

NOT FIRST CLASS

Flyer complaints soar as airlines cancel flights, deny refunds, ruin plans



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I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kristin Horowitz and her family ended a two-week vacation along the East Coast in August and were scheduled to fly home to California on United Airlines on Aug. 11. The flight was canceled at the last minute, supposedly for mechanical reasons. That began a two-day ordeal of more canceled flights, hours upon hours on hold with United, conflicting instructions from United and worry about their two dogs in a kennel back home. Horowitz, a small business owner in San Luis Obispo, along the coast in the middle of California, told U.S. PIRG she incurred \$858.28 worth of expenses for two extra days' worth of hotels, meals, a rental car and boarding for their dogs.1

After spending hours trying to get the reimbursement she said she was promised by United, and then filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), she got a \$500 check from United, plus four vouchers she swears she'll never use because she doesn't trust United enough to make plans with the airline. She also successfully disputed two of the airline tickets with her credit card.

It's been nearly four months. Horowitz is still seething with anger, not just about what happened but about how she said she was treated. "I felt absolutely helpless," she said. The stress "totally undid any of the rest of the trip we'd taken. As someone whose business was deeply affected by the pandemic and I had to fight the entire time to keep it and my employees employed, this was supposed to be an opportunity to recharge and unfortunately, I came back just as much in panic mode as when I left."

Horowitz is one of 34,011 people who was upset enough about their experience flying

to file a formal complaint with the DOT in 2021 through August of this year.₂

After being devastated by COVID-19 for most of 2020, the airline industry may be getting worse for customers. Sporadic mass cancellations by airlines may be the new norm. In November, American Airlines, the nation's largest carrier, canceled more than 2,000 flights over a period of several days.3

The month before, it was Southwest, the second largest, canceling more than 2,000 flights in one weekend.4 This summer, Spirit Airlines infamously canceled nearly 3,000 flights during an 11-day stretch.5

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of consumers are still trying to get \$10 billion in refunds for flights canceled last year.6

The pandemic was the catalyst for much of the change in the airline industry that consumers find themselves dealing with now.

The government acted fast last year to save the industry by giving airlines \$50 billion in taxpayer money.7 The first \$25 billion grant was aimed at saving 75,000 jobs; if that happened, each job cost \$300,000 to save. The money kept the airlines from filing for bankruptcy and ended up protecting the shareholders' investments. From April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, U.S. passenger airlines lost \$34 billion, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. They turned a profit of \$1 billion in the second quarter of this year.8 The four largest airlines all posted profits in the third quarter of this year.9

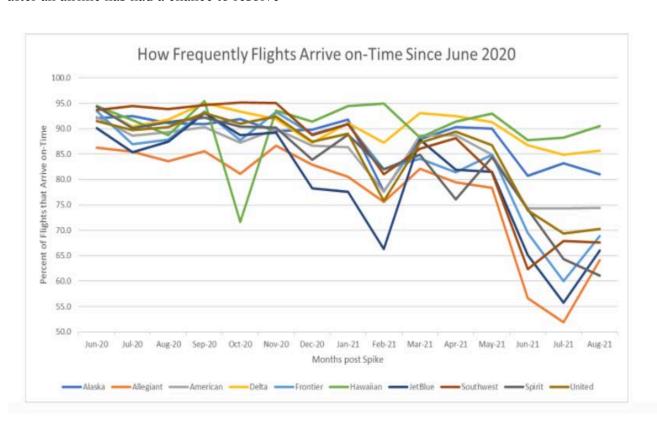
Obviously, consumers and the economy need the airlines to exist, but it's unclear how that money was used to help consumers. In theory, part of that money could have been used to refund flights that weren't taken due to the pandemic or invested in the operations side of the airline industry to help it run better this year. If the taxpayer money had been invested adequately, complaint volume wouldn't be so high and flights would be more punctual.

Not every airline and airport reacted to the pandemic equally. The DOT's Office of Aviation releases monthly Air Travel Consumer Reports that contain data on complaints against airlines, tour operators and travel agents, and data about flights departing and arriving on time.

The DOT says a complaint is to be filed after an airline has had a chance to resolve an issue raised to the consumer's satisfaction. So complaints should point to how well airlines deal with issues. The complaints are publicly available.

This enabled U.S. PIRG Education Fund to dive deeper into the state of the airline industry now, compared with periods during the last five and a half years.

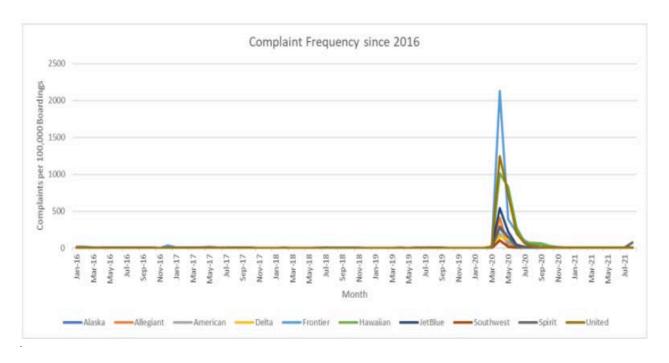
We looked at the data around more than 200,000 complaints against the airline industry and the data around flight departures and arrivals starting in January 2016. This analysis should help consumers to take as much as possible into account when deciding where to fly and through which airline.



KEY FINDINGS

- The airline industry failed to adequately deal with customers whose flights were canceled. The most common complaint category for consumers was refunds, with 107,781 complaints from April 2020 through August 2021, the latest data available. 10
- Southwest and Allegiant had the fewest complaints per 100,000 flyers since May 2020. Frontier, United and Hawaiian had the most complaints per 100,000 flyers.₁₁
- Complaints still haven't decreased to pre-pandemic levels. In August, the latest month for which data are available, complaints hit 6,666, compared with 1,190 in February 2020, the month before the pandemic hit. That volume in August is 460 percent higher than 18 months earlier.

- Punctuality dropped significantly in the summer of 2021 among seven of the 10 largest airlines.
- Some airlines have good on-time arrival records. DOT defines on time flights as those arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled time. Delta, Hawaiian and Alaska Airlines have been the most punctual since June 2020. Allegiant and JetBlue have been the least punctual.₁₂
- Among 16 of the largest airports, San Francisco International Airport and Seattle—Tacoma International Airport have the best on-time departure records since May 2020; Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, Fort Lauderdale—Hollywood International Airport and Denver International Airport have the worst.13



COMPLAINTS POUR IN

Anyone can file a consumer complaint with the Department of Transportation online against tour operators, travel agents, domestic flights and any international flight that departs from or arrives in the United States.₁₄ DOT will look into the complaint to categorize it and log who it was about. During the time reviewed prior to the pandemic, consumers generally filed 1,000 to 2,000 complaints every month.₁₅

That changed dramatically in March 2020 when the pandemic hit. By May 2020, complaints peaked at nearly 22,000.16

More than a year later, complaints still haven't decreased to pre-pandemic levels. In 2021 through August, complaints have stayed above 3,000 per month.₁₇ This can be explained in a few ways.

