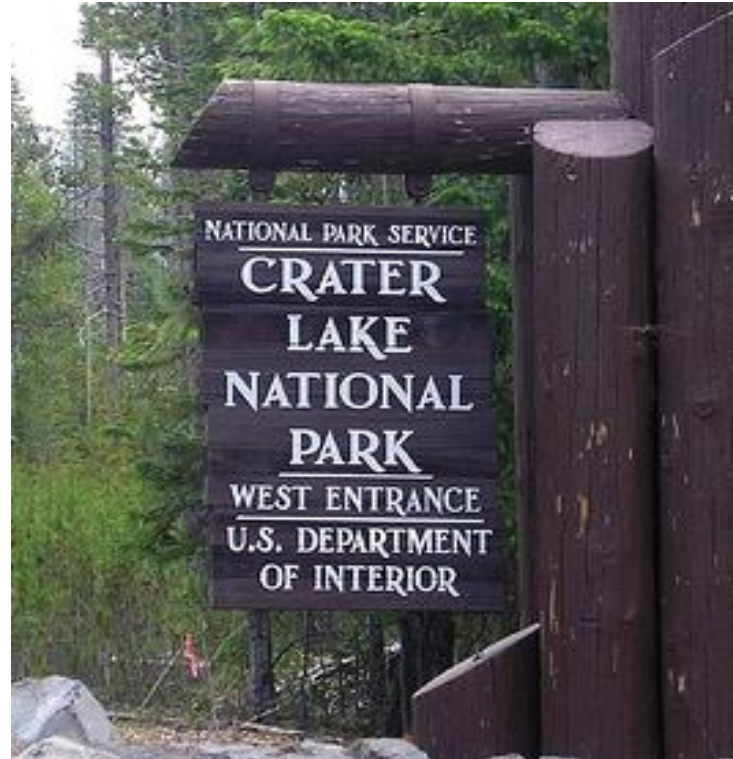


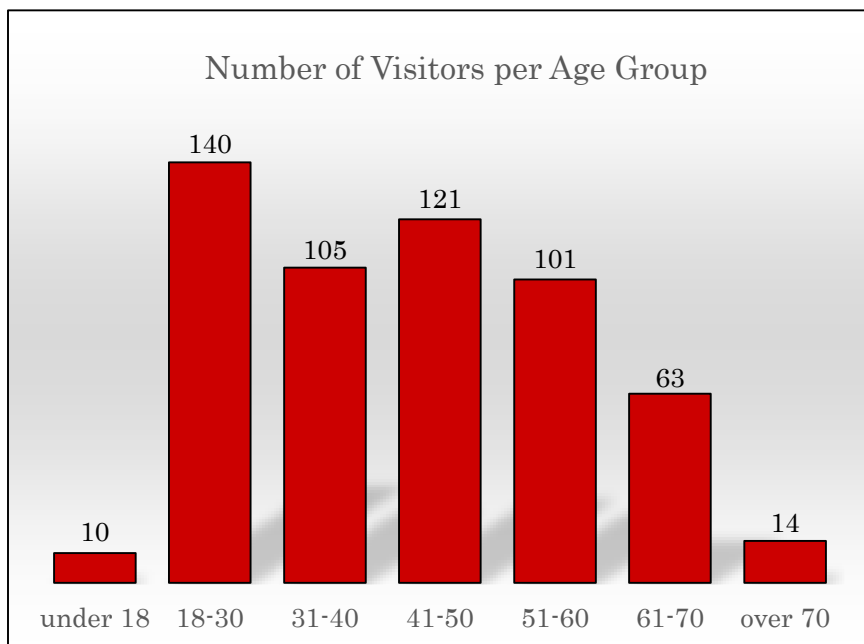
The Evaluation of Internet Presence and Social Media Perceptions and Usage by Visitors to Crater Lake National Park

Websites and social media have tremendous potential to inform and influence our decisions, especially when planning trips and sharing trip experiences. By studying how visitors use the Internet and social media to plan park visits, park and natural resource managers can establish web-based presences that lead to more enjoyable outdoor recreational experiences.

