



POWERING TRAVEL | SEASON 2 | EPISODE 5

## Data, trends, and AI: Transforming the travel industry

### What to listen for:

Press play on episode five of Powering Travel, featuring special (and returning!) guest Dennis Schaal, founding editor and executive editor of Skift.

In this episode, your host Brandon Ehrhardt and guest host Richard Kocher cut through the noise around the ever-shifting world of travel with Dennis. The three chat about using data and insights in the travel industry to make strategic decisions — and dive into using data for everything from leveraging research to tracking tourism trends.

Plus, you'll hear about their hot takes and trend predictions for the industry — including commentary on artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, and post-pandemic demand.

### Introduction:

[00:00:04] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Travel providers are the backbone of the travel experience. In this brand-new season of Powering Travel, we'll dive into industry trends, hot topics, and actionable advice to help business leaders continue evolving and enhancing travel experience, one trip at a time. Welcome to the Powering Travel podcast. The penultimate episode, second-to-last episode of season two, but we're just taking a short break this time. So, season three is right around the corner, but let's focus on the conversation at hand. I have enlisted the help of Richard Kocher, the director of Media Insights and Planning at Expedia Group. Richard, so glad you could join me for this one. Tell me about who you are and what you do for Expedia Group.

[00:00:51] **Richard Kocher** Sure. Thanks, Brandon. Yes, I oversee insights and planning for the Media Solutions team based in London for now, and part of a global group who are working with data and insights across each of our regions, you know, how a customer searching and booking across our sites is the kind of key behavior that we look at. This data underpins and supports company strategies and partnerships to partners that we have in each of these regions. We also use this data in supporting the Quarterly Traveler Insights report that some of you might be aware of and can access on a fairly regular basis. We are overseeing all insights and planning for the Media Solutions Group and data storytelling as a key component of what we do day to day.

[00:01:33] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Awesome, Richard. Thanks so much and so glad you are here to welcome back our guest today. Our first returning guest, this show, you know him, you love him. Founding editor and executive editor of Skift, Dennis Schaal. Dennis is a long-time travel industry journalist, writing for several publications, including USA Today. You can hear him in our first episode of Powering Travel, titled From Surviving to Thriving: A New Chapter for the Hospitality Industry. We're happy to have him back on the show with some fantastic Twitter follow. Let's jump into the interview. Okay, first question. Excited about this one's going to be a great episode. We're going to focus on data and insights, and I want to hear from you both. So, we're going to start from Dennis and to give us this gift perspective, Richard, I'd like you to give us the Expedia Group perspective. Here's the question. How is research being approached by your respective companies and how is it being leveraged to be published and then to extend these insights to the partners and customers that you're hoping to reach?

[00:02:36] **Dennis Schaal** Yeah, thanks for having me. From a research perspective, we like to do projects and topics that can be quantified in each report we do, but that's not true with every report. Each report is different. So, some reports rely heavily on data, some reports rely on interviews, and some reports are a combination of both. Well, for example, we do a travel health index. We have 22 data partners, companies like OAG, Hotelbeds, Amadeus. And in this most recent report, we measured tourism around the world. I think they're like 82 performance indicators that we cover for each country. And for example, the April numbers showed for the first time since the pandemic that our travel health index had topped 100 on a scale of 0 to 100. Of course, showing tourism's global recovery is back. The tourism is higher now than during the pandemic, although a lot of regions around the world or some regions like North America and Europe haven't quite caught up. So, this would be third-party data to come up with the findings.

[00:03:41] **Richard Kocher** At EG we continue looking at data and insights to better inform partners and really try to give an in-depth view of how what's motivating our customers to travel. A big opportunity for us in that kind of partner space. How do we use data? How do we use research to provide relevant and actionable insights to these partners, their decision making and some of that strategy? And there's two key areas. One is mining our first-party data, so search and booking behavior across all of our global sites. There's segment analysis in there as well. And then a big part of research as well, getting into the mindsets of our travelers and conducting, typically with third-party research firms, questions around the sort of terms like types of travel.