The spike was likely due to the airline industry not being adequately prepared for a disruption like a global pandemic and not dealing with the fallout properly. To be fair, the airline industry would have needed to expect the pandemic to hit when it did and at the severity it did in order to scale back the number of flights to reflect drastically reduced demand, and to adopt COVID safety measures.

That does not excuse the poor handling of the fallout. At the height of complaints in May 2020, nearly 21,000 of the 22,000 complaints were about consumers having difficulties getting adequate refunds.18

The volume of complaints has not returned to pre-pandemic levels because airlines continue to put up roadblocks for consumers seeking refunds. Thousands complain every month about refunds alone.19 Otherwise,

complaint volume this year would be similar to what it was before the pandemic, up until August 2021, when canceled flights emerged as another issue consumers complained about at higher rates.20

People complain about different issues now compared to before the pandemic. While baggage issues, flight problems and fares were common complaints prior to the pandemic at different times, refunds -- or lack of -- have been the top complaint every month for more than a year.21

That does not mean that other types of problems haven't grown as well. When filing a complaint, consumers may focus on one category over another. For example, a person may be seeking a refund but be put on hold for nine hours and never get a refund. That person would likely complain about the refund and not the poor customer service.

The mass flight cancellations after August 2021, including at American and Southwest in October and November, would not be seen in the statistics yet. In August 2021, there were nearly 1,500 complaints about cancelled flights, so it may be safe to assume that the volume of complaints about cancellations will continue to be abnormally high. That would be another problem airlines have to solve, with the problem evidently caused by understaffing.

The \$50 billion of taxpayer money was supposed to make sure that airlines had enough money to pay workers.22 Instead, airlines offered early retirement packages and buyouts to reduce how many workers they had on payroll. According to the government's Bureau of Transportation

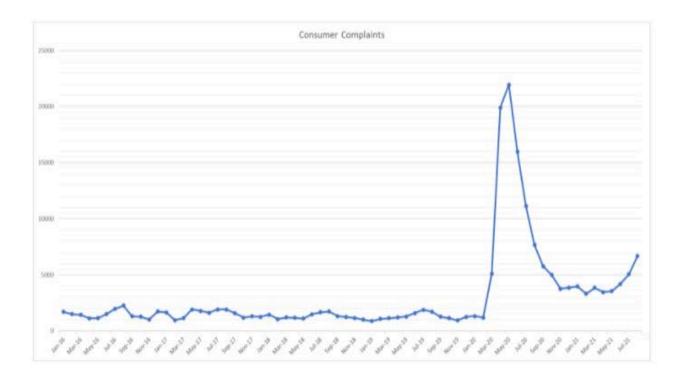
Statistics, passenger airlines in the United States employed 407,965 full-time equivalents in August 2021, the most recent month available.23

That's down 40,295 FTEs, or 10.8 percent, from when the pandemic hit in March 2020.₂₄ The August employment number is also down 9.2 percent from August 2019, the most recent corresponding pre-pandemic month.₂₅ Further, August 2021 had the lowest FTE total of any August since 2015.

The obvious solution to the major problem should be to refund the customers who were unable to fly due to the pandemic, regardless of whether their purpose for the trip was canceled or whether they were following advice from health officials to avoid travel. Instead, the go-to for the airlines has been to give vouchers and credits for future flights.

Airlines should not force people to deal with needlessly complex vouchers and credits that expire or may cause people to pay extra to try to use the credit once the consumer feels safe to fly again. Some consumers have to use their credits to buy tickets just to cancel them before the original vouchers can expire, so they can get new vouchers. (In some cases, consumers may have to shell out more money if the new flight is more expensive. That leads to consumers losing money to use the credits for a flight they weren't able to take.)

After all, 87 percent of American Airlines flyers only flew once a year before the pandemic.₂₆ American is the largest U.S. airline and likely is representative of the industry as a whole. The pandemic still exists. We hope it ends soon, but airlines shouldn't force people to fly or lose money before the reason for the cancellations is dealt with



THE MOST AND FEWEST **COMPLAINTS**

Not all airlines dealt with consumer problems equally well. During the height of complaints from March through June of 2020:

- Frontier, United and Hawaiian had the most complaints per 100,000 people boarded on that airline (called enplanements).27
- Both United and Hawaiian hit more than 1,000 complaints per 100,000 boarded (or 1 percent of all passengers on that airline).28
- Frontier reached more than 2,000 complaints per 100,000 boarded (or 2 percent of all passengers on that airline).29
- In contrast, Southwest, Delta and American each kept the complaints below 200 per 100,000 people boarded (or 0.2 percent of all passengers on that airline), which were still highs for them since 2016.30

Since last year's complaint spike, the story changes a little regarding which airlines have dealt with issues the best.

Remember that the DOT recommends travelers file complaints with the regulator only after raising the issue with the airline and not getting it resolved to satisfaction.

Some takeaways from our analysis:

- Those with the lowest rate of complaints consistently since May 2020: Southwest and Delta. Southwest has been especially of note by being the only airline in 2021 to have any month with fewer than one complaint per 100,000 boardings, and it had three such months.31
- Those with the worst rate of complaints since May 2020: Frontier, United and Hawaiian. Hawaiian averaged 86.87 complaints per 100,000 boardings.₃₂
- Hawaiian became one of the better airlines in this respect just recently by having fewer than three complaints per 100,000 boardings every month since June 2021.33
- Spirit had the most complaints per 100,000 boardings at 75.09 in August, most likely because of the cancellations the airline had to begin the month.34

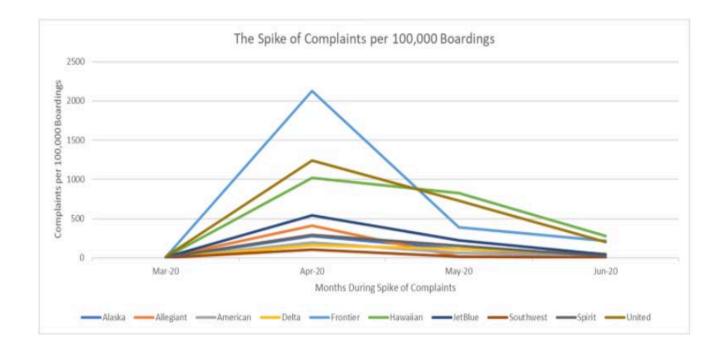
When choosing an airline, consumers should take into account how well airlines may respond to problems. Looking at the complaints is a good way to do so because a complaint generally signals the airline failed to resolve a concern quickly or adequately.

