



Leisure Trip Planning Sources: Use and Dependability

D.K. Shifflet & Associates Ltd.

1750 Old Meadow Rd. Suite 620, McLean, VA 22102
Phone: 703.536.0500 | Fax: 703.536.0580 | www.dksa.com

Table of Contents

Summary of Findings	3
Overall Usage vs. Dependability	6
Usage by Age Group	8
Dependability by Age Group	9
Usage by Household Income	10
Dependability by Household Income	11
Appendix	12

Summary of Findings

General Overview

- During the months of May, June and July 2009, U.S. travelers were asked to identify, from a selected list of travel resources, those that they use and those they find dependable in gathering information to help make leisure travel decisions.
- Overall, travel related Websites were chosen by more respondents than any other type of resource for use and dependability. In particular, Hotel/Resort and Destination (City, State) sites were those most often selected. With the exception of Airline Websites, more travelers said these Websites are dependable than said they use them, indicating that these are “go to” resources when making decisions about leisure travel.
- Interestingly, although a large share of travelers consider Travel Agents a dependable source of information, only one-third of them report actually using them to help make leisure travel decisions. It is also interesting to note that more travelers use printed magazines and newspapers and consider them more dependable than they do their online counterparts.
- While social media networks are getting a great deal of attention lately, only a small share of travelers actually use them to obtain leisure travel information and, excluding Trip Advisor and Travel Blogs, an even smaller number consider them dependable.

Summary of Findings (cont.)

Does the age of the traveler have an effect on use and dependability?

- The largest number of respondents claiming usage of Websites are in the 36-54 year old range. This is true for all Websites excluding Airlines for which the largest number of users are in the 55 years and older range.
- Travelers in the 55+ age group use conventional information sources such as Printed Travel Magazines, Newspapers and Travel Agents at a higher rate than do younger travelers. With the exception of Travel Magazines, travelers in the 55+ age group also place more trust in these sources than do younger travelers.
- As might be expected, more young (under 36 years) travelers use social networks to obtain leisure travel information than do older travelers. Even though these networks still rank last even among the youngest travelers as sources of leisure travel information; more of them consider these sources to be dependable than do travelers over 35 years of age.
- Trip Advisor and Travel Blogs are popular among all age groups as these sources have been around longer than community/social media websites, therefore inspiring more trust and comfort among older travelers.