[00:04:24] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I think sometimes with data, one of the challenges can be there's so much of it, right? First-party. Third-party. How do your teams break out signal and noise?

[00:04:33] **Richard Kocher** I can take that one. I actually just, interesting that as I saw that reference that you made around returning normality post-COVID, and we found that data for us during the pandemic was incredibly valuable understanding how the world was responding to changing regulations. You know, it's a real relief now to see the return to normality, but it serves that question, Brandon, relates to noise versus signal. I'd say that because we're looking at data on a daily basis, looking with patterns and search and booking behavior because we have a significant sample size and we're comparing the data and contrasting it with different time periods. I'd say it's pretty easy for us to distinguish between signal and noise, particularly in smaller sample sizes. It's very easy to see any quick changes that might be occurring. And so, I think, and this is kind of advice, I suppose, for partners listening to this podcast, **how do we ensure that we're always applying context to the data? What is it we're looking at? What is the sample size? And you know what kind of problems and are we trying to solve with the data?** So, from my perspective, we can distinguish fairly quickly those differences. And I think going back to COVID, it was a really good example for us to spot trends. We were hearing a lot in the industry around what was happening regarding cleanliness, greater prominence in domestic travel, rising demand in vacation rentals, and the benefit of us having access to data daily. And as I said earlier, on a large scale, we were able to verify those signals through search booking. And that is one of my favorite things about our sentiment analysis, we could see very early on in 2020 because of the feedback around cleanliness and hygiene being an important aspect of travelers. We can see that signal in our review data. So, the prominence, then, the likelihood of someone mentioning cleanliness or hygiene increased threefold in those first few months.

[00:06:19] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Richard, that's an interesting one. Let me dig on that one. So basically what you're saying here is, and I think this is a very important point to make, the data, the survey data matched the observed data that we were seeing in reviews, which really give us some strength behind the research you're doing. Is it the point that you're making?

[00:06:36] **Richard Kocher** It is three factors; I suppose you could argue. We are hearing a lot in the industry, talking points around travelers changing their perspective on what a quality travel experience looks like. And we were able to verify that. I suppose anecdotal type feedback with one, first-party data. So, the signals that we were getting through the reviews, but then also backing up with research, the questions that we are asking of our traveler user base. And so we had both the first-party piece and the third-party piece of first-party quantitative data that's qualitative feedback from those of a survey.

## Signals versus noise:

[00:07:09] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Interesting. Dennis, thinking about Skift. How do you all break out the signal from the noise? So, talk to us how Skift solved this problem and maybe how you specifically can identify that signal.

[00:07:22] **Dennis Schaal** There are a couple examples of what I consider noise that I try to not disregard but be very skeptical about. And one of those is social media, of course. Although at times it can be invaluable. But I found that sometimes, for example, tweets from Airbnb hosts complaining about some new policy or other may not really represent the majority of hosts. For example, when Airbnb did their change to search, a lot of hosts said that their bookings disappeared. But I found that might just be a minority sentiment. The people making the most noise might not be the most accurate. And then another thing that, you know, regarding research that I look for is I'm always skeptical about sponsored research as a journalist, when a company comes out with a self-serving report in partnership with a third-party research company. For example, Oxford Economics, in 2022, they did a report commissioned by Airbnb about short-term rentals in Puerto Rico. And the report found that 92 percent of posts are island based. In other words, they're locals. But another study came out by this company, by a firm called the Center for a New Economy, and they found that actually 79 percent of the revenue in short-term rentals in Puerto Rico was generated by corporations or big property management companies with multiple listings. So, it was really a fallacy that the mom-and-pop hosts were the ones that are cashing in on the short-term rental frenzy.