The following report details initial results from 580 survey results collected at Crater Lake National Park July-August 2014. Visitors were asked about their preferences for social media pertaining to the park, Wi-Fi access at the park, and what kinds of park information they would prefer to have access to in the future. Results indicate that visitors had a clear preference for specific types on information on specific social media platforms. The majority of visitors also reported a high level of trust in National Park Service publications.



Basic Visitor Demographics



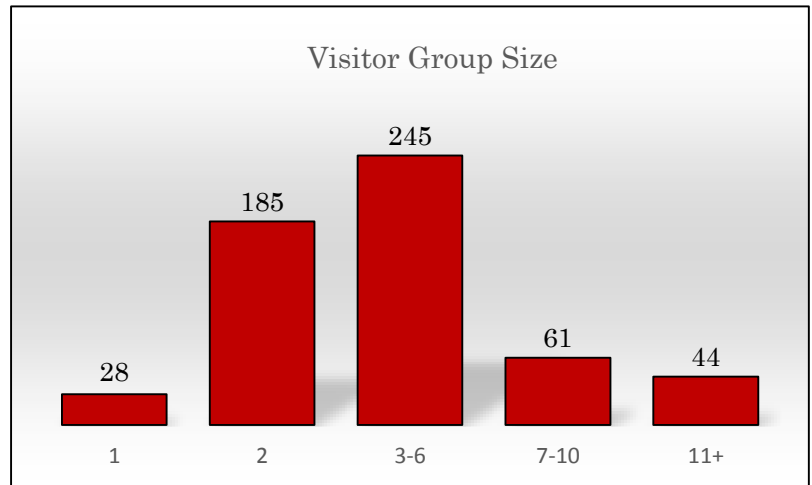
At a glance...

- 86% White/Caucasian
- 74% hold college degrees
- 54% men, 46% women
- 21% from Oregon
- 41% from Oregon's four border states

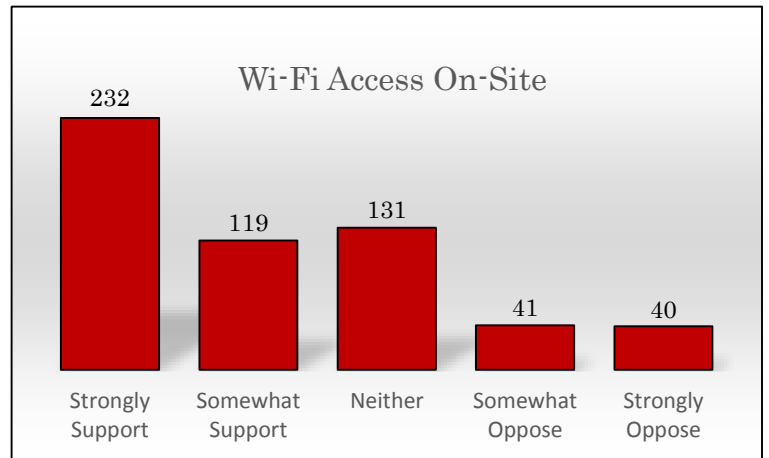
Visitor Characteristics

At a glance,

- 65% were first time visitors
- 35% had visited before
- 66% were visiting for the day
- 34% were staying at least one night



