoing joke – the Millennial generation’s close relationship to personal technology is nevertheless close to a truism.

% who manage their personal life on a smartphone at least once a day



Source: Future Foundation | Base: 8-country average of 1000-5000 online respondents per country aged 16-64 (Indonesia, Mexico & S.Africa 16-54), 2015

“If I don’t have a [device] it can be very inconvenient. Sometimes I travel abroad and I don’t have internet connection, it’s super bad for me because I can’t call my friends, I can’t navigate, I can’t use GPS... I buy WiFi packages on holiday because I don’t want to be disconnected with the world.”

Cathy, China



7 days with Premium features are over

GO PREMIUM

Solebaystraat

s103

Livornostraat

Haarlemmerweg
Amsterdam



10:32
(3min)

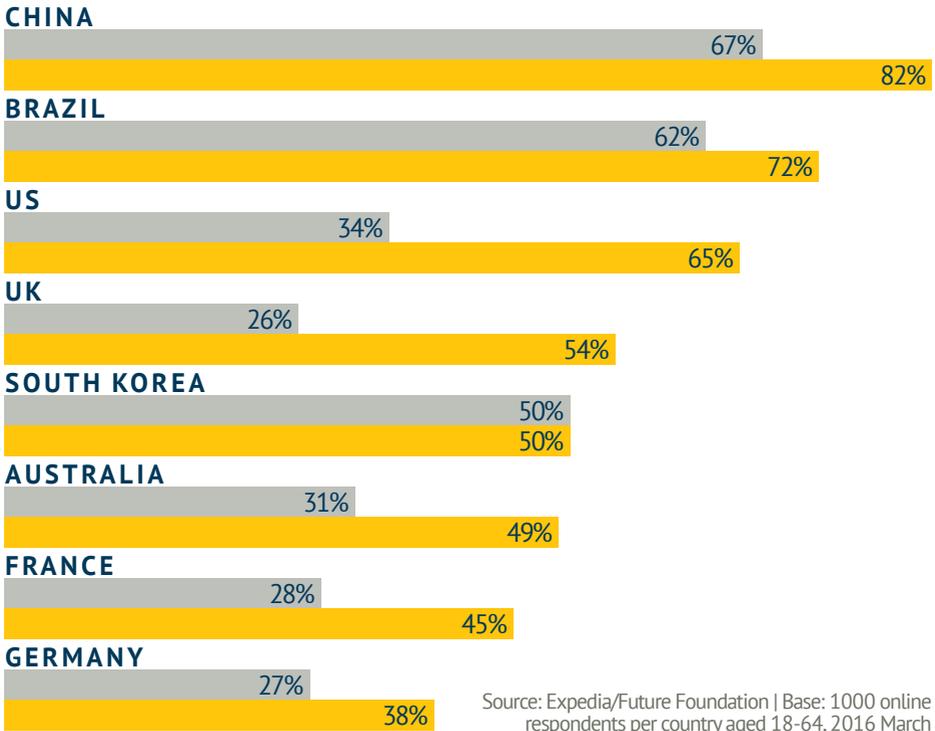
1.9
km

43
km/h



% interested in “wearable technology that automatically adjusted your hotel room temperature according to your own body temperature”

■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

But more than their reliance on technology, Millennials have an unshakeable faith in it.

If the stereotypically non-Millennial response to technology’s great promises is a mix of scepticism (and sometimes even alienation), the Millennial’s response is the opposite: optimism about future-facing technologies even in the absence of full knowledge of how it works; open-armed embrace of things still in beta.

“If they have location services you could have [something] which shows other peoples experiences through #Hashtags or shared location.”

Carmen, UK

But as every day seems to bring a new app to help them track calories and compare prices, to find hidden local bars or invest in small personal wealth funds – the number of tools Millennials are accessing to exert control over their lives is constantly multiplying. In turn, the number of things they are trying to control is proliferating as well.

This has led to the rise of convenience as a key demand alongside control – or perhaps more accurately, the increased perception that added convenience is itself a mechanism of better control.

When it comes to the particularly excruciating world of booking a holiday, we find that convenience is the primary reason why Millennials choose the booking methods that they do – regardless of whether it is booking directly through providers, or booking through online travel agents.

