Handbook on E-marketing for Tourism Destinations

Fully revised and extended version 3.0
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The rise of the Internet and expansion of new technologies has transformed the tourism sector in unprecedented ways. This presents immense opportunities yet also great challenges for National and Destination Marketing Organizations that need to keep pace in a constantly changing and competitive environment. As online information becomes one of the primary factors influencing travellers’ decisions, an effective e-marketing strategy is crucial to stand out on the global stage.

In this framework, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the European Travel Commission (ETC) have worked together to present our Members with a fully updated and extended edition of the UNWTO/ETC Handbook on E-marketing for Tourism Destinations, first published in 2008.

The Handbook, which provides an overview of current best practices in the field of destination e-marketing and practical information on how to develop an effective e-marketing strategy using the latest technologies, is part of the UNWTO/ETC joint research programme.

We trust this Handbook will guide National and Destination Marketing Organizations in Europe, and beyond, to improve their e-marketing strategies while optimizing the integration of e-marketing into their global marketing and thus improve the competitiveness of their destinations in a technology driven marketplace.

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Acknowledgements

This handbook was commissioned by the European Travel Commission (ETC) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It was written by Karin Elgin-Nijhuis, Christian Maurer and Jon Munro and edited by Carolyn George, with research and administrative support from Gaëlle Connolly and Lesley Pritchard, all of TEAM Tourism Consulting. Roger Carter, TEAM’s MD, provided strategic guidance on the overall direction of the project.

The Handbook would not have been possible without the advice and expert contributions of many e-marketing professionals from throughout the world. We acknowledge their inputs at the relevant points in the text throughout the book, with our grateful appreciation. ETC and UNWTO are particularly grateful to eConsultancy for providing access to all of their publications.

The report was prepared under the supervision of, and with input from, ETC’s Market Intelligence Committee and UNWTO’s Tourism Market Trends Programme. Our thanks go to all involved, including: Mr. Leslie Vella (Chairperson, MIC), Malta; Mr. Vincent Nijs (Vice-Chairperson), Belgium/Flanders; Ms. Emöke Halassy (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Tom Ylänén (Vice-Chairperson), Finland; Ms. Tünde Mester (Vice-Chairperson), Hungary; Ms. Helle Damkjaer, Denmark; Ms. Piret Kallas, Estonia; Ms. Kristina Hietasaari, Finland; Mr. Joachim Scholz, Germany; Ms. Nessa Skehan, Ireland; Mr. Raúl Castro, Spain; Mr. Peter Nash, Ireland; Ms. Valeria Croce and Ms. Stefanie Gallob (ETC Executive Unit); Mr. John Kester and Mr. Michel Julian (UNWTO); and the e-Marketing Network: Ms. Emese Kútvölgyi (Chairperson), Hungary.
How to Use this Handbook

‘E-marketing’

E-marketing, short for electronic marketing, is used in this handbook to cover all types of marketing using electronic communication. It encompasses the internet, e-mail, mobile forms of communication and television.

‘Destinations’ and ‘DMOs’

We use the term ‘destination’ in this handbook when we refer to a place as a whole – a country, region, city or locality, and all its tourism organizations.

Where it is important to make clear that we are talking about a corporate, accountable body, we have used the term ‘Destination Management Organization’ (DMO). A DMO may be a national, regional, city or local body.

‘Consumers’, ‘Customers’, ‘Visitors’ and ‘Users’

There are many terms that describe who you are marketing to. Whilst terms relating to businesses and organizations are generally clear, talking about the general public or individuals is more difficult.

In this handbook we use ‘consumers’ to refer to the population as a whole when discussing marketing theory/techniques. We use ‘visitor’ to refer to someone travelling to a destination, and ‘user’ to refer to someone using the internet and e-marketing applications. Visitors to a destination may not yet be users of e-marketing applications and vice versa. We have tried to limit use of the word ‘customer’ and be more specific about who we mean, but in some cases it has been necessary to use ‘customer’ where we talk about users and visitors together, for example both groups are customers of the DMO. Customers of the DMO may also include tourism businesses.

Finding Your Way Around the Handbook

E-marketing is a very joined-up subject, so we have tried to make it as easy as possible to move around the book:

• You can dip into the book at any chapter. Each chapter has an introduction informing the reader about the purpose and content of that chapter.

• There are frequent cross-references in the text to other relevant chapters, and to sections within chapters.

• There is a glossary of terms and abbreviations at the end of the handbook.
Due to the integrated nature of e-marketing it is difficult to group the chapters, however, some readers may find the following useful:

- Readers interested in e-marketing trends, strategy and key concepts should read chapters 1; 2; 3; 4 and 14;
- readers interested in e-marketing tools will find chapters 5 through to 13 useful;
- chapters 15 to 18 provide specific information on supporting the travel industry within your destination; and
- chapters 19 and 20 help you to measure and evaluate your e-marketing activities.

**Examples of Brands, Tools and Companies**

Sometimes it is useful to provide examples of brands, tools and companies that may help you with your e-marketing activities. These are not recommendations, per se; these are merely examples of the types of brands/tools/companies available. You are advised to research your specific requirements more widely before using or purchasing a particular tool or service.

**Observing the Law**

There is now a substantial amount of law that governs aspects of e-marketing, but it varies from country to country. There is a dedicated chapter on the legal aspects of e-marketing in this handbook. However, you should always consult your own legal advisor in relation to each of the countries in which you operate.

**The Wider Context**

E-marketing is only one aspect, albeit an important one, of destination management, and the scope of this handbook does not extend to other aspects of destination management and marketing. For the wider context, see other ETC and UNWTO publications such as *A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management* (2007), the *Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding* (2009), the *Handbook on Tourism Forecasting Methodologies* (2008), the *Handbook on Tourism Market Segmentation* (2007), and the *Tourism Trends and Market Insights reports and Outbound Market Studies*, which can be acquired from the respective websites in hard copy or electronically.¹

**Keeping Pace – Further Information and Online Sources**

The pace of change and development in e-marketing is fast and exciting, and no handbook such as this can aim to capture more than a current account of best practice. But there are enduring lessons throughout the book.

We have provided many online and offline points of further reference. These are given at relevant places in the text, as well as at the end of each chapter, and there is a list of references and bibliography at the end of the handbook.

¹ These documents are available at the following websites:
European Travel Commission: http://www.etc-corporate.org/reports/research-and-studies (26-01-2013); 
Executive Summary

Introduction

- DMOs can benefit hugely from exploiting the internet and the ever-increasing opportunities offered by technological developments.

- The web has developed from a read-and-write only platform into a highly participatory and interactive web – the Social Web. We live in a hyper-connected society and DMOs need to be active players in that society.

- Alongside the web becoming inherently social, the media landscape is continually changing and DMOs need to adopt a cross-media approach, allowing a consumer to switch easily from one medium to another.

- As technology develops, consumer behaviour changes. It is essential for DMOs to understand these trends and maintain customer focus in everything they do.

- In order to succeed in the hyper-connected society, DMOs will need to have the research and intelligence to fully understand the evolving market environment as well as the structures and skills to take full advantage of it.

Strategy and Planning

- A strategy is necessary to achieve your main goal with an efficient use of the available resources.

- It is essential to integrate e-marketing activities across media, channels and technologies, and within the overall marketing strategy.

- The concept of ‘The Customer Journey’ is central to developing an e-marketing strategy.

- Developing personas will help you think in terms of the internet services you can offer your customers at different stages of their ‘journey’.

- Identify a suitable framework, and use the advice in other chapters of this handbook to develop a tailored approach for your organization.

Destination Brands – Competitive identity and E-marketing

- Brands should create promises and guide the delivery of values that determine your reputation and the level of engagement with your customers.

- In our hyper-connected society, the competitive identity of places is more important than ever, and it is more dynamically constructed and re-shaped. Integration of your e-marketing strategy is therefore essential.

- Rich content and social engagement can offer a high-involvement experience for your customers, based on real substance and symbolic actions.
• Research can identify gaps in the way your online reputation is seen and understood. It can measure the effect of your e-marketing activities, and project more coherent brand initiatives and consumer reactions to events through social media monitoring.

Content
• Content is fundamental to your e-marketing programme. Its creation and management requires the allocation of significant resources.
• This includes editorial content (both professionally produced and user-generated) and product data.
• Your content strategy needs to address your strategic objectives and requires a clear understanding of your target market segments i.e. your visitors.
• Research requirements include developing an understanding of the networks your (potential) visitors engage with and a content inventory that looks at existing content.
• A content calendar is a very useful planning tool that supports co-ordination across the DMO.
• Developing a taxonomy for your destination and your marketing activities is a foundation piece of work that underpins all of your e-marketing.
• Essential investments include an open data platform to take in and feed out content, and a good content management system with well-trained staff.

