



On-time performance results for airlines and airports



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Contents

Foreword	5
Overview	6
Categories and Criteria	6
Airports: Small Category – <10m seats per annum	8
Airports: Medium Category – 10-20m seats per annum	10
Airports: Large Category – >20m seats per annum	12
Top Airlines: All	14
Top Airlines: Mainline Category	16
Top Airlines: LCC Category	18
Airlines by region	20
– Asia Pacific	20
– The Americas	21
– Europe	22
– Middle East & Africa	23
Conclusion	24
About OAG	25

List of Tables

Table 1: Top 20 Small Airports by OTP	8
Table 2: Top 20 Medium Airports by OTP	10
Table 3: Top 20 Large Airports by OTP	12
Table 4: Top 20 Airlines by OTP	14
Table 5: Top 20 Mainline Airlines by OTP	16
Table 6: Top 20 LCC Airlines by OTP	18
Table 7: Top 10 Asia-Pacific Airlines by OTP	20
Table 8: Top 10 Airlines in the Americas by OTP	21
Table 9: Top 10 European Airlines by OTP	22
Table 10: Top Middle East & African Airlines by OTP	23

Foreword

“Punctuality is the soul of business”

Thomas Chandler Halliburton

In a world of increasing transparency, immediate information and action, flight status and punctuality data has an increasingly important role to play in all of our planning. Everyone from the fuelling company to the catering supplier to the traveller wants access to timely, accurate information and at OAG we recognise the need for such data to be supplied by our fail-safe systems and processes.

OAG manages the definitive schedules database enabling over 900 of the world's leading airlines to distribute their schedules across the industry. As a result of the quality and richness of our schedules, we are in a unique position to provide reliable flight status and on-time performance data to the communities we serve.

Over the past few years we have been investing in and developing our Flight Status information offering. With over 10 years of historic flight status information, we are unique in the industry and we now have a wide variety of customers across the globe ranging from the travel technology community to airport services, receiving this information dynamically. Our global coverage now approaches 95% and is growing daily.

With that in mind we are delighted to launch the OAG Punctuality League, a round-up of our annual on-time performance results for airlines and airports. With over 80 years of expertise in flight data and aggregation, our history is our foundation, and we have used this discipline and reputation to provide accurate and timely on-time performance and flight status data. OAG puts data integrity at the heart of what we do; we deal in facts supplied directly to us, presenting you with data that you can trust.

The publication of the OAG Punctuality League provides both a time to reflect back on the last 12 months' performance and celebrate the success of this industry. With many airports and airlines achieving in excess of 90% on time performance within 15 minutes of schedule there is a lot to celebrate. In our complex business, with all its variables such standards and their continual maintenance is a credit to all concerned. So for those at the top of the tables a very big well done from everyone at OAG and for those who are not quite there yet I'm sure that progress will be made during 2015.

We are excited by this latest contribution to what is one of the most dynamic and powerful industries on the planet.

With best wishes for 2015.

John Grant
Executive Vice President – OAG



Overview

The OAG Punctuality League draws on OAG's vast experience of gathering and processing timely and accurate airline schedule and flight status data. Airline schedule data has been the core of the OAG business from its inception. Originally, schedules were distributed as large paper books. Times have changed and today OAG delivers real-time flight schedules and status information to airlines, airports and a myriad of other schedule users via web services, APIs and consolidated data feeds directly into host systems. Our customers depend on the reliability and accuracy of our schedule data.

The OAG database has data for over 900 airlines, including 113 low cost carriers. One hundred and sixty airlines supply schedule updates directly via SSM messages and we process around 2.2 million such messages each month so that about 30% of our schedule database is refreshed daily as a result of SSM updates.

OAG also processes over 21 million flight status updates every month, equivalent to 715,000 each day. It's our business to know where planes should be, when they should take off and land, and when they're late.

In this report we have consolidated Flight Status data for the full year 2014 and created tables of the best performers in a range of categories. The OAG Punctuality League is based on a total of 43.5 million flight records.

Category Criteria

The OAG Punctuality League presents on-time performance data as a series of tables based on a range of Airport and Airline categories.

Airports

There are three 'Airport' categories.

- Small Airports, defined as fewer than 10 million scheduled seats per annum
- Medium Airports, defined as between 10 million and 20 million scheduled seats per annum
- Large Airports, defined as more than 20 million scheduled seats per annum

To qualify for inclusion in the OAG Punctuality League the OAG database must have received data for at least 80% of scheduled flights to and from an airport.

Airlines

There are eight 'Airline' categories.

- All airlines
- Mainline airlines (i.e. excluding low cost carriers)
- Low cost carriers
- Regional Airlines
- Airlines based in the Americas
- Airlines based in Asia & Southwest Pacific
- Airlines based in Europe
- Airlines based in the Middle East and Africa

To qualify for inclusion in the OAG Punctuality League the OAG database must have received data for at least 80% of scheduled flights operated by an airline.

Additional qualifying criteria are as follows:

All airlines/mainline airlines

Airlines must have been ranked among the Top 200 operators globally in terms of Available Seats Kilometres (ASKs) in 2014, and must have operated more than 30,000 scheduled flights in 2014 .

Low cost carriers (LCCs)

Low cost carriers must have operated at least 18,000 scheduled flights in 2014, approximately 50 flights a day, with a fleet of at least 10 aircraft.

Regional airlines

Regional airlines have been defined as those airlines whose operations are entirely within the IATA geographic region that the airline is based in. They must have operated a minimum of 18,000 scheduled flights in 2014.

Airlines based in a region

The last four categories are for the best airlines operating in each of four regions. In each category airlines must have operated a minimum of 18,000 scheduled flights in 2014 to qualify for inclusion.

Definitions

In this report a 'record' is defined as a flight for which we either have a 'code', or an actual time of arrival (and departure in the case of airports) and excludes cancelled services.

On-time performance – also referred to as OTP. 'On-time' is defined as departures and arrivals that take place within 15 minutes of schedule for airports. For airlines, 'on-time' is defined as arrivals that take place within 15 minutes of schedule.

'Schedules' is defined as what has been provided by airlines to the OAG database.

Airports: Small Category <10m seats per annum

The Top 20 Small Airports on average ensured that 89.8% of arriving and departing flights were within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival and departure times in 2014. The average data coverage for these airports was 92.9%.

