

TripCheck.com popularity continues to grow

TripCheck.com is more popular than ever, according to an online survey conducted last winter. In November and December, nearly 4,000 users took part in the survey, answering questions about how they use the Oregon Department of Transportation's award-winning travel information Web site.



Transcript is a publication of the Oregon Department of Transportation

Visit ODOT's Web site: www.odot.state.or.us
For Oregon road, weather and travel information: www.TripCheck.com
Questions, comments or concerns about ODOT? Call us toll-free — (888) ASK-ODOT

ODOT is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, committed to a diverse workforce. Accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities. Alternate formats available upon request.

Survey results provide insight into which features are important to travelers and commercial interests, and will direct future site upgrades.

"Our two Web surveys and a prior phone survey in 2001 help us understand the audience for travel information," said Galen McGill, ODOT Intelligent Transportation Systems manager. "The results guide the development of all of our TripCheck systems, including the Web site, the 511 phone system and our emerging project to improve our cable TV product."

Survey results show that TripCheck.com is making a significant contribution to the safety and efficiency of Oregon's transportation system. Of those using the site to obtain road condition updates, 87 percent said TripCheck.com is their main source of this information. More than a third said they change their travel plans based on what they learn from the site.

"These findings are very important to us," McGill said. "When users change their plans based on our information, it shows a high level of trust and that we are achieving our goal to improve transportation system safety and efficiency."

High approval ratings

In November and December 2003, the number of site visits rose dramatically; there were twice as many compared to the same in 2002. For the 10-day holiday period in December 2003, the site logged an astounding 1.2 million visits. Current volume is about 28,000 visits per day.

About 40 percent of users visited TripCheck.com three or more times a week, and another 19 percent visited at least once weekly. Most used the information to plan trips inside Oregon.

Respondents gave the Web site high approval ratings. Ninety-four percent said they usually or always find what they are looking for on TripCheck.com. More than 70 percent said the information at the site is very useful, and 65 percent said it is very accurate. One respondent commented:

"Overall, I think you do a great job with TripCheck. I would like to see more traffic cameras... Thanks for the improvements that you have made over the past couple of years in the site. Keep up the good work!"

(Continued)

TripCheck.com popularity continues to grow

Continued

Nearly all winter visitors were concerned with the driving conditions on state highways. Almost 40 percent said they used the ODOT road conditions phone line, and some were already familiar with the newly implemented 511 dialing code. Road cameras, weather reports and incident reports also were widely used.

More than half of respondents said they would welcome a map displaying congestion information, if one was available. ODOT rolled out just such a map of Portland interstates on TripCheck.com in April. Forty percent of respondents said they would like to receive travel information by cell phone or personal digital assistant, also known as a PDA. Plans call for these enhancements to be added with the next site upgrade. Users also said they would like to see timely displays of road conditions, construction information, commercial services and tourism opportunities at roadside rest areas. A third of survey respondents was interested in trucking information, including details about major highways, construction, travel time and more.

A wide range of users

The survey indicated that 35 percent of TripCheck users were 50-64 years old. In a national comparison of government Web

sites, only 21 percent of users fell into this age range. In addition, dispatchers, family members and friends regularly used the site to provide drivers with real-time travel information along their routes.

Representative comments included the following.

“With me being in Kansas talking to the guys on the radio trucking through Oregon... they are asking me what the different passes look like as far as snow, road conditions, chain requirement or anything needed. It’s all right there in front of me on the screen.”

“I worked in a residence hall at a college and had to check the road reports every hour for the students before they left for holidays and everyday driving.”

The University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory conducted the survey for ODOT. It drew an unusually high response rate of 13 percent — about three times what researchers expected.

“Based on our research, TripCheck.com might well be one of the most useful information products of Oregon state government, if not the most useful,” said Perren Smith, University of Oregon TripCheck Survey Project Director.

.....
Written by [Chris Moore](#), strategic communications coordinator.