[00:08:54] **Brandon Ehrhardt** It's super interesting, right, that you have one set of research that tells you one thing and you have a second set that tells you the complete opposite or at least a significantly different story. So, thinking about, Dennis, your specialty is in writing the story. How do you find the story to activate those insights? A lot of companies like to make words trendy, and I think what Skift does a really good job of is finding words to better describe things that are actually happening that also happen to be trendy. So, we think about overtourism, which in that arc, you know, Skift coined the term overtourism, and then recently, I don't know, maybe a month ago, we started to walk back from that term. And I think that there was a lot of good reasons for why we use it and then why Skift started to think about it in a new way. So, talk to us about how you find a story to kind of activate the insights that you see or that you are part of the research that you see.

[00:09:52] **Dennis Schaal** Sure. On overtourism, we walked it back because we felt like it was sort of a blame the traveler term. But in terms of how we find stories, I find the greatest place to find stories is just talking to people. And I'm also a nerd that I scour SEC filings when I have the time. There's an annual report called a 10-K report, which public companies file, and I consider them to be almost encyclopedias on companies. And there's so much information in there. There is so much news in there that nobody has reported on, that I've made my career around reading those reports.

[00:10:33] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Let me ask you a question there, and then Richard, I want to circle back and get your perspective there. But Dennis, this is too good not to ask now. I was aware that you did this. And then I was thinking to myself the other day, have you started to use ChatGPT to help you find the nuggets, or how do you make that simple for yourself?

[00:10:51] **Dennis Schaal** Oh, yeah. I use ChatGPT. I find it's a streamlined way to search. By the way, Skift just launched an "asks guest" tool on our app, which is ChatGPT ask us anything about travel. Actually, for the purposes of this conversation, I use ChatGPT because I was going to say that looking at the future, I wouldn't be surprised if there's another pandemic coming in the next five years or so. But it's a great tool. It's a great shortcut. No, I don't use it to write stories, but all my stories are unfortunately written by myself. But it's a great tool.

[00:11:30] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I'll just tell you, I don't have another three years of COVID in lockdown in Chicago, so I may be joining you in Puerto Rico the other way.

[00:11:37] **Dennis Schaal** Oh, right. Come on. Come on, Brandon.

[00:11:39] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Richard, going back to the story and activating the insights, I think at Expedia Group, you certainly all have a very interesting way of going about that. Can you share your process and how you find the story within all of the data?

[00:11:52] **Richard Kocher** The way we like to talk about, actually, is the idea of real-time stories of how, when, and where the world is traveling. And I think our sample size of data is a good indication of what's happening more broadly in the world of travel. But day-to-day perspective, obviously, we're using it for decision making within the business strategy, and data underpins every decision that we make in the company from an external perspective. So, working with partners, we find that's incredibly valuable to inform not only our strategy on the Expedia side but our partners' strategy, particularly if they have maybe a blinkered view of what's happening in the industry, we can give them that all-out perspective of what's happening. An example would be an emerging trend of leisure travel, the idea of combining leisure and business travel. Partners looking to us for that thought leadership that came through our first- and third-party data. And then Houston being a great example. They leveraged that insight. They used it in that communication with travelers to encourage travelers to stay beyond the business trip and take leisure as well. I think this idea of domestic being increasingly popular with travelers during COVID, we leaned into that by encouraging our partners when running advertising across Expedia Group sites and partnering with us. We encourage them to feature domestic destinations and to drive messaging around domestic, and that applies to any number of sort of factors where we're seeing a signal in our data, whether that's first- or third-party. And then we're trying to give that to our partners, allowing them to then make decisions on how they invest in marketing with Expedia Group, but also more broadly and why their strategies, that cleanliness and hygiene item that I mentioned earlier. Again, we're able to give that thought leadership to our partners. They were able to replicate that in their creatives. But I'd say just overall, generally speaking, because we're seeing cyclical trends in travel and we're able to identify when customers are searching and booking destinations. That's invaluable data for our partners, looking to understand when they should be engaging with travelers or when they should be thinking about prior challenges and then helping drive demand.

[00:14:00] **Dennis Schaal** That's really changing the world, isn't it? That what you call leisure travel. We call it blended travel. You can see how the whole airline industry is, there are selling a lot of tickets at the front of the plane now to blended travelers, you know, to people who are on leisure trips or combo business and leisure trips, and they're willing to spend big bucks for it while, before business travel is fully recovered.