In 2021 through August, the types of complaints reported most often were the same every month, although the ranking after refunds sometimes shuffled slightly:35

- Refunds
- Flight problems (cancelations, delays, missed connections)
- Reservations/ ticketing / boarding
- Fares
- Baggage
- Customer service
- Disability

Ali Sauer of Cleveland is one of those who don't show up in the complaint statistics. Back in 2019, she and two friends booked a trip to New York City on JetBlue for spring 2020, she told U.S. PIRG.36 It was canceled when the pandemic hit.

JetBlue refused to give them refunds for the \$123 tickets, but instead offered travel credits good for one year. Sauer and her friends rebooked the trip for May 2021 but JetBlue changed the itinerary to flights that didn't work for them. They're still sitting on their travel credits, when what they'd really like is a refund.



WHO'S PUNCTUAL AND WHO'S LATE

The basic job of every airline is to get its passengers and their belongings to a place on time. DOT defines on time flights as those arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled time.

Allegiant and JetBlue trail the rest of the pack as two of the worst airlines for punctuality.37

Allegiant emerged as the worst during the initial pandemic spike as a measly 10.4 percent of all flights arrived on time in April 2020 and it continued to be one of the least punctual airlines through August 2021.38

On the other hand, Delta, Hawaiian and Alaska Airlines have been three of the most punctual airlines since June 2020.39

After the pandemic hit, the airlines became more punctual with fewer flights. Some were more punctual in June and July of 2020 than during any other time during the period we reviewed, going back to January 2016.

Since July 2020, most of the airlines have dropped off again:

- Allegiant and JetBlue continue to struggle to be punctual. Allegiant had only 51.9 percent of its flights arrive on time in July 2021.40
- Delta, Alaska and Hawaiian have stayed punctual (besides Hawaiian in October 2020), with Delta and Hawaiian airlines being the only two airlines to average more than 90 percent of their flights arriving on time since June 2020.41

The rest of the airlines have similar, so-so track records. And since May 2021, performance has fallen significantly, with seven of the 10 having on-time records of less than 75 percent for June, July and August.

The same airlines consistently are the worst at arriving on time.42 They know this, and they need to improve to have their flights arrive when they say they will. This can affect connecting flights or tight schedules that people may have. Consumers should take into consideration whether or not airlines will get them to their destinations as paid for.

Late arrivals seem to also be increasing again,43 and that will be something to keep an eye on. This could lead to a steady but long drop in flights arriving on time, or airlines may steady out to a new norm.44

Here are the percentages of flights that arrived on time in August for the 10 largest U.S. airlines:

Alaska: 81 percent Allegiant: 64.1 percent American: 74.4 percent Delta: 85.7 percent Frontier: 68.9 percent Hawaiian: 90.5 percent JetBlue: 66.0 percent Southwest: 67.6 percent

Spirit: 61.1 percent **United: 70.3 percent**

WHICH AIRPORTS HAVE THE BEST DEPARTURE RECORDS

Whether or not an airplane leaves an airport on time depends on how well two entities are run: the airline and the airport. Although, in theory, airports should be more affected by the airlines they are hubs for, sometimes airports will have flights leave late more frequently than would be expected based on which airlines have that airport as a hub. That would show that something other than the airlines are affecting the airport's ability to get flights out on time.

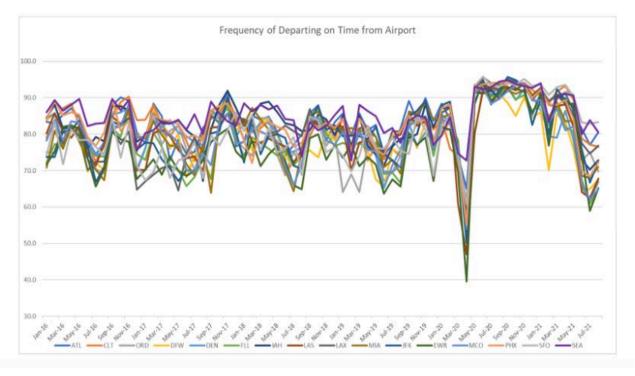
LAX early in 2017 is an example of that phenomenon. The majority of the airlines with hubs there were either average or some of the most punctual airlines nationally, but LAX was one of the least punctual airports of the 16 airports U.S. PIRG looked at.45

Below is a graph of how punctual 16 of the busiest airports have been since 2016.

Three airports that were among the most punctual before the pandemic of the 16 U.S. PIRG looked at: Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH).46 Seattle is a hub for Delta and Alaska. Atlanta is a hub for Delta while Bush Airport is a hub for United.

Seattle had the highest rate of flights leaving on time at 83.7 percent between January 2016 and March 2020.

On the other hand, Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) and San Francisco International Airport (SFO) stand out for being below average to, at best, average.47



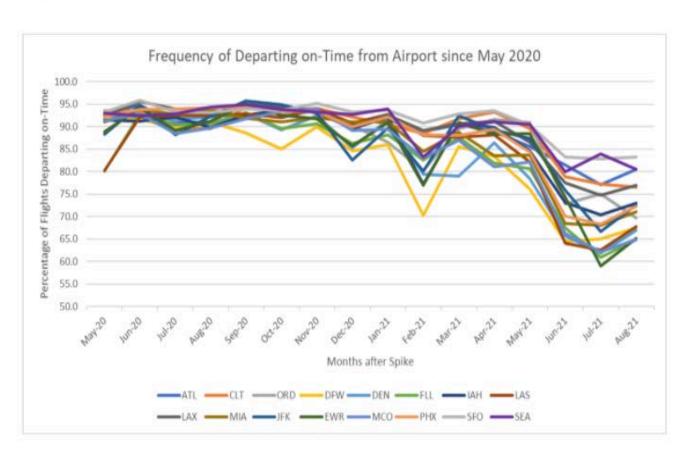
Newark is a hub for United, Fort Lauderdale for IBC Airways and Silver Airways and San Francisco for Alaska and United. Newark was the worst airport of the 16 looked at with 74 percent of flights leaving on time.

