



# How to ignite Digital Transformation in your tourism operators

## Best Practices and Case Studies

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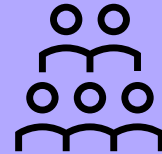


**Wheresight partners with DMOs and CVBs  
in the North East to measure, benchmark  
and impact digital maturity of the tourism  
Businesses in your community.**

# What is digital maturity?



Digital maturity is the level at which a business effectively uses digital tools, data, and technology to optimize visitor experience and conversion.



It is a measurement of both people skills and technology, peer benchmarked across the travel and tourism industry.

# Digital maturity matters

3 reasons why

# 1.

## Digital Presence

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Today, every tourist business is online first. It must be easily found and accessed, from anywhere

# 2.

## Global Competitiveness

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100s of businesses are competing for the same dollar and keywords, standing out is essential or get swiped left

# 3.

## Bookability

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Over 80%\* of business don't have an optimised and distributable booking tool, missing out on bookings and revenue every single day and over complicating a seamless digital process

# The challenge



Inconsistent  
Reporting



Recruiting and  
Developing  
Digital Skills



Making  
decisions  
with Siloed Data



Managing  
Expectations



***Linking*** Digital  
Maturity to  
Revenue Growth

# Digital Maturity Accelerator

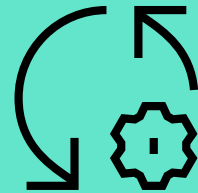
A three step programme



## 1. Audit & Report

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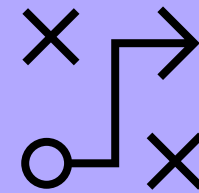
Establish what needs improving and why



## 2. Diagnostic

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How to improve and in what order



## 3. Roadmap

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An expert handheld engagement to achieve the digital goals

# The 5 key pillars



## Leadership & Governance

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Strategy

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Leadership

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Goals & KPIs

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Continuous Investment



## Customer experience

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Product Readiness

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Booking Experience

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Digital Marketing

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Website Experience



## Operational capability

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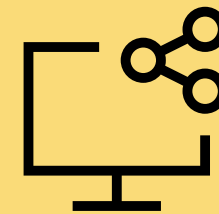
Managing Bookings

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Sales Reporting

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Managing Website



## Technology

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Booking Technology

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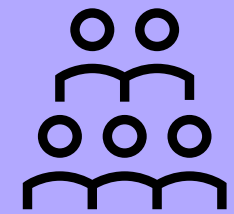
Web Analytics

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Web Technology

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CRM Systems



## People

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Skills & Knowledge

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Time & Resources

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Culture

# Digital Maturity Overview

- The insights and data outputs are an aggregation of multiple DMOs in the Northeast US
- The observations and suggestions we make are common to all, with varied emphasis
- The findings are based on aggregated responses from tourism operators who completed Wheresight's Digital Maturity Assessment.
- Each response is scored against Wheresight's proprietary digital maturity framework across defined metrics.
- Results are then benchmarked across participating businesses to reveal patterns, trends, and priority areas at destination level while preserving individual confidentiality.

# 01. Key Findings

## Executive Summary

- ▶ **The "Brochureware" Trap:** Operators excel at static content but fail at transactions. A critical gap exists between driving interest and capturing revenue.
- ▶ **The Readiness Paradox:** High availability of time and positive culture contrasts sharply with low technical skills. The will is there, but the skill is missing.
- ▶ **Structural Barriers:** The dominance of micro-businesses creates a natural ceiling for data maturity, limiting AI and analytics adoption.

## Operational Disconnect

Operators successfully manage top-of-funnel content but lose customers at the point of sale.

82%

Website  
Content

79%

Web Tech

40%

Sales &  
Reporting

27%

Managing  
Bookings

## The "Will vs. Skill" Gap

A unique anomaly where resource availability outstrips technical competency.

