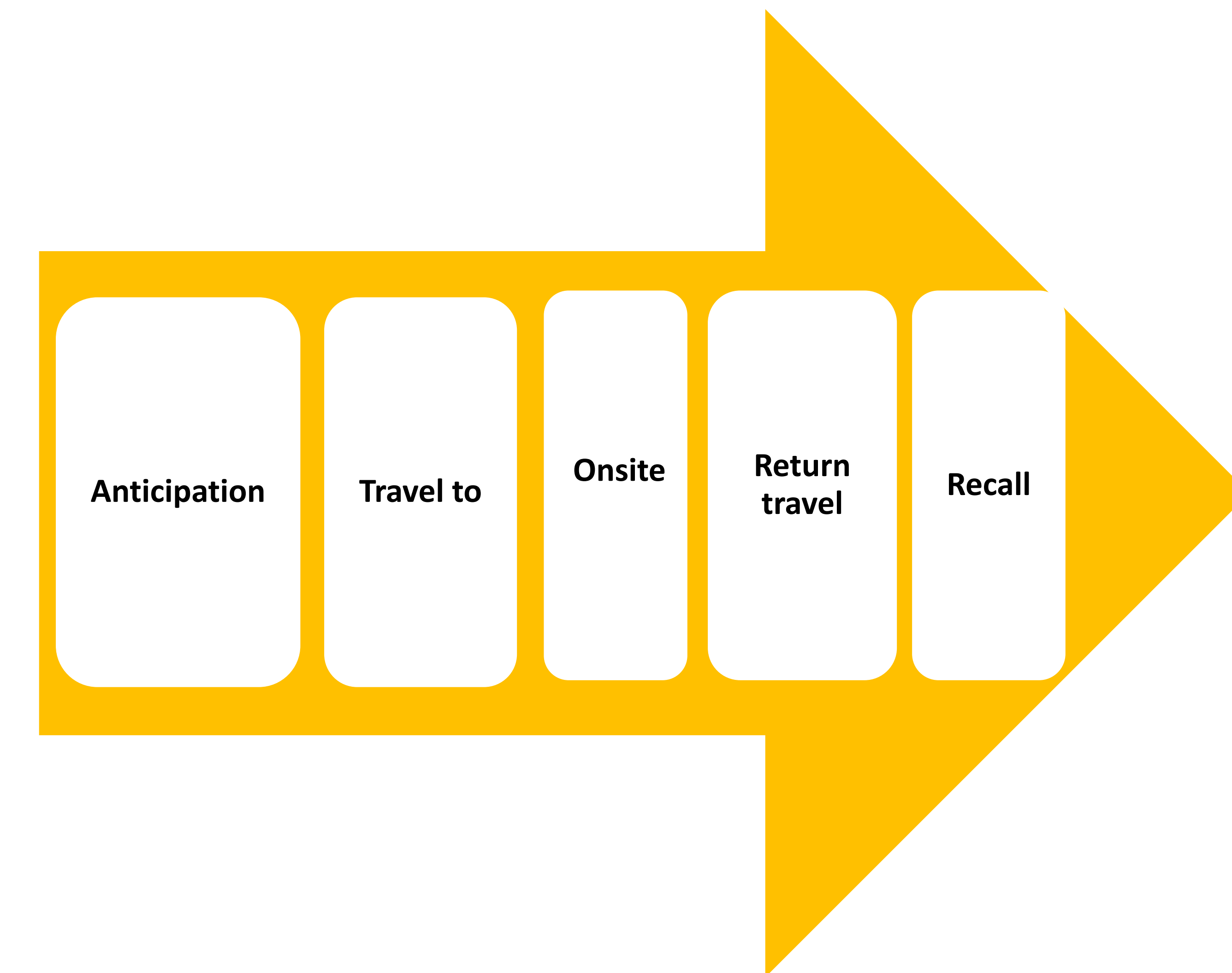
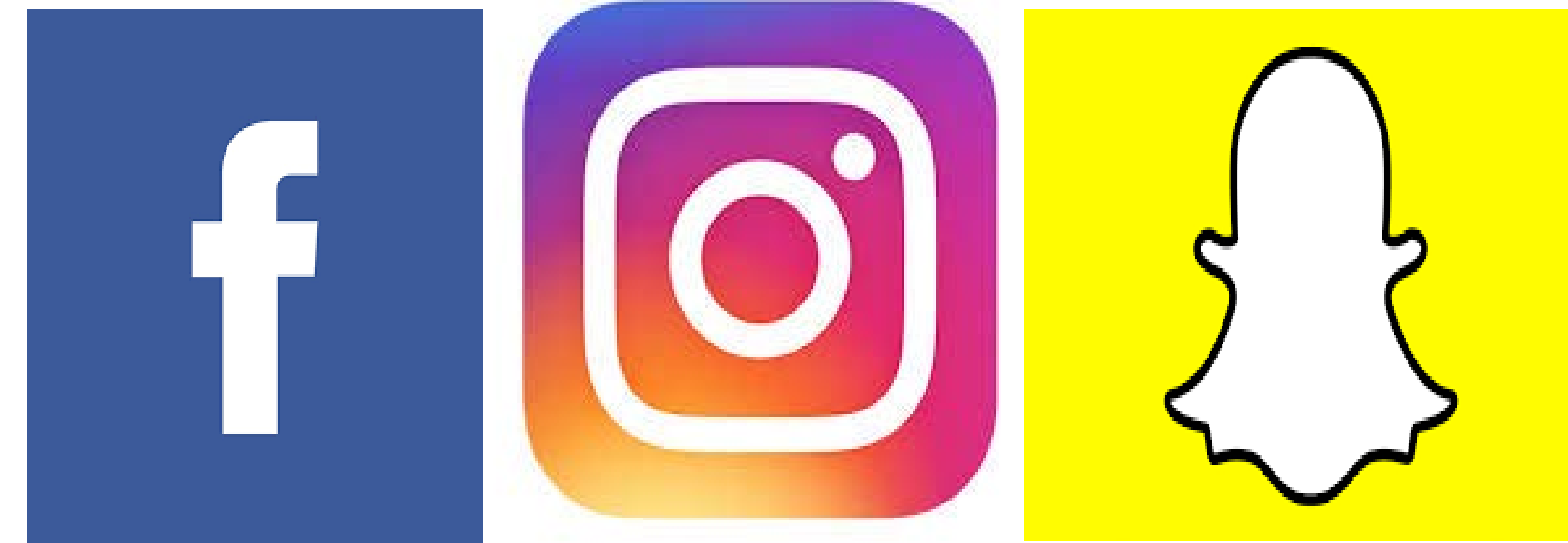