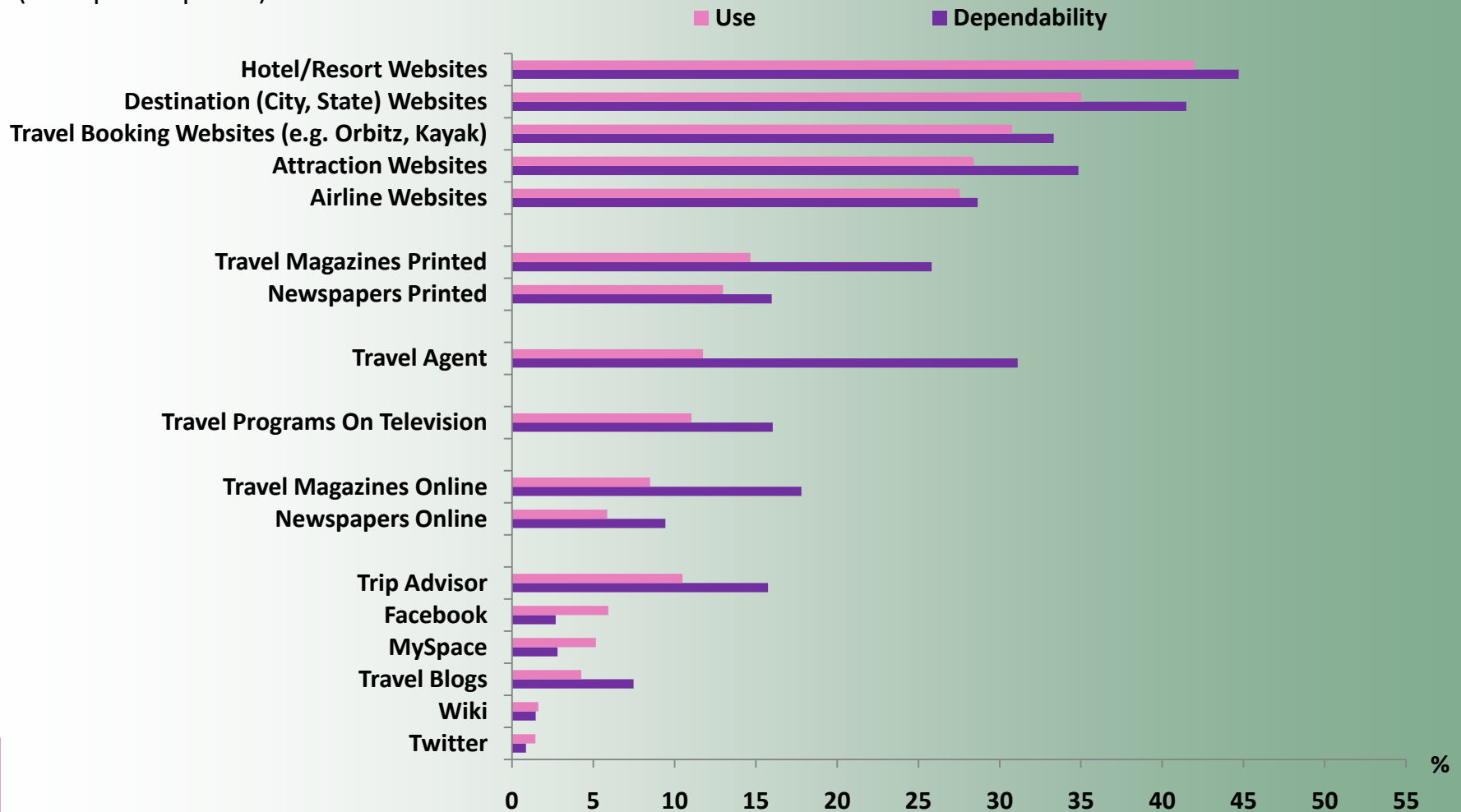
Summary of Findings (cont.)

How does household income affect usage and dependability?