[00:14:25] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Great for a segment there with Dennis, a journalist, all about data. Big fan of that. It's so interesting to hear him talk about all the ways that he's gathering the information he needs for stories. And then, Richard, hearing you separately talk about what you're doing with your team to ensure what you're releasing is not only accurate but is interesting and it's approached with that same level of integrity that Dennis brings to his work. Talk to us more about what it's like to hear a journalist discuss the line of work that you're also in.

[00:14:57] **Richard Kocher** Yeah, it's definitely refreshing and validating to hear from someone so prominent in the industry and in the travel journalism space. I mean, myself and the team reading articles on a daily basis, I'm always super impressed with the data that underpins them, finding stories in the data, leading on meeting on trends, some of which we can relate to as well. And actually maybe saying how can we actually work more closely with Skift on some of this small leadership. They've got some great ideas and thinking and what data can we do to provide support that. So, yeah, really refreshing, as I said, and quite an honor to catch up with.

[00:15:40] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I bet. Always great to have Dennis on, one of my favorite guests, and it was incredible. We had to pull back the curtain and provide a little bit more context around data collection and then how we externalize those insights was fully to hear his approach and your approach, Richard, was just very insightful.

[00:15:56] **Richard Kocher** Yeah, absolutely. I agree. There's a lot of crossover there in the work that we're doing and what Dennis is looking at, and I felt we could have gone on way longer talking about the opportunities that we're excited to hear what you have to say next in the next part of the interview.

## Hot takes on future trends:

[00:16:10] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Yes, we got to shift away from the nuts and bolts of gathering data and insights and get into some future predictions. You heard Dennis this first go-round with future predictions. You know, there were some smoking hot takes. I don't think this version's any different. So, we got to hear a lot of really cool, insightful pieces from Dennis. Let's jump into the second half of that interview right now. All right. Let's break out the skillet. It's going to be time for some hot takes, future trends. We'll make this a roundtable, so we'll go Dennis first and then Richard and then I'll round us out. Let's talk about what we're seeing. And Dennis, we'll start with you. Where do you think the industry is going? What's going to be the next new big thing? We talked a little bit about ask Skift, which is your ChatGPT plug-in, but feel free to jump into what you think's coming next.

[00:16:58] **Dennis Schaal** Yeah, that's the big trend. Artificial intelligence. I think it's going to be a tremendous advantage for travelers during the trip planning. You guys, Expedia launched both a plug-in and a generative AI feature in your mobile app, and I think a lot of companies are going to be using it internally as well to streamline operations. We mentioned a little bit about separating hype from reality, and I think artificial intelligence is going to be great. It could have a lot of unintended consequences. I think some of the noise regarding artificial intelligence, if someone is going to tell you that we're about to enter a new era of hyper-personalization, that's really difficult to see. I think we're still a long way off from that in terms of the way artificial intelligence is used. It's so hard to nail that.

[00:17:49] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Go, Richard.

[00:17:50] **Richard Kocher** Yeah, I think the ChatGPT approach perspective is an interesting one. And I think for me, it's to Dennis's point there, it's about how to streamline operations. And from a data insights perspective, how do we get to the insight faster? So, we've got a data set, how do we apply AI? What are the insights we're looking for in a more efficient way? And so, I really see that being incredibly valuable for the future of my team and how we generate insights more broader than that and have the travel trends. I think some of those emerging trends that we saw during COVID, sustained demand for vacation rentals. It's going to be interesting to see how that keeps up. And we also saw in that space an increasing desire from our travelers to book unique experiences, whether that's a barn or a houseboat or even a castle. And that then links to my other point, which is I think travelers' increased appetite for experiences. New unique experiences, things that money can't buy in many respects, The money can buy the travel, but these tend to be sort of one-off experiences. And I think, again, thinking about the pandemic, there was a lot of lost travel time during that period. And now I think families and travelers try to make up for lost time and seeing the world. And that also, I think, bodes well for price inflation. And then just do a couple more things for me. I think just reference leisure or pleasure. Again, I think with flexible working, you saw some great trends actually in this increasingly with the ability to work anywhere in the world. We're seeing individuals trying to pare that business and leisure travel and actually in a lot of cases, booking vacation rentals in order to do that. And then the final piece as well, and I know we've had another podcast featuring the sustainable travel experiences that I think will become an increasing currency for world of travel travelers out the businesses.

