



2018

AIRPORTS WEBSITE CLARITY INDEX

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



VisibleThread
Clarity Index

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The VisibleThread Website Clarity Report Airports: Australia & New Zealand – 2018

Executive Summary

Airports are the hubs of modern travel. Millions of people pass through Australian & New Zealand (ANZ) airports every year. Airports get a lot of their revenue from these travellers. When more people pass through an airport’s gates, the airport collects greater revenue. Money comes in the form of fees, rents and other charges. Airports drive revenue directly from travellers or indirectly from the airlines and other businesses that serve them. If you think about it, airports are really in the business of marketing to and managing individual consumers.

Airport websites contain a lot of information that travellers find useful. If content on an airport’s website is poorly written, travellers may have poor experiences as a result. Airports may miss out on revenue because travellers are unaware of services offered. If travellers develop a preference for other regional airports because of their experience, an airport may see a decline in the number of people it serves. So, what is the quality of the content on ANZ’s airport websites? We wanted to know. In May 2018, VisibleThread conducted an analysis of the readability of ANZ’s major airports*. What did we find? A summary of our findings follows:

Our ANZ Airport Website Clarity Report assesses the clarity of written content. We scanned 11 websites of the country’s most trafficked airports. We required a 50-page-minimum sample from each web site. We measured clarity across these four dimensions:

- Readability – How readable is the content?
- Passive Language – Active language communicates clearly. What proportion of sentences are passive?
- Long Sentences – What proportion of all sentences are too long?
- Word Complexity Density – How many complex, hard-to-understand words does the content contain?

These four measures are proven to have a meaningful impact on how well people understand what they read. In a country like Australia, where 35% + of the population struggles to read and write proficiently, simplifying content is a must.

*Forgive us Melbourne you are important too. You were not included as your website was unavailable to us. Please contact us and we can get some analysis completed for you.

Key Findings

The average readability score for all websites was 49.36. As a group, these sites almost met minimum requirements. The recommended minimum score for readability when working with the general public is 50. In general, ANZ Airports performed better than other industries surveyed.

ANZ's airports fail when it comes to passive voice. Passive voice makes content harder to read. Content creators should aim for fewer than 4% of their sentences to contain passive phrasing. The websites surveyed averaged 11% - more than 2x the recommended levels.

Airport websites used long sentences 21% of the time – more than four times the recommended level of 5%. When we cram more words in a sentence, people have a harder time understanding the meaning. Content is easier to read if we break concepts down into simpler sentences or present them in bullet form.

Many people work from a limited vocabulary. Content is harder to read if we use big, complex words. If complex words appear often, some people may not be able to understand the content at all. ANZ airports used complex words three times for every hundred words on average. Opting for simpler word choices makes content easier to understand for a much larger audience.

Leaders:

- [Auckland Airport](#) showed particularly well with a readability and long-sentence scores that ranked first among all sites.
- [Perth's Airport](#) ranked high for readability, passive voice and complex word usage. Too many long-sentences in copy cost this airport the top spot in our analysis.

Room for Improvement:

- [Darwin Airport's](#) content was the hardest to read of all sites measured. The site ranked in the bottom 10% for all measures but one.
- [Canberra airport](#) ranked second to last. The content on this site ranked in the bottom half of all measures for each of the four key measures for clarity.

Takeaways:

Airports Can Improve Customer Engagement: Providing travellers with better content increases the likelihood they enjoy their experience and return. Clearly written content helps people find the best parking, airport transportation and other services. Improving readability and reducing long sentences will help travellers better understand airport services and how to use them.

Reduced Costs and Better Compliance: Costs could be lowered if airports can make it easier for people to understand security requirements. Travelers who are prepared to go through security will do so more efficiently and more compliantly. Airports require fewer resources to deal with informed travellers. ANZ's airports can improve compliance by reducing levels of passive voice and complex wording in website content the explains security procedures.

Detailed Results Table

We show the full detailed table below.