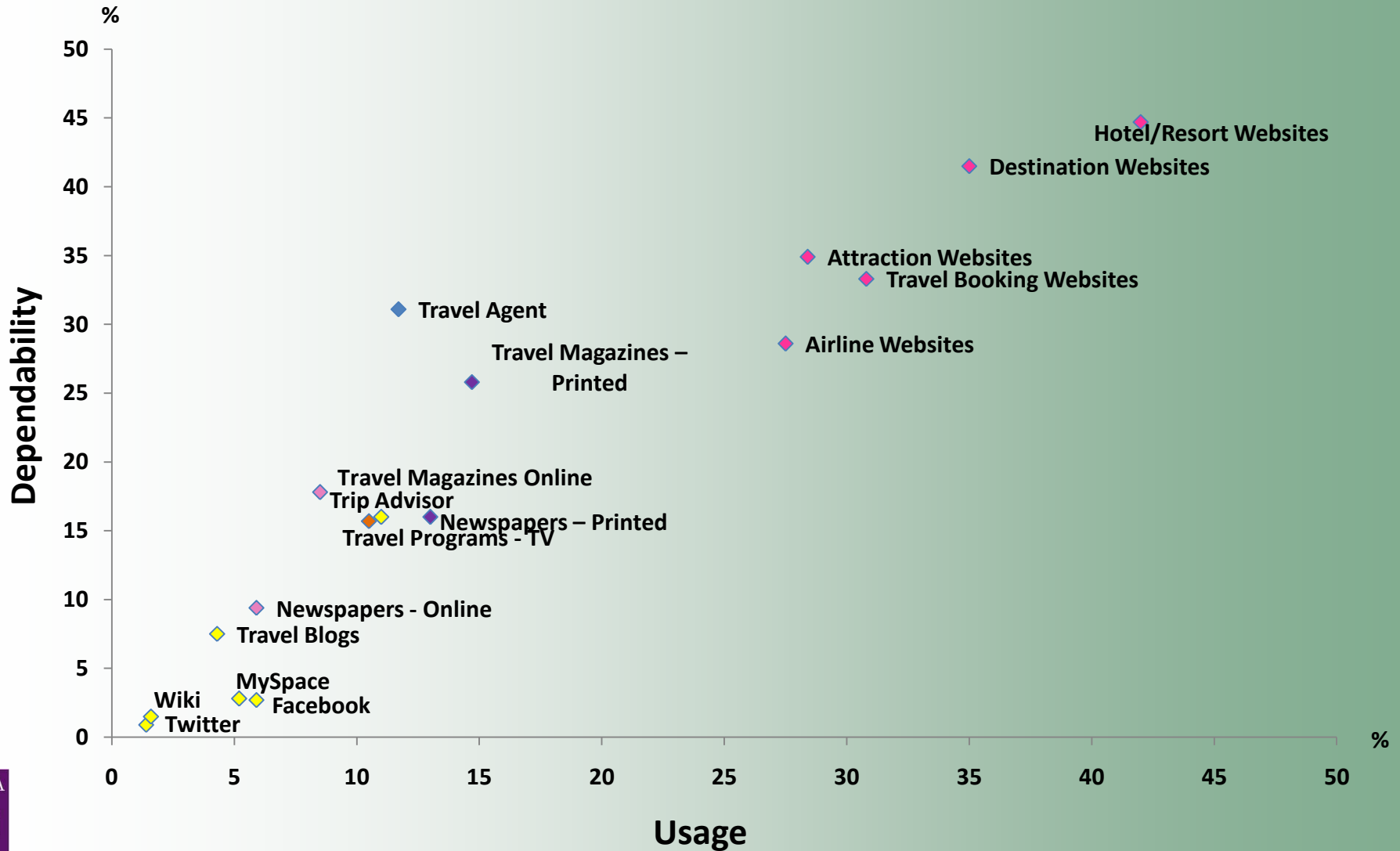
- The largest proportion of users for all sources of information, excluding social networks, are those with a household income in excess of \$100,000. This pattern holds for dependability as well – the largest proportion claiming any resource dependable is wealthier travelers. Social networks, excluding Trip Advisor and Travel Blogs, are the only type of information sources where this does not hold true.
- Excluding Trip Advisor and Travel Blogs, Social networks get the highest proportion of users from households reporting an income under \$50,000.

Hotel and destination websites most *used* and most *dependable* sources of leisure travel information; social networks are least *used* and least *dependable*

Q: Which of the following sources do **you use** for information to help make leisure travel decisions? (N=8,480)
 Q: Which of the following do you consider as **dependable** sources for leisure travel information? (N=8,480)
 (Multiple Response)