[00:19:37] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Cool. I'll add my two. First one, it's been growing since the pandemic when people were stuck at home for two or three years watching Netflix is the destinations that people see are the ones they want to travel to. And I think we've already started to see this become a business with destination marketing organizations and hotel and travel suppliers vying for this screen real estate. But I think like the phenomenons that we've seen with Bloodline and with White Lotus and I mean going back all the way back to Sex and the City for New York City, that will only get bigger. And I think what will be next is how do we help people find those locations and book those locations simply. And then the second piece I agree with Dennis, hyper personalization is a long way off, and I think there's a temptation to try and solve it with one swing of the bat, if you will, but it's breaking it down into components. And I think the personalization around loyalty, thinking about what is the benefit that you want. Do you want a discount? Do you want cash back for your next trip or points or do you want an intraday benefit like breakfast? That's I think where we're heading, where for these really big behemoth programs, they're going to have to target a more personalized

approach, I guess, to put it simply to attract that traveler because there are so many loyalty programs. I think whoever can speak to the individual the soonest is going to be able to grow the share of that wallet. They control that quick. So two couple interesting trends there. Dennis, question for you. We've seen vacation rentals take off, really grow, but then obviously fly during the pandemic. Are there other sectors of travel that you think are primed for exponential growth as we move towards 2024?

[00:21:24] **Dennis Schaal** I think cities are coming back, and that's going to mean, actually, Expedia, in your recent earnings called, talked about demand for vacation rentals becoming somewhat subdued compared to during the pandemic. And the cities are coming back. Hotels are coming back. I think we're going to see a lot of people going back to New York City. And I was thinking also that maybe that spells drive vacations to resort areas really picked up steam during the pandemic because that was the only place you could go. Right? But I'm wondering if they might lose some steam as cities come back as well. Regarding what you were talking about of the real estate for destinations in terms of where they can acquire their customers and how they present it, I definitely see Facebook losing advertising share in the long run and platforms such as TikTok and Hulu jumping right in there. So, it's not something new in the travel industry to see an incumbent player being displaced by the upstarts, but I think that's certainly going to happen.

[00:22:27] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Do you think about product placement and TV's own media, it's certainly not new. Started in the seventies and eighties. I mean, I think the best product placement of all time was the movie Top Gun, right? We saw what happened with like Navy enrollments after that film came out and the 1986 original. I think with TV and destination placement, there's just so much opportunity.

[00:22:51] **Dennis Schaal** When you talk about the focus on locals and advertising, I know Discover Puerto Rico did this well ad campaign based on locals and local culture. And that fits in with, Richard, what you were talking about, how people are looking for genuine experiences. You know, they want some of the big tourist spots, but they also want to fit in with the locals. And yeah, that kind of thing is really important and resonates as well.

[00:23:15] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Let's talk about the flip side of hot takes. You know, there are some that are so focused on the hot take, sometimes you forget that some things are fleeting. What are the red herrings right now in travel? What are some trends we're seeing today that we don't think will last? Richard, I'll start with you and then Dennis, we can pivot your way.

[00:23:34] **Richard Kocher** Perhaps linked a little bit to Dennis's point earlier. That, again, I don't talk about COVID, but it was it was so rich with insight. I think that period, because of the elasticity of travel, we really saw changes in how people moved and behaved around travel. And I think there was a lot of talk at that time about cities not coming back and how travelers who were done with cities. But to Dennis's point, the data proved otherwise. And we're seeing travelers flock back to cities, and they're getting back to what we saw in 2019. And you could probably argue the same maybe for people that fled the city to live outside of large cities. Maybe they're going back now as well. So that's what I would say is maybe something was fleeting as a trend.

