

Record sales in 2008 make downtime expensive for travel websites

With online travel sales set to reach a record \$110 billion in 2008, downtime is more costly than ever for travel websites. A survey of 16 travel websites shows that only one has had no downtime so far this year.

Online travel sales are at an all-time high, and they keep growing. In this competitive market it is more important than ever for travel websites to always be available to their customers. Website downtime is basically the same thing as closing the shop and will drive both sales and customers away to competing services.

A survey of 16 popular travel websites performed by the uptime monitoring service Pingdom shows a large difference in availability between the websites. Quikbook.com has had the most downtime in 2008, being unavailable for a total of more than 10 hours. This is more than twice as much as Expedia.com, which had the second-worst availability on the list.

Notably, Travel.yahoo.com hasn't had any downtime at all in 2008.

The table below shows the downtime for the period **January 1 to May 15**.

| Website | Downtime | Uptime % |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Quikbook.com | 10h 20m | 99.68 |
| Expedia.com | 4h 39m | 99.86 |
| SideStep.com | 3h 50m | 99.88 |
| CheapTickets.com | 3h 30m | 99.89 |
| Hotels.com | 3h 34m | 99.89 |
| Hotwire.com | 3h 24m | 99.89 |
| Orbitz.com | 3h 10m | 99.90 |
| Kayak.com | 2h 25m | 99.93 |
| Travel.com | 1h 50m | 99.95 |
| Travelzoo.com | 1h 30m | 99.95 |
| StaTravel.com | 1h 15m | 99.96 |
| Priceline.com | 1h 5m | 99.97 |
| LastMinuteTravel.com | 30m | 99.98 |
| OneTravel.com | 45m | 99.98 |
| Travelocity.com | 45m | 99.98 |
| Travel.yahoo.com | 0m | 100.00 |

US online travel sales will reach \$110 billion in 2008 according to the research firm PhoCusWright. This means that downtime costs more money for travel websites than for many other types of online services. Also, since there is so much competition, there are plenty of options for customers to take their business elsewhere if one website fails to respond.

With 10 out of these 16 websites having a 99.9% uptime or better in 2008, it is clear that they are taking the issue seriously.

How much money a travel website loses as a result of downtime depends on many factors, such as the time of day and the amount of visitors that get turned away. Availability issues may also damage the trust users have in a website, leading them to choose another travel service in the future. As competition between travel websites heats up even further, the negative effects of downtime will most likely increase.

About the survey:

The websites were tested from Pingdom's monitoring network, which has servers both in the US and Europe. Any website issues were always confirmed from two different geographic locations before a website was considered unavailable. Tests were performed every 5 minutes, around the clock.

Online travel sales data source:

PhoCusWright (<http://www.phocuswright.com/library/pressrelease/478>)

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About Pingdom:

Pingdom is a global uptime monitoring service, monitoring websites and servers from multiple locations to ensure the best reliability and accuracy possible. The company is growing fast and has customers in 130 countries, ranging from small one-man businesses to large, international corporations. Find out more at www.pingdom.com.