“If the app could integrate all my travel plans such as my hotel bookings, my flight bookings, [and] any other trouble booking such as train journeys or inland flights – that would be very useful, so I can just go to one place and look at what I have got on next.”

Carmen, UK

“[Referring to online automated services] It’s always good to have something to help me out with the next travel plan.”

Jenny, China

The Millennial definition of convenience is thus expanding.

As hassle takes on a whole host of different meanings, convenience can be found almost anywhere: fewer confirmation emails to clutter the inbox; having a “dashboard” of options to reference at a glance; being able to book or cancel a holiday last-minute, or even switch names on tickets if need be; having more payment options to spread, divide, amalgamate or otherwise play with costs.

Why do you prefer to book your holidays through your chosen method?

I prefer booking through online travel agents because it’s...

CONVENIENT



SECURE



I prefer booking directly through providers because it’s...

CONVENIENT



SECURE



USER-FRIENDLY



CHEAPER



USER-FRIENDLY



CHEAPER



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: Millennials of 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

We see a healthy appetite amongst all consumers for the spontaneous trip – but this is particularly strong amongst Millennials. Already, over 1 in 3 agree that they “often make holiday plans at the last minute” – compared to only 1 in 4 of older consumers, despite all associated costs with last-minute booking.

“Many of my holiday decisions have been spur of the moment as a result of chatting to friends about their past holidays (and wanting to do the same) or fantasising about what I could be doing and then going online [just] to see if it can be done (checking my ongoing budget, my bank account, prices, calendar)...

... Whilst we spoke about the trip loosely, i.e. “let’s travel together one day”, “I would love to see the ruins and temples”, “my friends photos of XYZ look amazing – we should do something together” – once I had agreed to it (during a moment of boredom and procrastination) it was all booked within 48 hours.”

Carmen, UK

Convenience is also being demanded within the mechanism of booking itself – in the number of clicks, or the flexibility of purchase options.

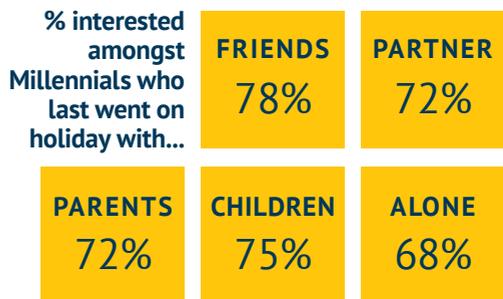
30% of the Millennials we sampled went with friends on their most recent holiday – which consumers of all ages know to be a veritable nightmare of booking to coordinate if there are more than two or three people involved. When asked separately about a service that could help split the cost of their holiday with another person, these travellers were more likely to show interest, with over 1 in 3 declaring themselves extremely interested and another 45% interested overall. Meanwhile, over 2 in 5 of our Millennial sample are still financially dependent on their parents; as this looks unlikely to abate globally, the sheer complexity of their finances will inevitably create demand for flexible services.

% interested in “a service that allowed you to split the cost of a holiday (e.g. travel, accommodation) online with another person”

MILLENNIALS



NON-MILLENNIALS



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: Millennials of 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March