Websites
• Make accessibility and usability the basis for website quality.
• Follow research-based guidelines to create an easy-to-use website that builds trust and identity – or optimize your current site using the guidelines.
• Create a website that eases the path through the customer journey for the internet user.
• Think in terms of services – delivered and fulfilled by the content and functionality offered by the website.
• Think of your website as a hub – as a focus point for social media and other inbound marketing activities, for paid advertising and PR; as a point of departure for extending the relationship and driving engagement using social media, e-mail newsletters or RSS; as the place where users are to be converted into leads and visitors.
• Make testing a part of the design and development process, as well as part of the evaluation of existing sites.

Domain Names
• Almost all campaigns using TV, press, posters and print feature the domain name as a primary response channel.
• Domains have a major brand-building function but also serve vital tactical requirements.
• Your approach to managing your domains must be consistent with your search engine marketing strategy.
Executive Summary

• There is a variety of approaches for targeting international markets. There are pros and cons associated with each of them.

• The selection of the domain is therefore a major strategic issue that needs a long-term view that avoids short-term compromises.

• Owning and using multiple domains can make managing your domains more complex and time consuming as well as make your search engine marketing activity less effective or more complex.

The Social Web

• The growth of social media, and thus the social web, is significant and needs to be embraced by DMOs.

• Many travellers turn to social media when planning a trip to find destinations, deals, advice and reviews from other travellers.

• There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Use of social media depends on the DMO’s objectives, and different channels require different tactics.

• Social media offers you the opportunity to converse and engage with your customers – it is not about the hard sell.

• A Social Media Policy (with Communication guidelines) is essential to motivate staff and protect your organization’s reputation.

Search Engine Optimization

• The objective of search engine optimization (SEO) is to rank highly in natural search results for the keyphrases you are targeting.

• It is important to understand how your (potential) visitors are searching for what your destination has to offer within the context of your specific marketing objectives.

• You must ensure that your content management system and site information architecture supports visibility of your content in natural search and optimization for your target keyphrases.

• Whilst good on-page optimization is an important ranking factor for natural search, your success in ranking for what are likely to be competitive keyphrases is going to depend on developing site authority and socializing your content.

• ‘Social signals’ are becoming increasingly important as a ranking factor.

• Think carefully about how you approach the mobile channel and the effort you put behind optimizing for mobile devices.

• Successful search engine optimization is increasingly focussed on well integrated e-marketing campaigns and the development of online brand equity in general rather than delivering specific SEO tactics in isolation.
E-mail Marketing

- E-mail marketing is most cost-effective and more powerful than ever when combined with social media. E-mail, social media and mobile use should work together to connect and engage with customers in different ways.
- The key drivers of e-mail marketing are segmentation, relevance, deliverability, transactional focus, testing, measuring and fine-tuning.
- Marketing and thus also e-mail marketing is all about action: aspects such as subject lines, content, calls-to-action, frequency and timing of sending, can all be adjusted to encourage recipients to do whatever you want them to do.
- Integrate the results of e-marketing activities into the CRM database and use that to send the right messages to the right people.
- The best results are achieved by those organizations that have a structured approach.

Mobile Tourism

- Smart mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, and their new features have led to a constantly connected lifestyle.
- Consumers increasingly engage seamlessly through a multitude of online touchpoints.
- Tablets have become the fourth screen for consumers, besides TV, PCs and smartphones, but each device is used for specific purposes.
- It is essential for successful mobile marketing that the usage patterns for each device and for each target group are clearly understood in order to reach the customers when they are most receptive.
- Whether your DMO opts for a native app, a mobile web app and/or a mobile website depends mainly on the DMO's marketing objectives, target audience, and available budget.
- Mobile advertising provides new creative advertising formats and a high degree of user interactivity.
- The diversity of channels available for mobile marketing requires a wide set of performance evaluation methods.

B2C E-commerce for Destinations

- E-commerce is part of the transaction services that allow governments, companies, organizations and consumers to conduct business online and to make agreements. Electronic payments may be a part of these transactions.
- DMOs need to consider carefully the extent to which they will engage in e-commerce activities.
- DMOs need to identify effective ways to drive business to the suppliers in the destination.
- DMOs can generate income through commissions for booking transactions, affiliate programmes or sales revenue from selling products through an online shop.
Paid Media Advertising

- The strategic role of paid media advertising has shifted from mere branding and traffic generation to a catalyst that feeds owned media and creates earned media.
- Display ads can be targeted to internet users in many different ways in order to reach the advertiser’s most relevant audience.
- New formats are available to meet marketers’ communications needs across the purchase funnel; such as the so-called ‘Rising Stars’ formats and in-stream video ads.
- Search engine advertising is highly targeted, allowing the advertiser to control the budget and the advertised text, to measure the ad performance in real-time and react immediately.
- Social media advertising must support your social media strategy and your overall marketing objectives in order to build your presence, develop your community and engage the community to drive specific actions.

Interactive and Smart Television – Increased Interactivity and Convergence of Services and Media

- The TV viewing experience is becoming increasingly more interactive and integrates various devices, applications and services.
- Nowadays, when TV is watched, another screen is being used simultaneously – most commonly smartphones.
- Smart TVs integrate the internet and Web 2.0 features into TV sets and drive the convergence between TVs, computers, and connected devices.
- Interactive advertising gives TV audiences the chance to interact with broadcast commercials and offers great opportunities for advertisers.
- Content and elements required for an interactive TV ad campaign must be considered in the creative planning process.

Customer Relationship Management

- CRM processes and technology are at the core of e-marketing.
- CRM systems improve customer communication, customer acquisition and customer retention.
- CRM is essential for customer segmentation and helps to identify customer demands quicker.
- CRM supports the provision of targeted sales and marketing campaigns.
- CRM must be seen holistically and with a long-term view.
- CRM implementation causes substantial changes to a DMO and its stakeholders, and requires careful planning and professional project management.

E-marketing Activities to Support the Tourism Suppliers in the Destination

- Providing information for, and communication with, the tourism suppliers in your destination is best conducted through a dedicated website channel and online news services.
- Content on the sub-sites for tourism suppliers should include information and services to create opportunities for co-operation.
• Key performance indicators to measure your success include the frequency and quality of your contacts with tourism suppliers.

Supporting the Travel Trade in Source Markets

• Online sales support for the travel trade can create significant additional business and bring more travellers to your destination.
• To be effective, information and support materials need to be focussed on the major markets and industry sectors.
• The main tools are websites, e-mail newsletters and e-learning modules.

PR and Media Relations

• Using media relations to create coverage about your destination is a very effective tool in the organization’s marketing toolkit.
• The internet, and especially the transformation of the web into a social web, has changed the landscape for those responsible for PR and Media Relations, requiring new knowledge and skills.
• A successful online Destination Media Centre is one that integrates tools, packages content in a variety of formats, makes this content shareable and quotable, and anticipates the different needs of writers, researchers and journalists for content and mode of communication.

Raising Income from E-marketing Services

• There are several opportunities for DMOs to raise revenue.
• You must consider the legal framework in which your DMO operates before choosing a commercial approach.
• Adverts and advertisers should be consistent with your own destination brand and campaign goals.
• Avoid advertising clutter and adverts which do not benefit your customers.

Measurement and Evaluation

• Any measurement and evaluation programme must be based on a clear understanding of the business and marketing objectives and support the development of an associated set of KPIs (Key performance indicators) and success criteria.
• Key requirements of any measurement and evaluation programme include tracking progress against a defined set of strategic objectives (particularly relevant to senior management teams) and the ongoing optimisation of marketing activities (particularly relevant to operational teams).
• Increasingly, marketers require a programme of continuous measurement that is supported by research-led analysis of specific elements of an e-marketing programme in greater depth.
• Measurement can be platform-focussed or channel-focussed. This can be supplemented by considering customers’ views and competitor analysis.
• Developing an appropriate measurement framework, that helps to understand key elements of the customer journey, becomes more important as that journey becomes increasingly complex.
• Attribution analysis provides a means of understanding cause and effect. It includes tracking the journey between online and offline channels as well as the contribution made by different digital channels. At the present time it is very difficult to track the journey between multiple devices.

Web and Social Analytics

• Web and social analytics can be used to track progress against your marketing objectives and help you to optimize your marketing efforts across your own website and social media.

• Make sure you understand your objectives. Develop specific KPIs which help you to understand how you drive traffic and what your users do when they arrive within the context of defined conversion events.

• Web and social analytics is a journey and one which should progress gradually and for which you should adopt a ‘test and learn’ approach. Invest in people that can interpret and act on it as well as the technology.

• Social business has created a new type of online analytics which includes social media measurement (platform-focused) and social media monitoring (network-focused).

• Selecting an analytics tool is complex. You need to assess each tool within the context of your specific business needs, the support you require and the resources at your disposal.

Crisis Management and Communications

• A tourism crisis can be environmental, societal or political, technological, health-related or economic, and can severely compromise or damage the reputation of a destination.

• It is common practice for organizations to develop risk and security audits and risk and security management procedures.

• There are a number of resources and tools available to help destinations to prepare for crises.

• Effective communication and addressing information needs are essential to managing a crisis.

• Social media have a key role to play in keeping people up-to-date with current and accurate information during a crisis, and for rebuilding confidence and reputation after a crisis.

