

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF TOURISM COMPANIES ONLINE IN SPAIN

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Internet is a very valuable tool in the marketing of products and services. It offers competitive advantages compared to other means of traditional marketing such as reduced costs for the exchange of information, high transmission speed, direct and personalized approach with the client, transaction control and flexibility in the use of the marketing elements (Alonso and Furio, 2006).

Development and dissemination of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have deeply affected the way business is performed and the way that organizations compete in any sector (Porter, 2001).

In the case of the tourism industry, which includes accommodation, food and beverage service activities (tour operators, travel agencies, airlines, etc), the influence of technological advances has been considerable, stressing particularly in the way in which the tourism companies distribute their products in the marketplace (Buhalis, 2000).

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) is generally considered as any form of commercial transaction or direct support, which is based in telematics means, takes place throughout the entire supply chain from the company until the final consumer, using as support for telecommunication networks (Sellers and Azorín, 2001)

The development and the convenience of the Internet to provide updated content, has led to the appearance of a large number of new intermediaries electronics both in the tourism sector as in other sectors (particularly Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs), Global Distribution Systems (GDSs)).

The travel suppliers, such as airlines, hotel chains, or car rental companies, have developed e-commerce applications so that users can directly access their reservation systems. This group includes both specific suppliers, such as integrated suppliers that emerged to support the disintermediation of the airlines in travel agencies.

The ICTs act in most sectors as tools to support innovation. This is why the challenge with the provision of services in the tourism sector is in the applications in mobility (Bernardos et al., 2007). The revolution of mobile technology has entered a full in society,

and that today we can no longer ignore. In fact, authors such as Savia (2011) considered that the future of the tourism industry is in the development and application of mobile technology.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the content and services offered by several Spanish tourist sites, in order to check if the design of these exploits to the maximum resources provided by ICTs and are demands by the current tourists. Methodologically we used the analysis of content. This analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications (Belerson, 1952).

To identify the tourism portals on which to make the analysis of content was used the Google search engine with two key words in the search: "Tourism Province" and "Tourist Promotion Province". Finally, we recognized 243 portals.

The conceptual categories of the effective design of a website, in the literature are identifying the following categories: *interactivity and communication*, *ease of navigation* and *content* of the web site (Díaz et al., 2008). However, and given that the objective of the study is to analyze the distribution and promotion carried out tourist portals, we discard the navigation category since it is more linked to aspects relating to the internal configuration of the web page itself (e.g. time of load, site map, search, etc.).

The items in each category were identified from previous studies in other areas online (Ghose and Dou, 1998; Palmer, 2002; Zhum and Kramer, 2002; Diaz et al., 2008). In addition, we were carried out a pre-test to a small sample of portals (50) to provide greater robustness and check its suitability in the tourism sector. Finally, the category *interactivity and communication* included the following items: company identification, type of company, e-mail and phone contact, social networks, and elements of communities-web; and the *content* category included aspects such as: advertising, languages, marketing (CRS foreign but associated or own).

The results showed that more than half of the sample provides an e-mail contact, while the 17.7 % leave the option of filling out a form in the own web page to establish communication. Also there are some portals that provide a contact telephone number.

Besides the half of the companies of tourism promotion in Internet use social networks as a means of dissemination. The most widely used of these networks is Facebook.

As far as web parts, the most commonly used is the newsletter, because the client facilitates your e-mail address and the company periodically send information to capture the attention of those potential customers. The blog and the comments of accommodation currently are on the rise.

In the translation to other languages, the sample is quite small, so only half translated into other languages (English being the most widely used). This is an important point to highlight as a deficiency within the promotion of tourism in Spain, since the translation to other languages is essential.

Commercialization of tourism products and services on-line is very important, and less than a third of the sample allows it (32%). In most cases, once the customer selects a property is rerouted to large hotel intermediation companies (Booking, Edreams, Logitravel, etc.). In some cases, they use central reservations associated with the main web page, and in some occasions, you can see the availability from the web but not to make

a direct reservation. Also, some web pages provide a link to the corporate website of the institution at which the reservation will be completed in the web of the own establishment.

Andalusia is the autonomous community that more commercialized tourism products through internet. The province that has more tourism portals is Barcelona with 7, followed by Cadiz that has 4, and Segovia with 3. The rest only have one or two companies that commercialize.

In the tourism industry are constantly applying technological innovations to improve connectivity, so this also is a limitation, since the information could be become obsolete in a short period of time.

In conclusion, the study showed the limitations and weaknesses in the promotion of tourism in Spain. The promotion does not become effective by emerging barriers to entry of tourists, and therefore a decline in income in the sector. Note the lack of translation into other languages in addition to the lack of information on destination, as well as facilities to let you get to the tourist information that requires satisfying your travel needs.

Despite these limitations, we believe that from the business point of view, the results can help the existing (or future) portals to create differentiation strategies in a geographical area through designing your website with content useful and attractive to tourists.

