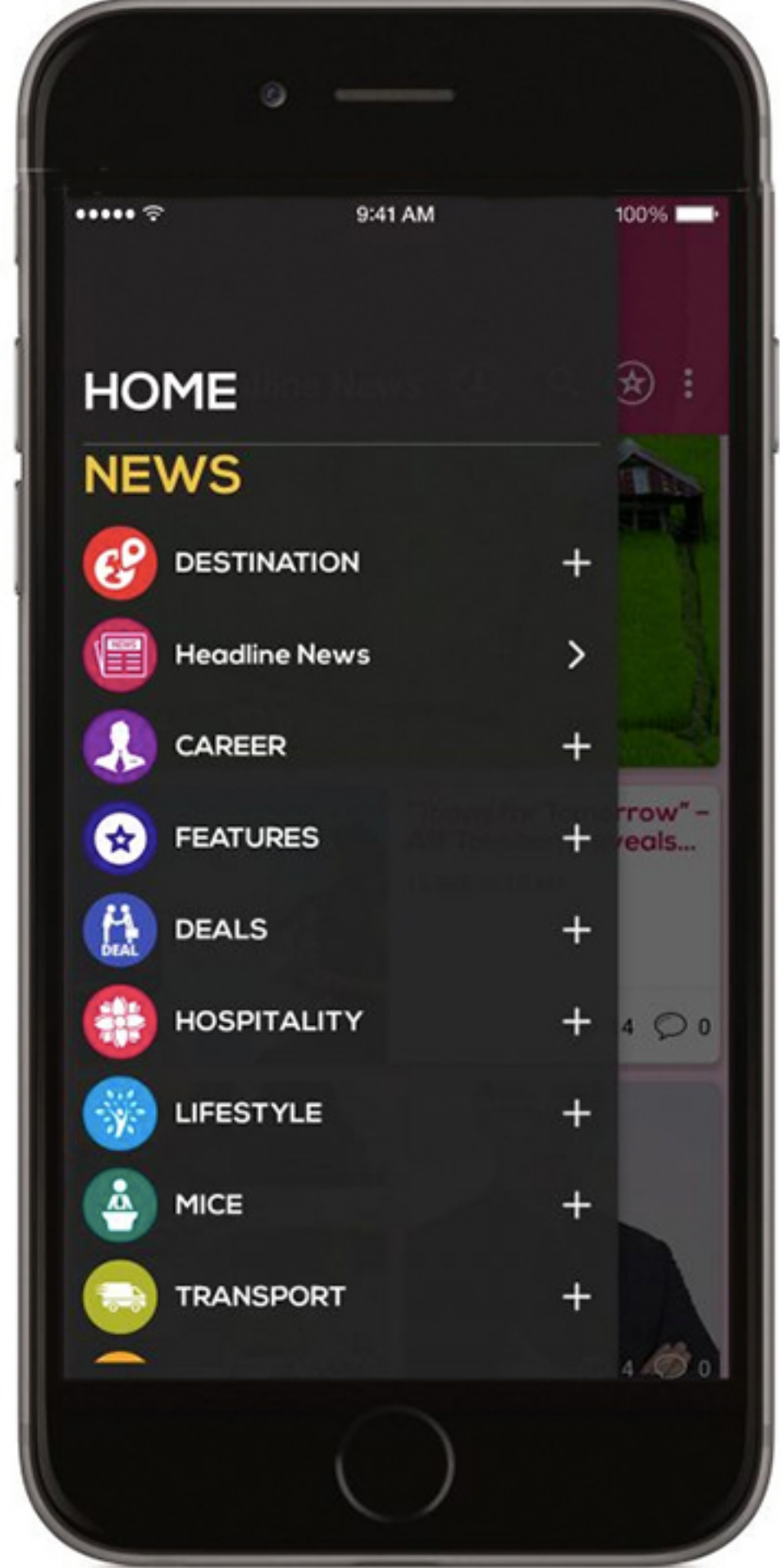


# What you need to know about Thailand's newest tourism app

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Most travellers these days begin their journey online. According to research undertaken by **Expedia**, the average consumer visits travel sites a whopping 38 times in the 45 days leading up to a booking, with an increasingly larger number relying solely on their smartphones to make bookings.



Tapping into this mobile trend is a handy new app called Destination Thailand, which provides both local residents and international visitors with the latest information on Thailand, featuring a wide range of video content and useful travel tips, plus information about expat life and the MICE market.

The app was developed by the Capital Television Group and Destination Thailand News Co., Ltd. from Thailand in conjunction with Singapore-registered Talisman Telecom Group, one of Asia's pioneers in mobile application development. We spoke with Capital TV director Raine Grady to find out how the idea of launching their own app came about.



Capital TV director Raine Grady helped launch the new Destination Thailand app.