• Monitor, measure and analyze the results of all your crisis contingency and management efforts.

Legal Framework for E-marketing Activities

• It is essential for DMOs to comply with ethical and legal regulations.

• A variety of laws regulates different aspects of e-business and e-commerce activities and differences from country to country can be significant.

• There are four essential aspects to be considered: property of information; accuracy of information; privacy and accessibility.

• In case of doubt, seek professional legal advice.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of recent developments and current trends in consumer behaviour and e-marketing. It discusses what these mean in terms of changes, challenges and opportunities for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and critical success factors in e-marketing for destinations. The terms, technologies, tools and e-marketing tactics mentioned are explained in more detail in the other chapters of this handbook.

This chapter does not provide market data on, for example, internet use, as this will quickly become outdated. Instead, a wealth of up-to-date information is available online on ETC’s Digital Portal.1 The annex in this handbook provides an overview of other useful sources for market research to assist you in doing your own research.

Key Messages

- DMOs can benefit hugely from exploiting the internet and the ever-increasing opportunities offered by technological developments.

- The web has developed from a read-and-write only platform into a highly participatory and interactive web – the Social Web. We live in a hyper-connected society and DMOs need to be active players in that society.

- Alongside the web becoming inherently social, the media landscape is continually changing and DMOs need to adopt a cross-media approach, allowing a consumer to switch easily from one medium to another.

- As technology develops, consumer behaviour changes. It is essential for DMOs to understand these trends and maintain customer focus in everything they do.

- In order to succeed in the hyper-connected society, DMOs will need to have the research and intelligence to fully understand the evolving market environment as well as the structures and skills to take full advantage of it.

1.2 Overview

Over the past two decades, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) have explored, and learned to exploit, the internet and other forms of electronic communication, in order to:

- deliver a wide range of information, from ‘hard information’ to motivational content;

- distribute information through intermediaries such as Expedia, Travelocity, Rough Guide, etc.;

- engage with visitors on one-to-one and one-to-many activities;

• facilitate two-way interaction between the DMO, suppliers, and visitors, as well as between (potential) visitors;
• gather visitor and management information;
• build their brand in innovative ways, made possible by the rapid spread of broadband connections, allowing users to experience attractive imagery and animation, as well as enhanced communication and interaction;
• facilitate visitors in planning their trip by offering tools such as ideas, itineraries and route planners;
• combine promotional activity with online purchasing;
• achieve cost-effectiveness in conveying information and products on sale directly, cheaply and at short notice to prime prospects; and
• work in harmony with offline marketing activities so that traffic can be driven in both directions, online to offline and vice versa.

DMOs have also used the internet to build and facilitate partnerships with other bodies, official and commercial, throughout the industry and outside it. Partnerships work at many levels, for example:
• sharing market intelligence within the industry;
• promoting the DMO’s marketing opportunities and operating co-operative marketing schemes;
• gathering product data, via data feeds, and by hosting product data entry forms that suppliers can use to provide and update their information;
• new joint product development;
• an integrated and coherent approach to branding of the destination achieved jointly by national, regional, and local tourism organizations and by their public and private stakeholders; and
• partnerships with visitors who have shared interests.

Although the world wide web was described by inventor Tim Berners-Lee, as “a collaborative medium”, in recent years it has evolved beyond the expectations of most into that “place where we all meet and read and write”. The term Web 2.0 was first used in 1999 to describe websites that used technology beyond static pages and facilitated interactivity, and it gained popularity after the 2004 O’Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference. Tim O’Reilly described Web 2.0 as “A set of economic, social and technology trends that collectively form the basis of the next generation of the internet – a more mature, distinctive medium characterized by user participation, openness, and network effects.”

This highly interactive and participatory web has become a very social web. The desire to share ideas and knowledge, and to create and aggregate content in a wide variety of forms for personal enjoyment and commercial purposes, has driven the adoption and popularity of blogs, social networks, (multimedia) content sharing sites, and other social platforms such as bookmarking sites and virtual worlds. The media landscape is a continually changing landscape driven by:
• the huge increase in available bandwidth, particularly wireless and mobile broadband (along with parallel enhancements in processing power and memory capacity) facilitating access to the internet via a variety of (increasingly mobile) devices;
• the development of new technologies which succeed each other faster and faster;

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• increases in adoption speed – new devices, features, channels and apps find large numbers of
users within months; and
• the continual convergence of media, channels, devices and services. Convergence occurs when
multiple products come together to form one product with the advantages of all of them.

In the next section of this chapter we will explore other recent and ongoing changes, originating in
information and communications technology (ICT), the internet and other technology, which offer new
opportunities. These in turn drive major changes in the use of these technologies and spin-off trends in
the behaviour of consumers and marketers.

1.3 Ten Key Trends in Technology and Consumer Behaviour

1. Communication is increasingly mobile as well as more immediate; shorter, faster, and in real-time.
The huge development in mobile technology, together with convergence across media, channels
and devices has resulted in a hyper-connected environment in which consumers can access
information anytime anywhere.

2. Consumers conduct conversations 24/7. An information economy has evolved into a conversation
economy; an attention, experience and emotion economy. Technological developments, and
especially the rise of mobile devices, allow consumers to converse seamlessly across the real and
the virtual world, between the private and the professional world. Consumers are texting using
SMS, WhatsApp or iMessage, sharing images and streaming real-time videos using services like
bliin YourLIVE! or Ustream. They are ‘lifecasting’.

3. Consumers are offered increasing quantities of information at increasing speed. To avoid
being overwhelmed, consumers must filter and judge content for its timeliness, usefulness and
correctness. They also need other consumers to assist them. Consumers can choose from a wealth
of websites and tools, such as Flipboard, Streamified, Zite or Delicious which allow them to
collect their social streams in one journal, read what others are saying, aggregate information on
topics of interest, tag and archive that content.

4. Visual information reigns supreme, from pictures to infographics and video, as shown by the rise
in popularity of websites such as Instagram and Pinterest. Consumers bothered by information
overload shift further toward visual information. Increasingly, video is the way to learn about
products and services. YouTube, owned by Google, is now the second largest search engine after
Google itself.

5. Consumers trust other consumers more than traditional institutions. Along with the increasing
opportunities that communications technology presented, there came a shift in trust, from traditional
institutions and authorities to peers. Li and Bernoff described it in their book *Groundswell* as this
“social trend in which people use technologies to get the things they need from each other, rather
than from traditional institutions like corporations”. Furthermore, in 2012, the Edelman Trust
Barometer showed that people judged ‘A Person Like Me’ to be the most credible spokesperson.
Traditional media still enjoy the most trust, but the diversification of trusted media sources
continues with social media (social networking sites, content sharing sites and (micro) blogs)
continually enjoying an increase in trust among media sources.

6. The consumer is in control. The new hyper-connectivity, combined with the ability to filter
information and take advice from other consumers, places the consumer firmly in control. It is
no longer possible to ‘interrupt’ consumers with your advertisement. For example, it is up to the
consumer to search for your destination and to decide whether to read your content, watch your
advert, become your fan or follower. He/she decides whether, when and how to contact you.

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Boston, p. 9.

7. **Large numbers of consumers now group together online** to buy collectively and to secure discounts. FlightsUnite.com and Groupon.com are examples of initiatives facilitating group buying, also called collective and social buying, whereby products and services are offered at significantly reduced prices on the condition that a minimum number of consumers make the purchase.5

8. **Consumers are assisted by search engine developments.** Search engines such as Google strive to index all forms of content. Google’s acquisition of ITA Software is an example of vertical search – search focusing on a specific segment of online content – and aims at making it even easier to find flight information.6 Not only have search engines become more inclusive and intelligent, they are also more social search engines. They have started to index social content and incorporate social signals such as views, likes and shares into their ranking algorithm. Google+ has become integrated into Google’s search results and Facebook data into Microsoft’s search engine Bing.

9. **Location-based services are gaining popularity** rapidly as a result of the increased use of mobile devices and more possibilities. Search engines are adding local information to search results and, although privacy and security are important concerns for anyone sharing their whereabouts (geo-tagging), visitors can ‘check in’ using Foursquare, Facebook Places, Google Places and other providers. They use a wide variety of location-based apps to tell them what is available locally, to form temporary groups and to make use of special location-based offers.

10. **Consumers long for personalisation and belonging.** The internet has made the world more transparent and bigger, but at the same time smaller. The web plays a role in new processes of individualisation and tribalisation. Consumers require individual attention, personalised communications, customised and co-created products and services. Increasingly he/she turns away from one-way communications, pushed marketing messages and paid media. Authenticity, transparency and added-value have become more important. But at the same time, consumers want to find like-minded others. He/she wishes to talk and share, to build relationships, to socialise, to belong, to form a tribe of his own. Technological developments empower people to create their own personal experiences and find like-minded others, thus encouraging them to feel they have the right to be who they are: unique individuals.

1.4 **Ten Key Trends in E-marketing**

1. **The ‘customer journey’ is continuously becoming more complex.** An ever-increasing range of factors, platforms and channels influence the customer decision-making process.

