



ESA DIGITAL

23 October 2026

Travel & Mobility App Organic ROI Forecast 2027

Flight-tracking, trip-planning and transit apps with subscriptions · US search demand · global AI visibility

Industry report · Prepared by **ESA Digital** · Ahrefs Site Explorer, Keywords Explorer + Brand Radar

[Check interactive report](#)

1. Key findings

FINDINGS

- A Travel demand starts with where and when.** 14.6M US searches/mo across eight topics. Things to Do & Destinations is the largest (4.5M, 30%), led by city guides ("things to do in chicago", 91K/mo) and seasonal lists ("best places to visit in october", 52K).
- B Flights are the high-intent core.** Flight Tracking & Status draws 3.2M searches/mo ("flight tracker", 832K) and Cheap Flights 2.5M ("cheap flights", 1.19M). With airports and layovers (1.3M, led by "tsa precheck", 396K), flights make up almost half of the demand.
- C Planners win long-tail search.** Wanderlog ranks for 484K keywords, more than Skyscanner (308K), on city and itinerary pages. Skyscanner still leads traffic (9.9M visits/mo), mostly outside the US. Flighty, Citymapper and Triplt sit under 200K visits.
- D One brand owns AI answers.** Skyscanner holds 96.1% of the set's 80.4M AI impressions/mo, on prompts like "How do I get the cheapest flight prices?" and "Is Skyscanner better than Kayak?". For "Which is the best plane tracker?" ChatGPT cites flightradar24.com and flightaware.com.
- E Strong subscription apps pay back.** Top-10% travel apps convert 9.7% of installs at \$45 per payer a year. A Growth project then returns \$590K on \$263K over 24 months (ROI 124%, break-even in month 14); at the top quartile no package pays back, and the median returns \$35K.

WHAT TO DO

Build the pages travellers search before a trip: destination and itinerary guides, cheap-flight timing tips, flight-status and delay pages and airport guides, each ending in the app for alerts and planning. Keep comparison and pricing pages current so AI answers can name you next to the big brands.

2. SEO Opportunities

RELEVANT CONTENT IDEAS

3 897

TOPICAL CLUSTERS

8

MONTHLY SEARCH VOLUME

14 633 200

CLUSTER	VOLUME SHARE	IDEAS	VOL/MO
Things to Do & Destinations ↗	30.3%	499	4 461 600
Flight Tracking & Status ↗	21.8%	500	3 211 900
Cheap Flights & Deals ↗	17.0%	499	2 511 000
Airports & Layovers ↗	8.9%	424	1 305 400
Hotels & Stays ↗	6.9%	486	1 021 000
Packing & Travel Tips ↗	6.5%	500	954 300
Trip Planning & Itineraries ↗	4.9%	498	718 650
Public Transit & Getting Around ↗	3.0%	491	449 350
Relevant total	99.3%	3 897	14 633 200
Off-topic / adjacent — excluded	0.7%	31	108 300
Total		3 928	14 741 500

How this was built >

FINDINGS

Things to Do & Destinations (30.3%), Flight Tracking (21.8%) and Cheap Flights (17.0%) hold more than two thirds of relevant US demand. Airports & Layovers (8.9%), Hotels (6.9%) and Packing Tips (6.5%) follow; itineraries (4.9%) and public transit (3.0%) are smaller but closest to planner and transit apps.

WHAT TO DO

Pick the slice your app serves: flight trackers should own live status and delay pages by airline and airport, planners should publish city itineraries at scale, and transit apps should cover maps and schedules by city. Add "best app for ..." comparisons next.

3. Competitive Landscape

3.1 Organic SEO — Ahrefs Site Explorer

BRAND	ORG. TRAFFIC/MO ↓	ORG. KEYWORDS	TOP 3	BACKLINKS	ORG. VALUE	DR
Skyscanner ↗ skyscanner.net	9 906 287	307 641	134 789	2 815 489 186	\$2.1M	82
Wanderlog ↗ wanderlog.com	1 723 307	484 423	74 433	4 615 100	\$401K	77
Citymapper ↗ citymapper.com	180 544	30 714	5 854	4 628 303	\$23K	79
Flighty ↗ flighty.com	84 974	3 611	736	15 653	\$14K	65
Triplt ↗ tripit.com	25 918	1 391	614	178 998	\$13K	77

Click column header → sort. Click brand row → SEO dashboard. Bars are normalized per column.