Since spring 2020, the airports have had better departure performance initially but have been getting worse.₄₉ Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), Fort Lauderdale and Denver International Airport (DEN) have all struggled to be punctual compared with the other airports on the list.₅₀ San Francisco and Seattle have been the most punctual of the airports since May 2020.₅₁

All of this information can be used in a couple ways. First, this can help consumers decide where to have a layover if they have a choice between two airports in order to be less likely to be departing late. No one likes to spend more time traveling than planned, and a longer-than-expected layover can make for a stressful day and affect a traveler's other plans.

Second, these airports can be run by the cities or the counties that they are in.

Consumers can call on their local and state governments to improve how they run the airports.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The government gave \$50 billion in taxpayer dollars to the airline industry, but it's unclear from the statistics that it helped consumers. The airlines are understaffed and consumers complain more than in 2019. That does not even take into account the recent avalanche of flight cancellations after August 2021.

- Consumers should consider how many complaints an airline has and how punctual airlines are before choosing which airline to fly on.
- When given options of layovers in different cities, consumers should look at how reliably the airports get passengers out on time.
- Consumers should voice their concerns to government officials. Call the agency in charge of the airport, and call the Department of Transportation at 202-366-4000 regarding the airlines. Ask where you can file a complaint.
- Cities can improve airports' efficiency and help improve the experience of travelers. There are a multitude of ways to improve airport efficiency depending on the airports. These include: putting in place predictive tools and creating a good working environment where staff aren't overworked and are incentivized to hit metrics that improve efficiency.
- Airlines can improve by issuing refunds to customers, being more punctual and treating their customers much better. But airlines don't have an incentive for that.
 The government has not pushed back against the airlines adequately to lead to any improvements.

- The Department of Transportation can act by cracking down on the airlines to improve how they interact with their customers and refund people for the flights they could not have taken due to the pandemic.
- Congress can approve any number of solutions for the airline industry. These could range from breaking up major airlines to create more competition, to simply requiring refunds for canceled flights.
- The FAA and DOT should make the airline consumer complaint database, https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/air-travel-consumer-reports searchable online. At least three other leading consumer agencies, including one also under the USDOT -- the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's safercar.gov -- already do so

The others are the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's public database of consumer financial complaints and the Consumer Product Safety Commission's https://www.saferproducts.gov.

This change would enable consumers, academic researchers and even competitors to study airline passenger complaint trends more easily and effectively.

I METHODOLOGY

The data for this report came from monthly reports by the Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection. https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/air-travel-consumer-reports

We looked at records from January 2016 to the most current data, which is through August 2021. That time frame was used to capture the effects of the pandemic as it emerged and trends since the pandemic began, and to establish the norm that existed before the pandemic. The data for a given month is released two months later, so there is a delay in public access. The data through August 2021 were released in early November.

The 10 largest U.S.-based airlines were chosen because the DOT's monthly reports had the most information about them compared to other U.S.-based airlines. Foreign airlines were left out of the report because the majority of flights are domestic flights and there is less information on them in the DOT's monthly reports.

U.S. PIRG Education Fund also looked at the 16 busiest airports in 2020 according to the Department of Transportation. We chose the 15 busiest, plus San Francisco, which ranked No. 16 in 2020 but ranked No. 7 in 2019 and is generally one of the 10 busiest.

This report looks at the volume of complaints, types of complaints, frequency of complaints for airlines, frequency of flights arriving on time for airlines and the frequency of airports getting flights to depart on time.

- The volume of complaints helps show how well the airline industry has dealt with problems that arise. The Department of Transportation advises that a complaint is to be filed after the airline has a chance to resolve the issue to the consumer's satisfaction, so the complaints should signal how well airlines deal with the issues.
- The types of complaints were reviewed to find out what issues consumers complain about more than others and what the airline industry may be failing to address.
- For frequency of complaints, U.S. PIRG Education Fund analyzed which U.S.-based airlines consumers complained about most often. To correct for the size of the airline, because larger airlines would more likely have more complaints, the amount of complaints per 100,000 enplanements (boardings) were used. That way, it could fairly be seen which airline is complained about by their customers more often than others.
- For frequency of on-time arrivals, we analyzed the percentage of flights that arrive every month at the scheduled time or within no more than 15 minutes later than the scheduled time. The 15-minute threshold is what the Department of Transportation uses to define on time.
- For on-time departures at airports, we looked at the percentage of flights that depart on-time from an airport every month. A flight is considered on time by the DOT if it leaves no later than 15 minutes after scheduled departure.

