



2018 PRSA Travel and Tourism Conference

# STORIES START **HERE.**

**GOING VIRAL:  
How Digital Content Is Influencing Travel  
Trends**

**Moderator:**

*New Orleans*



# Caleigh Alleyne



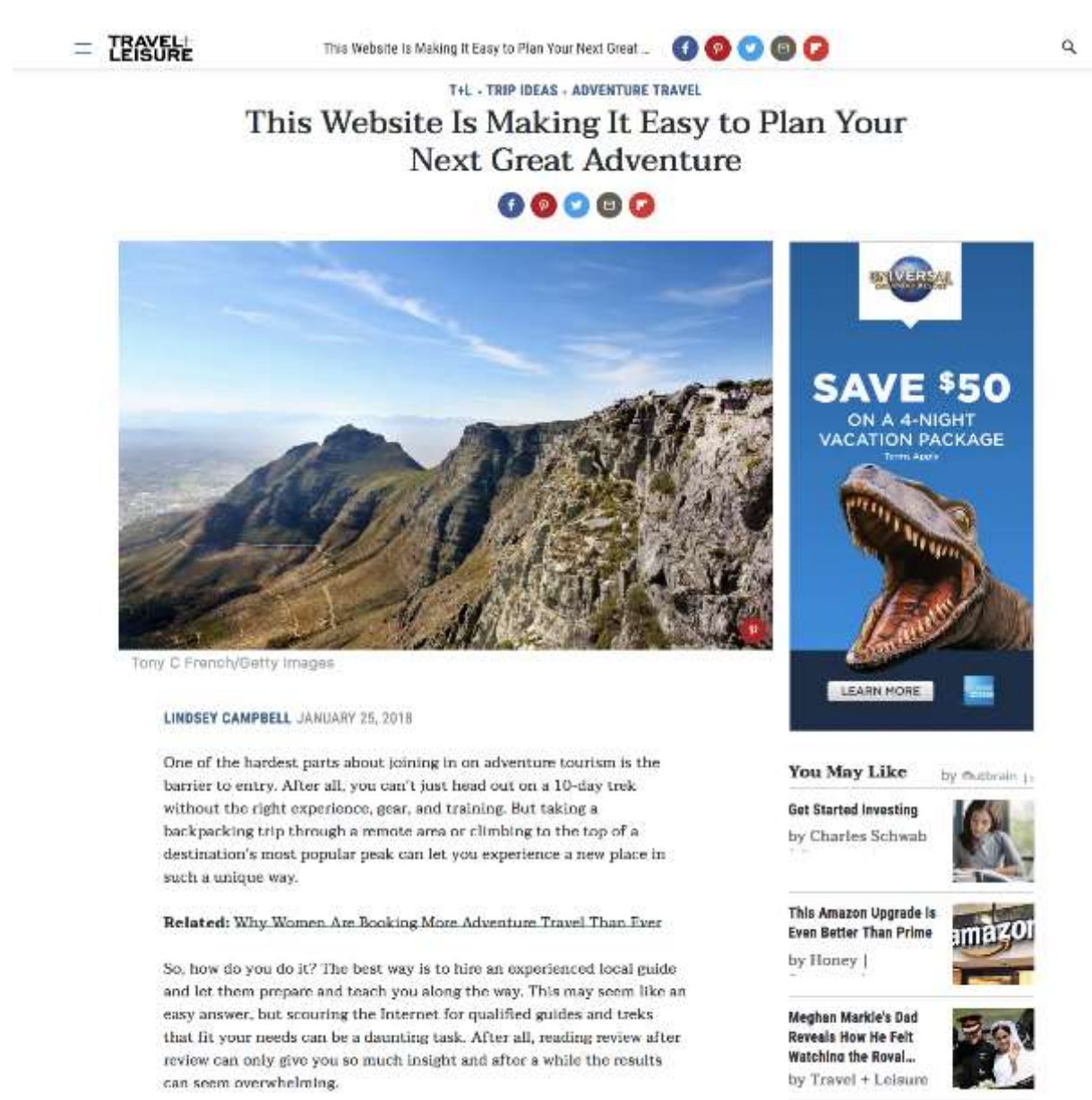
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The screenshot shows a webpage from 'the social' with a navigation bar including 'HOME', 'VIDEO', 'TOPICS', 'WHAT WE WORE', 'THE JESS FILES', 'THE SOCIAL CHAPTER', and 'TICKETS'. The article title is 'Courses you should take on your next vacay' by 'The Social' dated 'May 28, 2018'. A video player shows five women sitting on a couch in front of a sign that says 'UNIQUE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ABOARD'. Below the video are social sharing options for Facebook, Twitter, and Google+, and a link to the article: <https://www.thesocial.ca/Real-Life/Travel/Courses-to-take-while-travel>. The article text begins: 'For many people, travel is about relaxation, eating and a round of golf. However, when you're in exotic locales, there's actually a lot you can learn. It may sound boring, but learning on vacation doesn't have to be! Travel writer [Caleigh Alleyne](#) breaks down some of the incredible classes you can take on your next vacay.' Under the heading 'CULINARY COURSES', it mentions 'Le Cordon Bleu' in Paris offering programs for professional chefs and short courses for beginners. To the right of the article is a McCain advertisement for 'Wedges Quarters' potato wedges with the slogan 'Share Something Surprising' and the website 'McCain.ca'. Below the ad is a 'Related Content' section featuring a map and two passport books.