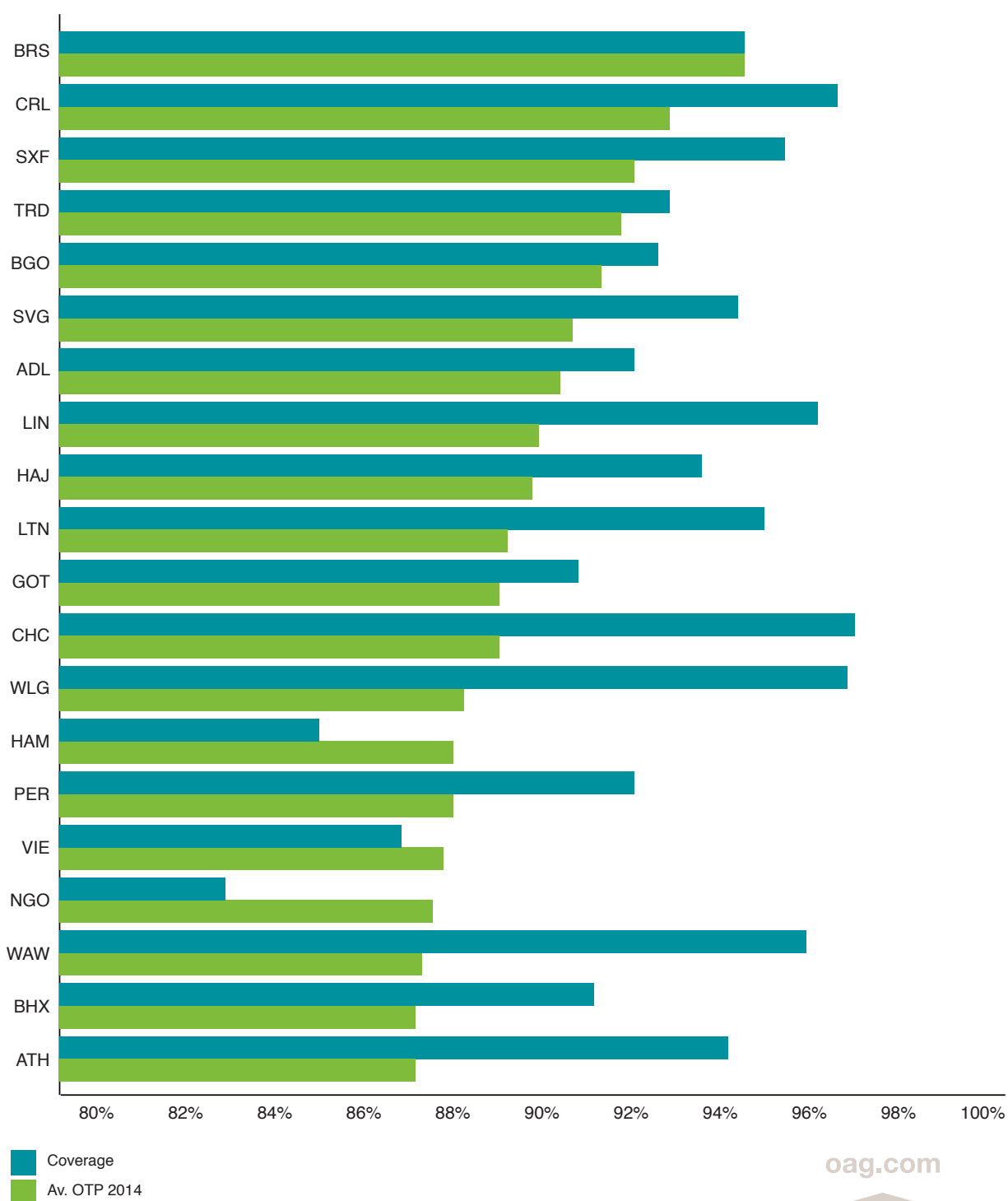
Table 1: Top 20 Small Airports by OTP

Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	94.4%	Bristol	BRS	94.4%
2	96.4%	Brussels South Charleroi	CRL	93.1%
3	95.7%	Berlin Schönefeld	SXF	92.3%
4	93.1%	Trondheim	TRD	92.0%
5	92.9%	Bergen	BGO	91.6%
6	94.2%	Stavanger	SVG	90.8%
7	92.3%	Adelaide	ADL	90.5%
8	96.3%	Milan Linate	LIN	90.1%
9	93.9%	Hannover	HAJ	90.0%
10	95.1%	London Luton	LTN	89.3%
11	90.9%	Gothenburg	GOT	89.2%
12	97.2%	Christchurch	CHC	89.2%
13	97.1%	Wellington	WLG	88.3%
14	85.2%	Hamburg	HAM	88.1%
15	92.3%	Perth	PER	88.1%
16	86.8%	Vienna	VIE	88.0%
17	82.9%	Nagoya	NGO	87.8%
18	96.1%	Warsaw	WAW	87.6%
19	91.4%	Birmingham	BHX	87.4%
20	94.3%	Athens	ATH	87.4%

In this category, Bristol Airport (BRS) recorded the best on-time performance with 94.4% of flights on time in 2014. Brussels South Charleroi Airport (CRL) came second with 93.1% of flights arriving or departing within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival or departure time, whilst Berlin Schoenefeld (SXF) ranked third with 92.3% of flights on time.

Nine of the Top 20 performers managed to achieve 90% of flights on time, a level of performance not replicated in the other airport categories. Fifteen of these 20 airports are in Europe, and there are three German airports: Berlin Schönefeld (SXF), Hannover (HAJ) and Hamburg (HAM). There are no North American airports, and similarly, only one of the Top 20 is in Japan: Nagoya (NGO). The remaining four airports in the Top 20 are located in Australia and New Zealand.

For some of these airports the significant proportion of flights operated by Low Cost Carriers (LCCs), with their high aircraft utilisation, will be a factor. At Brussels 46% of flights in 2014 were operated by easyJet and a further 17% by Ryanair. At Charleroi Ryanair operated 79% of flights and the remaining flights were also operated by LCCs. Across the Top 20 airports the average proportion of flights operated by LCCs in 2014 was 35%.



Airports: Medium Category <10-20 seats per annum

Top 20 Medium Airports on average ensured that 85.5% of arriving and departing flights were within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival and departure times in 2014. The average data coverage for these airports was 93.3%.