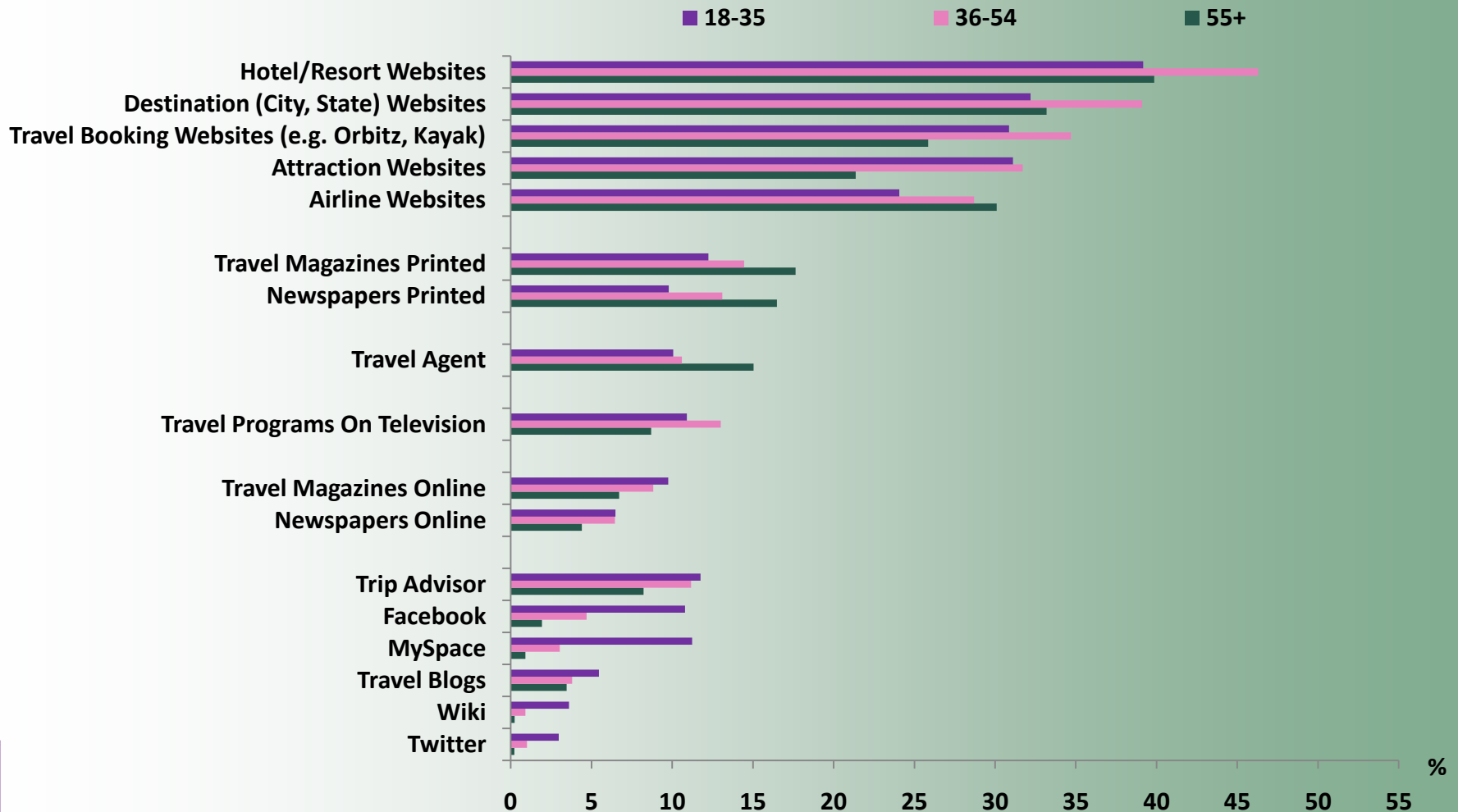


Websites are most used and most dependable; social networks are least



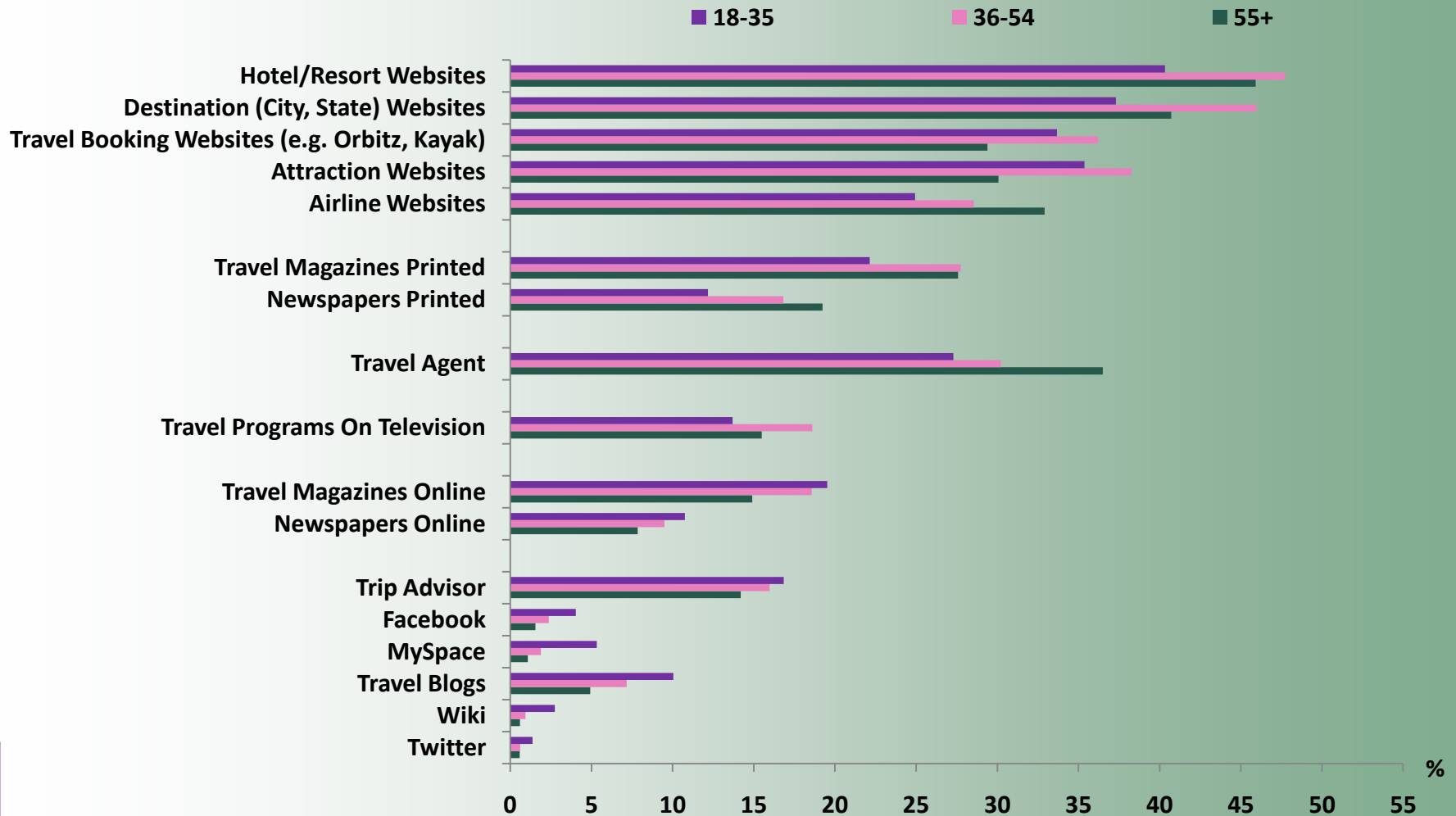
*Printed materials and travel agents **used** most by 55+ age group; websites **used** most by 36-54 year olds and social networks **used** most by younger travelers*

Q: Which of the following sources do **you** use for information to help make leisure travel decisions? (N=8,480)
(Multiple Response)