   In the past, consumers found it difficult to discover and research alternatives and hear more than a handful of recommendations. Their primary sources of information were the marketing and sales departments, whose goal was to guide an individual to a specific solution for his/her problem and towards purchase. Now the internet allows consumers to research alternatives easily, as well as consult reviews and ratings from other consumers. Research from McKinsey reveals, for example, that for many products and services the reality is now quite different from the metaphor of a funnel in which customers go from awareness, consideration and preference to action (buying) and loyalty.8 Instead of systematically narrowing down their choices, today’s consumers take a more iterative and less reductive journey of four stages: initial consideration, active evaluating, buying and then experiencing (enjoying, advocating, bonding).

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5 FlightsUnite (online), available: http://flightsunite.com (04-02-2013).


7 ITA Software by Google (online), available: http://www.itasoftware.com (03-08-2012).

8 See chapter 2 for more information on the customer journey.

The ‘customer journey’ begins with a consumer’s initial consideration set: products and brands identified as a result of exposure to various stimuli. This initial consideration set frequently expands as consumers seek input from peers, reviewers, producers and retailers. For the marketer this means finding out how to influence these increasingly discerning and well-informed consumers, finding touch points, understanding key buying factors, and managing word-of-mouth and thus reputation.

2. **Marketers need to think in terms of cross-media concepts** and focus on finding the optimal match of messages with channels, platforms and devices. The aim is to create an integrated and positive experience with the brand. Storytelling and dialogue are important communication tools for successful cross-media engagement. The consumer is no longer in one place using a single device for a scheduled period of time. It is a story that invites/makes a consumer switch from one medium to the next. The marketer needs to understand how to construct a narrative structure and how to tell a story on different levels and in different mediums, so as to keep the consumer engaged.  

3. **Owned and earned media (inbound marketing)** has increased in importance while paid media (outbound marketing) has become less effective. Marketers are shifting attention and budgets to inbound marketing tactics in order to make changes in consumer behaviour (such as social networking, search engine use and sharing content) work for them. Smart marketers synchronise their efforts across search, social and content. Outbound marketing, paid media such as banner advertising, sponsored TV and radio time, or cold calls, loses traction as a result of the shift in consumer preferences, attention and behaviour. This should not lead to a neglect of paid media; on the contrary, it can now have new strategic roles and assist in amplifying owned and earned media efforts.

4. **Inbound marketing is about drawing people in, nurturing leads and converting to ‘hub sites’**. Inbound marketers need to ‘draw’ people in by synchronising their efforts across search, social and content. They have to drive demand using permission-based e-mail marketing. E-mail marketing is the most suitable approach for lead nurturing, and the most cost-effective as the return-on-investment of e-mail marketing is, according to the Direct Marketing Association, still higher than for any other e-marketing channel. Then the e-marketer has to ensure users converge on the main website or blog, now referred to as the ‘hub sites’.

5. **Understanding touch points with consumers is essential**. Traditional segmentation and customer relationship management (CRM) can now be enhanced, and marketers can listen, talk and monitor what people say and what they like. Investing in technology that compiles data on web behaviour and data from multiple systems (for example Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, social media monitoring, booking engines, etc.) in a way that is more easily measurable and actionable, results in a unified view of your customers. This helps marketers to understand the existing consumer touch points and how to create new ones. Knowledge of target groups and customer insights are used to create personas for whom an e-marketing strategy is developed.

6. **Online content is very powerful and the level of consumer engagement determines the success of content**. Creating, distributing and sharing content is a vital component of inbound marketing.
E-marketing is very much about the marketing of content: “getting the right content in front of the right person at the right time on the right device at the right point in their decision-making process to drive the right action”. Many brands are taking notice of the power of online visual content in particular. The level of consumer engagement is an indicator of the value of the content and the breadth of interest in it. The higher the level of consumer engagement with the content, the greater the chance of success in terms of brand recognition, brand perception and an increase in visitors to your destination.17

7. **There are new approaches to measuring success.** Marketers still measure site traffic, the number of unique users, the amount of content viewed and on-site conversion. Now, however, success is more dependent upon, for example, the quality of our content network and the amount and sentiment of conversations carried out within our networks. Four key areas of measuring success are now: *involvement* (do people know about you?), *interaction* (what are they doing?), *intimacy* (what do they say?) and *influence* (who do they tell?). Internally, marketers find themselves more accountable for the choices made and in greater need of data and understanding cause and effect to improve their strategy. Attribution analysis, the process which credits the conversion (of consumers to customers of the DMO) to the correct online activity, is a developing discipline in which marketers are assisted by new monitoring and web analysis tools and specialised external agencies.

8. **The need for continual content creation and distribution may require re-focussing of the entire organization.** Research by Rebecca Lieb and other members of the Altimeter Group shows that re-focussing/re-balancing has five components: organizational structure, internal and external resources, education and measurement. These all need to sustain commitment to content marketing.18

9. **The marketing planning timetable and resources need to adapt to technological developments.** Communication is immediate and occurring across different media, requiring more layers of activity. DMOs need to accommodate shorter campaign cycles, whilst at the same time undertaking follow-up work, on-going dialogue, reputation management and continuous webcare. Webcare refers to the need for organizations to allocate and train staff to undertake on-going tasks such as listening to, monitoring and energizing conversation, interacting with blog comments, reviews and tweets. In response to the 24/7 society and the immediacy of communications, staff must be able to address online reputation management, deliver service and support, and create and distribute (often real-time) content in existing media as well as seeing to search engine optimization.

10. **Optimization for mobile devices is vital.** As e-marketing is increasingly mobile, marketers must invest in mobile-optimized websites and e-mail, apps and location-based services and offers. Mobile marketing can build bridges between clicks and bricks and marketers are rethinking the role of shops, travel agencies and visitor centres in terms of experience instead of turnover.19

### 1.5 Ten Actions for Successful E-marketing for DMOs

DMOs are successful in their e-marketing strategy and activities if they:

1. build strong brands;
2. reach as many (potential) customers as possible;
3. offer (potential) customers high quality content and other internet services at each stage of the customer journey;

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17 See chapter 7 on the social web.
19 See chapter 10 on mobile marketing.
4. make smart combinations of owned, earned and paid media;
5. make the most of the internet as a truly collaborative environment;
6. socialize and develop authority and thought leadership;
7. deliver sales, directly or indirectly;
8. maximise the lifetime value of customers;
9. evaluate and benchmark performance, demonstrating added value and return on investment;
10. commit to continual learning.

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 described trends in technology, consumer behaviour and e-marketing. These trends confront DMOs with changes and new levels of complexity, challenges and opportunities. Focus and/or refocus is required from DMOs in order to achieve successful e-marketing. Please be reminded that terms, technologies, tools and e-marketing strategies and tactics are explained in more detail in the following chapters and the Glossary.

1.5.1 Focal Points for DMOs

**Branding.** Destination branding refers to all activities that are undertaken with the purpose of turning a city, region or country into a destination (see chapter 3). People’s initial travel decisions are chiefly driven by brand image and recommendations. New research methods allow destinations to identify the way destination brands are understood and to identify gaps. However, more is required than to build bridges. The changes in media and influences landscape described above ask for focus and fierce commitment, coherency and consistency and a truly collaborative approach. Consumers are in control: they filter, curate and aggregate using a wide variety of technologies such as RSS, content sharing sites, augmented reality, Google Maps and Streetview. In the conversation economy, reputations are moulded continuously and destination branding has become more complex.

**Innovation.** DMOs are facing a fierce battle for attention and need to find innovative ways to attract customers. However, as the next twenty-one chapters illustrate, e-marketing offers increasingly more and better opportunities to create attention and to build a competitive identity. Think in terms of service and innovating in each and all off your e-marketing plans and activities and offer internet services at every stage of the customer journey. The rise of mobile technologies alone offers DMOs the opportunity to enhance the entire travel experience. The Social Web requires a DMO to socialise, release control and at the same time be an authority and thought leader and add value. Not an easy task, but that same social web offers an abundance of opportunities to create services, alone or by co-creation and crowdsourcing.

**Value.** The internet has made value chains transparent. Consumers expect the roles of, and value added by, each stage to be clear. They themselves have become part of the value chain. DMOs are therefore also continuously challenged to innovate as they need to create and show added value. Other organisations and companies are developing new online business models and concepts, using the new technologies to anticipate and cater to the wishes of travellers, capitalising on the groundswell, i.e. the trend of consumers using each other to find solutions to problems. Observe, for example, the popularity of websites like Airbnb.com and Gydsy.com, which facilitate matchmaking between consumers looking for accommodation and activities and locals that offer these, thus marketing destinations.