Table 2: Top 20 Medium Airports by OTP

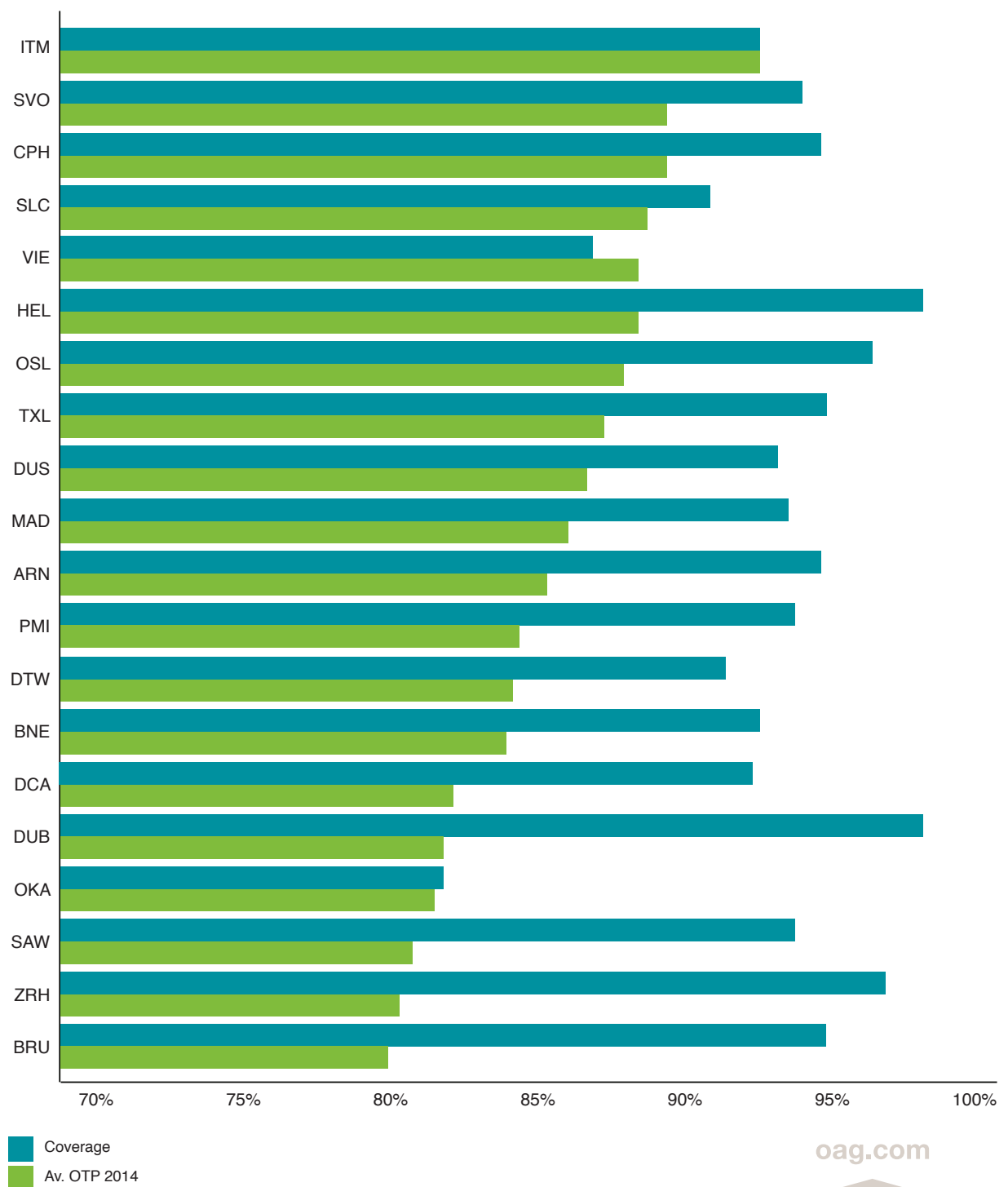
Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	92.6%	Osaka	ITM	93.2%
2	94.4%	Moscow Sheremetyevo	SVO	89.8%
2	94.8%	Copenhagen	CPH	89.8%
4	91.0%	Salt Lake City	SLC	88.2%
5	86.8%	Vienna	VIE	88.0%
6	97.9%	Helsinki	HEL	88.0%
7	96.2%	Oslo	OSL	87.9%
8	95.1%	Berlin Tegel	TXL	87.2%
9	93.0%	Duesseldorf	DUS	86.1%
10	93.3%	Madrid	MAD	85.8%
11	94.9%	Stockholm	ARN	85.4%
12	94.2%	Palma	PMI	84.6%
13	91.3%	Detroit	DTW	84.5%
14	92.6%	Brisbane	BNE	84.4%
15	91.7%	Washington National	DCA	82.0%
16	97.8%	Dublin	DUB	81.9%
17	81.9%	Okinawa Naha	OKA	81.4%
18	94.1%	Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen	SAW	80.7%
19	97.3%	Zurich	ZRH	80.4%
20	95.1%	Brussels	BRU	80.1%

Only one airport in this category achieved 90% or higher on-time performance and on-time performance falls away more quickly further down the list with the airport ranked 20th achieving an on-time performance of 80.1%, compared with 87.4% for the airport ranked 20th among our Small Airports category.

Osaka (ITM) came top among the Medium Airports with an on-time performance of 93.2%, while Moscow Sheremetyevo (SVO) and Copenhagen (CPH) were joint second with 89.8%.

Fourteen of the Top 20 Medium Airports are in Europe. There are three in the United States: Salt Lake City (SLC), Detroit (DTW) and Washington National (DCA). Japan manages two airports in this category: Osaka (ITM) and Okinawa Naha (OKA).

An interesting observation is that nine of the Top 20 lie above 50 degree latitude, in regions which are generally known for their colder weather and snow. It would seem that snow may be an easier disturbance to handle as an airport than the disruption caused by weather in more temperate and tropical regions.



Airports: Large Category

>20m seats per annum

Top 20 Large Airports on average ensured that 82.9% of arriving and departing flights were within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival and departure times in 2014. The average data coverage for these airports was 90.0%.