3.2 AI Visibility — Brand Radar (impressions/month)

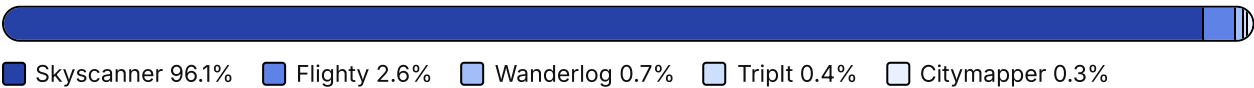
BRAND	CHATGPT	AI OVERVIEWS	AI MODE	TOTAL ↓
Skyscanner * ↗ skyscanner.net	18 091 308	43 853 464	15 268 855	77 213 627
Flighty ↗ flighty.com	71 961	706 811	1 271 015	2 049 787
Wanderlog ↗ wanderlog.com	276 189	166 928	101 040	544 157
Triplt ↗ tripit.com	65 461	177 084	100 844	343 389
Citymapper ↗ citymapper.com	77 744	76 644	50 952	205 340

Click column header → sort. Click row → ChatGPT citation prompts. Brand Radar matches **brand names**, not domains.

* Skyscanner is off-scale: its amber bars are shown at full width and left out of the bar scale so the other four brands stay readable; the values are the real Brand Radar figures.

3.3 AI Share of Voice

Skyscanner 96.1% — the 5 brands in this set hold **80 356 300** AI impressions/mo across ChatGPT, AI Overviews & AI Mode.



FINDINGS

The five brands hold 80.4M AI impressions/mo, and Skyscanner alone has 77.2M (96.1%), most of it in Google AI Overviews. Flighty has 2.6%, almost all of it in Google AI Mode, so part may be noise from the common word “flighty”. Wanderlog, Triplt and Citymapper are each under 1%; Wanderlog is cited mostly on local restaurant questions.

WHAT TO DO

Smaller apps get cited on specific questions: best plane tracker, best journey planner, best free travel app. Publish direct, current answers to those on your own domain, with screenshots and pricing.

4. ROI Forecast

INDUSTRY BENCHMARK

Weak

Typical

Strong

×

PACKAGE

Start

Growth

Scale

×

PERIOD

12m

24m

36m

Forecast outcomes

BREAK-EVEN

Month 14

24M REVENUE

\$590K

24M ROI

124%

24M PROFIT

\$327K

Investment

PROJECT COST

\$263K

PUBLISHED PAGES

600

Parameters

PACKAGE INPUTS

Pages / month 25

Monthly cost \$11K

CONVERSION FUNNEL · STRONG TIER

Visit → Install 4.8%

Install → Paid 9.7%

Revenue / payer / yr \$45

CONTENT PERFORMANCE

Months to peak 7

Avg visits/page 180

Success rate 60%

AI / GEO LIFT

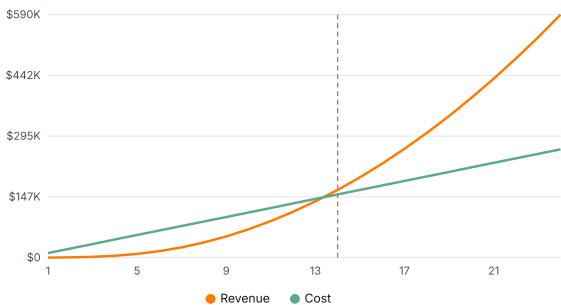
LLM ratio 0.1x

LLM conv boost 2x

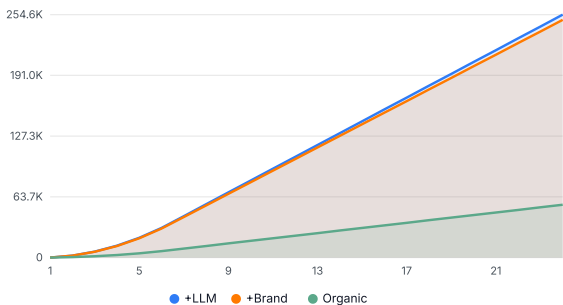
[Dive deeper — change parameters in the ROI calculator](#) ↗

– Open the interactive model to adjust assumptions yourself.