[00:24:16] **Dennis Schaal** Yeah, from a business perspective, somewhat from a consumer perspective, too, I think a trend that's going to dissipate is the metaverse.

[00:24:26] **Dennis Schaal** I think it's like a gigantic boondoggle for Facebook. The amount of billions of dollars they're putting into the metaverse. What's the saying? So, it's not if you build it, they will come. It's the opposite, right? Build the metaverse and nobody's going to show up. I know that Travelzoo just launched their own metaverse, so we'll have to see how that does. With AI being as hot as it is to invest in the metaverse right now, I think it's the wrong place at the wrong time. And then the other thing I was just going to mention is obviously a lot of travel businesses, we're talking about blockchain, you know that, hey, Expedia was going to be bypassed, the global distribution system would be bypassed with blockchain. Not too many people are talking about that right now.

[00:25:10] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Dennis, that's a good one. Richard, it was fleeting.

[00:25:13] **Richard Kocher** Yeah. I just want to follow up on Dennis's point there about metaverse, because I felt something similar to that. And I think because you hear the investment that's gone into it. It does feel a little bit like hype. But I do think that it's maybe a generational thing. And I think for myself, I'm in my forties and I think about experiencing travel through the metaverse and I can't relate to that. However, I think about my children who are growing up with screens and they're growing up in a far more virtual environment, perhaps there'd be a point where the metaverse plays a bigger role for them in how they think about travel plans to travel and potentially even experience travel. So, I do think it will have a future, but I think it will take longer to get there than perhaps the industry felt initially.

## Foreign travel in 2024 & beyond:

[00:25:51] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Interesting. I don't think it'll go away, but I think it will decrease. Dennis, we'll start with you. Richard, get ready. What are you excited and optimistic about foreign travel as we look to the end of the year in 2024 and beyond?

[00:26:05] **Dennis Schaal** Well, it's sort of online travel lore. After 9/11, when the travel industry nosedived, somebody at Expedia said they were talking about going ahead with an acquisition or not going ahead with the acquisition. And somebody on the Expedia board or in the Expedia leadership said without travel, there is no life. And I think what I'm excited about is we're seeing that today, you know, in droves. So, while the economists have been talking about recession, inflation, high prices, but it hasn't really yet hampered people's desire to travel. Without travel, there's no life. We saw that during the pandemic. So that's exciting to see how persistent that desire is and how it just keeps on rolling.

[00:26:53] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Richard?

[00:26:54] **Richard Kocher** Yeah, I was going to say something similar, actually, Dennis, around the resilience of travelers. I think that's exciting. From a personal perspective, actually, when we're excited about in travel, I'm currently based in the UK and I'm moving to Seattle in August with my family, and what I'm really looking forward to when we get there and having a base is exploring the U.S. and seeing all the states that I haven't visited before. So, that's a kind of personal thing for me Dennis said a moment ago, is the resilience of travelers and what new trends will be created over the future.

## Final thoughts and key takeaways:

[00:27:24] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Richard, top U.S. state on the wish list that you want to visit that you have not.

[00:27:29] **Richard Kocher** Really good question. I think I've been to California before a couple of times, but in terms of leisure trip, it was 20 years ago when I went there. So, I'd like to really explore California in greater depth.

[00:27:41] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Dennis, let's talk about summer travel for you. So, you're in the hottest place on earth for the summer. Puerto Rico is going to be cooking. Are you planning any trips, planning any travel to the U.S. or abroad?

[00:27:54] **Dennis Schaal** Well, I got back on Sunday from a trip to Iceland, so that rivals Puerto Rico in the weather. We had 70 people from our company. We do our annual retreat. We did our second retreat to Iceland. So, that was awesome. There are a lot of places I haven't been. Vietnam is on my bucket list. I've never been to India. Those are two places I definitely want to go.

