INTERNET TOURISM – AN AUTONOUMOUS GLOBAL POLITICS

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Abstract: *Internet is a vast network (computer network) which connects computers from every corner of the world so that they can communicate and share information. Thus, its structure is globalised lacking the acknowledgement of a certain form or limit and also lacking a centre with free and direct interconnected networks. It is not lead or regulated by anyone, therefore it is autonomous with its own politics, although quite a lot of organizations, including tourism, voluntarily contribute with services and systems that help maintain and strengthen its architecture. The origins of internet go back to the communication system known as Arpanet which was developed in 1960. The computers' mainframes were connected to make it easier for information go along, but the connections were done so that the distribution of information be safe if a part of the network was destroyed. Therefore the information could get to destination through another route.*

Key words: *Internet, politics, tourism, real time, global web.*

1. Introduction

Internet is used by all organizations, governmental departments and nongovernmental organizations, research labs and universities, business men and public in general. From the technical point of view, internet communication is eased by the usage of protocol known as protocol control transmission/internet protocol or TCP/IT. All computers connected to internet use TCP/IT to communicate with each other and to transmit messages (information). The TCP/IT advantage is that it is truly an independent platform that allows computers and other networks of different shapes, sizes and structure to exchange information with each other. Therefore, it does not matter if you use a IBM PC or a Mac, if you're connected to a mainframe, the TCP/IT allows you to use the Internet's facilities in a transparent way.

This started out as a simple set of labels that informed the browser to use Italics, Bold, barred paragraphs, lines, graphics and other elements of design, but evolved into allowing sounds, moving pictures and various levels of interactivity to be incorporated in the web pages. These information pages must not be read sequentially. Instead, certain words (or graphics) can be called link words. When we click them, they transport the users of other pages, eventually housed in different places and different computers. This non linear arrangement allows users to skip from page to page and to surf the web in

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order to find the information they need (Ghibutiu, A., 2000).

Developing and accepting the web as a standard way to use internet has lead to a phenomenal interest on behalf of the general public. For 10 years, the internet has increased form a size that could have been measured in millions to one that must be measured in billions. Any network connected to the internet can be composed from wherever and countless of computers. Each and every single one of them can have several (even hundreds) of users, establishing a total number of internet users being literally impossible. Instead of trying to evaluate the total number, quite a lot of studies focus on establishing the Internet's demographic data analyzing the user's gender, education, income, race, occupation and geographical characteristics. Some of the general conclusions of these studies indicate that men are opposed to women, high class social people are opposed to lower social and economical groups, whereas Caucasians are opposed to other racial groups (Badulescu, D., 2003). In any case, these demographic data change as time goes by. Even if the demographic wave stops at one point, the characteristic profile of the users corresponds to the ideal market of producing similar tourist articles.

While some goods are meant to be sold online as well, services such as traveling where the product is less tangible and clients base their decisions on greater information, are better suited to the online environment. Recent researches have showed that tourist articles are becoming the most popular sold items in the web. Jupiter Communications states that over 800 millions of tickets have been bought off the internet in 2011. Although this means less than 1% from all the tourism incomes, during 2012, between 6% and 10% of the travel reservations that is over 8 billion dollars in sale, came off the internet.

2. The impact of internet in current tourism. The specific of internet connection structure through tourist webs

The conventional path for companies is to install their own web server. In order to do so, they ask for utilizing a relatively strong computer, special web server software and a rental telephone line to permanently connect the server to internet. Naturally, one requires a certain amount of technical knowledge to obtain (and keep!) the system steady and together. Thus, this path is relatively expensive, but has the advantages of having a vendible web address (such as, www.abc-hotels.com) and of using the entire row of facilities and technical web traits to further enhance the respective site. From the user's point of view, connecting to the web is easy. In lots of cases, the networks of their companies can already be connected to the internet thus the user being able to gain access to jobs, in a simple way by installing favorable software. Home, the user also needs a modem and an account with which a company offers access to internet by telephone wire (Lupu, N., 2002). Giving the way in which one gains access to internet, the next pace is creating the company's web pages. Over more, a lot of tourism data are particularly dynamic for they are already electronically housed in other computerized and electronic systems.