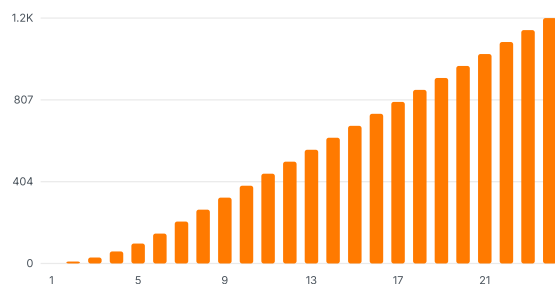
Cumulative Revenue vs Cost



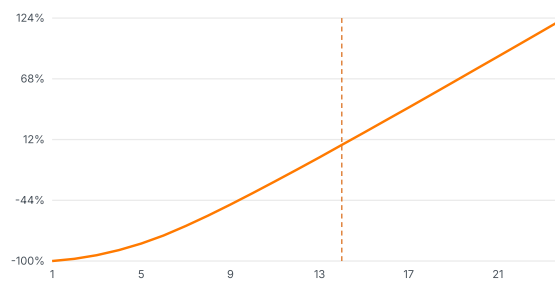
Traffic Growth



New Paid Customers



Cumulative ROI



MONTHS	PAGES	ORGANIC	BRAND	LLM	INSTALLS	PAYERS	REVENUE	ROI
1	25	0	0	0	0	0.0	\$0	-100%
2	50	450	1.6K	45	102	9.8	\$443	-98%
3	75	1.4K	4.7K	135	305	30	\$1K	-95%
4	100	2.7K	9.4K	270	609	59	\$3K	-90%
5	125	4.5K	15.8K	450	1.0K	98	\$4K	-84%
6	150	6.8K	23.6K	675	1.5K	148	\$7K	-76%
7	175	9.4K	33.1K	945	2.1K	207	\$9K	-68%
8	200	12.2K	42.5K	1.2K	2.7K	266	\$12K	-58%
9	225	14.8K	52.0K	1.5K	3.4K	325	\$15K	-48%
10	250	17.6K	61.4K	1.8K	4.0K	384	\$17K	-37%
11	275	20.3K	70.9K	2.0K	4.6K	443	\$20K	-26%
12	300	22.9K	80.3K	2.3K	5.2K	502	\$23K	-15%
13	325	25.6K	89.8K	2.6K	5.8K	561	\$25K	-4%
14	350	28.4K	99.2K	2.8K	6.4K	620	\$28K	7%
15	375	31.1K	108.7K	3.1K	7.0K	679	\$31K	19%
16	400	33.8K	118.1K	3.4K	7.6K	739	\$33K	30%
17	425	36.5K	127.6K	3.6K	8.2K	798	\$36K	42%
18	450	39.1K	137.0K	3.9K	8.8K	857	\$39K	54%
19	475	41.9K	146.5K	4.2K	9.4K	916	\$41K	65%
20	500	44.5K	155.9K	4.5K	10.1K	975	\$44K	77%
21	525	47.3K	165.4K	4.7K	10.7K	1034	\$47K	89%
22	550	50.0K	174.8K	5.0K	11.3K	1093	\$49K	101%
23	575	52.6K	184.3K	5.3K	11.9K	1152	\$52K	113%
24	600	55.4K	193.7K	5.5K	12.5K	1211	\$55K	124%

ESA ROI Calculator · Start 10/\$5.5K · Growth 25/\$10.95K · Scale 40/\$15.5K · peak 7 mo, success 60%, 180 visits/page, brand ×3.5, LLM 0.1×, LLM conv ×2. Funnel inputs follow the industry benchmark switch (Weak / Typical / Strong = bottom quartile / median / top 10% of the category). Revenue per payer is 12-month subscription revenue for travel apps; ride-hailing, delivery and navigation are not covered by the source. Strong = top 10% on each metric; visit → install is an estimate.

