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**Title:** Online travel information search - Using web traffic for forecasting tourist arrivals to Vienna

**Abstract:** The travel information search is a crucial component of the decision making process of travelers. Various researchers have studied the motives, factors affecting and sources of information and have also tried to understand how overall the process of information search of consumers evolves. The information search has predominantly a functional purpose in the pre-trip information search phase and travelers’ specific information needs and sources used during this process have been identified.

To investigate the information search behavior, researchers have analyzed log files which are the traces unwittingly left by each individual user during their information search processes online. Nonetheless, this web usage data is barely used for analyses of strategic relevance. Some researchers have made use of log files from search engines in order to forecast indicators and model the demand for various products and services in recent years. However, this research area is still at the outset.

Therefore, this study has the intention to gain relevant insights into the information search behavior of travelers through web usage mining on the example of Vienna. Log files reflecting the access rates on the search engine Google and the destination website overall and of five different source markets were used to forecast tourist arrivals. Moreover, the information search timing is investigated. This information is relevant for destination managers but also single industry actors with regards to promotional activities (i.e. AdWords campaigns) planned on the analyzed information platforms.