3. Typical internet risks and how to prevent them

The challenge for web marketers is finding an adequate balance between title and graphic so that users are attracted to the site but also access information in a reasonable amount of time. The last problem is probably the most urgent one. The web being uncertain is either a fair or unfair opinion of the general population.

Nevertheless, lots of people want to buy direct tourist services and search active products that are suitable for them, but are not willing to make the transaction by giving the credit card details over the internet. This opinion has delayed the great circulation of electronic commerce not only in the tourist sector but also in the general business one. Nevertheless, the necessary security system and technology for safely handling credit card transactions over the internet has rapidly been developed. The mark association, such as SET (Secure Electronic Transactions) developed in collaboration with Visa and MasterCard comes to the aid of the transaction hesitation.

4. New quality-quantity solutions from the tourist internet domain

One of the web's most interesting characteristics is its global network. Putting online information regarding your own company, this approach gives an unparallel and available exposure for clients from all over the world, 24 hours a day, and 365 days a year. Clients everywhere can access your promotional plan at a convenient hour without struggling to find people to work on their sales while being at the office. The majority of users will agree that the internet is a new and important channel of distribution that supplies marketers a strong and direct channel of distribution that interacts with the consumers. In any case, the web is in no way similar to any distribution channel from the past. It has several characteristics that make the traditional marketing practices inefficient and often counterproductive. The market agent must bear in mind these things to obtain the maximum benefit from this new and powerful electronic environment. Promotional literature can use the internet's complete abilities, including colored photographs and graphics, sounds, animations and even video to the cost of producing a modular brochure. These multimedia brochures can rapidly be updated which displays a great promotional potential for the last minute offers. For example, British Airways traditionally used t paper and TV publicity to promote their last minute sales. Anyway, the fact that the internet information is much faster, gives the companies a much greater flexibility, becoming their favorite way of introducing to the market their special offers. The traditional way of going on the market for a bigger audience id by using the media channels essentially for using a sole standardized message designed to appeal to the potential customer.

Marketing controls the content (the presented information), time (when being visualized), location (where being visualized) and frequency (how often it is being visualized). Publicity through TV and media is a common example of such a promotional plan. The content is limited to factors such as costs or capacity, and in any case, the strategy transforms itself into lost time. In most cases marketing has no clue who will watch this expensive publicity. Furthermore, it is a waste of resources to show this kind of publicity to people outside the niche. Even when the target is aimed, such publicity, quite often inefficient, fails to appeal to the client. Internet marketing reversely brings back a lot of these characteristics. With an internet presentation, the client becomes the one in control. Using the hyper-links, clients decide what they will see and when they will see it. If one does not like what has been presented, they can exit with a single click, so the notion of capturing passive audience is not applied for the internet.

An electronic version of a printed brochure with promotional materials is not enough. Content and shape must be

adapted so that one can benefit from the power of internet. Furthermore, the surfing tools must be included so that users can avoid losing themselves in too much data. A site's content must be relevant for the visitors' needs, easy to use and must include logical links general interest domains. Making the visitor surf the page only once is just not enough. Its content must be changed regularly and must be captivating to such an extent that users would like to come back again and again. Secondly, unlike the traditional marketing techniques, the client is the one coming to the company to ask for information and not the other way around (Kotler, P., 2007). On the internet, the client is the one actively looking for information. Truly, they already know what it is all about because they surf the internet showing interest and implication. They need information and want to buy things form the companies or persons who better satisfy their needs. The fact that they decided to visit the site is significant. The internet gives companies the opportunity to access people who are already predisposed to learn more about their products – a favorable situation. Even when traditional means of publicity are being used, it is required for the target to have proven an interest in the particular product. For example, with search engines such as Google or Yahoo, a client who searches information about Ireland can receive a banner with Irish hotels with the help of the search engines (Moldovan, I.T., 2000).