Table 3: Top 20 Large Airports by OTP

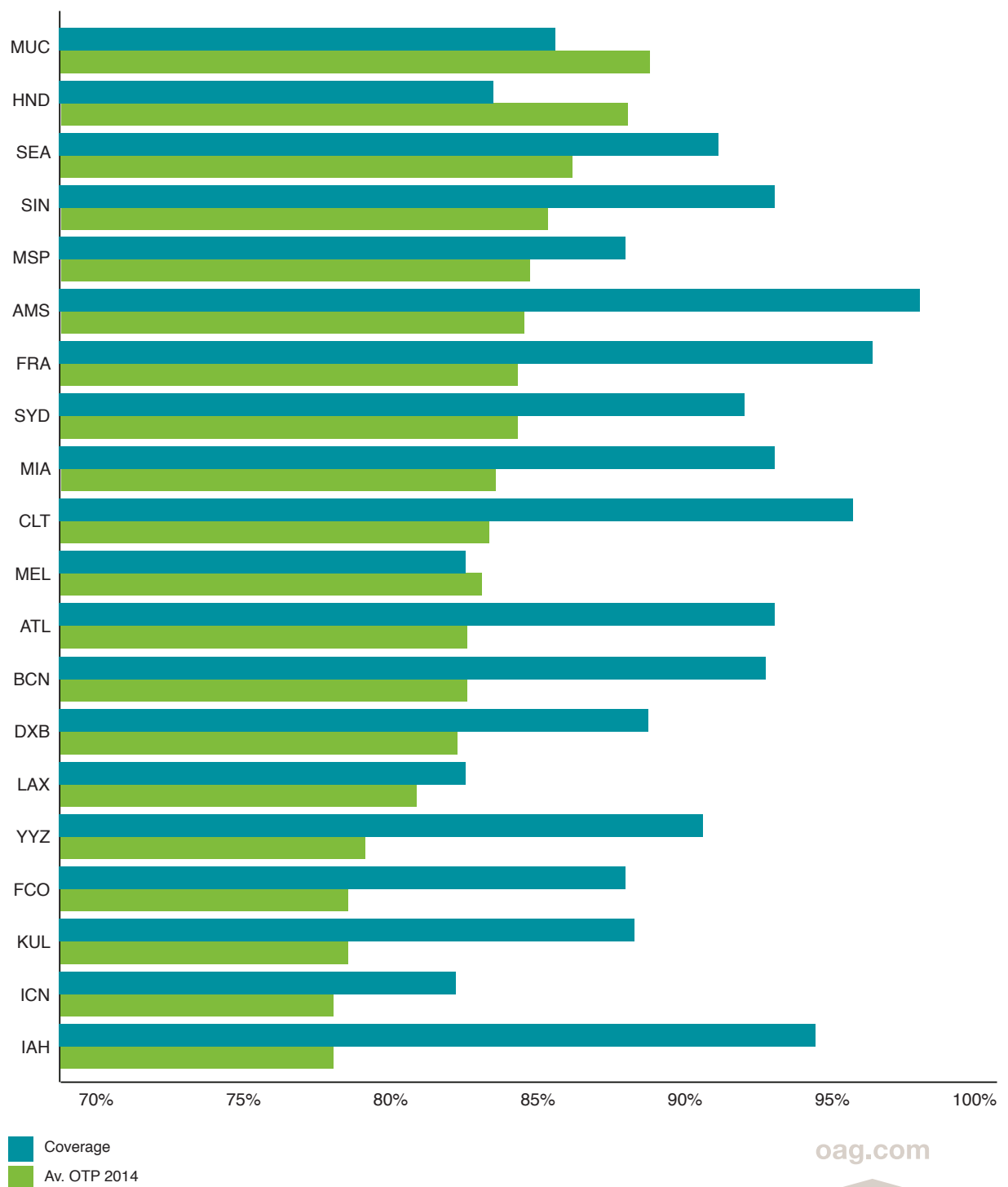
Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline	Code	Average OTP 2014
1	85.6%	Munich		MUC	89.0%
2	83.9%	Tokyo Haneda		HND	87.9%
3	91.3%	Seattle		SEA	86.2%
4	93.1%	Singapore Changi		SIN	85.3%
5	87.7%	Minneapolis		MSP	84.5%
6	98.1%	Amsterdam		AMS	84.4%
7	96.6%	Frankfurt		FRA	84.4%
8	92.7%	Sydney		SYD	84.4%
9	93.1%	Miami		MIA	83.2%
10	96.1%	Charlotte		CLT	83.1%
11	82.4%	Melbourne		MEL	82.9%
12	91.3%	Atlanta		ATL	82.4%
13	93.0%	Barcelona		BCN	82.4%
14	89.2%	Dubai		DXB	82.3%
15	82.6%	Los Angeles		LAX	81.1%
16	90.4%	Toronto		YYZ	79.6%
17	87.9%	Rome Fiumicino		FCO	79.1%
18	88.8%	Kuala Lumpur		KUL	79.1%
19	82.2%	Seoul Incheon		ICN	78.8%
20	94.9%	Houston		IAH	78.8%

None of the Top 20 Large Airports achieved over 90% on-time performance in 2014 reflecting the greater operational challenges large airports face. Aside from congestion due to high demand for slots, these airports are also more likely to feel the effect of disruption elsewhere as their route networks include many more airports. The higher proportion of long haul flights that these airports handle also provides more scope for flight duration to vary from the schedule simply through head and tail winds.

Munich (MUC) topped the leader board with 89.0% of flights departing and arriving on time. Tokyo Haneda (HND) was second with 87.9% on-time performance and Seattle (SEA) third with 86.2% on time. There are eight North American airports in the Top 20 and the world's busiest airport, Atlanta (ATL)¹, makes it into the Top 20 at number 12 with 82.4% of flights on time. Dubai (DXB) also appears in the Top 20, ranked number 14, with 82.3% of flights on time. Australia's two biggest airports, Sydney (SYD) and Melbourne (MEL) also feature in the Top 20 at number eight and 11 respectively.

Given the likelihood that Beijing will soon replace Atlanta as the world's busiest airport it is interesting that there are no Chinese airports among the Top 20 yet. Beijing is the highest Chinese airport in the league but is outside the Top 20, appearing at number 28 in terms of on-time performance.

¹ Based on 2014 seat capacity of more than 100,000 one-way seats each day.



Top Airlines: All

The Top 20 Airlines category sees an average on-time performance for arriving flights of 88.8%. Coverage was 92.7%.

Table 4: Top 20 Airlines by OTP

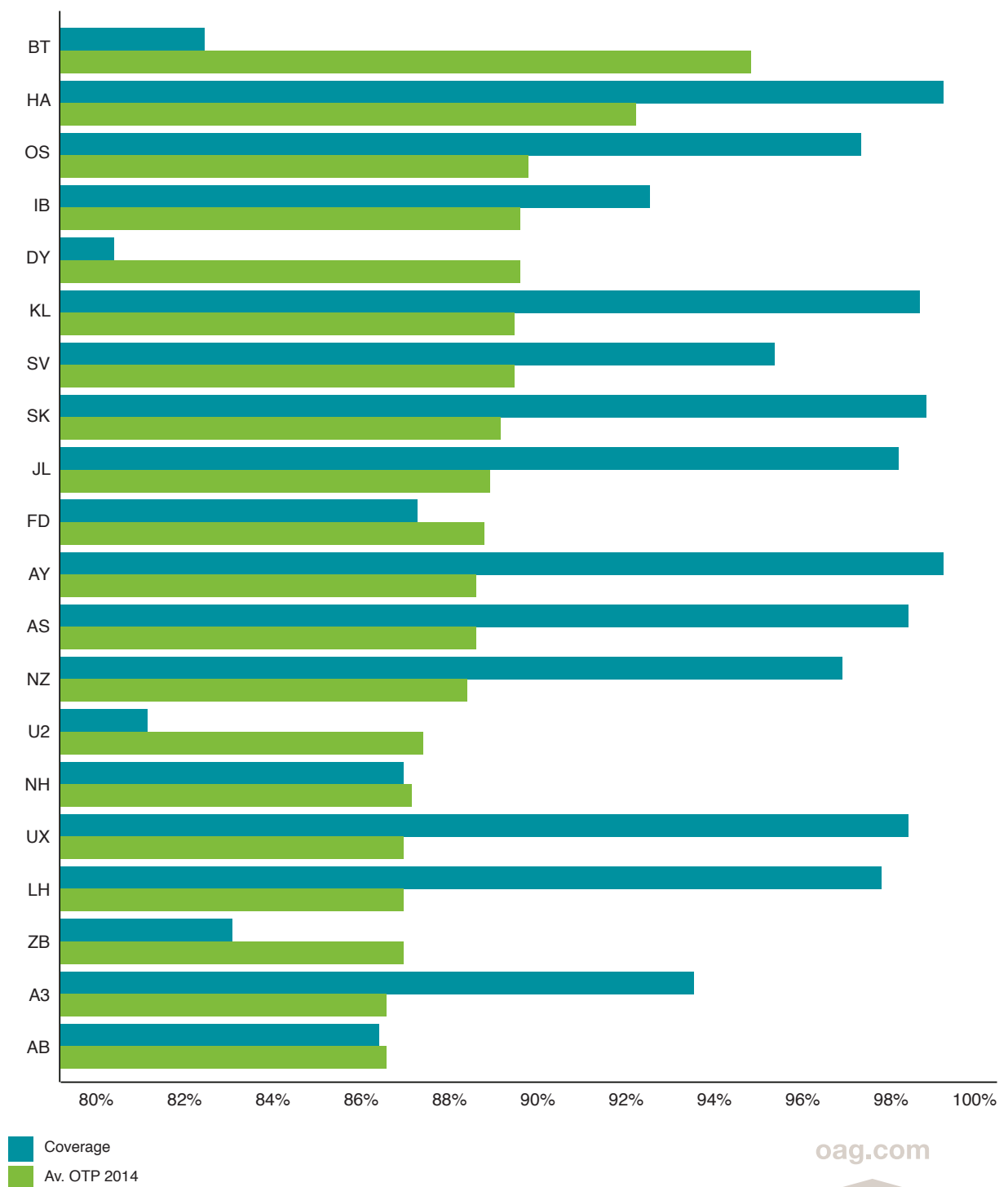
Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	82.4%	airBaltic	BT	94.9%
2	99.3%	Hawaiian Airlines	HA	92.3%
3	97.7%	Austrian Airlines	OS	90.0%
4	92.5%	Iberia	IB	89.7%
5	80.3%	Norwegian Air Shuttle	DY	89.7%
6	98.7%	KLM	KL	89.4%
7	95.6%	Saudi Arabian Airlines	SV	89.4%
8	99.0%	SAS	SK	89.1%
9	98.2%	Japan Airlines	JL	88.8%
10	87.4%	Thai AirAsia	FD	88.7%
11	99.3%	Finnair	AY	88.6%
12	98.4%	Alaska Airlines	AS	88.5%
13	97.0%	Air New Zealand	NZ	88.3%
14	81.3%	easyJet	U2	87.7%
15	86.9%	All Nippon Airways	NH	87.3%
16	98.3%	Air Europa	UX	87.1%
17	98.0%	Lufthansa	LH	87.1%
18	83.1%	Monarch Airlines	ZB	86.9%
19	93.9%	Aegean Airlines	A3	86.5%
20	86.2%	Air Berlin	AB	86.4%