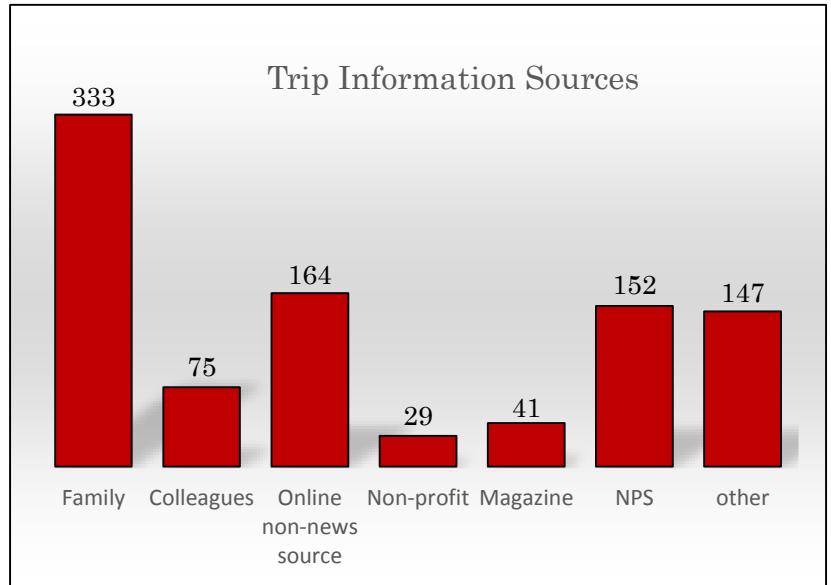
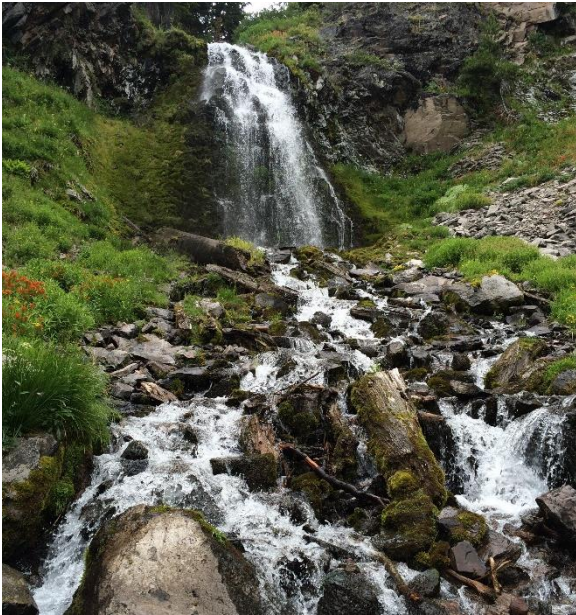
Preference for Wi-Fi Access



At a glance, visitors were most impassioned about this particular topic. Many individuals offered their strong opinions verbally and through extra comments on the survey:

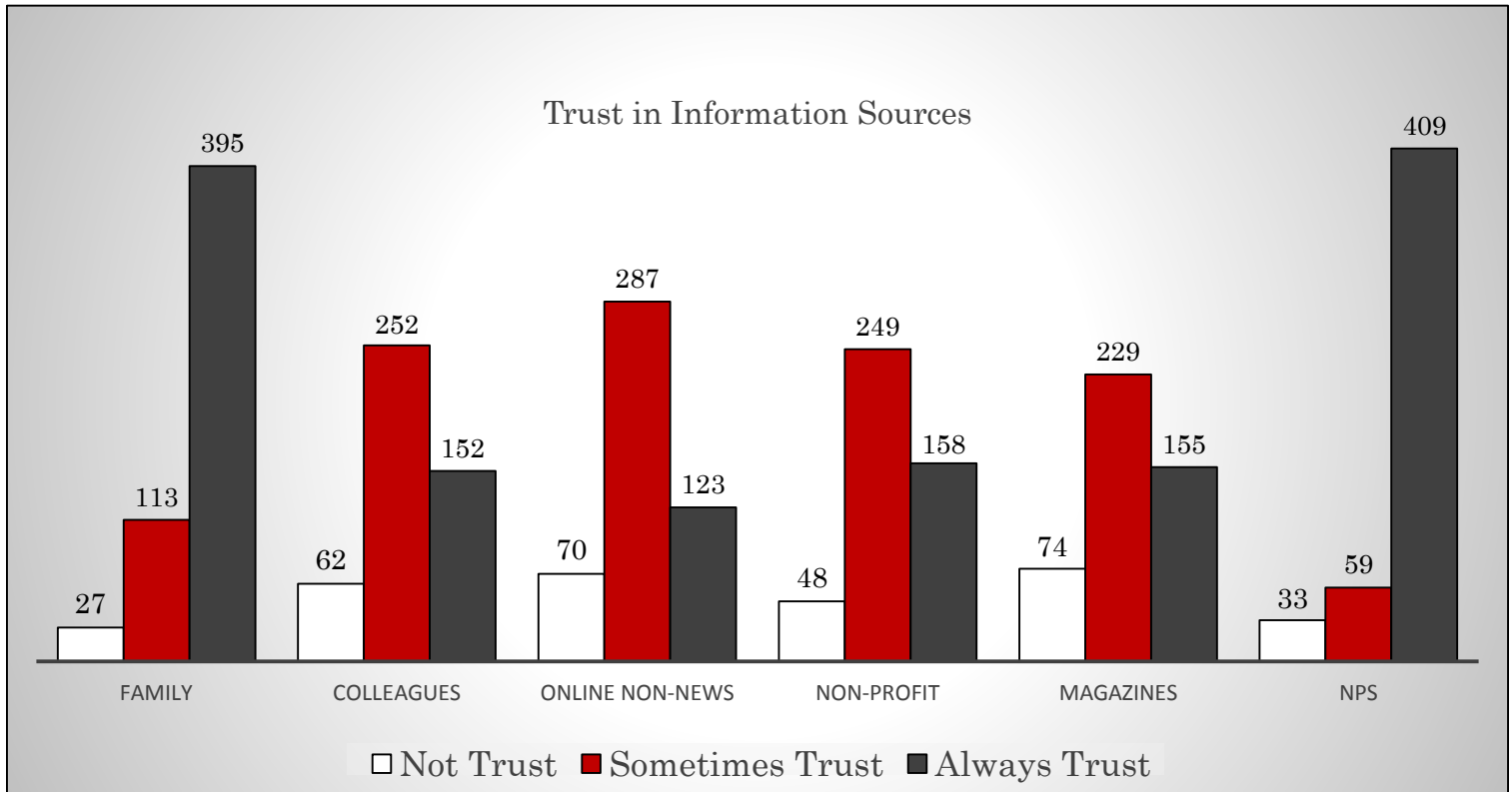
- “Yes YES please!”
- “Absolutely not – we come here to get away from that kind of stuff.”
- “It would help to be able to get to our finances or find available campgrounds.”

Alternative Information Sources



At a glance,

- Visitors relied on their family and friends for important pre-trip information.
- The National Park Service is the second highest trusted source of information for visitors.