# Optimizing Social Media Engagement: Prioritizing Social Media Platform Use Among Visitors

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Visitors increasingly engaged in social media

3 platforms most frequent daily use among select National Park Service visitors

Focus limited resources in those platforms throughout visitor experience (Clawson & Knetsch 1966)

## Background and methods

### Public agency use of online social media is strategic & required

- Digital Government Strategy (Obama, 2012) ensure government adapts to digital world & provide access to digital services & info
- Federal Transparency & Open Government Directive to “harness new technologies” for public information (2009)

### Social media in recreation & leisure provides

- Highlights of unique or creative experiences (Liu, Wu & Li, 2019)
- Indirect management in a format preferred by visitors (Winter et al., 2000)
- Opportunity to engage with visitors in all stages of the visitor experience (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966)

### This analysis identified select National Park Service (NPS) unit

- Visitor use of social media platforms
- Visitor preferred forms of communication to learn about NPS site & subsequent ways to optimize social media engagement

### Onsite/online visitor surveys at Osceola Landing, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (SACN)

- Systematic sample summer 2018
- Commercial & non-commercial visitors (n=440)
- Non respondents > 1<sup>st</sup> time visitors

## Results

3 platforms used by majority: Facebook, YouTube & Instagram

3 platforms most frequent daily use: Facebook, Instagram & Snapchat (Figure 1)

2 online sources visitors identify as best to get information: General online & nps.gov (~45% each)