Only the top three carriers in this category achieve nine out of 10 flights arriving on time.

airBaltic, Latvia's national carrier, tops the league in 2014 with the best on-time performance across all major airlines (mainline and LCC) with 94.9% of flights arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. airBaltic is by no means the biggest carrier in this category, but has performed significantly better than the average for this group. They operated 3.9 million seats and 42,000 flights to 40 destinations from their main base in Riga across Europe in 2014.

Hawaiian Airlines is ranked number two with an average on-time performance of 92.3%. They operated 85,000 flights and 12.8 million seats in 2014. Hawaiian Airlines is one of only two US carriers in the Top 20, the other being Alaska Airlines, ranked at number 12. Both are smaller and more regionally focused carriers than the US majors or big LCCs.

There is a heavy bias among the best performing airlines towards the European airlines with 13 of the Top 20 carriers in 2014 based in Europe. Although the proportion of LCC flights appeared to be a contributory factor to good airport performance, and despite smaller airports with a higher LCC share returning better on-time performance, there are only four LCCs in the Top 20.



Top Airlines: Mainline Category

The Top 20 Mainline Airlines category sees an average on-time performance for arriving flights of 88.3%. Coverage was 94.7%.

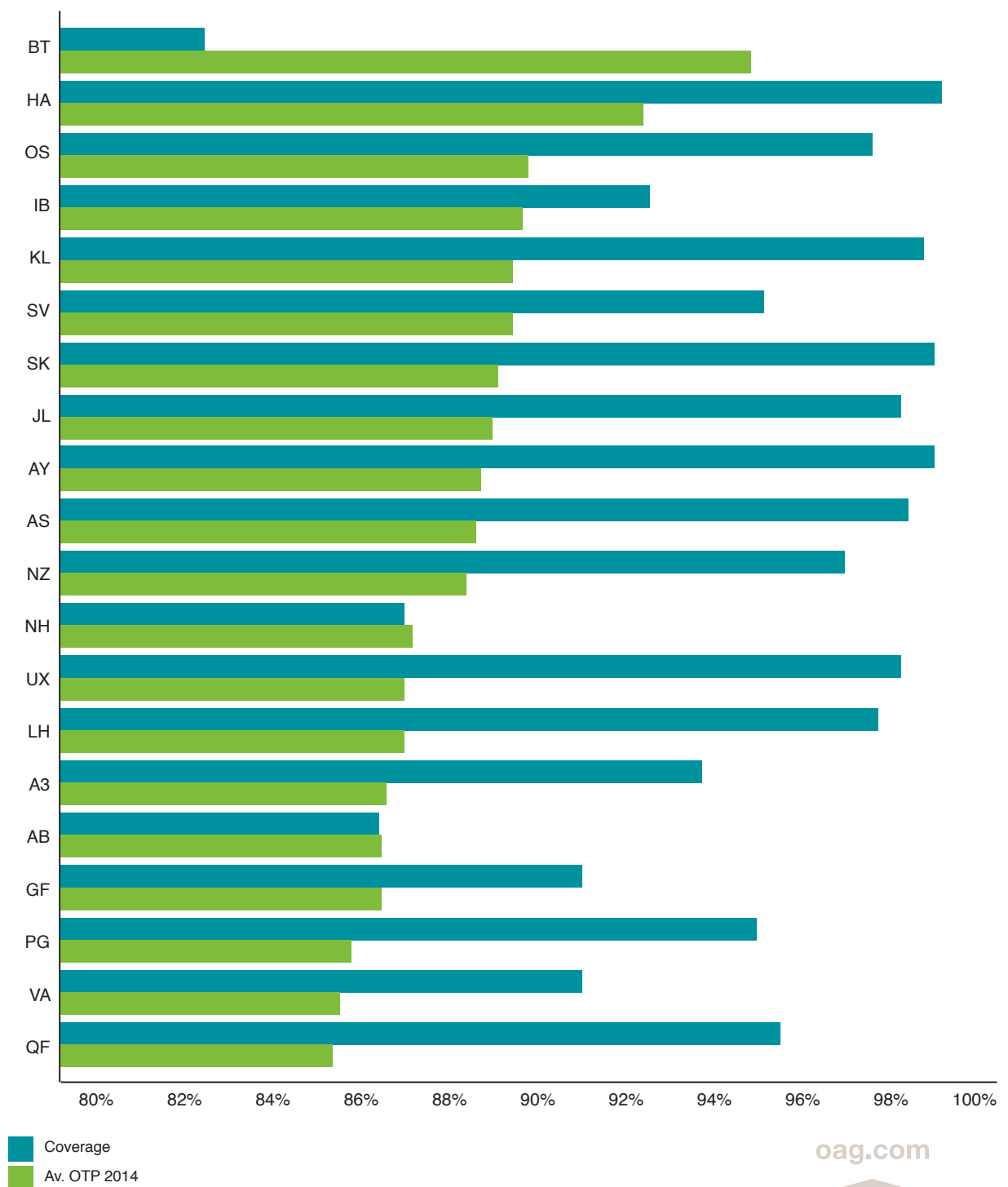
Table 5: Top 20 Mainline Airlines by OTP

Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	82.4%	airBaltic	BT	94.9%
2	99.3%	Hawaiian Airlines	HA	92.3%
3	97.7%	Austrian Airlines	OS	90.0%
4	92.5%	Iberia	IB	89.7%
5	98.7%	KLM	KL	89.4%
6	95.6%	Saudi Arabian Airlines	SV	89.4%
7	99.0%	SAS	SK	89.1%
8	98.2%	Japan Airlines	JL	88.8%
9	99.3%	Finnair	AY	88.6%
10	98.4%	Alaska Airlines	AS	88.5%
11	97.0%	Air New Zealand	NZ	88.3%
12	86.9%	All Nippon Airways	NH	87.3%
13	98.3%	Air Europa	UX	87.1%
14	98.0%	Lufthansa	LH	87.1%
15	93.9%	Aegean Airlines	A3	86.5%
16	86.2%	Air Berlin	AB	86.4%
17	91.1%	Gulf Air	GF	86.4%
18	95.2%	Bangkok Airways	PG	86.0%
19	91.1%	Virgin Australia	VA	85.5%
20	95.8%	Qantas Airways	QF	85.4%

Unsurprisingly airBaltic and Hawaiian Airlines are also the top performers in this category. The four LCCs shown in the previous tables have dropped out and been replaced by Gulf Air, Bangkok Airways, Virgin Australia and Qantas, ranked 17 to 20.

Only three carriers achieved over 90% OTP. Lufthansa is the largest airline, as measured by the number of flights operated in 2014, among the Top 20. It is ranked 14th followed by Alaska Airlines, ranked 10th, and Qantas, ranked 20th. This shows that it is possible for some of the largest airlines in the world to achieve very high levels of on-time performance across their diverse and widespread route networks.

Another interesting feature is that almost half of the Top 20 airlines for on-time performance are European carriers. In contrast, with the exception of Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines, there are no carriers based in the Americas.



Top Airlines: LCC Category

The best performers stand out in this category as performance falls away rapidly, with the airline ranked 20th managing to get only 58.3% of flights to their destination on time. While there is a clear imperative for LCCs to maintain a high level of operational performance, it appears that the level of ambition is frequently much higher than the reality.

Table 6: Top 20 LCC Airlines by OTP

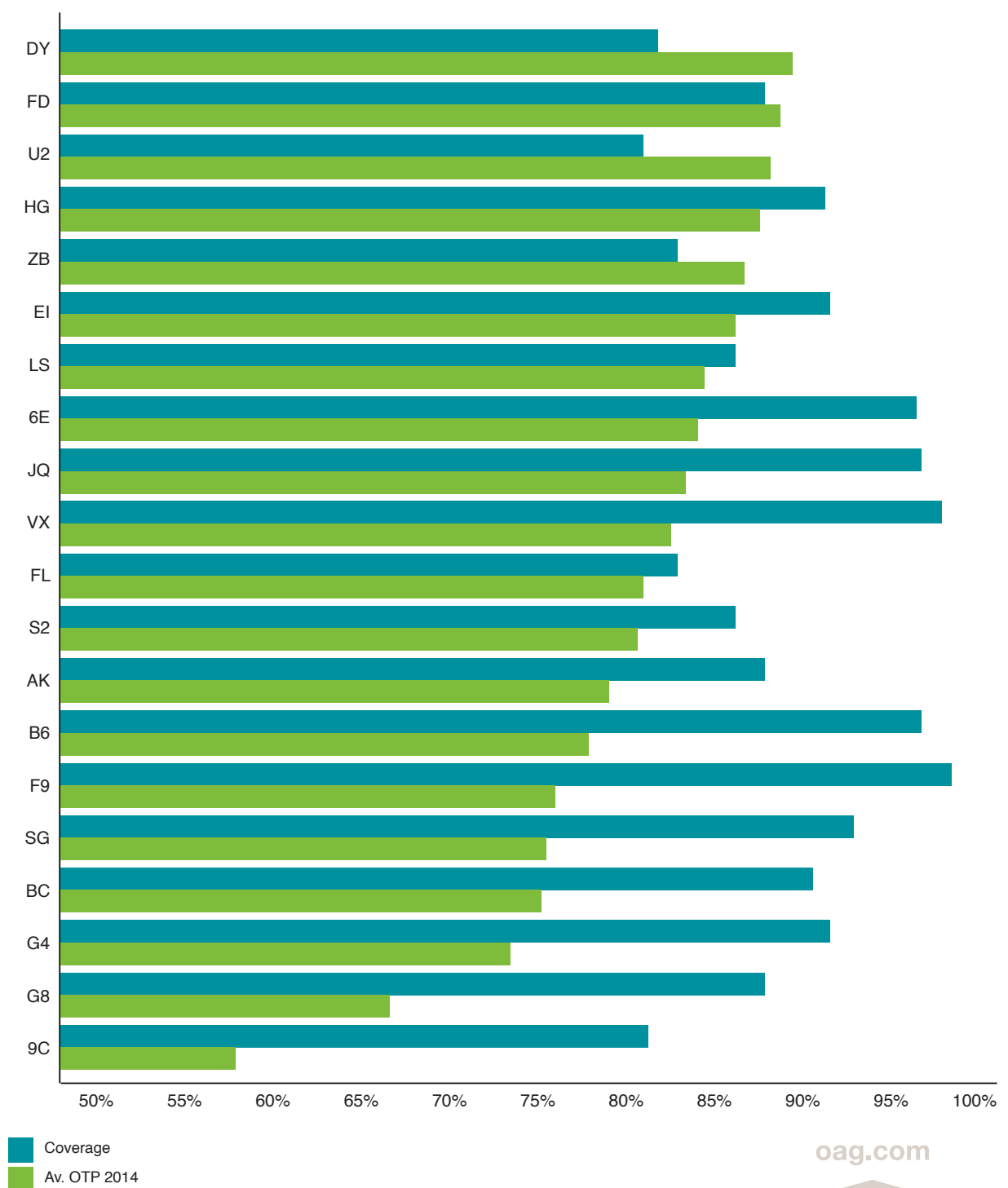
Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	80.3%	Norwegian Air Shuttle	DY	89.7%
2	87.4%	Thai AirAsia	FD	88.7%
3	81.3%	easyJet	U2	87.7%
4	90.8%	NIKI	HG	87.2%
5	83.1%	Monarch Airlines	ZB	86.9%
6	91.3%	Aer Lingus	EI	86.0%
7	85.8%	Jet2.com	LS	84.7%
8	96.4%	IndiGo Air	6E	84.1%
9	96.2%	Jetstar Airways	JQ	83.1%
10	98.8%	Virgin America	VX	82.8%
11	83.0%	Airtran Airways	FL	81.8%
12	86.2%	JetKonnct	S2	81.5%
13	88.1%	AirAsia	AK	79.9%
14	96.8%	JetBlue Airways	B6	77.0%
15	99.1%	Frontier Airlines	F9	75.5%
16	93.1%	SpiceJet	SG	75.4%
17	90.5%	SkyMark Airlines	BC	75.3%
18	91.5%	Allegiant Air	G4	74.6%
19	87.7%	Go Air	G8	66.5%
20	81.8%	Spring Airlines	9C	58.3%

Norwegian Air Shuttle is ranked first in the table and achieved just under 90% OTP. With 175,000 flights and 32 million seats to 120 destinations in 2014, Norwegian operated more flights than Emirates in 2014, and is comparable in size to Alitalia.