FINDINGS

On the Growth package over 24 months, a top-10% funnel (Strong tier: 4.8% visit → install, 9.7% install → paid, \$45 per payer) turns a **\$263K** project into **\$590K** of revenue (ROI 124%) and breaks even in month 14. At the top quartile no package pays back (Start -38%), and the median (Typical tier) returns only **\$35K**. These are subscription-app figures (flight trackers, trip planners).

WHAT TO DO

Ride-hailing, delivery and booking apps earn per trip or order instead: platform revenue per active rider is about \$74–273 a year at the leaders. If that is your model, replace revenue per payer with your own figure before reading the forecast.

Sources & Benchmarks

I. Sources

- **Content** — [Ahrefs Keywords Explorer](#) (US volumes) + [ESA](#) intent clustering
- **Organic SEO** — [Ahrefs Site Explorer](#)
- **AI Visibility** — [Ahrefs Brand Radar](#) (ChatGPT / AI Overviews / AI Mode; citations API limit 25)
- **ROI** — [ESA ROI Calculator](#) + service packages
- **Industry benchmarks** — [RevenueCat](#), [State of Subscription Apps 2026](#), [Unbounce](#), [Conversion Benchmark Report 2024](#), [CleverTap Benchmark Report \(travel apps\)](#)

II. Benchmarks

Reference ranges for a subscription-app funnel — Visit → Install → Trial → Paid — for the median app in the category and its bottom quartile and top 10%. Rows marked **ROI-model input** feed the forecast above. All figures are modelled estimates on the stated inputs, not guarantees.

II.A. Conversion — industry benchmarks

FUNNEL STEP	WEAK → TYPICAL → STRONG	SOURCE / NOTE
Visit → Install	Weak 1% Typical 3% Strong 4.8%	Estimate; strong = landing-page benchmark (Unbounce 2024)
Install → Trial (30 days)	Weak 2.5% Typical 4.1% Strong 9.0%	RevenueCat 2026
Trial → Paid	Weak 30.6% Typical 43.5% Strong 62.4%	RevenueCat 2026
Install → Paid (35 days)	Weak 0.9% Typical 2.2% Strong 9.7%	ROI-model input. RevenueCat 2026
Revenue per payer (12 months)	Weak \$10 Typical \$19 Strong \$45	ROI-model input. RevenueCat 2026
First booking after install (travel apps, 2023)	Weak — Typical ~11.8% Strong —	CleverTap 2023

Avg. visits per page
(peak)

180 visits

ROI-model input. Ahrefs top pages of the five leaders (US, pages with 10–3,000 visits/mo, top 100 per domain, n=400) have a median of ~230 and a trimmed mean of ~240 visits/page, but those pages carry years of links and brand pull. A newly published page is modelled at **180**.

Revenue per payer
(12 months)

\$45

ROI-model input. RevenueCat, State of Subscription Apps 2026: 12-month revenue per payer for Travel apps with subscriptions (bottom quartile / median / top 10%).

II.B. GEO benchmark ranges

GEO METRIC	EARLY	HEALTHY	AI-HEAVY	NOTES
LLM traffic ratio	0.01–0.04×	0.05–0.12×	0.15–0.30×	LLM referrals as a multiple of organic
LLM conversion boost	+50–120%	+300–500%	+400–700%	ChatGPT highest; AI Overviews lowest
Content success rate	30–50%	45–65%	50–70%	Service pages and how-to content rank best
Months to peak	3–6	6–14	14–24	Per published cohort
Brand traffic multiplier	0.05–0.15×	0.20–0.40×	0.45–0.90×	Fixed at 3.5× brand-lift in the model