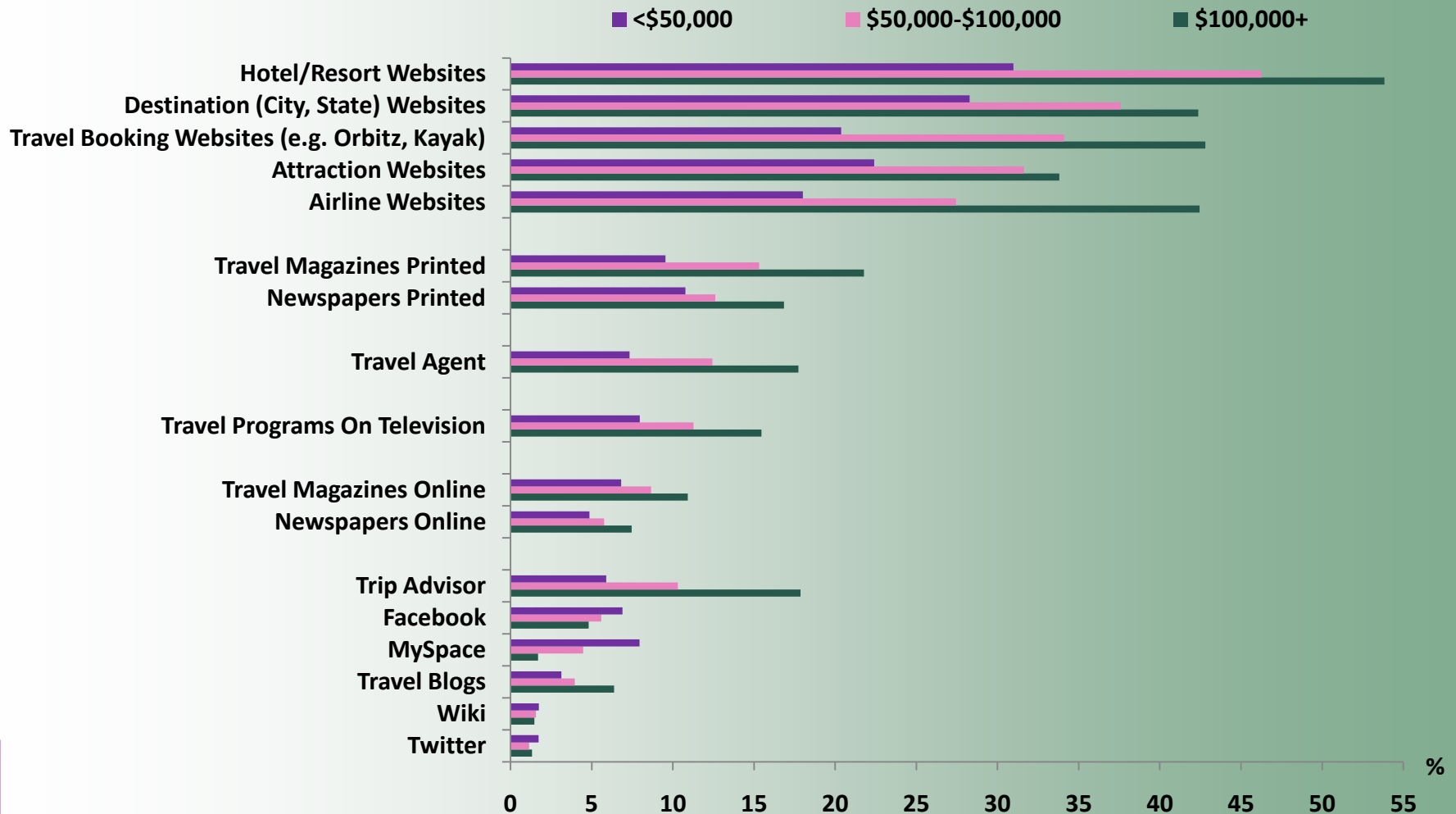
More travelers aged 36+ find hotel and destination websites **dependable** than do younger travelers; more younger travelers find all social media **dependable** as compared to those over 35

Q: Which of the following do you consider as **dependable** sources for leisure travel information? (N=8,480)
(Multiple Response)