| APPENDIX Percentage of flights that arrive on time by airline

Month	Δlaska	Allegiant	American	Delta	Frontier	Hawaiian	letRlue	Southwest	Snirit	United
Jan-16	87.0	Allegiant	79.8	85.2	85.1	91.7	69.4		68.1	82.5
Feb-16	1		83.0	86.4	87.3	91.9	68.9		63.2	86.2
Mar-16	1		80.7	87.9	77.6	89.8	76.0		64.6	81.1
Apr-16	1		83.5	90.3	85.8	94.1	78.9		73.8	85.1
May-16	1		80.7	88.6	80.2	92.1	80.7		76.4	83.7
Jun-16	1		72.4	83.4	75.6		74.4		73.0	79.2
	1		70.8	81.8			66.4		71.9	76.5
Jul-16	1		70.8 71.9		62.0 65.9		73.0			
Aug-16 Sep-16	1		83.0	79.9 90.2		92.6 91.3	78.7		71.8	77.5
	1		84.7						85.1	84.4
Oct-16	1					93.2	77.0		83.6	83.4
Nov-16	1		85.4		87.5	91.5	84.3		86.4	86.1
Dec-16	1		79.1	81.4	62.4	85.1	71.3		72.1	76.0
Jan-17	1		79.2	80.7	69.3	85.7	72.8		72.8	78.4
Feb-17	1		85.2	89.5	82.3	78.2	72.3		81.6	81.5
Mar-17	†		80.2	86.9	79.3	84.7	70.8		75.0	81.0
Apr-17	1		78.7	76.9	79.5	88.8	72.4		77.0	81.9
May-17	1		80.1	82.8	76.6	89.7	67.2		69.0	82.3
Jun-17	1		73.2		73.1	90.4	60.6		68.3	79.4
Jul-17	1		73.1	83.1	75.2	92.3	63.5		73.5	78.7
Aug-17	1		77.7	87.4	77.2	93.0	68.1		76.9	77.5
Sep-17	1		82.8	88.7	83.9	94.0	70.1		75.1	85.5
Oct-17	1		85.1	89.4	82.1	89.5	79.6		87.1	86.0
Nov-17	1		88.8	93.7	86.0	89.3	86.6		89.8	88.6
Dec-17	1	70.0	82.0	83.5	75.8	80.8	74.1		80.4	84.6
Jan-18	1	78.6	77.6	80.4	74.9	88.3	65.8		82.9	78.6
Feb-18	1	78.3			73.8	78.1	74.6		81.9	78.1
Mar-18	1	78.5	81.1	82.6	78.4	84.2	64.2		85.1	81.9
Apr-18	1	78.8	82.7	83.3	76.4	86.2	67.6		81.8	82.6
May-18	1	76.7	78.0	84.4	71.8	89.1	71.0		80.3	77.9
Jun-18	1	69.7	72.4	81.5	60.3	88.4	73.8		76.8	74.1
Jul-18	1	67.0	72.2	81.9	59.7	91.5	67.2		73.6	76.1
Aug-18	1	78.2	73.1	80.4	61.4	90.0	66.7		73.3	71.9
Sep-18	1	82.2	78.0	86.0	66.3	89.6	77.5		84.2	80.7
Oct-18				87.1					89.0	
Nov-18	1	78.7		81.2					82.1	75.7
Dec-18	1	78.8			74.4		74.5		84.5	77.6
Jan-19	1	73.4					69.4		82.9	72.1
Feb-19	+	75.2							77.7	71.1
Mar-19	1	73.4							82.9	72.1
Apr-19		81.6							80.2	
May-19	1	79.5		85.4			77.6		76.0	74.7
Jun-19	1	72.9					70.1 70.2		71.6	
Jul-19	1	78.6							74.1	
Aug-19	1	76.8			71.2				70.9	73.6
Sep-19	1	84.1	82.7				82.0		83.8 84.5	79.0
Oct-19	1	83.4					80.7		86.9	79.5
Nov-19	1	81.6			78.5		80.4			
Dec-19	1	73.6							81.2	
Jan-20	1			88.2					85.8	82.8
Feb-20	1			86.0			83.4		82.8	81.9
Mar-20	1	62.4		76.4					81.6	
Apr-20	77.3	10.4	54.8	67.6	49.6	80.9	61.3	47.0	74.6	59.5

Percentage of flights that arrive on time by airline continued

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Month	Alaska	Allegiant	American	Delta	Frontier	Hawaiian	JetBlue	Southwest	Spirit	United
May-20	90.6	37.4	93.3	90.8	93.9	96.0	86.4	91.3	96.8	91.4
Jun-20	92.1	86.3	92.3	94.3	93.5	94.5	90.1	93.7	94.4	91.5
Jul-20	92.5	85.5	88.6	90.4	87.0	91.7	85.4	94.5	90.1	89.7
Aug-20	91.1	83.6	89.3	91.8	87.8	88.7	87.4	93.9	91.3	90.3
Sep-20	90.9	85.6	90.3	95.1	93.4	95.5	93.1	94.7	92.2	93.1
Oct-20	91.9	81.1	87.3	93.4	87.7	71.6	88.7	95.2	90.4	91.0
Nov-20	89.5	86.7	89.9	91.9	93.3	93.6	89.2	95.1	90.2	92.4
Dec-20	89.8	82.9	86.7	87.3	88.9	91.4	78.3	88.7	83.9	87.4
Jan-21	91.8	80.5	86.4	91.1	90.9	94.5	77.6	90.9	8.88	89.0
Feb-21	77.7	75.6	77.6	87.3	82.0	95.0	66.3	81.0	82.0	75.8
Mar-21	87.9	82.1	88.6	93.1	84.1	88.2	87.8	86.1	84.9	87.3
Apr-21	90.3	79.4	88.7	92.5	81.4	91.4	81.9	88.1	76.1	89.4
May-21	90.0	78.4	84.9	91.3	84.9	93.0	81.5	81.3	84.4	86.8
Jun-21	80.7	56.6	74.3	86.8	69.5	87.7	65.1	62.4	74.1	73.9
Jul-21	83.2	51.9	74.3	84.9	60.0	88.2	55.7	67.9	64.3	69.4
Aug-21	81.0	64.1	74.4	85.7	68.9	90.5	66.0	67.6	61.1	70.3
Since June 20	88.0	77.4	84.9	90.5	83.6	90.4	79.6	85.4	83.2	85.2