instant concierging

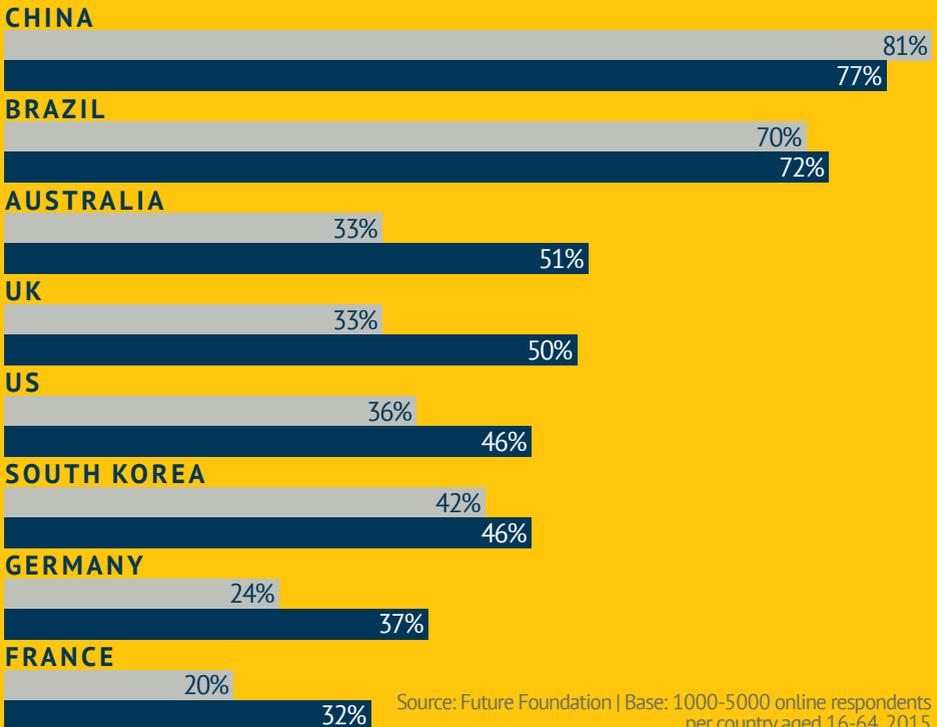
With so many competing demands, it can seem nigh-impossible to know what Millennials actually want – let alone how to deliver it.

Yet the provision of service to this group will become more important as they mature into stable adult rhythms. Because as we've already seen, Millennials are all too-ready to take the reins of control into their own hands and shoulder all aspects of their holidays from inspiration to booking as personal projects – even if it means more time and effort spent.

It is no wonder that services have proliferated around the world to better engage Millennials, resulting in the global phenomenon of “instant concierging”: the provision of customer service via instant messaging.

% who value socialising over instant messaging as much as or more than socialising face-to-face

■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials



Source: Future Foundation | Base: 1000-5000 online respondents per country aged 16-64, 2015

A quarter of Millennials world-wide consider socialising over instant messaging equally valuable to their entertainment as they do socialising face-to-face; a further quarter consider instant messaging more valuable.

If this is surprising, it shouldn't be; since the introduction of early 00's products like MSN Messenger and AIM, Millennials have been conducting vast portions of their social and emotional lives over instant messaging. Today, with many social media networks providing much of this infrastructure – from behemoths like Facebook and WeChat to more esoteric platforms like Snapchat – Millennials are simply used to talking to human beings in human ways even using non-human interfaces.

% interested in “an online shop assistant that I could talk to for advice as I was browsing products online”

■ Very Interested ■ Quite Interested

BABY-BOOMERS



GENERATION X



MILLENNIALS



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

It was therefore only a matter of time that service provisions moved to the chat-platform space as well. With a huge precedent being set by WeChat in the East for what some are calling “conversational commerce”, human-like communications served up in familiar chat bubbles are likely to govern Millennial commerce across the world in the near future.

“My travel experience hasn’t always been that great because, language barriers have been a problem...For Turkey I found it quite difficult to get around because they didn’t know English very well and if I needed any help travelling nobody could really help me out.”

Stephanie, UK

This will be particularly important for travel, where we see latent Millennial demand for 24/7 service. Public social media is already littered with this footprint – complaints made public with an expectation for drop-of-the-hat response, and particularly in times of emergency. The combination of high technological expectation with strong risk-aversion in Millennials has a clear result: the demand for nothing less than concierge levels of service, and all at the instantaneous tap of a button.

“I would like technologies that can stand by 24 hours and be ready to answer to my requests as I go. They could be mobile apps on smartphones or other portable devices. I don’t own an Apple Watch, but I guess a portable device like that would come in handy to navigate places and give me recommendations throughout my trip.”

Jenny, China



me-me generation

It's hard for this generation not to see things in terms of themselves at all times – young, self-aware and conscientious in their own efforts, Millennials today are the Me-Me Generation.

This is ultimately what makes or breaks the Millennial relationship with brands – and which underscores their trust in their peers. As a group so willing to put in hours and effort themselves towards their own self-betterment, a natural question arises for them at every turn: who knows me and my needs better than myself?

But Millennial self-reliance is a double-edged sword: as we've already seen, demand for convenience has skyrocketed due to the overwhelming number of options that Millennials can access.