Time & Resources

74%

Digital Culture

66%

Skills & Knowledge

32%



# Capability Deep Dive

## Core Strengths



Businesses have the time and the website infrastructure to succeed. Marketing engines are generally active.

## Critical Friction Points



Despite having time, staff lack specific digital skills. Manual booking management is a major bottleneck.

## 02. Strategic Opportunities



### Commercial Enablement

**The Opportunity:** Monetize existing 68% Digital Marketing maturity score.

By implementing lightweight booking engines, the region can close the "Sales Cliff". Moving the 27% Booking score to the global average represents the single highest ROI activity available.

**Goal: Turn traffic into transactions.**



### Workforce Activation

**The Opportunity:** Leverage the "Surplus Capacity" anomaly.

With Time & Resources at 74% and Culture at 66%, the workforce is ready but untrained. A structured upskilling program will face less resistance here than in time-poor regions.

**Goal: Rapid skills acquisition.**



### Inclusive Design

**The Opportunity:** Mitigate legal risk and expand market reach.

Current Accessibility score is 40%. For a region heavy in public assets (Museums/Sites), a "Digital Inclusivity" drive ensures compliance and opens the market to travelers with disabilities.

**Goal: 100% Compliance.**

## 03. Priority Recommendations

### Commercial Capability Sprint

**01** **Deploy "Right-Sized" Transactional Tools:** Negotiate region-wide access to simplified SaaS booking platforms tailored for micro-businesses. Bypass complex ERPs.

**KPI:** % of operators capable of real-time digital payment.

### Practical Digital Academy

**02** **Micro-Learning for Micro-Teams:** Launch bite-sized, on-demand training focused on "Smart Basics" (Analytics & CRM). Provide templates and checklists, not abstract theory.

**KPI:** Completion rate of "Web Analytics 101" modules.

### Regional Accessibility Initiative

**03** **Audit & Remediate:** Mandate a subsidized digital accessibility audit. Provide a shared toolkit (alt-text generators, contrast checkers) to elevate the 40% Accessibility score.

**KPI:** Region-wide WCAG compliance score.

# Key Takeaways

- **Businesses excel at visibility but fail at transaction**
- **Different Digital Priorities depending on segment i.e. Attractions v Festivals**
- **Data-Driven Visitor Management - move from intuition to evidence.**
- **"Lack of Knowledge" is the leading barrier to booking system adoption**
- **The primary barrier to ROI is not interest, but capability. Businesses are requesting practical, sector-specific training to bridge the gap between "trying" and "benefiting."**

**What's really happening with AI and operators?**

## Adoption Landscape: The "Tinkering" Phase

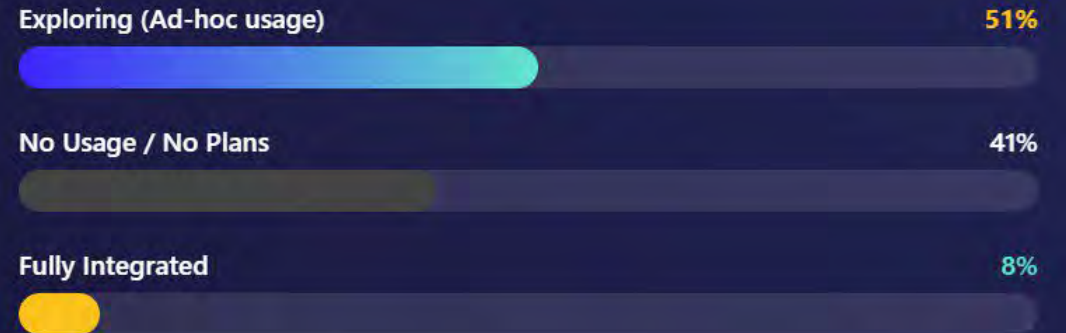
The majority of the region's visitor economy is currently in the **Exploration Phase**. While total rejection of AI is significant, over half of businesses are experimenting with tools.

However, **true integration** into core business workflows remains exceptionally rare (<10%).

