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INTERNET EMPOWERING TRAVELLERS: STUDY

Internet an Important and Growing Research Tool

TORONTO, June 2, 2005 – Canadian Internet users are increasingly turning to the Internet to help them make their travel decisions according to an annual marketing research survey conducted by TNS Canadian Facts.

Findings from the firm's annual *Online Travel* study suggest that almost one in five (18%) online Canadians spend more than half of their total travel spending at websites. While the majority spend less than ten percent of their overall travel dollars online, visits to travel-related sites extend beyond making purchases. Nearly half of online Canadians (46%) say the Internet is very or extremely important for making travel plans. Indeed, the study reveals that online Canadians who value the Internet as a planning tool are more likely to travel.

“Consumers are taking full advantage of the key strength of the Internet — an easily accessible and rich source of information that allows them to research and plan their own vacations,” said Richard Jenkins, TNS Canadian Facts’ corporate director of public opinion research.

Travel agents are not being bypassed completely, but their role as a sole or primary source of information on trip destinations is being diminished. Today, many online Canadians arm themselves with information accessed from travel websites before they consult with their agents.

- One in five (20%) travellers (travelled in 2004 or intend to do so in 2005) used a travel agent to make a purchase compared with 12% who purchased from a full service travel website (e.g. Expedia or Travelocity) and 19% who purchased directly from a company website (e.g. Aircanada.com).

- The most likely online activities for travellers relate to conducting research on travel costs (52%), accommodations (51%), destinations (48%), the weather (44%) or transportation (44%).

Although online Canadians expect to use the Internet more in 2005 than they did last year, few people are extremely satisfied with the travel websites they visited.

The *Online Travel Study* is conducted annually by TNS Canadian Facts using the firm's national weekly Internet omnibus Service, TNS Express Online. E-mail invitations were sent to 2,600 members of the TNS Canadian Facts Internet panel comprising more than 80,000 Canadian Internet users who have agreed to participate in survey research from time to time. In total, 1,109 online interviews were completed between January 27 and February 1, a 43 per cent response rate. The survey results are nationally representative of the online Canadian adult population and are considered accurate to within three percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

TNS Canadian Facts (www.tns-cf.com) is one of Canada's most prestigious full-service marketing, opinion and social research organizations.

About TNS

TNS is a market information group. We are the world's largest custom research company and a leading provider of social and political polling. We are also a major supplier of consumer panel, TV audience measurement and media intelligence services.

TNS operates a global network spanning 70 countries and employs over 13,000 people. We provide market information and measurement, together with insights and analysis, to local and multinational organizations.

We combine our specialist sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of new product development, motivational research, brand and advertising research and stakeholder management to bring our clients up-to-the minute, internationally consistent information.

We think differently to help our clients build competitive advantage, making TNS the sixth sense of business (www.tns-global.com).

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