[00:28:14] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I love Vietnam. I reference Vietnam, at least half of the episode. That's one of the best countries I've been to. And there's just, it's an amalgamation of so many different cultures like Vietnamese, Japanese,

Chinese, French, a little bit of American. It's just a melting pot, and the result is super good food and really nice people. And I just had a fantastic time. So do not wait too long to go to Vietnam, Dennis, it's incredible.

[00:28:42] **Dennis Schaal** Great. Plan on it.

[00:28:47] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Off sites in Iceland. Sounds like a pretty fun place to work, Richard.

[00:28:53] **Richard Kocher** Yeah. I think I wish we were doing our offsite in Iceland. That sounds really good fun. And yeah, just speaking out about the metaverse as well with Dennis, it's not something we've talked about for a while. So, it's good to reengage there, absolutely. So, any plans for your travel, Brandon?

[00:29:10] **Dennis Schaal** I still have not nailed down where we're going at this summer, but it is on my to-do list this week.

[00:29:16] **Richard Kocher** We actually went to Helsinki last summer, which is getting into that territory. That was a great, great trip. Great summer trip.

[00:29:25] **Brandon Ehrhardt** It is a fun place to be in the summer. It's like one of those places where you can walk out of a restaurant or bar at 11 o'clock at night and it is like 2pm, sunny, which is not something that you ever experience here in the U.S. But Richard, we are looking forward to welcoming you to the U.S. here soon. But before we do that, let's talk about how listeners can tap into the rich research that you're doing here at Expedia Group.

[00:29:48] **Richard Kocher** Yeah, so probably two core routes into getting access to our data and research. The first one, data insights that we published to the industry can be accessed on all our sites and on our Media Solutions blog, and you'll see a number of previous research studies on there at our Quarterly Insights report, and then be on the lookout for the upcoming path of purchase research. We conduct the study with this research to look closely at the path travelers take from the inspiration phase, the purchase phase of their travel. We have survey data of recent travelers telling us how they prep the trip, what inspired them, etc. And then we also have digital data where we can actually see the steps they took in the 45 days leading up to that travel purchase. And we're very excited this is going to be launching in the summer, so look out for that. The other avenue, in addition to sort of going to our sites and accessing the various studies that that are available, is via my team and that's the partner relationships are the conversations that we have on a day-to-day basis. And so as this minister just partners with us, my team are engaging them on various trends that we're seeing that then inform their partnerships with us. So those two core avenues.

[00:31:02] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Love it. And what's cool is you can connect the dots between the episodes, thinking about what inspired them in the path of purchase research. I'm personally excited to see where set-jetting fits into this. So, we talked about people who travel to the destinations where their favorite TV shows and films were shot. I'm looking to see if that starts to creep up in terms of how many people are inspired by TV shows and movies. So, Richard, as I mentioned, really glad to have you joining us on this side of the pond. I know you're moving over to Seattle soon, and next time I'm out that way, I would love to grab a beer, coffee with you. Thanks again for joining and co-hosting this one with me.

[00:31:39] **Richard Kocher** Definitely. Yeah. Thanks, Brandon. Can't wait to see you in Seattle and having me on the show. I really, really enjoyed it.

[00:31:47] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Thanks for joining us for another episode of the Powering Travel podcast. We have just one more episode left this season. If you liked this episode, you're going to love our finale. In the meantime, rate and review helps people like you find our show. And I do want to mention we do read your emails. Thank you for sending them. We love hearing from you, so please keep sending those to [PoweringTravel@ExpediaGroup.com](mailto:PoweringTravel@ExpediaGroup.com). That's PoweringTravel, all one word, at [Expediagroup.com](https://partner.expediagroup.com). And as I mentioned, if you have just a few seconds to take some time to rate and review the show. Thanks so much for listening. We'll see you next time for the season finale of the Powering Travel podcast. Season three is right around the corner. But next up, the finale of season two. We will see you in two weeks for that finale, the Powering Travel podcast, brought to you by Expedia.