# Lindsey Campbell



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The screenshot shows a webpage from Travel + Leisure. At the top, the navigation bar includes the site logo, a search icon, and social media links. The main headline reads "This Website Is Making It Easy to Plan Your Next Great Adventure". Below the headline is a large landscape photograph of a mountain range. To the right of the photo is a promotional banner for Universal Orlando Resort, offering a \$50 discount on a 4-night vacation package. Below the photo, the author's name "LINDSEY CAMPBELL" and the date "JANUARY 25, 2018" are displayed. The article text begins with "One of the hardest parts about joining in on adventure tourism is the barrier to entry. After all, you can't just head out on a 10-day trek without the right experience, gear, and training. But taking a backpacking trip through a remote area or climbing to the top of a destination's most popular peak can let you experience a new place in such a unique way." A "Related" section follows, titled "Why Women Are Booking More Adventure Travel Than Ever", with a sub-headline "So, how do you do it? The best way is to hire an experienced local guide and let them prepare and teach you along the way. This may seem like an easy answer, but scouring the Internet for qualified guides and treks that fit your needs can be a daunting task. After all, reading review after review can only give you so much insight and after a while the results can seem overwhelming." On the right side of the page, there is a "You May Like" section with three article recommendations: "Get Started Investing" by Charles Schwab, "This Amazon Upgrade Is Even Better Than Prime" by Honey, and "Meghan Markle's Dad Reveals How He Felt Watching the Royal..." by Travel + Leisure.

# Erika Owen



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VOGUE

FASHION BEAUTY CULTURE LIVING RUNWAY VIDEO MET GALA

BEAUTY > HAIR

## This All-Natural Shampoo Smells So Sweet, It's Worth a Round-Trip Ticket to Iceland

JANUARY 12, 2018 8:00 AM  
by ERIKA OWEN



Photographed by Patrik Demarchelier, Vogue, June 2008



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#prsatravel *New Orleans*

# How Digital Media is Influencing Travel

# How Digital Media is Influencing Travel

- **85%** of leisure travelers use their smartphones while abroad
- **30%** use mobile apps to book travel
- **40%** of US travellers use social media while traveling
- **76%** post vacation photos while on social media
- **92%** say they trust recommendations and earned media over advertisements

Source: [Four Pillars](#)



Image Source: @caleigh.alleyne  
(Instagram)

# How Travel Can Be Influenced on Digital Media

- Increase the visibility of your travel brand online
- Inspire others to vacation with you
- Encourage travellers to share
- Monitor and engage with the conversation online
- Capitalize on last minute bookings made online
- Be mindful of the real world impact of your presence online



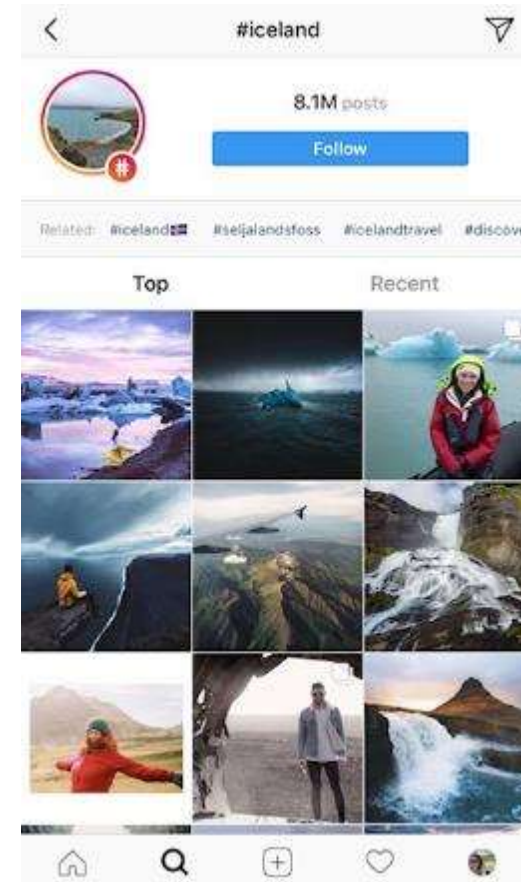
Image Source: Intrepid Travel

# How Travel Can Be Influenced on Digital Media

- Iceland has skyrocket in popularity over the last few years largely influencing travel decisions based on imagery shared online.