Percentage of flights departing on time from 16 busiest airports

Month	ATL	CLT	ORD	DFW	DEN	FLL	IAH	LAS	LAX	MIA	JFK	EWR	мсо	PHX	SFO	SEA
Jan-16	83.4	79.1	75.1	83.8	84.4	72.2	84.5	80.2	78.4	70.8	73.7	71.7	78.3	84.1	74.2	86.0
Feb-16	82.9	83.6	74.9	85.7	85.7	77.3	88.1	85.8	83.6	80.9	73.7	75.2	83.8	89.1	83.3	89.3
Mar-16	85.4	87.1	78.6	76.6	77.2	76.6	81.5	80.7	77.4	76.0	80.7	82.0	78.4	85.1	71.8	86.4
Apr-16	87.1	88.4	82.0	82.4	81.6	81.5	82.0	79.0	81.3	82.5	81.3	82.5	83.5	86.0	81.3	88.1
May-16	84.6	82.6	80.2	79.5	80.7	79.0	81.7	82.3	79.6	77.9	83.6	81.4	83.2	85.4	78.4	89.7
Jun-16	78.2	77.2	77.2	69.7	77.1	76.1	76.2	74.6	70.2	73.2	76.8	73.4	78.0	79.2	78.5	82.0
Jul-16	74.6	72.5	70.4	72.3	74.6	74.1	79.2	71.4	72.4	70.3	66.8	65.6	74.4	76.9	76.5	82.9
Aug-16	76.9	76.6	69.2	70.0	77.8	73.8	78.0	77.5	72.4	67.4	71.0	70.5	74.8	80.4	74.3	83.1
Sep-16	88.0	85.5	82.3	84.7	85.4	81.7	87.7	84.8	81.1	81.4	83.4	80.7	81.7	89.5	84.4	89.7
Oct-16	90.1	88.8	82.2	88.1	86.0	79.3	87.6	82.8	77.3	82.3	82.6	78.6	82.1	80.8	73.5	86.6
Nov-16	89.2	90.3	83.6	85.2	87.2	86.9	86.5	86.5	80.7	86.3	84.4	77.9	88.4	83.9	82.8	89.3
Dec-16	80.4	83.8	69.7	79.6	70.4	74.6	77.9	70.2	64.8	79.3	75.8	67.7	79.0	76.4	71.2	75.4
Jan-17	77.5	84.0	76.0	79.0	76.2	73.0	79.6	70.2	67.0	78.8	77.7	70.3	79.3	79.7	67.4	80.3
Feb-17	88.4	87.9	84.3	86.8	83.8	80.4	85.7	80.3	68.9	83.4	77.5	73.1	85.7	85.3	69.6	81.0
Mar-17	84.9	82.8	77.2	81.3	81.9	76.5	83.1	81.2	70.7	79.8	73.1	68.9	80.7	84.0	76.1	83.5
Apr-17	72.8	79.5	80.9	76.0	83.8	71.4	82.9	79.5	71.4	76.8	70.6	73.9	80.0	83.5	68.0	83.0
May-17	78.6	82.5	82.3	80.2	80.4	70.2	84.0	75.7	64.6	76.7	67.1	69.9	77.6	82.8	72.8	83.7
Jun-17	74.6	78.1	75.9	68.1	79.4	65.7	81.1	73.4	74.6	71.8	70.2	68.5	70.2	79.0	73.7	81.3
Jul-17	75.1	72.6	70.2	74.2	77.8	68.2	79.3	73.8	79.1	68.7	69.8	69.9	69.5	79.6	77.9	85.5
Aug-17	81.7	80.3	77.6	76.4	77.0	73.3	67.1	69.9	74.9	77.0	73.0	72.7	74.7	78.4	67.9	80.1
Sep-17	84.3	85.5	84.8	86.1	86.6	67.7	81.3	81.8	85.2	63.9	80.2	77.8	71.5	86.5	79.7	88.9
Oct-17	85.9	86.0	84.3	87.0	84.7	83.8	88.2	82.0	83.0	84.0	80.8	80.0	83.4	87.7	77.0	85.7
Nov-17	91.7	90.0	87.2	89.4	89.1	87.6	91.9	85.6	85.7	88.9	90.2	81.5	85.7	89.2	81.2	83.5
Dec-17	76.6	84.7	78.2	81.0	79.2	78.8	87.2	82.3	84.2	82.8	80.7	75.2	77.6	84.3	86.0	82.3
Jan-18	78.0	78.4	76.1	82.6	83.3	74.1	82.3	83.9	84.2	82.7	72.2	73.0	77.8	78.1	80.8	88.5
Feb-18	85.1	81.1	74.1	75.6	80.5	79.1	84.7	77.8	82.6	87.2	84.8	78.3	81.7	72.1	85.4	86.2
Mar-18	84.0	81.6	84.4	83.8	83.1	77.6	88.4	77.7	75.2	84.1	74.5	71.2	80.7	82.7	75.6	88.1
Apr-18	84.8	83.7	84.5	84.0	83.0	76.0	88.9	78.8	80.3	81.3	79.4	74.5	79.7	83.5	81.7	86.8
May-18	80.6	77.0	74.4	79.7	80.4	74.2	86.1	77.6	80.6	76.2	80.0	76.7	78.0	82.0	75.0	87.8
Jun-18	74.0	69.1	68.7	73.8	75.0	75.5	83.0	76.6	82.3	70.3	79.0	72.8	71.1	81.3	76.0	84.2
Jul-18	77.1	72.5	75.2	71.4	75.2	71.5	82.5	72.1	80.8	64.3	71.4	66.0	66.0	76.5	79.2	83.9
Aug-18	79.9	74.5	71.0	74.8	76.3	74.3	80.8	75.7	79.4	75.3	70.5	64.9	71.8	77.6	68.8	73.8
Sep-18	85.7	79.4	81.3	75.6	83.7	84.4	81.1	84.3	86.9	85.1	83.9	78.9	83.8	83.0	84.8	83.3
Oct-18	88.0	84.2			81.9			82.1						82.0		
Nov-18																
Dec-18	85.7												77.2 80.6		76.5	85.3 87.7
Jan-19 Feb-19		79.4			74.0		76.6			81.7	79. 4 79.7	77.1	75.5	75.2		72.7
Mar-19		81.6	64.1		80.3			77.7		81.1	79.4	71.2			74.1	88.1
Apr-19		72.8	77.3	75.5	79.7	75.8	76.7		82.2		78. 4	73.7	75.8	80.3	82.3	86.3
May-19		77.0		67.6		77.7		75.3		79.3		71.7		75.7	76.2	84.9
Jun-19		73.1		65.5			71.3		73.9	70.9				74.4	76.0	80.3
Jul-19		76.0				69.4		79.0		73.0				79.5	79.1	81.7
Aug-19		73.8				66.6				69.2		65.6		80.8	75.4	77.6
Sep-19		85.1				82.6				86.2				85.0	74.6	
Oct-19		83.1	83.1		76.9				85.5	85.6		77.1	83.6	83.7		85.2
Nov-19				83.2					84.0			79.1	84.9		81.3	
Dec-19		81.3	79.1	78.7		74.1		76.6	75.8		77.0	67.1	76.0		68.6	77.1
Jan-20			80.8		85.5					84.5				87.2		79.6
Feb-20				83.5			87.3			85.5						84.7
Mar-20																
Apr-20													54.1			