Looking further ahead, we see that Millennials will inevitably turn to others for help in overcoming the sheer amount of choice paralysis they face – on top of all the other challenges that dawn in later adulthood. But when they do, they will do so with expectations that stretch higher than convenience and concierge – they want nothing less than precision-level relevance, and accuracy that exceeds their own capabilities. The Me-Me Generation will be the first to demand perfect personalisation, challenging brands to know them better than they know themselves.

“Travel companies can improve their personalised offers to me with a basic understanding of my hobbies (like stationery, shopping, modern art, mom and pop shops, boutique hotels and vintage aesthetic) and interests when travelling.”

Monica, USA

“I do need someone or some kind of app with a massive database that can actually figure out what my interests are and what my future destination would most likely be. I wouldn't mind putting in my personal preferences in the first place [but] I want [the personalisation] to be accurate.”

Jenny, China

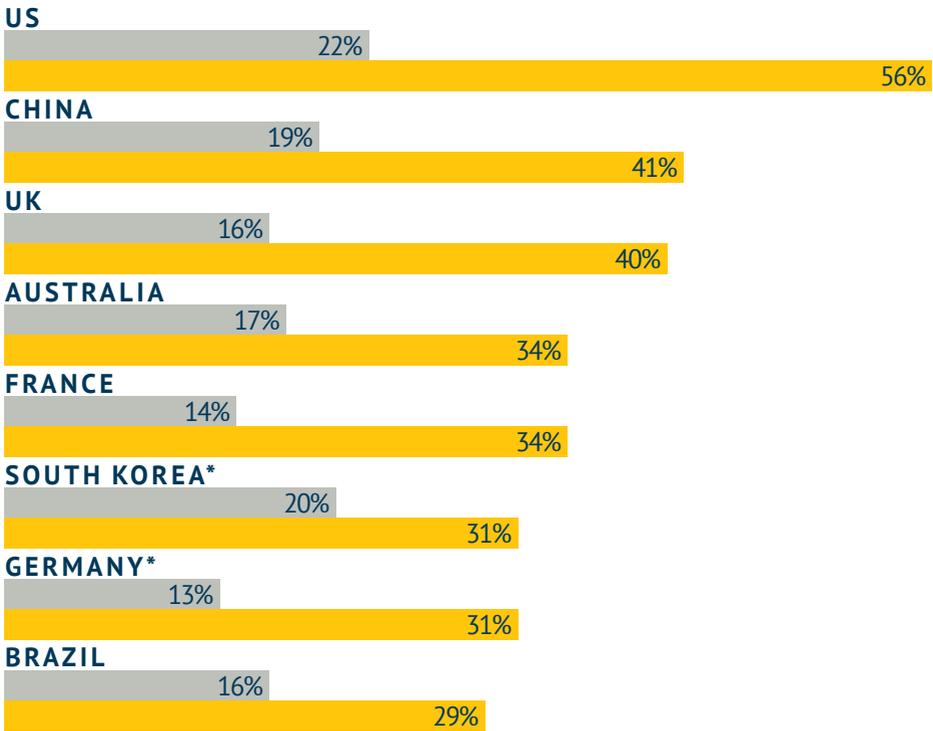
“I am interested in personalised travel ... however what they are offering needs to be so unique and not doable from my own research into the country...”

Carmen, UK



“Having children has had a negative impact on the quality of my holidays”

■ Non-Millennial Parents ■ Millennial Parents



*Low sample size of Millennial parents
Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: All who have had children of 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

A first hint of a complex future Millennial cohort comes from current Millennial parents: in comparison to older parents, we see an extraordinary amount of travel-related angst specific to having children.

Of course, much of this can be explained as a natural consequence of Millennials currently having younger children. But briefly dwelling on all of the previous themes – it is easy to see how for a group that particularly prizes the holy trinity of authenticity, shareability and safety whilst on holiday, having children could severely complicate travel.

We also know that lifestage is likely to remain heterogenous across the generation for some time. Millennial parents of tomorrow will likely still be inundated with social media posts from friends delaying settling down. We see evidence that some Millennial parents are likely to continue to have holidays with friends alongside their family holidays.

All of these looming factors will contribute to ongoing difficulty in decision-making; indecision is perhaps the biggest accidental byproduct of control.

This is where personalisation takes its first role: it is the only response to Millennial demand for services that help them make decisions in the face of crippling choice paralysis – but ones that do so without compromising individuality or authenticity.