### Key Finding

Adoption is widespread but shallow. Businesses are using AI for ad-hoc tasks rather than strategic advantage.

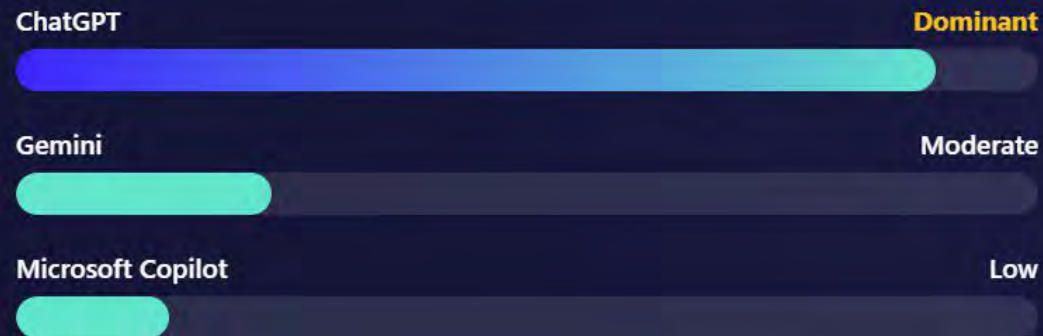
### CURRENT MATURITY LEVELS



\*Percentage of total businesses assessed across all segments.

## Tools & Application: The "Content Crutch"

### DOMINANT TOOLS



ChatGPT is effectively synonymous with "AI" for most respondents. Other LLMs have minimal market penetration.

### PRIMARY USE CASES

Social Media Posts Website Copy Marketing Assets

The primary utility is **Generative Content**. Complex use cases like data analysis, automation, or personalization are virtually non-existent.

### FREQUENCY OF USE



## Barriers to Entry: The Knowledge Gap

### WHAT BUSINESSES NEED TO ADOPT AI

Practical Training (Sector Relevant)

Top Priority



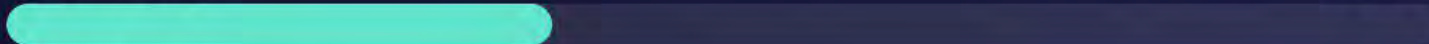
Funding for Paid Tools

Medium



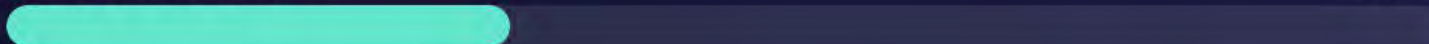
1-to-1 Mentoring

Medium



Privacy & Risk Guidance

Medium



# 57%

of all respondents specifically requested  
**practical training.**

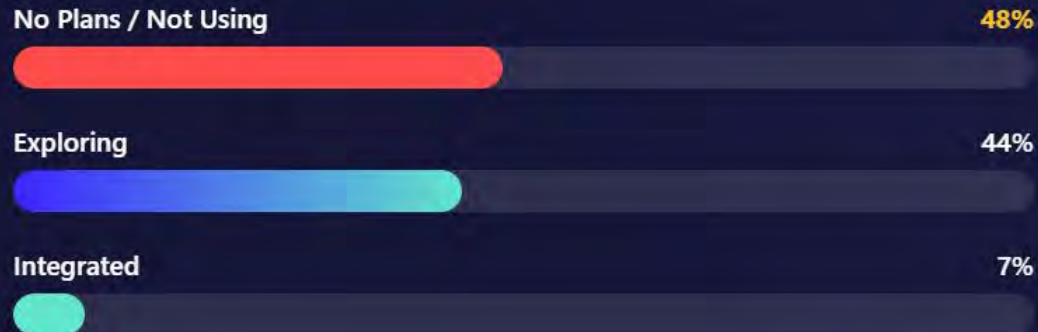
Businesses are not asking for "strategy" — they are asking for "how-to".