Each score in the index is colour-coded green to red. Green indicates best, red indicates worst.

Colour-coding helps us to understand sites where one or two specific scores may be dragging down the overall ranking. Flagging specific areas (for instance, passive language) pinpoints areas for improvement.

		Num Pages		Clear Writing		Readability		Passive		Long		Complex		Num Words
				Index	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
1	Auckland	https://www.aucklandairport.co.nz/	500	2	59	1	6%	2	14%	1	2.42	4	265314	
2	Perth	https://www.perthairport.com.au/	332	3	52	2	6%	1	22%	7	2.22	2	164925	
3	Sydney	http://www.sydneyairport.com.au	500	3.75	48	9	9%	3	17%	2	2.07	1	91400	
3	Wellington	http://www.wellingtonairport.co.nz/	163	3.75	50	4	10%	4	20%	4	2.34	3	34915	
5	Cairns	https://www.cairnsairport.com.au/	429	5.75	50	4	10%	5	24%	9	2.43	5	66643	
6	Goldcoast	https://goldcoastairport.com.au/	134	6	51	3	11%	7	22%	8	3.01	6	45883	
7	Adelaide	http://www.adelaideairport.com.au/	212	6.5	49	6	10%	6	20%	5	3.58	9	54188	
8	Brisbane	https://bne.com.au/	500	6.75	49	6	11%	8	19%	3	3.98	10	107531	
9	Hobart	https://hobartairport.com.au/	64	8.5	45	10	19%	11	20%	6	3.17	7	79575	
10	Canberra	https://www.canberraairport.com.au	215	9.25	49	6	11%	9	27%	11	4.04	11	67444	
11	Darwin	https://www.darwinairport.com.au	87	9.75	41	11	14%	10	26%	10	3.48	8	40055	

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Methodology – what are the metrics?

- We analysed the sites between May 10 and 16th, 2018.
- We scanned 100 pages of content via VisibleThread Web..
- We crawled starting from the publicly available URL.
- Certain pages within the sample of 100 contain non-textual content (e.g.: videos). We omitted these pages from our scan.
- Certain scans had less than 100 pages, so we included the page count and word count for each agency.

We calculated the index based on 4 metrics. Each metric contributes equally to the final score. The metrics are:

Metric	Formula
1. Readability	
Readability ranges from 1 to 100. 100 is the top mark. If communicating with citizens, aim for at least 50. This is based on the Flesch Reading Ease index.	$(206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{Average Sentence Length}) - (84.6 \times \text{Average Syllables per Word}))$
2. Passive Language	
The % rating is the proportion of sentences containing passive voice. Passive language is where the subject of a sentence is acted on by the verb. For example: "Quality is monitored" vs. "We monitor quality" If you use active voice, you will increase clarity & strength. You will also flush out the 'actor', i.e. who did the action?	$(\text{Passive Sentences} / \text{Total Sentences} * 100)$
3. Long Sentences	
The % rating is the proportion of sentences that are longer than 25 words. Long sentences mask multiple concepts. Splitting up these sentences will result in a clearer message.	$(\text{Long Sentences} / \text{Total Sentences} * 100)$
4. Complex Word Density	
The density rating is the proportion of complex words relative to the total word count. This scan looks for complex words/phrases based on Federal Guidelines. See http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm for the list scanned. Replacing complex words with simpler words helps your readers concentrate on your content.	$(\text{Complex Words} / \text{Total Words} * 100)$

About VisibleThread

VisibleThread provides content analysis solutions for Web, Digital & Communication professionals.

Our solutions help embed plain language and automate the reviewing and editing process.

Our solutions & reports allow customers to:

- Scan docs and websites in minutes
- Identify risky and complex language with objective metrics
- Benchmark web sites against sector peers
- Flag compliance issues

For questions or if you want a specific industry or sector index:

- For a specific industry or sector index, email: sales@visiblethread.com
- For questions on the metrics or methodology, email: support@visiblethread.com