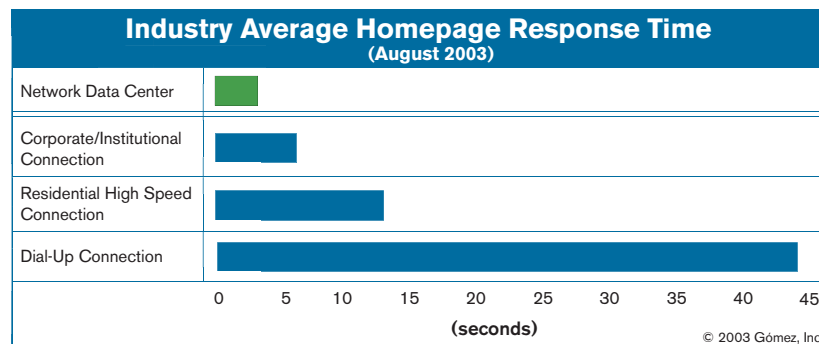


## Gómez Hotel Industry Benchmark - Homepage Data

The Gómez Hotel Industry Homepage Benchmark for August reveals:

- Network Data Center Response times are again on the rise for the online hotel industry. The aggregate benchmark for all companies monitored was 4.06 seconds for the month of August 2003, up from 3.68 seconds in July.
- Marriott continues to lead the Network Data Center, Corporate and Residential Broadband connection speed benchmarks in end-to-end homepage response time. The hotelier's site, however, falls short in our dial-up "last mile" measurements, ranking third behind Choice Hotels and Embassy Suites.
- Availability metrics for all benchmarked hotels remain superb across each connection speed monitored. Each benchmark, save the Dial-up Connection index, is in the 99th percentile, illustrating superior online reliability for the industry as a whole.



Network Data Center		Corporate/Institutional Connection		Residential High Speed Connection		Dial-Up Connection	
Site	Response Time (seconds)	Site	Response Time (seconds)	Site	Response Time (seconds)	Site	Response Time (seconds)
Marriott	2.34	Marriott	5.96	Marriott	12.63	Choice Hotels	37.47
Hilton	3.24	EmbassySuites	6.56	EmbassySuites	12.93	Embassy Suites	42.80
Intercontinental	3.51	Ramada	6.61	Ramada	13.21	Benchmark Average	44.55
Starwood	3.83	Hilton	6.69	Hilton	13.66	Marriott	44.59
Choice Hotels	3.85	Benchmark Average	7.36	Benchmark Average	13.76	Hilton	45.56
Radisson	3.87	Intercontinental	7.79	Choice Hotels	14.55	Ramada	51.75
Benchmark Average	4.06	Choice Hotels	8.94	Intercontinental	15.96	Intercontinental	56.16
EmbassySuites	4.28	Starwood	9.43	Starwood	17.57	Starwood	56.56
Ramada	4.28	Wyndham	12.99	Wyndham	21.61	Wyndham	62.81
Wyndham	7.34	Radisson	N/A	Radisson	N/A	Radisson	N/A

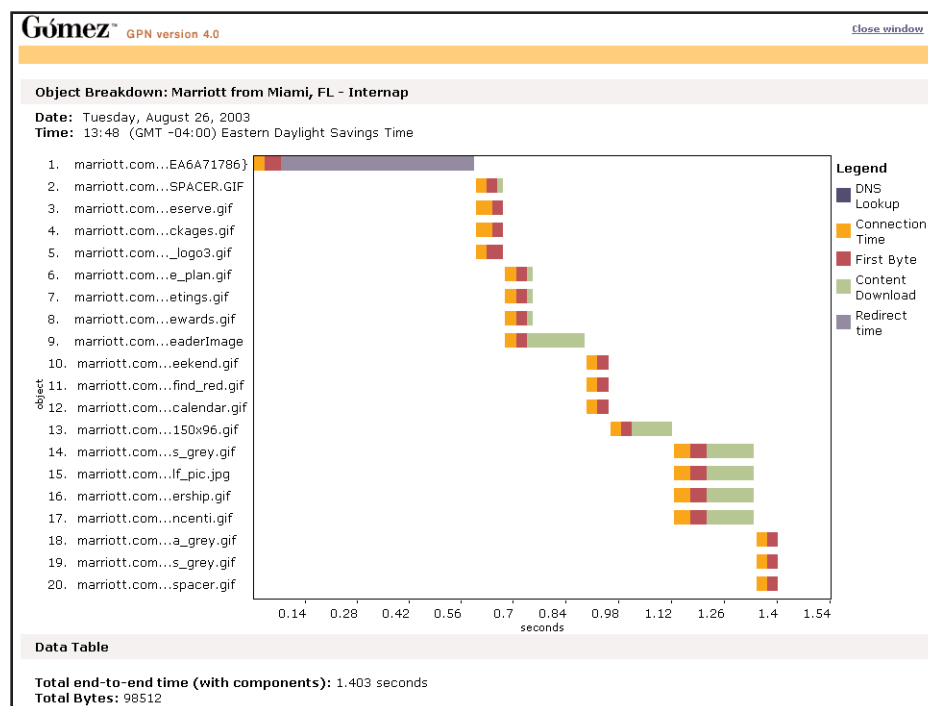
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**Analyst Comments:**