**Re-focussing.** DMOs are wise to focus, within their e-marketing strategy, on synchronising marketing efforts across search, social and content (inbound marketing). Rather than developing campaigns driven by paid media (outbound marketing), DMOs must now focus on content marketing and on making smart combinations of owned, paid and earned media, creating integrated experiences. The need to continually attract and engage consumers by creating and sharing compelling content means re-focussing for any enterprise, but specifically challenges DMOs who may not have editorial staff due
to the definition of their role as mainly marketing and PR organizations. Many have been dependent on outsourcing individually funded and (far in advance) planned campaigns to external agencies. These DMOs need to encourage government and industry stakeholders to join them in rethinking their position and organizational structure.

Skills. More re-focussing is necessary as the fast changing media landscape, combined with new technologies, platforms and channels, enables any enterprise to function as a media company. For DMOs this means developing (partly new) roles and skills and adapting their structure. These include skills in narrative management, in order to answer the questions ‘what is our story?’ and ‘how are we going to tell it?’ Skills in storytelling, dialogue and gamification are needed to engage and socialise, build relationships, influence opinion and generate leads. Where, in the past, the primary objective was to drive traffic to and keep users on the website, now the task is to create cross-media stickiness. The development of skills in monitoring, data collection and analysis, and measuring success in a truly multichannel environment; commitment to continual learning; and knowledge management across all departments, are vital. These will help DMOs to understand the needs and behaviour of target audiences, to translate these into personas and cross-media strategies, to gain high levels of innovation and competitive advantage.

Intelligence. There is a wealth of intelligence that DMOs can access quickly and economically. DMOs can build on e-marketing expertise and experience gained in the past years; use the wide variety of tools to gather additional intelligence and access specialist expertise. We know now, for example, what makes websites accessible, user-friendly, trustworthy and thus successful or how to make the most of e-mail marketing. Services such as the UNWTO Destination Web Watch Website Audit and Evaluation, eye tracking and other evaluation methods can assist a DMO in evaluating and optimizing existing channels and in the acquisition or development of new ones.

Integration. In the near future, marketing will be characterized by integration. We will see a further integration of online and offline marketing, of social and local content in search results. We will see the integration of existing and new technologies and systems, as well as types of content, in pursuit of bringing consumers into contact with the destination brand (online and offline) and delivering a seamless customer experience. Thus, DMOs will need to make integration a characteristic of their strategy too, even more than they are already challenged to do due to the fragmented nature of the industry, products and services.

1.6 The ETC Digital Portal and Other Market Data

The Digital Portal has been created to help keep European tourism marketing professionals fully up-to-date on trends in internet usage by tourism consumers alongside latest trends in e-marketing. Marketers, tourism professionals and researchers can learn about digital technologies and trends worldwide. The website monitors data on a global scale, in different regions and countries, focussing specifically on travel and tourism. This gives readers a thorough insight into the industry. The website, www.etc-digital.org, is updated weekly and draws together data from a variety of established sources into one easily navigable site. It contains dedicated sections for each digital trend but also offers country specific reports, reflecting latest trends and developments in the individual countries. The content is organized by digital trend: Consumer Behaviour, Connectivity, Mobile Devices, Social Networking and E-commerce.

The website offers a ‘Latest News’ section – tourism and travel news stories on online marketing and e-commerce, research reports and white papers and a free newsletter. All this is entirely free of charge, courtesy of the European Travel Commission. Annex I provides an overview of useful sources for further market research.

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20 Refers to the use of game design techniques, game thinking and game mechanics to enhance non-game contexts. See chapter 5 for more information.

Further Information

Coca Cola (n.d.), Content 2020 (online), two videos explaining the company’s strategy:
   Part One: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LerdMmWjU_E
   Part Two: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiwlq-8GWA8 (05-08-2012).


Chapter 2

Strategy and Planning

2.1 About this Chapter

This chapter presumes you, as the DMO, are familiar with general business planning and marketing strategy development models. It also presumes that your organization has worked through the decision-making process necessary to build the overall marketing strategy, where this includes the more general research, such as situation analyses and marketing audits that are a normal part of preparation.

This chapter, therefore, does not describe in detail the general approaches available for a marketing strategy, but provides help with ‘translating’ this strategy into an e-marketing strategy and action plan. It provides key concepts and useful frameworks that will help you to develop and optimize the e-marketing strategy for your destination and achieve excellence.

Key Messages

- A strategy is necessary to achieve your main goal with an efficient use of the available resources.
- It is essential to integrate e-marketing activities across media, channels and technologies, and within the overall marketing strategy.
- The concept of ‘The Customer Journey’ is central to developing an e-marketing strategy.
- Developing personas will help you think in terms of the internet services you can offer your customers at different stages of their ‘journey’.
- Identify a suitable framework, and use the advice in other chapters of this handbook to develop a tailored approach for your organization.

2.2 Overview

A strategy is a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem. A strategy is necessary to achieve your main goal with an efficient use of the available resources.

When building your e-marketing strategy and action plan:

- start with the visitor in mind and your insights as to his/her needs and expectations;
- your aim should be an integrated strategy: a cross-media strategy, not a channel or technology led approach, embedded in the overall organizational and marketing strategy;
- your strategy should include goals – achievable aims and objectives – precise attainments that you want to accomplish, and which can be reached by following a series of steps (tactics);
- keep your strategy and plans for action flexible: a clear three year vision, goals to achieve in a year, detailed plans for the coming months. Keep plans up-to-date;
• ensure that you have excellent systems to manage information by building the requirements into every aspect of your marketing activities. Establish SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time-bound) objectives to achieve maximum effect, efficiency and return-on-investment (ROI) and become SMARTER by including Evaluation and Reassessment. Choose appropriate metrics;
• define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that connect objectives with metrics: measurements that provide you with the most important information regarding the performance of your e-marketing activities and indicate where improvement is necessary;
• aim to create a methodical strategy involving formal and repeatable processes with precise guidelines that can be performed routinely for planning, executing and measuring the success of e-marketing activities. Only then will it be a flexible and scalable strategic approach;
• commit to continual learning and improvement, especially to understand the needs and behaviour of your target audiences. It enables the high levels of innovation that are required to gain a competitive advantage;
• integrate your e-marketing activities with other channels. Where it is appropriate, combine online activities with the traditional offline media and events;
• ensure that departments work together: ICT, marketing, sales, PR, trade shows and exhibitions, MICE;
• build a corporate dashboard to assist management decision-making. The concept of management information systems is well established: to collect, collate and present key performance information. Digital dashboards use visual at-a-glance displays of data pulled from disparate business systems to provide warnings, action notices, next steps, and summaries of business conditions;
• identify key skills and competences for staff managing and operating e-marketing activities.

2.3 Key Concepts

E-marketing must be an integral part of the marketing programme of a DMO, not a separate activity. It is increasingly uncommon to develop a pure e-marketing strategy. However, organizational goals need ‘translating’ into e-marketing goals and objectives; e-marketing does require specific expertise and experience and, in many organizations, departments and roles are divided between online and more traditional media.

The following sections in this chapter offer essentials – key concepts and building blocks – that will help you in preparing and building an e-marketing strategy. They are not exclusive to e-marketing and, if shared across departments, they will not only assist in developing an integrated e-marketing strategy but also an integrated organizational strategy.

2.3.1 The Customer Journey

Organizational strategy in general, and specifically e-marketing strategies, must be developed with ‘the customer journey’ in mind. The customer journey is a cycle of thoughts, decisions, and actions taken by the visitor before, during and after their visit to your destination.
Some marketers prefer to speak of the ‘Customer Decision Journey’, ‘Customer Experience Cycle’, and – especially since the web has become a social web – ‘Customer Engagement Cycle’ or ‘Customer Interaction Cycle’ to stress the fact that it is all about the experience that the customer has with the organization and the brand, and about exploiting the internet to engage with them in each stage. Engagement can be understood as the degree and depth of visitor interaction.

Figure 2.1 is just one example of how you can define and visualize the customer journey. Researchers and practitioners may use different stages and names for the stages. Some prefer to think in terms of ‘dreaming’ (or ‘intent’), ‘informing’, ‘planning’, ‘selecting’, ‘booking’, ‘travelling and visiting’ (or ‘experiencing’), post-visit ‘recollecting’ (or ‘reflecting’, ‘evaluating’), ‘recommendating/rejecting’ and ‘repeating’. Others prefer to work with stages and concepts such as ‘awareness’, ‘consideration’, ‘preference’, ‘inquiry’, ‘purchase’, ‘support’, ‘loyalty’ and ‘advocacy’ and/or ‘retention’. Additional concepts are used, such as a funnel or loop, when focussing on a particular part of the buying process or a specific technique to influence customers.

The essence of the customer journey – the term used in this handbook – is that it creates awareness of the need to understand how to serve and influence customers in each stage of their relationship with your destination in order to achieve your marketing goals and objectives.

You can consult chapter 1 to understand trends in consumer behaviour and marketing, and the effects that these have on the customer journey. Research what this means for (potential) visitors to your destination and the journey they take to get there. Aim to have a unified image and understanding of the customer journey in your organization as a whole, not just the e-marketing team. Agreement should be achieved on every aspect, from the number of stages to the terminology to describe those stages and on which stages you will focus on.