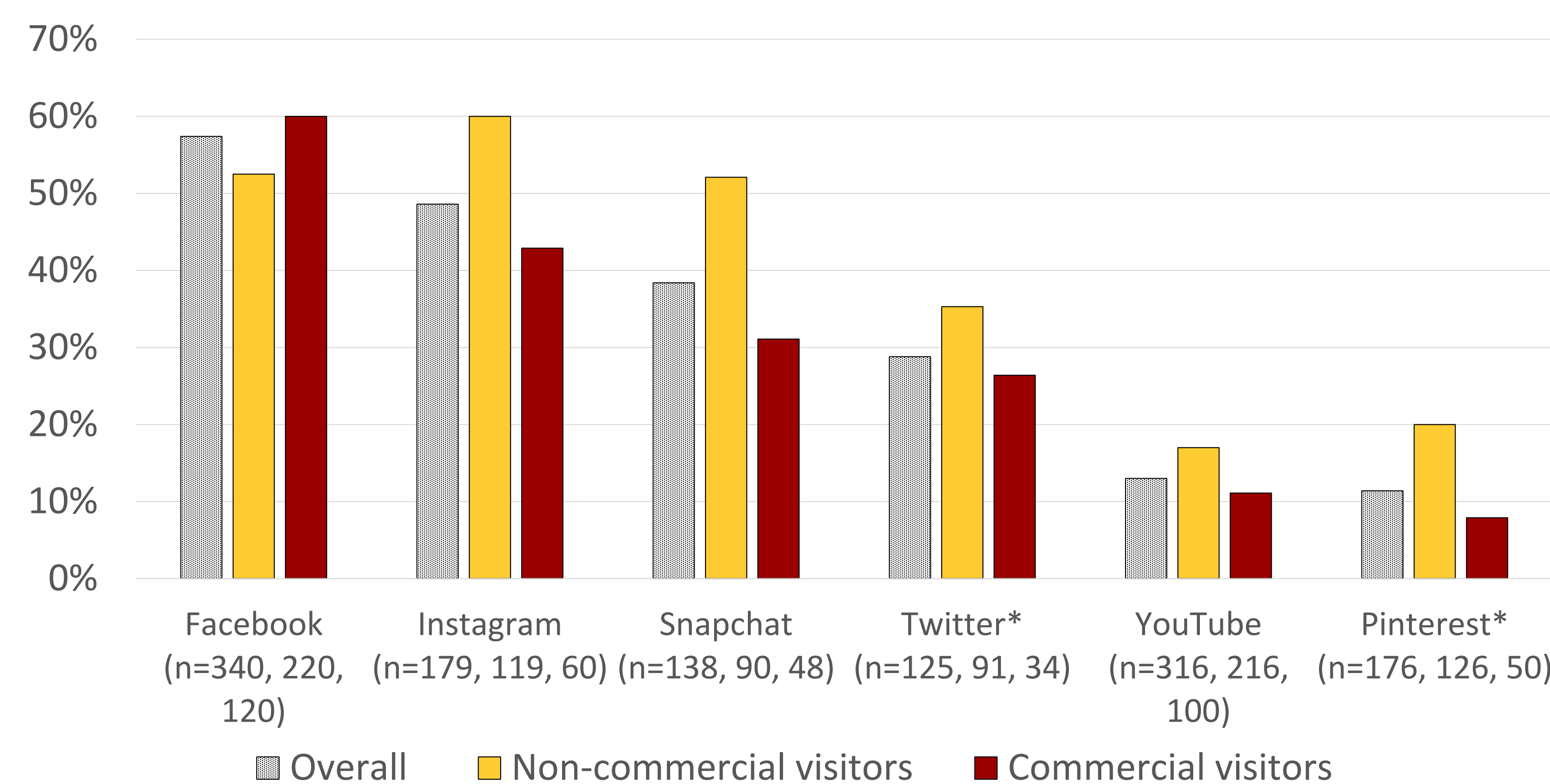


Figure 1. % daily platform use among river recreationists at Osceola Landing, SACN 2018 (\* = significant differences between groups)

## So what?! Opportunities & future ideas

NPS visitors similar to general public in platform use (Pew, 2018)

### Opportunities to use social media...

- Familiarize visitors with norms offsite; perceived behavior norms strongly influence action (Groshong et al. 2017)
- Complement traditional engagement & communication efforts
- Facilitate co-production & crowd-sourced solutions (Krantzberg et al. 2015)
- Dynamic & timely content that fosters engagement legitimacy
- Set clear e-participation goals & expectations to optimize satisfaction & process understanding (Bryson, Quick, Slotterback, & Crosby 2013; Jaeger, Bertot & Shilton, 2012)

### Future research

- Inventory NPS use of most frequently used platforms (Schneider et al. 2017)
- NPS site sentiment and posting effectiveness
- Consistency in messaging within & across units as well as across federal recreation agencies (i.e. invasive species management, Leave No Trace)