Thirdly, promoting things has nothing to do with size or capacity, things imposed by costs or space. The cost of creating a page is minimal. This is why, in the electronic world, one can also include very through information at a cheap price. An internet page can work for you until you decide you want to shut it down or change it. Through hyper-links pages, the marketer can create a personalized multimedia brochure thorough and instantly available for the clients from all around the world. This allows users to explore the products and services based on the individual needs and interests and not on the standardized sale message. Thus, different information can easily and economically be housed. Instead of having a sole message, more messages can be sent to the client at a marginal cost. Another of the internet's facilities is the correct personalized approach. Besides its personalized potential, one also notices the internet's ability to ease a two-way communication which represents an essential marketing tool. This form of two-way communication is an important part of marketing relations and is fundamental for winning the client's loyalty. Clients can effortlessly communicate with companies to find out information about their products, to ask questions and to negotiate prices. In the same way, companies can contact clients to clarify their needs or inform them on the new products, through the 6 levels presented in table 1.

The Internet's 6 levels of interactivity   Table 1

Level	Description	Characteristics
1	Static web pages	Text, photos, frames.
2	Semi-static web pages	Maps, animation, CGI.
3	Active web pages	Audio and video recordings.
4	Semi-interactive web pages	Detecting the user, creating the page.
5	Interactive web pages	Interactive audio and video images.
6	Future?	Recognising voices, virtual reality.

Source: adaptation from Bathory-Kitsz, D., Inventing the Internet process, 2011

Characteristics such as email or other forms of internet encourage marketers to interactively work with clients. As Deighton (2009) states, interactivity of such kind is highly technological and can be subtle, flexible, relevant and convincing just like a face to face dialogue. The computer can also come back to the individual responses and this makes it possible to reflect the clients' individual preferences. This high level of receptivity makes the internet unique through its media marketing tools. Microsoft Expedia, the traveling services for Microsoft Network (www.expedia.com) represents the last traveling example from this phenomenon. This site follows the user's actions and appreciates his/hers traveling preferences and habits based on the pages they visit and the products that they reserve. Expedia maintains contact with each user by periodically sending him/her newsletters. The latter are well directed to buzz in the client's buying interests and habits, thus determining him/her to return to the initial site.

A good example of how this information is used it being supplied by the Best Western hotel which started its internet activity with 160 properties on the www.travelweb.com site. In the first month there have been more than 80.000 accesses and the system supplied an electronic address for each of their data access. Thus, Best Western realized that half of the visitors were outside of the US and the reservations were individual, not done by institutions and corporations – things pretty hard to establish using conventional methods. Even through the existence of such a technology that allows such transactions the public must try several times before succeeding. Moreover, it is easy to benefit from the advantages which have been taken out of the electronic commerce opportunities. For example, a revision of the hotel sites has made it clear that while half of them pretended to offer means of making a reservation, only half of them have a functional reservation system, less than a quarter suggested ways to pay and less than 5 % offered a sure method to make the payment directly through the site. A research done in the UK in 2010 said that 41% of the hotels offered a **real time** reservation processing. As a result, practically all the tourism actors are struggling to establish the presence of the internet, as shown in table 2. While few of them regard the internet as a main channel for the near future, no one is willing to risk being left behind. The hotel sites include big hotel and rental car companies. The latter promote and distribute information about a single type of product (hotel rooms and rental cars) and only the products of a single company. The tourism budget (such as airlines with Southwest Airways or hotels such as Formule 1) whose limits are way too small to allow them to conventionally and traditionally distribute is mainly interested in the internet's distribution potential.

The web's traveling sites number Table 2

Type	Number	Type	Number
Airlines	492	Other forms of housing	107
B&B	1759	Resorts	219
Bus companies	13	Reservation services	24
Casinos	70	Tour operators	2374
Rental car companies	36	Traveling agencies	1315
Cruise companies	345	Train companies	58
Hotels	426	Other companies	64

Source: excerpt of an Yahoo directory (www.yahoo.com), 2011

Most chains supply a central site that contains information about the company in general. Most of them include a search engine that makes it easier for potential clients to find the desired product. For example, in the case of a hotel, the users introduce the location and any other criteria (such as pools or babysitting facilities) on a web page and the site responds with a list of proprieties suitable to their needs.

Conclusion

The new conditions offered by the tourist internet show that the future of tourism is an electronic one, decisive for a quality management of tourism.

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