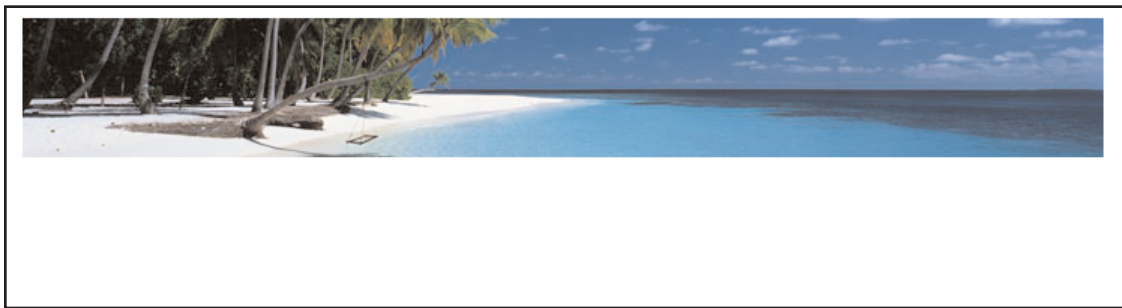
As summer days dwindled, hotel industry homepage response time averages slowed from their lightening fast pace. Marriott.com, however, continued to dominate all but the slowest connection speed benchmarks. To gain a deeper understanding of how this industry mogul maintains its top spot, Gómez deconstructed the homepage elements of its Web offering.

As mentioned in [last month's performance update](#), response times tend to normalize over the course of an entire month. Yet, when we drill-down into the day-to-day and even the hourly performance of a Web site, we see variances that could impact on overall customer experience.

In pursuit of flaws in a seemingly flawless site, Gómez examined the response time of the Marriott.com homepage on Tuesday, August 26. The information graphic below illustrates the 19 objects identified on the Marriott.com homepage as download by the Gómez Performance Network (GPN) agent. On average, this page required 2.34 seconds to load across a Network Data Center connection throughout August. As our graphical depiction shows, no individual objects contributed overwhelmingly to significant performance degradation. In fact, the entire page only required 1.43 seconds to load, outperforming the average for the month. Thus with no flaws we continued to investigate.



We then discovered an instance where the page required eight seconds to load from the same node depicted above (Miami Internap network) and drilled down to see why. Analysis revealed what appeared to be a very tranquil and innocuous image at the top of the page (see image below) as the primary drag on performance. This GIF is 1.7 kilobytes in size, which isn't normally a problem, yet in this instance it took 2.7 seconds to download. That's more time than the entire page took on the earlier test!



Although performance was affected in this individual test, it was an anomaly and unlikely disrupted the experience of numerous site visitors. Yet, without consistent performance monitoring and benchmarking, we would have been unable to identify the offending image and understand the problem. Persistently slow connections and problematic images often drive customers to competing Web sites.

With its "Last Mile" performance monitoring service, Gómez delivers Web site performance metrics that reflect true online customer experience. This view complements GPN, which synthetically measures site performance from the Internet's Backbone. Gómez benchmarking services provide a competitive view of site performance.

Gómez helps companies weigh the benefit of content and functionality against performance to maximize Internet channel effectiveness. The site elements we benchmark are instrumental in shaping overall customer satisfaction, and drive customers' willingness to utilize the online channel. To learn more, visit [www.gomez.com](http://www.gomez.com).