Your focus depends on the strategic context. Some DMOs choose to focus on certain stages, for example on inspiring the customer and demand creation only. They can rely on excellent use of e-marketing by industry partners and link to them. Others are forced to focus on certain stages due to restricted budgets or a limited definition of their role by governments. For less developed markets and products, regional and local DMOs for example, the situation may be different. These DMOs might need to offer content and other services for each of the stages, so that creating and supporting systems, platforms and ultimately direct sales becomes a more central role for the DMO.

It is most important to understand that the customer journey is not a one-way process in which an individual is guided to a specific solution for his/her problem. It has increasingly become a complex process, as the internet enables consumers to consult competitive analyses, peer reviews and recommendations and other forms of user-generated content.
2.3.2 Internet Services

In chapter 1 we discussed the fact that the basic principle of marketing – creating and delivering value for (potential) customers – has not changed. When developing an e-marketing strategy, it is essential to think in terms of service, as the internet is, in essence, a layered phenomenon consisting of “an information and communication technology infrastructure, which can, through universal agreements, use various applications, which allow people and organizations to offer and buy services, which may be used for economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific and other purposes.”\(^1\)

Thinking in terms of internet services is an excellent starting point for developing your e-marketing strategy and for evaluating the quality of your e-marketing activities. In order to create a quality website or Facebook page, for example, you need a service-oriented mindset.

The following services may be distinguished:

- **Information services** offer information to the internet user. Information can be defined as ‘anything that is communicated in any form of language (including text, audio, and visual)’.

- **Contact services** are services that enable direct contact with the owner of the website and with other internet users.

- **Transaction services** allow governments, companies, organizations and consumers to conduct business online and to make agreements. Payments may be a part of transaction services.

- **Entertainment services**, such as competitions and games, can contribute to a positive experience of a website.

- **Relationship services** include e-mail newsletters, certain social aspects of the web, loyalty programs, saving programs, incentives, etc. Relationship services aim to turn (potential) customers into loyal customers, to create possibilities for ‘permission marketing’ and to maintain long-term relationships.\(^2\)

Many websites offer a combination of services. Examples can be found in, amongst others, chapter 5 on Websites. Use the customer journey to understand which services you can or are expected to offer at each stage to attain your marketing goals and objectives.

Thinking in terms of services has become more important as the internet has developed into a cross-media communication channel and e-marketers need to build strategy across channels and platforms.

2.3.3 Adopting Personas

A persona is a fictional character created to represent an actual group of customers. Adopting a ‘persona’ assists with:

- focussing on a customer, as it puts a human face on ‘target groups’;

- making the transition from traditional segmentation techniques, which are not sufficient anymore to understand today’s consumers, to profiles that include important drivers of customer choice and decision-making, such as media consumption and (online and offline) behaviour to understand the customer;

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2 Tiggelaar, B. (1999), p. 215-217. There is no clear distinction between an information service and a communication service, as communication can be considered a transfer of information. Entertainments services are treated here as a separate category for practical reasons, despite the fact that many of those services are a combination, as they contain information with the aim to ‘entertain’ (infotainment, gamification). In order to evaluate websites (for example, see chapter 5 Websites and chapter 19 Measurement and Evaluation) and to create awareness of the possibilities to entertain, it is useful to treat these services as a separate category.
• avoiding creating a one-size-fits-all website design with many features and content intended to satisfy everyone that in reality suits no-one very well;

• creating meaningful content and experiences;

• optimizing the overall usability and user experience of web applications; and

• understanding your most valuable customers and learning how to attract more of the same.

Since the web has developed from a mostly read-only web to a social web which requires a marketer to listen, talk, inspire, engage and persuade – working with personas has become even more important. Personas remind you whom exactly you are ‘talking’ to and help you find the ‘tone of voice’ that appeals to the audience, represented by the persona. Some organizations prefer to develop ‘social personas’. Others prefer, in order to focus on sales, to rethink the whole buying process or to optimize the targeting of an advertisement, to also develop (inbound and/or outbound) ‘buyer personas’.

To develop personas:

• Use your understanding of the visitors to your destination i.e. the research you have done on your target markets and the segmentation profiles you have developed. The *Handbook on Tourism Market Segmentation – Maximizing Marketing Effectiveness*, published by ETC and UNWTO, assists DMOs to develop market segmentation.\(^3\)

• Select the traits that are most characteristic of these visitor/user groups and construct profiles that are as detailed as possible.

• Make the personas come ‘alive’:
  – Give each persona a name (e.g. Sue, Surinder or Sam).
  – Find an appropriate photo.
  – Use the psychographical information you have and describe values and lifestyle and provide demographical information such as age, gender, ethnicity and marital and family status.
  – Elaborate on the persona by describing level and type of education, interests, job title, major responsibilities, and a typical day in the life.
  – Include a quote: something that he or she might be heard saying (and that ideally relates to what you offer).
  – Describe what you know of the media habits of this persona.

• Develop the personas further so that you become well-equipped to develop the best e-marketing strategy for each of them. Ask yourself, for example:
  – Which tasks are they trying to perform? What questions do they have? What are their needs, wishes, and expectations?
  – What devices and systems do they use, when and where?
  – What do you know about their online behaviour? How do they find your content? How do they search and which keywords do they use? What social media do they use and how?
  – What are their turn-offs? Are they bothered by privacy concerns? Do they disengage when confronted by certain forms of advertising?

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\(^3\) For further information see World Tourism Organization and European Travel Commission (2007), *Handbook on Tourism Market Segmentation – Maximizing Marketing Effectiveness*, UNWTO, Madrid
In order to answer these questions and find other relevant ones, you may want to work with scenarios and/or storytelling. Align personas to other building blocks in your strategy, such as the customer journey (see section 2.3.1), internet services (see section 2.3.2), and the PMPCs (see section 2.3.4).

Review the personas regularly. Allow them to ‘grow’ in terms of your knowledge about them and allow them to grow on you and all they benefit in the organization. Maintain them with ongoing analysis and measurement, using the data collected in your CRM system, online engagement monitoring tools, and the knowledge provided in chapters 19 and 20 on Measurement and Evaluation, and Web and Social Analytics.

“Personas have a hidden power, widely untapped by marketing”, advises June Li, managing director of ClickInsight Corporation. Give each persona a name, e.g. Sue, Surinder or Sam. Publish personas, introduce them to the project teams and departments, stakeholders and sponsors. Each time there is an urge to discuss what ‘the user needs, wants or would do’, refer to Sue, Surinder or Sam. Ask questions like: What words might Sue be looking for? What would Surinder do here? Would this cause a problem with Sam? If I do X to satisfy Sue, will Sam still be willing and able to complete the task he needs to do? Hmm... half the ‘Sam’ users don’t seem to be completing the scenario as designed. What’s getting in their way? Personas are fictional descriptions of people – people with needs. “Using personas also helps us define the scenarios to be tracked by web analytics tools, and allows us to define the goals that the analytics should track.”

2.3.4 Product Market Partner Combinations (PMPC)

It is the role of every DMO to build and operate partnerships with:

- tourism suppliers in the destination in order to take potential customers to, or go through, the point of sale; and
- tour operators and agents, to give sales support and leverage additional business by encouraging them to sell the DMO’s destination rather than a competitor.

It is also vital to find strategic partners to:

- share e-marketing tasks and to spread the costs and risks;
- help to avoid fragmented budgets and propositions in all media;
- meet trends in lifestyle and offer strong brand experiences by working with a group of complementary product and service providers;
- reach the maximum potential customers;
- leverage brand equity; and
- share research and market intelligence.

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The internet allows you to collaborate on an unprecedented scale with others in developing and sharing the destination brand. However, a destination cannot be all things to all people. A strong focus is required, for example, by:

- developing a range of specific themes or brand experiences for specific target groups;
- placing offerings in clusters of products, activities and services appropriate to the purpose for which a target group visits the destination and conveying their own particular emotional appeal; and
- developing PMPCs by bringing partners together around these clusters. These include partners from the tourism sector but also from sectors adjacent to tourism to attain the best possible promotional and competitive power.

### 2.3.5 Media and Content Categories: Owned, Earned, Paid and Converged

More and more organizations now categorise their media as owned, earned and paid (or bought):

- Owned media is a channel you fully control, like your website, blog or Twitter account. Its role is to project your brand, build longer-term relationships with customers and to earn media.
- Paid media is media you pay for. Its role is increasingly to leverage a channel, or function as a catalyst, that feeds owned and creates earned media. Examples include display ads, paid search and sponsorships.
- In earned media consumers become the channel. The term earned media is not new as it was used in PR for free media mentioning the organization's brand. It has evolved and now includes the word-of-mouth and user-generated content so typical of the social web, enjoying credibility and playing a major role in the customer decision-making process.