### Why a tourism app?

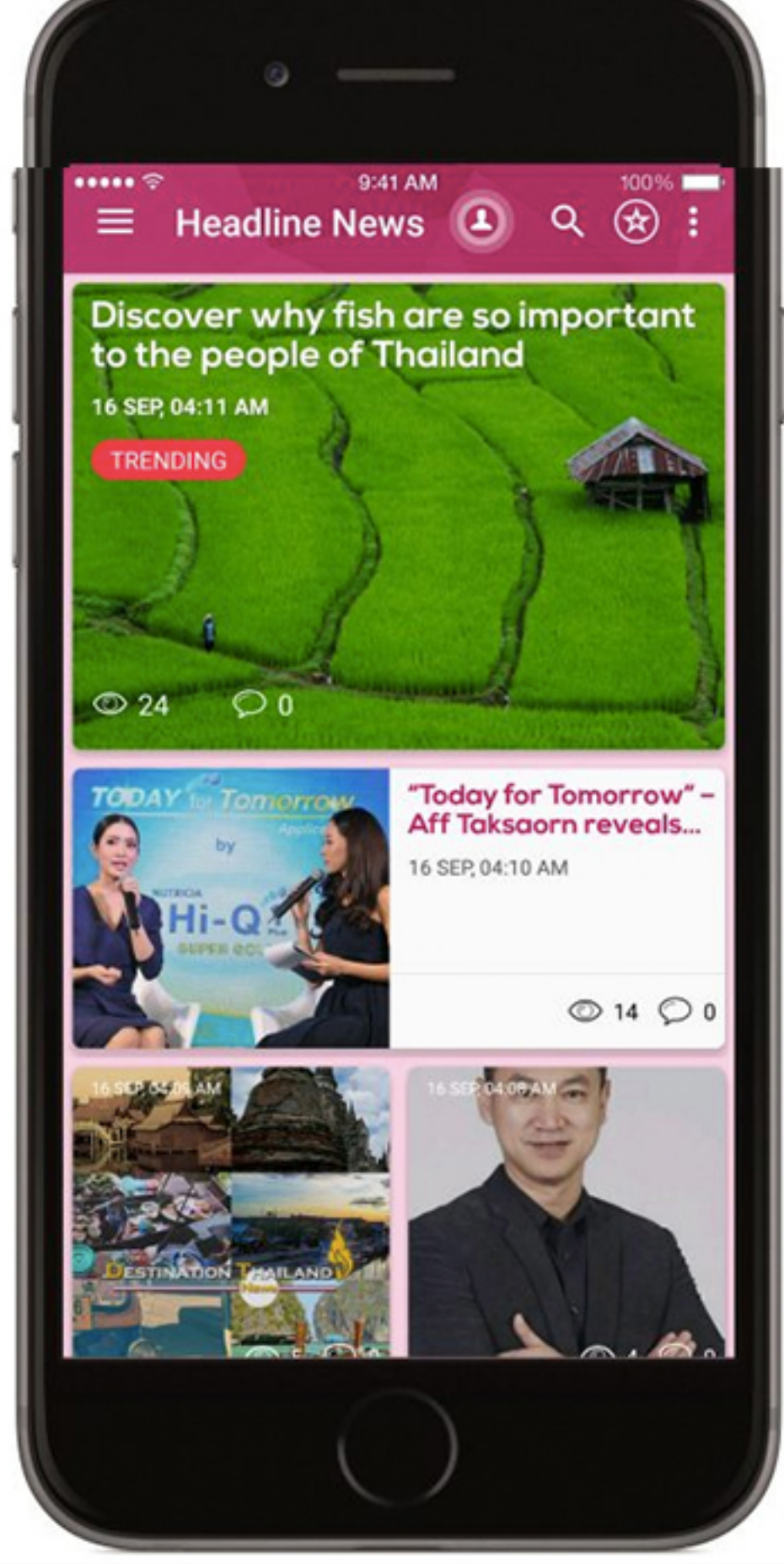
We felt the timing was perfect for a tailor-made app for travellers to Thailand as the country ranks first with the most connected travellers, with China at number two. These days local expats need more than just the usual tourism information, they want to know what's new, what's happening on the food and entertainment scenes, where they can take their children along with tips on art, culture, music and other interesting events that only a real insider can deliver on one complete app instead of having to visit a bunch of different websites.

### It must have been a Herculean task to come up with the massive amount of content required for such an app.

While many start-up app companies have difficulty in securing relevant content, fortunately for us, this wasn't the case. Capital TV has captured over 5,000 hours of video footage of destinations in Thailand and Asia since 1995, and produces one of the longest and most watched travel and lifestyle series in English with Thai subtitles, on Travel Channel (True 364)/Travel Planet (True 345) and YouTube. We teamed up with popular news service **Destination Thailand**, which has been providing visitors with up-to-date news about tourism, travel, lifestyle, events and MICE for the past three and a half years. The website has more than 87,000 subscribers worldwide, resulting in almost 2 million monthly online views.

### How important is video?

Video is a key component of the app and reflects the trend on social media. We found, from research by **Expedia**, that in 2015 the average consumer watched 62 minutes of online video per day. This number is set to grow to 72 minutes by 2017. At the moment 57% of all web traffic is video and it's expected to increase to nearly 80% by 2018. The expectation for video on apps is also growing and user generated content is another strong trend.



### What functionality can users expect?

Our technology partner, Talisman Telecom, has ensured the latest communication tools are available on the app including chat, emergency calls, classified listings, instant alerts and advertising popups. It's been designed to deliver both live and Video On Demand content in an engaging manner. Lacing in social media and gamification, the application provides many interesting ways to keep users engaged and several new options to intelligently monetise content.

Users can customise or reserve tours as well as book flights and hotels at the best possible prices via the app, through strategic alliances we've established with Asian Trails, **HotelsCombined** and Skyscanner. Further down the line we'll be adding Galactio GPS navigation software. Developed by AAPICO ITS (AITS) Co., Ltd., this GPS software is regarded as one of the best of its kind, offering not only how to get to one's desired destination, but also provides real-time traffic information, estimated time of arrival to any destination and major attractions along the route. Apart from English and Thai, the GPS software also has Chinese and Japanese language capabilities.

### Do you cater to luxury travellers?

For luxury travellers we're currently working on a customised concierge service to connect visitors with personal shoppers, artists, luxury brands, local fashion designers, boutique travel experiences and unique tours.

The app can be downloaded free on both Android ("Destination Thailand") and iOS ("Destination Thai") mobile systems.

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