Thai AirAsia came second in this category with 88.7% of flights arriving on time in 2014, a remarkable performance given the 24% increase in airline frequencies recorded in 2014 compared to 2013². AirAsia, another of the nine airlines operating within the AirAsia group of carriers, is also listed.

The best performing American LCC is Virgin America with 82.8% OTP. JetBlue makes the Top 20 but OTP is only 77%. Despite the generally strong on-time performance by Japanese airports, only one Japanese LCC, Skymark, appears among the Top 20 LCCs.

² OAG Schedules Analyser



Airlines by Region

In these tables we have chosen to report the Top 10 best performing airlines as there are fewer airlines in each region meeting the criteria for inclusion determined by OAG.

Asia Pacific

Table 7: Top 10 Asia-Pacific Airlines by OTP

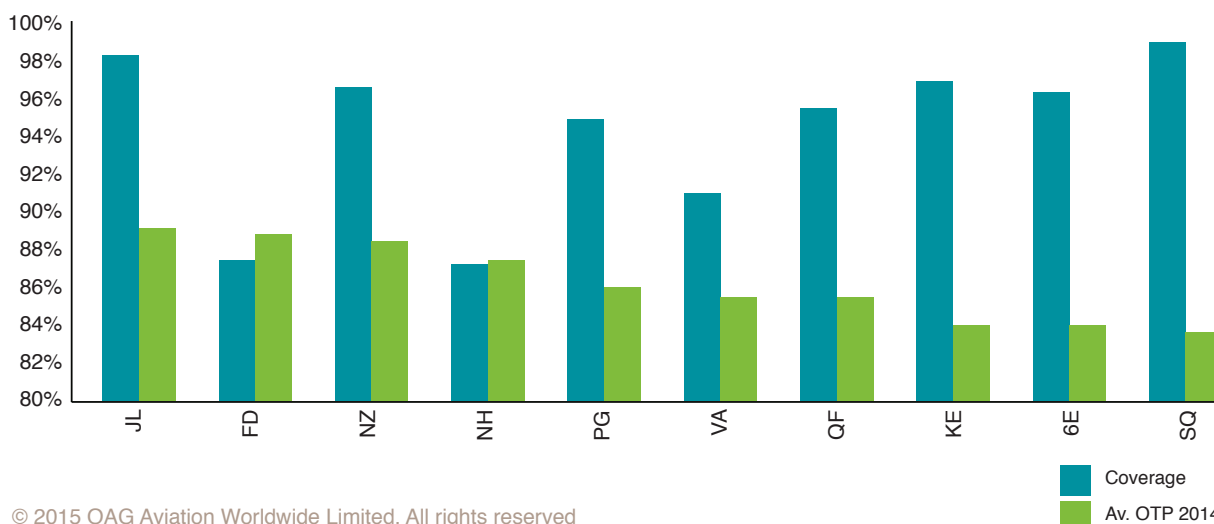
Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	98.2%	Japan Airlines	JL	88.8%
2	87.4%	Thai AirAsia	FD	88.7%
3	97.0%	Air New Zealand	NZ	88.3%
4	86.9%	All Nippon Airways	NH	87.3%
5	95.2%	Bangkok Airways	PG	86.0%
6	91.1%	Virgin Australia	VA	85.5%
7	95.8%	Qantas Airways	QF	85.4%
8	96.9%	Korean Air	KE	84.2%
9	96.4%	IndiGo Air	6E	84.1%
10	99.3%	Singapore Airlines	SQ	83.7%

While all the Top 10 airlines in this category achieve on-time performance in excess of 80%, none manage to break through the 90% barrier.

Consistent with the excellent performance recorded at Japanese airports, it is no surprise that Japan Airlines appears as the top performing airline in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thai AirAsia is ranked second and, as has been noted, its achievement of an on-time performance of 88.7% is particularly good for a year in which it operated 24% more flights than the previous year. This will no doubt contribute to their reputation going forward, and contribute to further growth. Air New Zealand appears third, while All Nippon Airways comes in fourth.

Two Australian airlines, Virgin Australia and Qantas appear in the Top 10 airlines, as does one Indian airline, Indigo Air. There are as yet no large Chinese carriers in the Top 10.

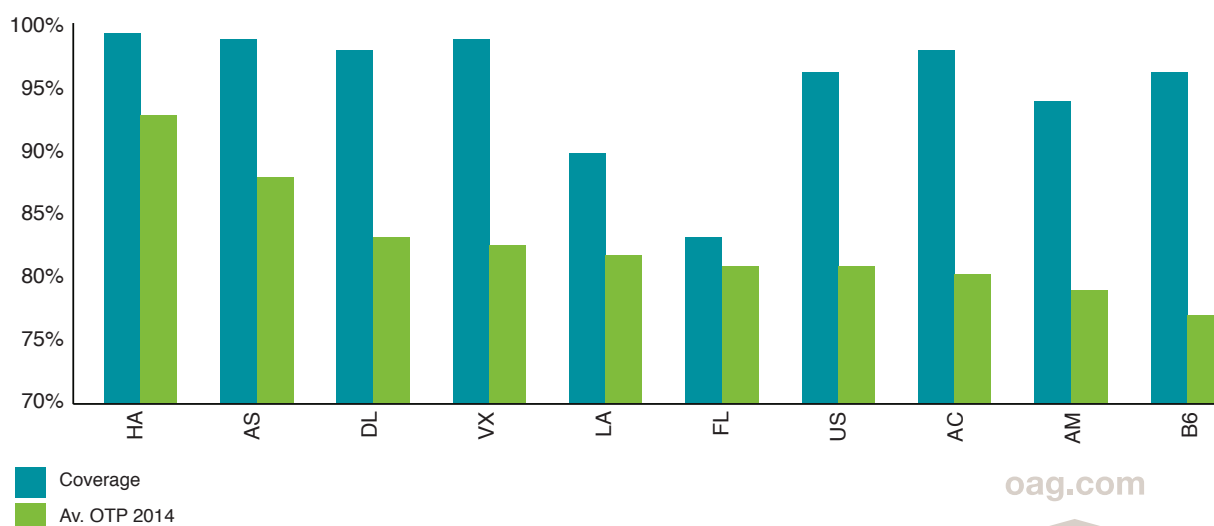


The Americas

Table 8: Top 10 Airlines in the Americas by OTP

Rank	Coverage	Airline Name	Code	Average OTP 2014
1	99.3%	Hawaiian Airlines	HA	92.3%
2	98.4%	Alaska Airlines	AS	88.5%
3	97.8%	Delta Air Lines	DL	83.6%
4	98.8%	Virgin America	VX	82.8%
5	90.8%	Lan Airlines	LA	82.3%
6	83.0%	Airtran Airways	FL	81.8%
7	96.4%	US Airways	US	80.8%
8	97.9%	Air Canada	AC	80.3%
9	94.2%	Aeromexico	AM	79.4%
10	96.8%	JetBlue Airways	B6	77.0%

Among the airlines based in the Americas five of the Top 10 airlines for on-time performance rank among the Top 20 airlines worldwide, at least in terms of the number of scheduled operations they flew in 2014. However, only Hawaiian Airlines succeeded in getting over 90% of its flights to arrive on time. JetBlue, one of the largest LCCs in the world, and the biggest US LCC in the Top 10, only managed to ensure slightly more than three out of every four flights arrived on time.