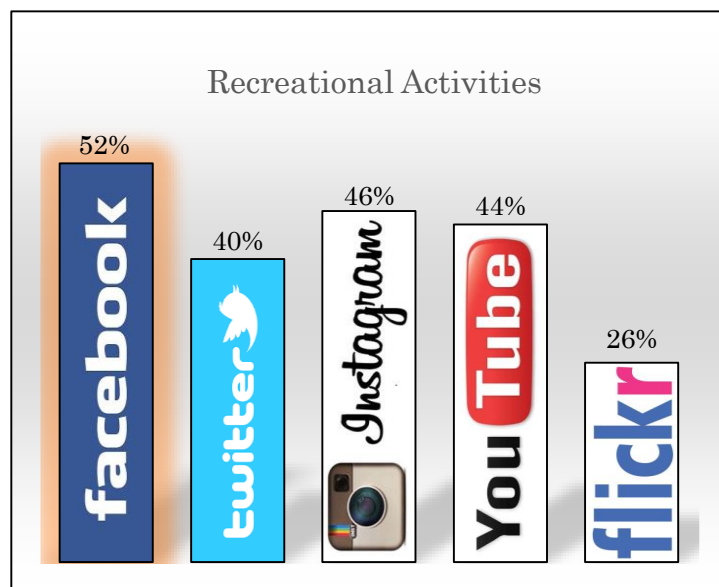
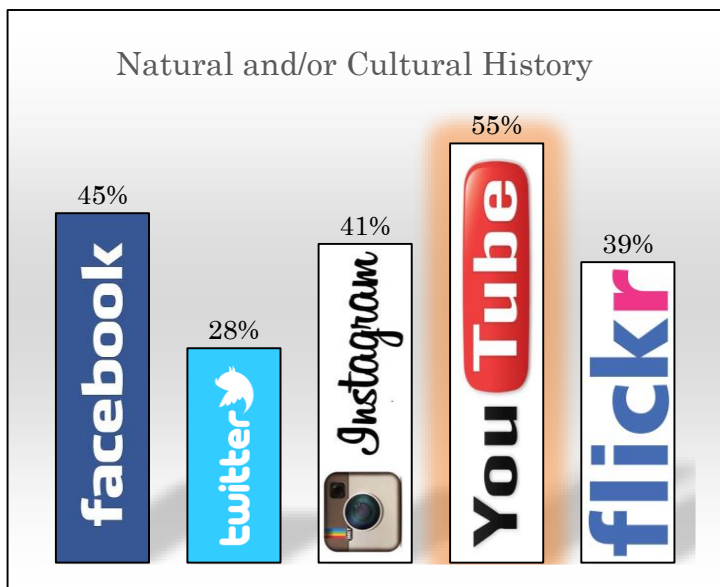
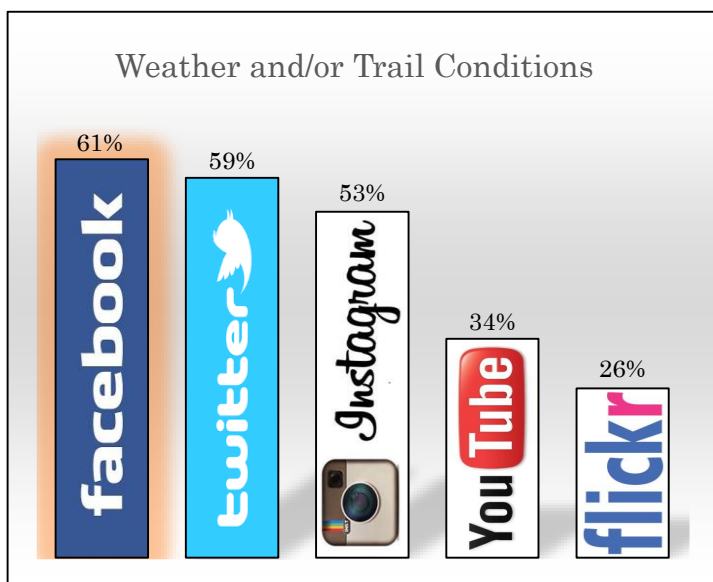


Social Media Preferences

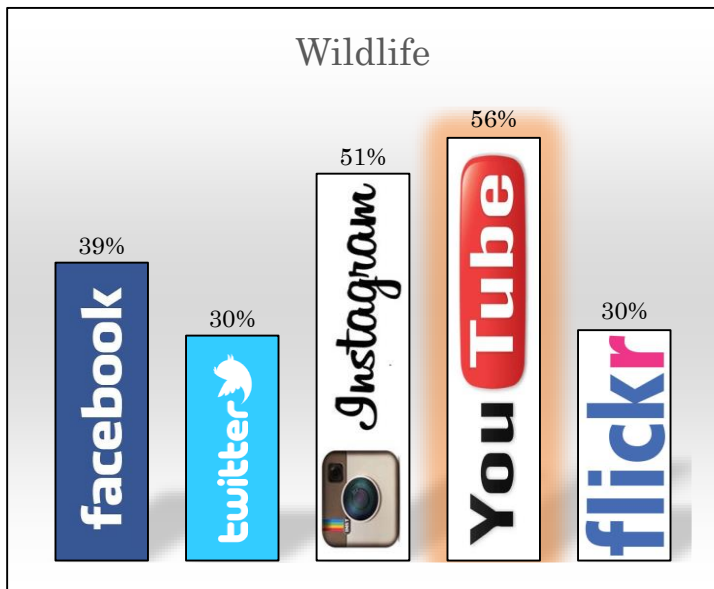
Visitors were asked what kinds of information they would prefer from each of the major social media sites. The graphs below indicate a clear visitor preference for different kinds of information through specific social media platforms.