Percentage of flights departing on time from 16 busiest airports continued

Month	ATL	CLT	ORD	DFW	DEN	FLL	IAH	LAS	LAX	MIA	JFK	EWR	MCO	PHX	SFO	SEA
May-20	92.7	93.5	91.7	92.1	92.2	80.1	91.5	80.2	92.3	91.0	88.3	88.9	91.4	92.3	93.2	93.0
Jun-20	94.7	93.4	92.9	91.7	92.1	92.8	91.2	92.2	95.6	93.8	94.8	94.2	92.9	93.8	95.8	92.4
Jul-20	90.9	89.6	91.3	89.5	91.6	90.4	92.1	92.6	94.0	92.7	88.2	89.1	88.4	94.0	93.3	92.9
Aug-20	91.1	89.6	93.8	91.1	92.2	90.6	88.6	92.4	94.1	93.7	92.3	91.2	89.7	94.2	93.1	94.4
Sep-20	95.1	94.4	95.0	88.6	92.8	93.1	92.5	92.9	94.9	91.9	95.7	95.0	91.8	94.3	94.0	94.9
Oct-20	94.3	93.7	92.6	85.0	89.3	89.6	93.6	92.0	94.4	91.1	94.9	92.5	93.4	93.4	93.6	93.8
Nov-20	93.4	94.1	93.5	90.0	92.4	90.7	93.3	93.9	93.5	92.0	93.0	91.7	93.9	93.4	95.2	93.2
Dec-20	90.8	92.2	90.2	84.6	85.3	86.3	87.3	90.8	90.1	88.9	82.6	85.7	89.2	89.9	93.2	92.7
Jan-21	91.6	90.5	86.5	86.0	91.5	88.2	92.1	92.7	92.6	91.1	89.7	90.9	89.4	92.2	93.7	94.0
Feb-21	88.9	88.4	80.3	70.2	79.4	82.5	77.2	88.1	89.1	84.5	80.1	76.9	83.1	88.2	90.8	83.3
Mar-21	90.5	91.7	89.5	85.6	79.0	87.6	90.8	87.7	90.7	88.7	92.4	90.9	87.0	88.1	92.9	90.1
Apr-21	88.9	93.2	91.6	83.4	86.4	81.9	89.8	88.2	91.2	83.5	89.3	88.3	81.0	89.4	93.5	91.1
May-21	85.6	89.6	90.9	76.1	78.5	80.7	84.6	82.1	86.5	83.6	87.4	88.4	82.1	84.3	90.4	90.5
Jun-21	81.5	78.8	72.8	64.5	65.7	67.5	73.1	64.1	77.5	68.5	75.9	74.3	66.2	70.1	83.2	80.0
Jul-21	77.1	77.2	75.0	65.0	61.9	60.9	70.3	62.5	74.7	68.0	66.7	59.0	62.2	68.3	82.9	83.9
Aug-21	80.5	76.5	69.7	67.5	66.9	64.9	72.9	67.8	76.9	71.0	72.6	65.2	64.9	72.3	83.3	80.5
Post Avg	89.2	89.2	87.3	81.9	83.6	83.0	86.3	85.0	89.3	85.9	86.5	85.1	84.2	87.4	91.4	90.0
Pre Avg	82.2	80.8	77.2	78.6	79.9	76.9	82.2	78.9	78.9	78.9	78.4	74.0	78.4	81.8	77.0	83.7

Total complaints filed with DOT about airline industry

	1012
Month	Complaints
Jan-16	1698
Feb-16	1501
Mar-16	1427
Apr-16	1123
May-16	1135
Jun-16	1490
Jul-16	1964
Aug-16	2250
Sep-16	1303
Oct-16	1267
Nov-16	1020
Dec-16	1726
Jan-17	1651
Feb-17	950
Mar-17	1132
Apr-17	1909
May-17	1779
Jun-17	1605
Jul-17	1914
Aug-17	1908
Sep-17	1575
Oct-17	1187
Nov-17	1302
Dec-17	1247
Jan-18	1452
Feb-18	1047
Mar-18	1193
Apr-18	1170
May-18	1100
Jun-18	1477
Jul-18	1665
Aug-18	1725
Sep-18	1309
Oct-18	1242
Nov-18	1148
Dec-18	1001
Jan-19	878
Feb-19	1067
Mar-19	1136
Apr-19	1205
May-19	1289
Jun-19	1586
Jul-19	1875
Aug-19	1713
Sep-19	1259
Oct-19	1140
Nov-19	943
Dec-19	1246
Jan-20	1312
Jaii-20	1312

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Feb-20	
Mar-20	
Apr-20	19900
May-20	21951
Jun-20	15961
Jul-20	11125
Aug-20	7657
Sep-20	5764
Oct-20	4992
Nov-20	3756
Dec-20	3846
Jan-21	3966
Feb-21	3313
Mar-21	3831
Apr-21	3462
May-21	3539
Jun-21	4176
Jul-21	5058
21-Aug	6666

Top categories of complaints, Aug. 2021 and Aug. 2020

		AUGUST 2021					AUGUST 2020
COMPLAINT CATEGORY	RANKING	COMPLAINTS**	SUB-CATEGORY	COMPLAINT CATEGORY	RANKING	COMPLAINTS**	SUB-CATEGORY
REFUNDS	1	3,061		REFUNDS	1	6976	
FLIGHT PROBLEMS	2	1,896		FARES	2	212	
CANCELLATION			1,458	RESERVATIONS/TICKETING/BOARDIN	3	120	
DELAY			253	FLIGHT PROBLEMS	4	97	
MISCONNECTION			86	CANCELLATION			44
RESERVATIONS/TICKETING/BOARDIN	3	512		DELAY			21
FARES	4	423		MISCONNECTION			9
BAGGAGE	5	294		CUSTOMER SERVICE	5	93	
CUSTOMER SERVICE	6	238		DISABILITY	6	67	
DISABILITY	7	161		BAGGAGE	7	54	
OVERSALES	8	36		OTHER	8	24	
OTHER	9	30		FREQUENT FLYER			12
FREQUENT FLYER			12	OVERSALES	9	8	
DISCRIMINATION	10	10		ADVERTISING	10	5	
ADVERTISING	11	5		DISCRIMINATION	11	1	
ANIMALS	12	0		ANIMALS	12	0	
COMPLAINT TOTAL	7,000	6,666	3,605	COMPLAINT TOTAL	2007	7657	