Airlines by Region continued

Europe

Table 9: Top 10 European Airlines by OTP

Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	82.4%	airBaltic	BT	94.9%
2	97.7%	Austrian Airlines	OS	90.0%
3	92.5%	Iberia	IB	89.7%
4	80.3%	Norwegian Air Shuttle	DY	89.7%
5	98.7%	KLM	KL	89.4%
6	99.0%	SAS	SK	89.1%
7	99.3%	Finnair	AY	88.6%
8	81.3%	easyJet	U2	87.7%
9	98.3%	Air Europa	UX	87.1%
10	98.0%	Lufthansa	LH	87.1%

Given the strong on-time performance of airBaltic, it's not surprising that they also top the list of European carriers in 2014. Lufthansa, Europe's largest carrier, ranks tenth, while easyJet, the second largest European LCC, ranks two better at eighth.

There are only two airlines which achieve an average on-time performance through the year of more than 90%, and there are two LCCs among the Top 10 carriers.

An observation is the preponderance of northern European airlines including three Scandinavian airlines among the Top 10.



Middle East & Africa

Table 10: Top Middle East & African Airlines by OTP

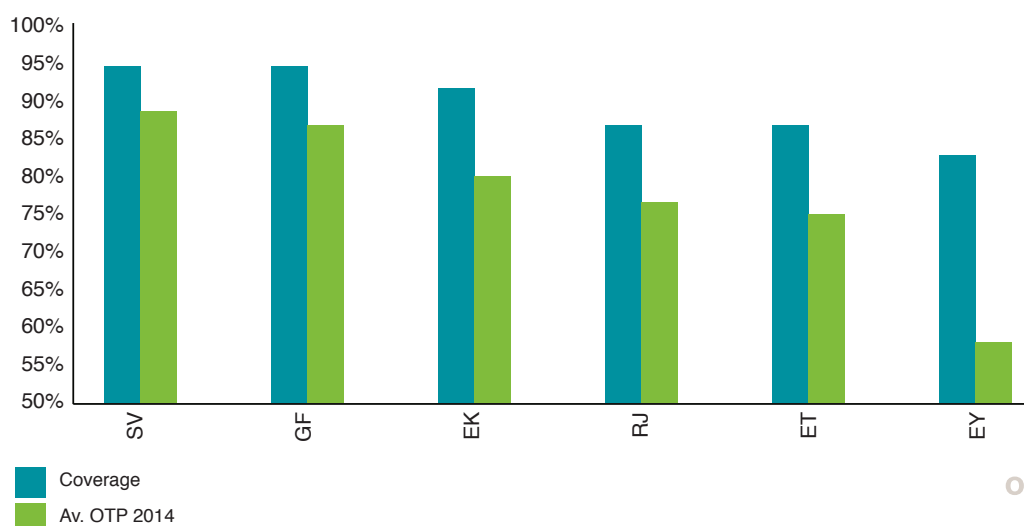
Rank	Coverage	Name	Airline Code	Average OTP 2014
1	95.6%	Saudi Arabian Airlines	SV	89.4%
2	91.1%	Gulf Air	GF	86.4%
3	92.1%	Emirates	EK	80.1%
4	85.9%	Royal Jordanian	RJ	76.6%
5	86.7%	Ethiopian Airlines	ET	75.3%
6	83.0%	Etihad Airways	EY	56.8%

The need to meet the qualifying criteria for inclusion in the OAG Punctuality League means there are only six airlines listed for the Middle East and Africa regions. None of them achieved an on-time performance of greater than 90% in 2014.

Ranked in first place among the Top 6 is Saudi Arabian Airlines with an on-time performance of 89.4%. Saudi Arabian Airlines is also the largest of these airlines in terms of flight operations in 2014.

Emirates is ranked third with an on-time performance which is almost nine percentage points behind Saudi Arabian Airlines, although as an airline it is not much smaller in terms of the number of flights operated.

Ethiopian Airlines is the only African carrier represented among the Top 6.



Conclusion

The factors contributing to a good on-time performance are sometimes out of the control of an airport or airline, however there are some that still manage to perform consistently well.

For airports, with size comes complexity and congestion, and on-time performance typically suffers although there are some very large airports, such as Atlanta, which perform well despite the obstacles. The shift from small to medium and large airports by LCCs is undoubtedly becoming a factor, making it especially challenging for larger airports to consistently deliver high on-time performance when they increasingly have a mix of legacy and LCC operators to handle. The type of aircraft an airport handles is also a contributory factor, with ranges in mix bringing their own complexity.

There are some notable exceptions in our Punctuality League. There are no large or medium sized UK airports, reflecting the urgent need for more capacity, particularly in the South East of England. We can only hope that 2015 will bring some long awaited decisions from the UK Airports Commission. China too, is missing, with no airports or airlines in the Top 20 categories. There are many conflicting priorities in China's airspace that effect on-time performance, not least capacity constraints at some of the country's biggest airports. The construction of a second airport in Beijing should go some way towards alleviating these constraints.

Our Top 20 carrier league is dominated by European airlines, who achieve good on-time performance. China's larger carriers meanwhile are conspicuous by their absence, and this is true across the wider Asian region, with LCCs and Japanese carriers leading the way. In the Americas, there are some gaps too, with no US majors appearing in the Top 20. The multi-hub and spoke operations, complex fleets, and crewing integration that characterise the big US carriers' networks do not lend themselves well to achieving high on-time performance rates.

There is also an interesting performance gap in the Medium Airports category, with those airports located in a more northerly latitude seemingly more able to deliver consistently higher performance than their southerly peers. We often think of winter weather as being particularly disruptive to air travel, but these northerly airports are clearly doing something right.

Small airports appear to benefit in terms of on-time performance when the airlines using them are predominantly low cost carriers with a keen focus on aircraft turnaround times. But that does not mean that all LCCs actually succeed in keeping high levels of on-time performance. Some do, such as Norwegian Air Shuttle, but others – even quite established LCCs – seem unable to match the mainstream carriers. The LCC ranked seventh for on-time performance in 2014 is only as good as the mainline carrier ranked last among the Top 20.

Smaller airlines too appear to benefit – airBaltic tops our league in three separate categories – undoubtedly as they operate from a small, well-defined hub, and mostly with consistent sector lengths. The extent to which they operate to smaller airports also is a factor, meaning there is less scope for disruption.

What remains clear is that whilst there are challenges for some, many airports and airlines achieve 90% of flights arriving and departing within 15 minutes of their scheduled time, which is no mean feat given the complexities and challenges faced by the aviation industry today.

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*based on top 200 carriers

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