At a glance,

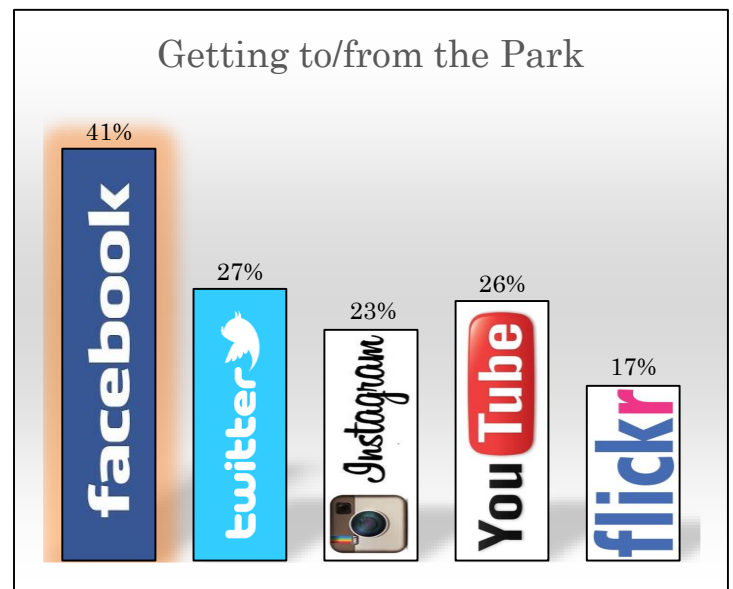
- 90-100% had not visited one of CLNP social media pages
- 21% used Facebook to plan the trip
- 64% did not use any social media to plan the trip
- 51% had visited the CLNP website prior to the trip
- 40% used information from the CLNP website to plan the trip



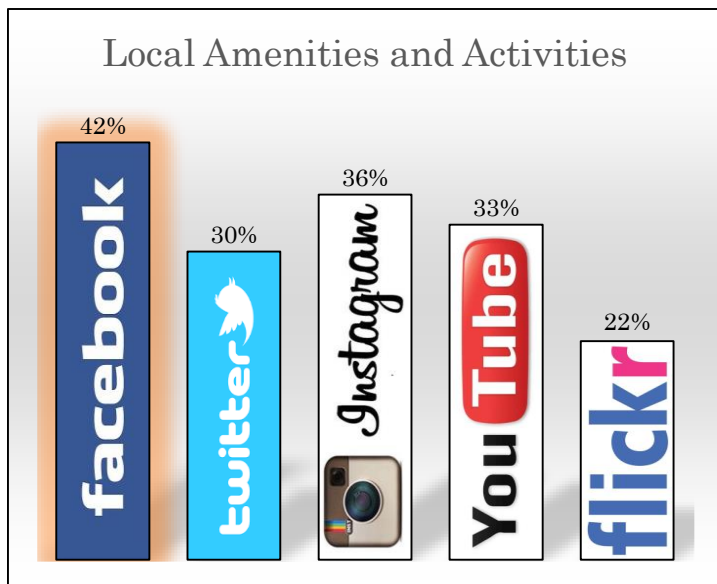
Wildlife



Getting to/from the Park



Local Amenities and Activities



Visitors generally preferred to receive more current information from sources like Facebook and Twitter. Other content, such as videos or images showing the photogenic nature of the park, was generally preferred to be found on websites such as Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube.

Park managers should carefully consider their online presence, and whether the park visitors can find relevant information on those sites easily. Using a social media management tool such as HootSuite, TweetDeck, or SocialFlow might help to centralize the social media communication process, and save park managers valuable time while still providing visitors with the information they need.

Using social media effectively means that visitors have more opportunities to share their experiences with their friends and relatives, and as these results have shown, friends and relatives are a highly trusted source of information that Crater Lake National Park management could benefit from enormously.

Many thanks to:

The U.S. National Park Service, Dr. Jherime Kellermann, Dr. Jordan W. Smith, Emily Embry, Darby Robinson, Chief Ranger Dimmick, and all Crater Lake National Park staff that made this research possible.

