



In Mobile We Trust

The Effects of Mobile Versus Non-Mobile Reviews on Consumer Purchase Intentions

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What we found

What makes a user-generated review of a hotel or restaurant credible? Research from the Oxford Future of Marketing Initiative finds knowing an online review was posted from a mobile device can increase both trust and purchase intent. Interestingly, this is because consumers equate effort with credibility, and they assume mobile reviews take significant time and energy to craft.

What we did

We used TripAdvisor data and five experiments to examine how mobile devices impact consumers' perceptions of user-generated content (UGC) and their purchase intentions.

In *study 1A*, we analysed 1.5 million UGC hotel reviews from TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel site. We found visitors were more likely to rate reviews with a 'via mobile' label as 'helpful'.

In *study 1B*, 369 participants reviewed identical UGC hotel reviews where the only difference was whether the post was 'via mobile' or 'via desktop'. We found participants were more likely to consider staying at the hotel after seeing the 'via mobile' label.

In *study 2*, we learned the positive impact of the 'via mobile' label could be moderated by informing participants that posting via mobile takes the same amount of effort as posting via desktop.

In *study 3*, we found if participants were led to believe the hotel commissioned its UGC reviews, the impact of the 'via mobile' label was lessened.

In *study 4*, we saw the 'via mobile' label only increased purchase intent when associated with positive reviews (e.g., 4 stars).

In *study 5*, we made sure the 'via mobile' label was driving the increases in credibility and purchase intent, and not factors such as the reviewer's rating (e.g., 'Top Contributor') or the review's length.

Why it matters

Marketers have long sought to understand how mobile devices influence the ways consumers *interact* with content. Our research explores something equally relevant but often overlooked — how mobile devices shape the ways consumers *interpret* content.

Our findings are most relevant to UGC review platforms (e.g., TripAdvisor, Yelp). But all firms should take note of that fact seemingly innocuous details can have a significant impact on consumer psychology and behaviour — particularly at the intersection of mobile devices, UGC and word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing.

Actions

- Invest in research that seeks to understand **how mobile devices are impacting the way consumers think and behave online**.
- Another topic worth studying is **how UGC reviews are interpreted on social media channels** (e.g., Twitter, Instagram) as opposed to UGC review platforms (e.g., TripAdvisor, Yelp).

Further reading

Grewal, Lauren and Andrew T. Stephen (2019), "In Mobile We Trust: The Effects of Mobile Versus Non-Mobile Reviews On Consumer Purchase Intentions," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 56 (October), 791-808.