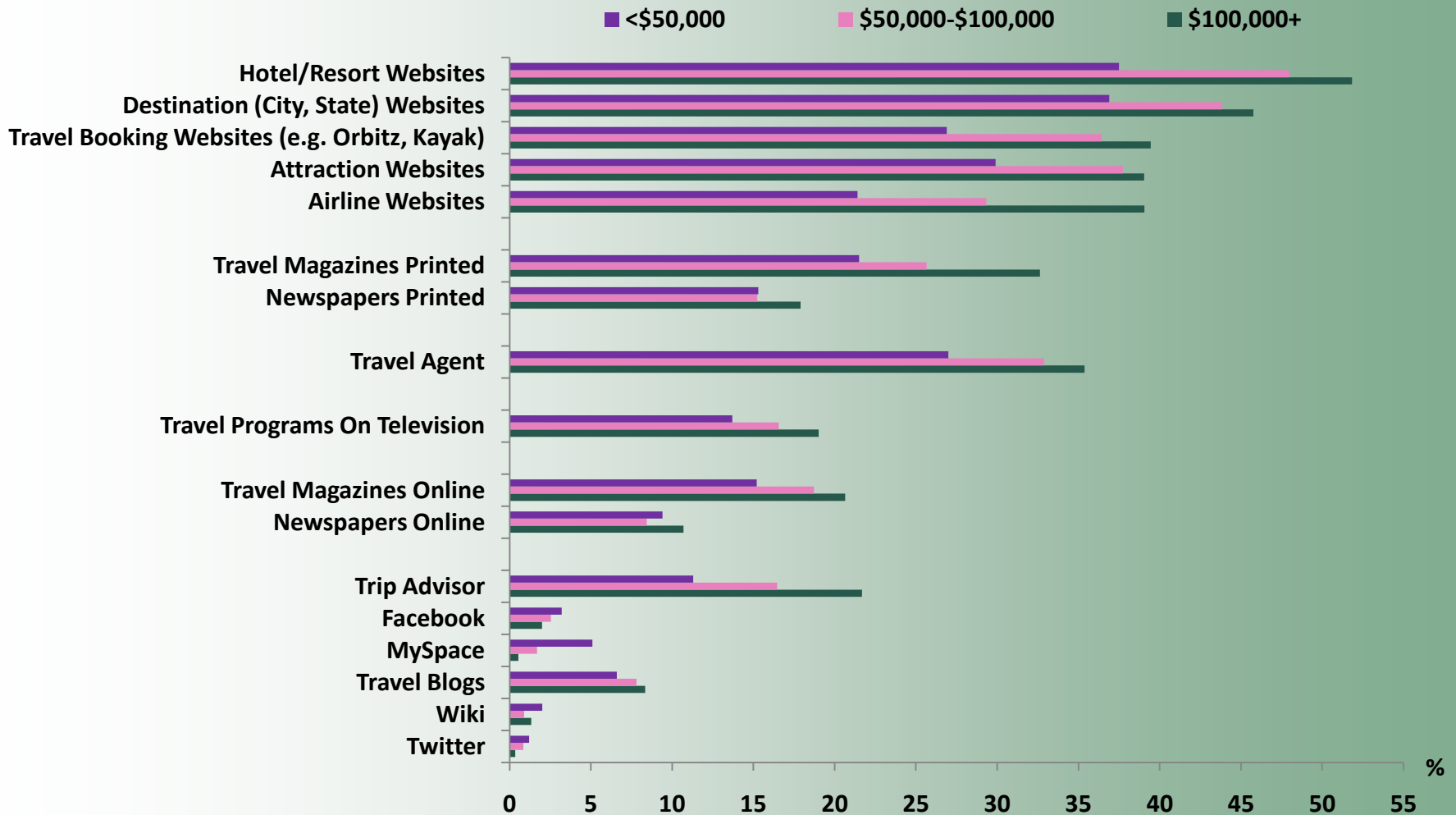
More high income travelers claim *usage* of almost all sources of leisure travel information than do lower income travelers

Q: Which of the following sources do **you** use for information to help make leisure travel decisions? (N=8,480)
(Multiple Response)



More higher income travelers find almost all sources of leisure travel information **dependable** than do lower income travelers

Q: Which of the following do you consider as **dependable** sources for leisure travel information? (N=8,480)
(Multiple Response)



Appendix

Study Details and Definitions

- The findings of this study are based on a national online survey of 8,480 respondents, which was conducted by DKSA from May through July in 2009. Travelers were asked to select from a list of travel informational tools which sources they used and which sources they considered dependable in helping them make leisure travel decisions.

About DKSA

- D.K. Shifflet & Associates Ltd. is the leading U.S. consumer travel research firm. DKSA is located in McLean, VA and has, for the last 27, years provided the Industry's most complete consumer based travel data on U.S. residents and their travel worldwide. DKSA's information is used daily by leading travel organizations and their strategic planning groups. DKSA's **DIRECTIONS**[®] contacts approximately 40,000 U.S. households for detailed travel data each month and has over 20 years of consumer travel history.
- The DKSA *TRAVEL PERFORMANCE/Monitor*SM captures visitor profiles, volumes, share, guest satisfaction and value ratings, trip purpose, time frame and geography, and benchmarks brand performance for all major accommodation types, hotel chains, airlines, rental cars, cruise lines, credit card companies, destination countries, states and cities. These metrics have become the Industry standard.