Over 8.1 million public photos shared on Instagram with #Iceland (plus the many more on private profiles)

“Iceland” has an organic search rating of 368, 000 and 419 000 000 results





# How Travel Can Be Influenced on Digital Media

- On August 20, 2016, China opened the world's highest and longest glass bottom bridge, stretching 1,000 feet over the lush Zhangjiajie Grand Canyon. Within the first few days, thousands of tourists swarmed the bridge, eager to capture mind-bending photos. After just 13 days, the bridge was forced to close due to overcrowding.



[Image Source](#)



[Image Source](#)

# Facebook:

## How to find your place on the ever-changing platform

# The Current State of Facebook

**The Facts:** Over 1.45 billion active users a day. Each active user is on the platform for roughly 3 hours daily.

**The good news:** The algorithm is now favoring people and brands over publishers

**The bad news:** What used to work no longer works

## What's Going On?

- People's trust in the platform, and the content they see there, has steeply declined
  - Because of this Facebook has changed, and continues to change, its algorithm
- The algorithm favors content from users' friends above all else
  - Reaching people on the platform is harder than ever before
- The algorithm is not your only hurdle
  - Scrolling through Facebook has become a passive activity, making catching followers' attention even more difficult

# Facebook: How to Make it Work For You

*Not only do you have to catch people's attention, you have to make them **trust** you.*

- Develop a relationship with your followers
- create “thumb-stopping” content
- how do you keep up?
- Get on board with Facebook's new initiatives

# Facebook: What Doesn't Work Anymore

- Pushing out content just to push out content
  - Good content gets surfaced, content without a purpose will quickly fail
- Telling people to engage.
  - No more “tag a friend,” or “share for a chance to win!”
- Clickbait headlines
  - If a reader clicks on a piece of content, then quickly goes back to the feed because they didn't get what they wanted from that content, the algorithm will penalize the page.

# Instagram:

## How to Become Everyone's Favorite Travel Account (Without Selling Out)

# Instagram: How to Make It Work for You

*The algorithm is focused on providing users with content they are **likely** to engage with*

What that means for brands:

- Getting a “like” isn’t good enough anymore
  - The brands someone engages with are the ones that pop up in their feed
- Create content based on over-performing social content
- Retain audience — give them something to “save”
- Serialize your content
  - Get creative, do something new; people will notice



Image Source: @erikaraeowen (Instagram)

# Instagram Case Study: Travel + Leisure's #TLPicks

## Strategy

- Focused on regramming your audience
- Responded to comments
- Paid attention to popular destinations
- Gsve them a reason to daydream

## Takeaways

- 2+ million followers gained in a two-year period
- Photo diversity and location popularity over photographer
- Consistency was your lifeline



Image Source: @travelandleisure (Instagram)



# Instagram: Local Insiders vs. General Influencers

## Micro Influencers

- Specialized in a specific region
- Knowledge of less-visited areas
- Open to interacting with audience
- More versatility + flexibility
- Personal connection

## General Influencers

- Expensive
- Incredible quality
- Often lack specialized know-how
- Ability to speak to a larger audience
- Doesn't always translate to gained business
- Less flexibility

# Instagram Collections: Find Your Creative Spot

- **Give the gift of utility:** users will come back + engage
- **Keep it simple:** create savable and digestible itinerary advice
- **Capture UGC:** share content from insiders — little-known tips will always grab interest



Image Source: @erikaraeowen (Instagram)

# How Can Publicists Best Work with Travel Brands?

- Know the brand's focuses and follow up thoughtfully.
- Invest in an media library of unedited b-roll and images that can be used to create content.
- Cater your pitches for the medium. Storytelling on social media differs from editorial.
- Be flexible.

# Key Takeaways

1. Increase your online footprint to help inspire travel to your destination.
2. Highlight experiences over all else. This is what people are investing their time and money into.
3. Invest in the platforms that make sense for your brand.
4. Choose your influencers and partnerships wisely.

# Stay Connected to PRSA

- **Newsletter**
- **@PRSATravel**
- **Members-only Facebook Group:**
  - *“PRSA Travel & Tourism Section Membership”*
- **PRSA Communities**
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Philadelphia – June 16-19, 2019





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