Number of complaints per 100,000 people boarded

Month	Alaska	Allegiant	American	Delta	Frontier	Hawaiian	JetBlue	Southwest	Spirit	United
Jan-16	0.61		3.78	0.81	4.06	0.92	0.71	0.58	12.03	3.60
Feb-16	0.46		3.69	0.76	3.73	0.85	1.05	0.47	11.56	2.97
Mar-16	0.38		2.64	0.52	4.33	0.89	0.54	0.42	9.68	2.28
Apr-16	0.65		2.13	0.61	2.76	1.76	1.02	0.36	6.81	2.00
May-16	0.19		1.99	0.45	2.61	1.89	0.37	0.29	5.00	1.99
Jun-16	0.50		2.30	0.57	2.39	1.05	1.07	0.46	5.90	2.25
Jul-16	0.44		2.57	0.78	3.54	1.38	1.11	0.94	6.46	2.01
Aug-16	0.61		3.23	1.31	4.12	0.92	1.06	0.77	7.96	2.98
Sep-16	0.26		2.19	0.55	4.98	0.69	0.38	0.35	5.14	2.09
Oct-16	0.15		2.01	0.61	4.22	2.08	0.63	0.25	4.71	1.70
Nov-16	0.70		1.63	0.57	3.18	0.59	0.38	0.26	3.11	1.42
Dec-16	0.93		1.83	0.73	31.29	0.77	0.65	0.44	3.73	2.30
Jan-17	0.57		2.05	0.76	7.87	0.77	1.19	0.77	5.26	2.26
Feb-17	0.56		1.40	0.64	2.21	1.35	0.51	0.32	3.42	1.72
Mar-17	0.62		1.45	0.45	3.39	1.08	0.60	0.34	5.05	1.35
Apr-17	1.00		2.69	2.52	2.42	1.58	1.19	0.49	7.20	3.03
May-17	0.44		2.15	1.21	3.01	1.05	1.44	0.59	11.39	2.02
Jun-17	0.47		2.09	0.80	1.86	0.60	1.27	0.50	7.38	2.09
Jul-17	0.65		2.48	0.95	3.34	0.77	1.41	0.44	6.03	2.41
Aug-17	0.58		2.26	0.77	1.74	0.70	1.62	0.77	4.91	2.24
Sep-17	0.77		2.53	0.85	2.52	1.67	1.87	0.55	6.65	1.70
Oct-17	0.52		1.39	0.57	2.69	0.42	1.36	0.31	3.84	1.43
Nov-17	0.29		1.40	0.71	1.51	0.32	0.69	0.22	3.15	1.19
Dec-17	0.36		1.46	0.76	1.61	1.22	0.50	0.31	2.57	1.09
Jan-18	0.26	2.44	1.29	0.95	2.55	1.05	1.49	0.38	3.02	1.51
Feb-18	0.37	1.29	1.18	0.79	3.16	1.13	1.10	0.37	3.42	1.32
Mar-18	0.35	1.38	1.05	0.56	1.55	1.30	0.77	0.27	2.52	2.25
Apr-18	0.46	2.39	1.11	0.55	3.15	1.16	0.86	0.46	3.07	1.12
May-18	0.38	1.57	1.24	0.51	3.30	1.21	0.74	0.37	2.50	0.97
Jun-18	0.67	1.92	1.57	0.65	4.34	0.97	0.87	0.41	2.95	1.19
Jul-18	0.70	1.70	1.69	0.61	5.77	0.46	1.11	0.51	3.55	1.21
Aug-18	0.74	1.68	1.65	0.78	7.23	1.79	1.61	0.43	2.94	1.51
Sep-18	0.58	1.48	1.68	0.50	6.00	1.44	0.81	0.32	2.64	1.38
Oct-18	0.73	1.28	1.56	0.39	4.37	0.63	0.92	0.27	2.46	1.08
Nov-18	0.78	1.55	1.20	1.11	3.60	1.30	0.71	0.31	2.60	1.09
Dec-18	0.54	1.02	1.25	0.44	2.47	0.93	0.87	0.21	2.30	0.84

Number of complaints per 100,000 people boarded continued

Month	Alaska	Allegiant	American	Delta	Frontier	Hawaiian	JetBlue	Southwest	Spirit	United
Jan-19	0.63	1.49	1.35	0.41	2.34	1.06	0.64	0.26	1.01	0.90
Feb-19	0.89	2.53	1.33	0.53	2.47	1.17	0.70	0.51	2.16	1.32
Mar-19	0.54	0.66	1.46	0.31	2.19	0.72	0.71	0.38	1.74	0.96
Apr-19	0.59	1.71	1.88	0.45	2.03	0.75	0.79	0.44	3.47	1.18
May-19	0.36	1.55	1.76	0.52	1.73	1.11	0.81	0.37	2.73	1.29
Jun-19	0.37	1.42	2.27	0.60	3.58	0.61	1.11	0.40	3.38	1.81
Jul-19	0.50	1.30	2.49	0.65	3.32	0.76	1.46	0.30	3.64	2.12
Aug-19	0.36	1.82	2.10	0.61	3.29	0.67	1.28	0.30	4.19	1.92
Sep-19	0.49	2.11	1.52	0.48	2.25	0.66	1.31	0.21	3.87	1.39
Oct-19	0.34	1.74	1.10	0.44	2.32	0.62	0.95	0.31	2.63	1.12
Nov-19	0.93	1.14	0.97	0.28	2.60	0.22	0.91	0.18	2.05	0.96
Dec-19	1.30	1.66	1.17	0.76	2.49	0.51	0.80	0.27	2.81	1.64
Jan-20	0.59	1.39	1.78	0.59	2.54	0.42	1.15	0.28	2.91	1.53
Feb-20	0.66	1.23	2.41	0.48	2.23	0.83	0.90	0.17	2.28	1.36
Mar-20	2.65	8.40	5.15	2.24	12.62	6.58	8.22	2.62	6.74	17.89
Apr-20	279.48	407.91	192.64	158.89	2129.20	1016.16	542.49	106.84	293.07	1241.26
May-20	110.09	13.67	67.01	115.61	387.44	827.40	221.63	17.59	152.36	731.60
Jun-20	25.14	7.53	23.16	47.73	214.11	281.32	44.35	3.97	22.81	202.39
Jul-20	12.20	4.67	13.27	16.93	97.09	69.78	15.66	3.03	9.10	60.82
Aug-20	8.52	4.35	9.11	6.07	49.16	68.24	12.83	1.62	7.55	26.97
Sep-20	6.58	3.27	5.60	4.06	55.43	65.05	8.13	1.59	11.13	17.09
Oct-20	5.70	2.64	4.63	2.18	28.49	30.26	5.70	1.34	7.17	9.61
Nov-20	4.81	2.58	4.15	1.86	13.29	6.32	5.82	1.13	4.83	8.21
Dec-20	5.13	2.04	3.82	1.35	9.50	6.36	4.78	1.21	5.91	6.15
Jan-21	5.88	1.62	3.60	1.61	9.84	6.87	4.89	1.59	7.47	7.82
Feb-21	3.01	3.78	4.07	1.27	7.59	3.43	4.90	0.96	6.12	7.03
Mar-21	2.58	1.71	3.22	1.29	4.52	6.73	4.22	1.01	4.20	6.22
Apr-21	1.47	3.41	3.14	1.61	4.13	4.34	5.47	0.86	4.65	4.62
May-21	1.61	3.50	2.28	1.14	2.79	5.86	4.94	0.88	3.94	5.05
Jun-21	1.75	3.83	3.53	1.02	4.18	2.76	6.67	1.22	4.21	4.71
Jul-21	1.72	6.90	3.83	1.50	7.32	2.47	8.86	1.21	6.34	4.92
Aug-21	1.80	9.30	4.95	1.12	7.58	2.66	9.19	1.24	75.09	5.40
Post Spike	12.37	4.68	9.96	12.90	56.40	86.87	23.00	2.53	20.81	69.29

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