“I felt so inundated with information and looking at all the places to go... I was having a challenging time. I do feel there is a lot of information and it actually obscured me from making a proper selection.”

Monica, USA

“I think I would want something like a quiz or app where I could type in the sort of stuff I like to do and it could automatically pull that up and organise the activities that I would enjoy, making it more simple for me to plan my trips.”

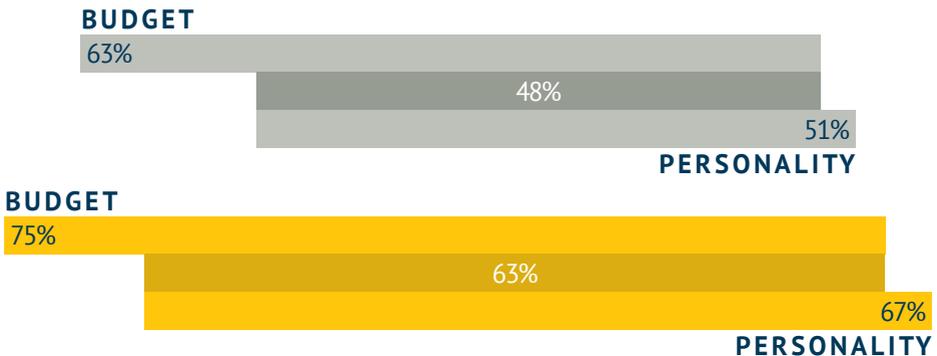
Michelle, USA

We see that Millennials are much more likely to respond positively to personalised recommendations already – and tellingly, they show the starkest departure from Non-Millennials when it comes to personalisation outside of money matters.

3 in 4 Millennials are interested in “a service that could provide personalised travel recommendations based on my budget”. When asked the same about a service that was based on personality, 2 in 3 were interested – suggesting that the demand for personalised services extends beyond price sensitivity.

% interested in a service that provided surprise holiday recommendations based on their...

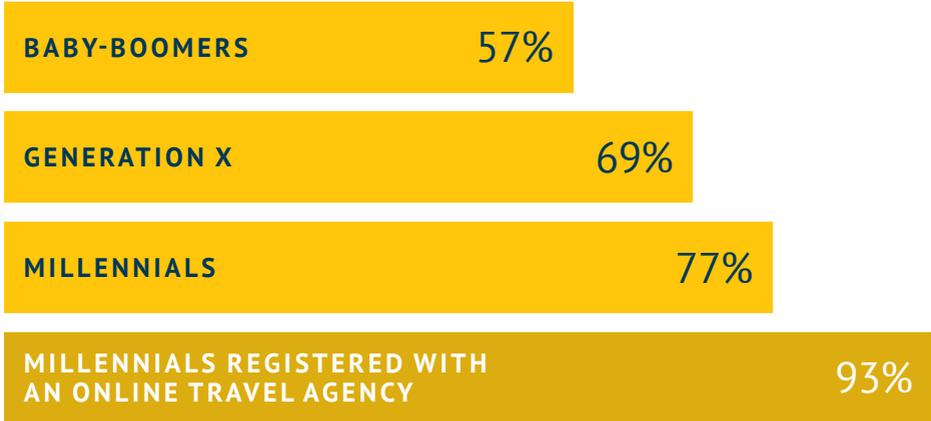
■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

Indeed, we find that data privacy is not a particularly strong concern for Millennials – so long as they perceive benefit in exchange for their data.

**“For which, if any, of the following reasons would you be happy to give permission to an online travel agency to use your personal data?
% who have selected any reason**



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation | Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