Using and thinking in terms of owned, earned and paid content aids DMOs in developing an e-marketing strategy. It avoids misunderstandings and mistakes, such as those resulting in uninspiring Facebook pages of organizations which do not realise that one needs to budget for and publish great owned content that engages users and generates earned content. The success of your e-marketing strategy will be determined by clever mixing, merging and mashing-up of owned, earned and paid media and content, online and offline, and brand behaviour. In order to get there, it is necessary to make choices — using clear terms shared by all involved — about the building blocks of your strategy, budgets, and also about measures of success.\(^6\)

At the same time, it is important to align media and avoid fragmentation. The term converged media is used for media using two or more channels of owned, earned and paid media, enabling brands to reach consumers exactly where, how and when they want, regardless of channel, medium, or device online or offline.\(^7\) This is illustrated in figure 2.2.

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\(^6\) Ibid.

2.4 Useful Frameworks

The dynamic nature of a DMO’s market environment, combined with the wealth of e-marketing tools, technologies and channels becoming available, can easily become overwhelming. Budget restrictions, requirements to make e-marketing activities measurable and show a return-on-investment have added to the pressure to strategize and plan with precision.

In recent years a wealth of methodologies and models, frameworks and templates has emerged. Some are traditional, others e-marketing focussed, some are more sales focussed, others are content focussed. Each has its own rationale and benefits. Knowing where to start is often the hardest part of developing an e-marketing strategy and action plan.

We introduce here four frameworks to give you an example of simple approaches and more inclusive frameworks, and to give you a taste of the frameworks available. These frameworks will get you started and help to separate out the key building blocks and tactics, while at the same time promoting working across multiple channels. These frameworks are relatively simple to implement and to adapt to suit your specific needs. They are helpful when developing the overall e-marketing strategy and also when starting a specific campaign.

However, these frameworks only provide an outline approach. Other chapters in this handbook are dedicated to specific topics, channels and techniques, and provide more detailed advice to help you to develop these generic frameworks into a tailored approach for your organization. You will need to carefully consider your choices regarding goals, objectives, tactics, evaluation methods and key metrics – the remaining chapters in this book will support you in these decisions.

2.4.1 Getting Started: Building an Inbound Marketing Strategy and Creating a Hub-and-Spoke Architecture

One way to start developing your e-marketing strategy and action plan is to focus first on owned and earned media (inbound marketing) and construct a hub-and-spoke architecture.

Inbound marketing is all about optimizing and synchronizing marketing tactics (at least), across search, social and content to achieve the optimal results when driving brand equity and obtaining leads. It has become a very useful approach to e-marketing for the following reasons:
• As mentioned before (see above and chapter 1), the customer journey has become complex, but
the task of a DMO (and specifically an e-marketing department) remains unchanged: to create
awareness and guide (potential) visitors to booking and visiting.
• Traditional outbound marketing methods – the buying of attention and pushing of messages using
advertising, paid search, direct mail or tradeshows – are expensive and have become less effective.
• Once you have your inbound marketing strategy researched and defined, you will see more clearly
where outbound marketing tactics are necessary to support you in influencing customers in those
stages of the customer journey where inbound marketing tactics alone are insufficient and thus
spending money on paid media would be wiser.

‘Hub-and-spoke’ is a paradigm used in many industries and stands for “a system of connections arranged
like a chariot wheel, in which all traffic moves along spokes connected to the hub at the center’. It is
also referred to as a ‘content wheel’.

Figure 2.3 shows the hub-and-spoke architecture, as depicted by Marketing Sherpa and MECLABS,
which proposes to start by building an inbound marketing architecture on three levels:
• The foundation of the architecture: organic search, (in general) the main source of external traffic
to websites;
• the social media spoke sites for community building, engagement and content sharing; and
• the hub sites for the convergence and conversion of inbound traffic.

Figure 2.3  Example of a hub-and-spoke inbound marketing architecture
A powerful inbound marketing strategy aims at systematically directing the flow of online interactions, from search enquiries and social media engagement, to lead capture and customer conversion. In a nutshell the approach looks like this:

- **Preparation** – by researching and rethinking end-to-end engagement with the customer, the target markets’ behaviour on the path to purchase (using personas) and establishing SMART objectives aiming at maximum ROI.

- **Practice** – by attracting attention with relevant and timely search results, building and engaging social networks, creating and sharing engaging content. Construct the inbound marketing architecture for synchronizing the channels, using two kinds of spoke sites (social networks for community building and engagement, and multimedia sites for content aggregation and sharing) and two kinds of hub sites (website and blog).

- **Perfection** – by gathering actionable insights and intelligence, budgeting time and money wisely, and by committing to ongoing improvement of your strategy and effectiveness of the hub-and-spoke.

Each tactic in the hub-and-spoke architecture needs to be provided by objectives and KPIs.

Many experts are of the opinion that e-mail newsletters should, from the start, be part of an e-marketing strategy. E-mail marketing is, after all, ‘permission marketing’, and essential for lead nurturing. Lead nurturing is the process of developing a relationship with a potential visitor by sending targeted, relevant and valuable messages in a timely manner.

So, a slightly different simple framework for developing an e-marketing strategy and action plan is to:

- build a keywords strategy;
- build or optimize your website to get found;
- create a blog;
- promote content through social media;
- convert website traffic into leads;
- nurture leads with targeted messages; and
- analyze and refine strategies.

Read the following chapters in this handbook to learn about making the most of each step: for example, how to produce successful e-mail newsletters, how to optimize your marketing for mobile viewing, and how to support conversion by creating clear and compelling calls-to-action and landing pages.

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MarketingSherpa (2012), Inbound Marketing Handbook – Synchronize search, social, and content to get found more often, more effectively, by more customers (online), available: http://www.meclabs.com/training/publications/handbook/2012-inbound-marketing-handbook/overview (07-07-2012).
2.4.2 Focussing on Content: Developing a Content Grid or Content Marketing Matrix

Today’s marketing is all about two things: content and distribution. Chapter 1 explained that e-marketers should be content marketers busy with storytelling and dialog and concerned with:

“Getting the right content
In front of the right customer
At the right time
On the right device
At the right point in their decision-making process
To drive the right action.”

But how do you start to develop a strategy for this? One way of approaching this is to create a ‘content grid’ or ‘content marketing matrix’ for each of your target audiences/personas, in which you map out the stages in the customer journey or goals you wish to achieve with your content, topics/types and format of content, and the channels you will use to distribute the content. Attribute evaluation methods, key metrics and KPIs to each type of customer in relation to the type of content and refine your strategy based on the insights gathered.

You can combine the use of a content grid with a calendar for content creation and distribution during the year, as well as with the approaches mentioned above. For example, think in terms of the hub-and-spoke architecture or content wheel by relating content consumer type to your keyword strategy and by ensuring your website and blog function optimally as hubs.

Eloqua

The marketing automation software company Eloqua, focussing on content as a service and demand generation tactic, has developed an inspiring framework of types of content consumers:

- **Suspects**: everyone in your target market who may consume or share your content. What they want is what you know, not what you sell.

- **Prospects**: anyone who has taken action, that is, has actively supplied personal information in exchange for more content. What they want is content that relates to their interests.

- **Leads**: the right persons, that is, prospects that meet specific criteria (fit, behaviour, interest, intent) as determined by sales and marketing. Leads want content that addresses their plans.

- **Opportunities**: ready persons, ready to buy. What they want is content that helps them to make the right buying decision.

Figure 2.4 shows Eloqua’s Content Grid. The Content Grid shows type of content consumer, content types and distribution channels and key performance indicators across the “buying process” stages awareness, consideration and close.

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10 Another useful example of a Content Marketing Matrix is offered by Smart Insights at http://www.smartinsights.com/content-management/content-marketing-strategy/the-content-marketing-matrix-new-infographic/. Google on Content Grid and Content Marketing Matrix to find other examples and choose and adapt the one that suits your organisation best.
Figure 2.4  Example of a content grid: the content grid v2 infographic by Eloqua and JESS3

By courtesy of Eloqua.
Source: Chernov (2011).

2.4.3 Inclusive E-marketing Planning Models: SOSTAC® and RACE

The acronym SOSTAC® stands for:

- Situation – where are we now?
- Objectives – where do we want to be?
- Strategy – how do we get there?
- Tactics – how exactly do we get there?
- Action – what is our plan?
- Control – did we get there?

SOSTAC®, originally developed in the 1990s as a generic marketing planning model, was adapted by its creator Paul Smith and by Dave Chaffey for e-marketing, as shown in figure 2.5, and has become widely used. It summarises the key issues to consider at each stage when developing e-marketing strategy and action plans.

The 5Ss refer to the e-marketing goals you should set for yourself:

- Sell (grow sales);
- Speak (get closer to customers through dialogue and participation);
- Serve (add value);
- Save (save costs); and
- Sizzle (extending your brand online).

The 8Ps refer to product, place and time, price, promotion, process, physical environment, people, productivity and quality.