# Segment Deep Dive: Attractions

representing ~73% of the sample

## ADOPTION PROFILE

The Attractions sector shows **high polarization**. Nearly half have no plans to use AI, while the other half are exploring. Daily usage is very low.



## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

# 56%

Report "No Real Impact" yet



**Sentiment:** This segment includes the strongest resistance, with several respondents explicitly stating lack of interest or negative sentiment towards generative AI.

*"We have never used any AI tools and have no immediate plans to do so."*

## Segment Deep Dive: Festivals

representing ~27% of the sample

### ADOPTION PROFILE

Festivals are significantly more **experimental** than fixed attractions. Only a small minority have "no plans" to use AI.



### INVESTMENT INTENT

# 60%

Are "Not Sure" about investing



**Sentiment:** While usage is higher, uncertainty about ROI is also higher. Festivals are trying tools (mostly ChatGPT) but haven't found a compelling reason to pay for them yet.

*High interest in content creation and marketing assets, likely due to the event-driven nature of the business.*

# Cross-Segment Comparison

## DIGITAL CURIOSITY

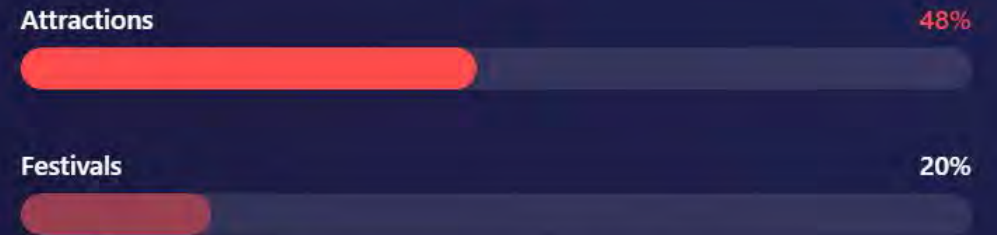
Percentage of businesses actively exploring AI tools.



Festivals are **1.6x more likely** to be experimenting with AI than Attractions.

## DIGITAL RESISTANCE

Percentage of businesses with no plans to use AI.



Attractions are significantly more resistant or indifferent to AI adoption.

## Key Strategic Insights

01

### THE "TINKERING" TRAP

Adoption is wide but shallow. Businesses are "playing" with ChatGPT but lack the strategic framework to integrate it into workflows. This results in sporadic usage and unclear ROI.

02

### THE ROI GAP

The majority of businesses report "No Real Impact" yet. Without visible efficiency gains or revenue growth, businesses are hesitant to invest in paid tools or formal training.

03

### SECTOR DIVERGENCE

Festivals are agile early adopters driven by marketing needs. Attractions are slower, more skeptical, and require clearer "use cases" to justify the leap.

# Strategic Recommendations

**1**

## LAUNCH "PRACTICAL AI" WORKSHOPS

Move beyond theory. Offer sector-specific training (e.g., "AI for Grant Writing" for Attractions, "AI for Social Media" for Festivals) to address the #1 requested need.

**2**

## DEVELOP "QUICK WIN" PLAYBOOKS

Create simple, downloadable PDF guides with copy-paste prompts for common tasks. This bridges the gap between "Tinkering" and "Daily Use."

**3**

## CROSS-POLLINATION PEER LEARNING

Leverage the higher adoption rate of Festivals. Host sessions where Festival organizers demonstrate their marketing workflows to Attraction operators.

# Summary

- ✓ Operators in the Northeast possess the time, resources, and culture to succeed.
- ✓ By addressing the "Sales Cliff" and the "Skills Gap," we can transform the region from a digital brochure into a digital economy.
- ✓ With AI and digital transformation; develop and share regularly - familiar use cases with a simple 'how to'. This is the Lighthouse effect.
- ✓ Develop common tool kits – suppliers are willing and free (even paying) partners here!

**Any questions?**



# Thank you for your time

[Learn more about Wheresight](#)

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