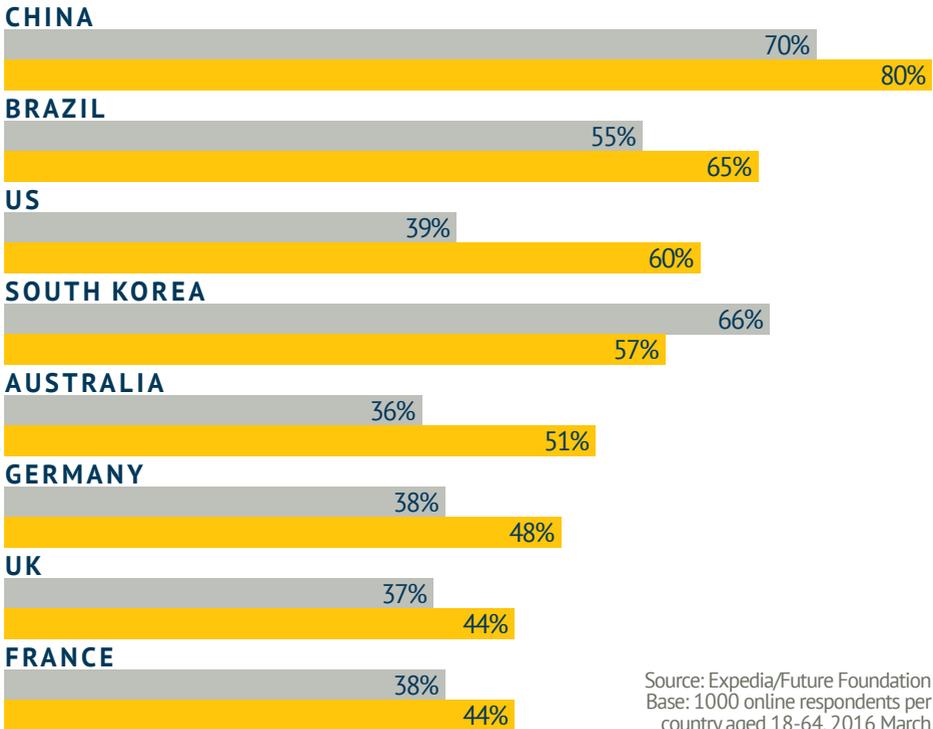
Across the board, it is less than 1 in 4 Millennials who would be unwilling to give up personal data to an online travel agent for any reason; this rises to over 1 in 3 for Non-Millennials. A further 16% of Millennials would only give up data in exchange for monetary reward – such as personalised discounts or offers – leaving a remaining 57% who are willing to share data in exchange for more diffusive forms of personalisation. These include suggestions and recommendations, travel tips and advice, and generalised future services.

“[Online travel agencies] have huge database[s] and from that they could use an algorithm to work out what trip I might like and make suggestions with a high percentage of success.”

Carmen, UK

% who are willing to share personal data in exchange for recommendations, advice/tips, or personalised service provision

■ Non-Millennials ■ Millennials



Source: Expedia/Future Foundation
Base: 1000 online respondents per country aged 18-64, 2016 March

Perhaps the most interesting finding from this analysis is a group of Millennials which emerged who do not consider discounts a good enough reason to share data at all – but who do consider other forms of personalisation valuable enough to be persuaded. This represents 3 in 10 of the Millennial cohort – almost twice the size of those who consider personalised discounts to be the only good reason to share data.

What remains is how the travel industry will rise to the challenge that Millennials will ultimately pose. And already, we have seen considerable expectation that brands ought to be able to provide personalisation to an extremely high degree about extremely personal things – from hobbies and interests to financial situation.

But perhaps the most valuable benefit that brands stand to gain from tailoring service to the Me-Me Generation is their trust. Fundamentally, we have seen that Millennials place the opinion of those who occupy a peer-level space in high regard – and ultimately, it is because they feel relatable.

In future, this generation will be won over by nothing less than a true relationship with the brands they choose – conducted over mediums they prefer such as instant messaging, in languages they understand such as content media, and with products and services on offer which belie true understanding of them as unique individuals.

methodology

Expedia has worked with Future Foundation, a leading global consumer trends and forecasting consultancy, in the design and delivery of this study.

Drawing on established and emerging trend research tracked by Future Foundation, this report further explores the key trends that pose changes and pressures for the Millennial vacation and booking process.

A 10 minute questionnaire was undertaken online in March 2016 with a sample of 1,000 consumers per country, 18-64, UK, Germany, France, USA, China, Australia, Brazil and South Korea.

In parallel, qualitative research was undertaken via Future Foundation's global network of Trendspotters. Feedback on a number of questions around travel behaviours, needs and attitudes was received from 9 consumers from the UK, USA and China. Six of these respondents were Millennials, aged between 25 and 31, and have been quoted throughout this report.

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