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Chaffey and Bosomworth elaborated on the SOSTAC® and created the RACE framework and templates that aim to assist marketers with creating and refining e-marketing plans, as shown in figure 2.6. The advantage of their approaches is that they are very inclusive, inviting you to go back to the basics – marketplace analysis and goal setting – and providing an overview of inbound and outbound marketing activities.
**Figure 2.6 RACE framework developed by Dave Chaffey and Danyl Bosomworth**

**Key digital strategies: How do we want to grow our business?**

- **REACH** Prospects and customers
- **ACT** Achieve interaction
- **CONVERT** To Lead or sale
- **ENGAGE** Through time

**Marketplace Analysis: How well are we using digital media now?**

- Audience and customer analysis
- Competitor benchmarking
- Online Partner analysis
- SWOT: Own digital marketing review

**Objective setting: Which goals and KPI’s should we use?**

- Vision and mission setting
- Good setting and evaluation
- Google Analytics
- Managing digital marketing

**Strategy: How can we achieve our goals?**

- Segmentation and Targeting
- Brand Position and value proposition
- Engagement and content strategy
- Integrated communication strategy

**Tactics: Which digital marketing activities do we optimize?**

- **REACH** Acquisition strategy to build awareness of off-site and in offline media to drive web
  - Search engine optimisation
  - Pay Per Click (PPC)
  - Affiliate and partner marketing
  - Online advertising
  - Online PR
  - Social media marketing

- **ACT and CONVERT** Acquisition strategy to build awareness of off-site and in offline media to drive web presences
  - Conversation rate optimisation
  - Ecommerce management
  - Lead generation techniques
  - Home page optimisation
  - Landing page optimisation
  - AB and multivariate testing

- **ENGAGE** Retention and growth strategy to build customer and fan relationships to encourage repeat visits and sales
  - Content marketing
  - E-newsletters and promotional emails
  - E-contact strategy
  - Customer service and support
  - Mobile marketing
  - Social CRM

By courtesy of Dave Chaffey, SmartInsights.


In this model:

- **Reach** refers to building awareness of your brand on other websites and in offline media in order to build traffic to your website or social media presences;
- **Act** is about persuading site users or prospects to take the next step in the customer journey;
- **Convert** is when the user commits to form a relationship with you which will generate commercial value for the business;
- **Engage** is about building long-term customer relationships over time through multiple interactions using different paid, owned and earned media.

### 2.5 E-marketing Budgets

- When budgeting from scratch, use the data available on how others in your industry allocate and earmark their e-marketing budgets. This provides you with a benchmark for your own budgeting exercises. Consult marketing spend benchmark surveys and forecasts such as those published regularly by MarketingSherpa, MarketingProfs, Forrester or Econsultancy.  

- If not budgeting from scratch, review past results.

- Preferences vary: budgets are allocated across channels, target markets, customer segments and/or stages of the ‘customer journey’. Budgets for e-marketing should properly reflect its potential value to the destination. Therefore there is much to be said for budgeting across goals. Forecast your budgets in terms of ROI.

- Do not forget to budget time. Inbound marketing tactics – SEO, content marketing, maintaining social networks – are time consuming.

- See chapter 1 on webcare and campaigning. Allocating budgets to both is necessary.

- Include in your budget testing, measuring and iterating.

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**Case Study  Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC)**

*By courtesy of NBTC. ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Natasja Fortuin, Manager Online Marketing, and Thérèse Ariaans, Spokesperson at NBTC for their contribution to this case study.*

NBTC is responsible for promoting the ‘Holland’ brand abroad. With an increased focus on online, NBTC has invested in new technologies to attract, capture and convert online users into real-life ‘Holland visitors’. NBTC enlisted an online engagement tool to start a continuous communication process with each individual online user. This new engagement strategy resulted in higher service levels for both NBTC’s partners and for tourists visiting the Netherlands.

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Introduction

With more than 10 offices in Europe, North America and Asia, NBTC is responsible for the worldwide promotion of the Netherlands as an attractive destination for holidays, business meetings and conventions. By using its expertise in the fields of marketing, communication and research, NBTC is the leading organization for marketing ‘Holland’. With the current offline and online marketing efforts, NBTC is able to attract 11 million people to visit the Netherlands as a tourist or for conventions each year.

Situation

Promoting a country as a tourist destination is traditionally an activity where the public and private sectors meet. NBTC, faced with lower government funding, has reorganised and renewed its business strategy, and is now aiming more at co-creation together with its partners in the hospitality industry.

This business strategy has also put more emphasis on NBTC’s online marketing efforts. Whereas previously NBTC’s online activities were mainly focussed on branding ‘Holland’ as a tourist destination, NBTC has now turned to look at new online business models that are focussing on visitor relevance and user conversions. NBTC wants to capitalise on its extensive tourism and marketing expertise to generate more bookings via its hospitality partners. Moreover, it strives to deliver a tailor-made travel experience including all relevant services and products based on the individual tourist’s interests.

Solution

In order to attract more tourists to the Netherlands through co-creation and co-operation with its partners, NBTC looked for high-quality partners that contributed to the ‘Holland’ brand and who were able to offer tourist accommodations online. These accommodations consisted of (luxury) bungalows, housing in holiday parks and large-group accommodations. For this group of partners, NBTC introduced Blueconic, the online engagement tool from GX Software, a performance-based advertisement model based on conversions.

With Blueconic, NBTC helps to guide website visitors to find the most relevant tourist and destination information on its sites. This tool captures the characteristics and interests of anonymous visitor profiles on the Belgian, German, American and British holland.com websites. How does it work? Once users of the website start reading articles, Blueconic is able to create a unique profile of that user. Based on this unique profile, NBTC can offer specific and relevant information about the type of accommodation that fits this profile. For instance: hotel offers for a couple traveling together or holiday house possibilities for a family traveling together. And it allows NBTC to automatically display a deep-linked banner for the most appropriate partner.

Results

The results were astonishing. The click-through and conversion rates for these relevant deep-linked banners increased with over 200%. And not only was conversion extremely high, but also the absolute number of bookings increased significantly. Besides these positive revenue-generating results, NBTC also got to know their anonymous website users better. Through continuous research, NBTC is an expert in incoming tourism and visitor profiles per market. Online engagement adds a whole new level of understanding of the website user.
Separated by country and language, statistics could be derived which showed e.g. that American visitors usually travelled as couple, while Dutch visitors were mainly travelling as families with young children. Also cross-overs between group composition and main interests could be made, which allows NBTC to increase service levels and make more relevant package offerings.

As Natasja Fortuin, Manager Online Marketing at NBTC explains: “It gave a boost to our conversion rates and more in-depth insights into the characteristics and preferences of our target audiences.”

Next: Getting There and Around

Pleased with the initial results, NBTC is now expanding its online communication program to travel-related services. By further refining and segmenting their online audience, they will soon start to offer similar performance-based campaigns aimed at a distinct group of travel service providers. Moreover, there are also plans to include other tourist services for specific activities like visiting a museum, going to adventure parks or renting bicycles. In the end, NBTC wants each of the tourists to have an unforgettable journey to the Netherlands, a journey that started right from the very first click on one of NBTC’s online channels!

Figure 2.7 Screenshot of www.holland.com

Further Reading


Chapter 3

Destination Brands –
Competitive Identity and E-marketing

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Simon Anholt, Robert Govers and Jeremy Hildreth for their input to this chapter.

3.1 About this Chapter

This chapter describes the exciting opportunities and the challenges that e-marketing offers to support your destination’s competitive identity. After reading this chapter you will have a basic understanding of the concepts of place and destination brand, brand equity and brand gaps. It gives you ideas and examples of how to research and measure the effect of your e-marketing efforts on branding.

Key Messages

- Brands should create promises and guide the delivery of values that determine your reputation and the level of engagement with your customers.
- In our hyper-connected society, the competitive identity of places is more important than ever, and it is more dynamically constructed and re-shaped. Integration of your e-marketing strategy is therefore essential.
- Rich content and social engagement can offer a high-involvement experience for your customers, based on real substance and symbolic actions.
- Research can identify gaps in the way your online reputation is seen and understood. It can measure the effect of your e-marketing activities, and project more coherent brand initiatives and consumer reactions to events through social media monitoring.

3.2 Foundations

This chapter aims to create an understanding of how e-marketing activities and tools can be used to build and strengthen the competitive identity of destinations. However, there is an important prerequisite and caveat. Whatever the resources and political drive for e-branding, messages do not change national images. When we use terms like ‘brand’ and also explore areas which are strongly associated with marketing communications (such as social media), you must be extra careful to remember that reputation is not a phenomenon that can be tackled directly. You have to tackle the drivers of reputation, whatever they might be, in order to make it as likely as possible that the consumer will amend his or her perception. Cosmetics, generally, will not change reputation; behaviour does.
3.2.1 E-branding Opportunities

E-marketers have many exciting opportunities to support their destination’s competitive identity:

• You can offer visitors on-brand e-experiences and engagement to enjoy before they travel to the real destination and while at the destination.

• The growth of online social networking means that visitors are also providing e-experiences to their friends, relations, and wider online communities, sharing substance and symbolic actions.

• New research methods (see section 3.3.4) allow destinations to identify gaps in the way online images are seen and understood. These offer the chance to project a more coherent competitive identity.

3.2.2 The Basics of Branding

E-marketers have a vital need for a strong brand – it is essential in order to establish consumer trust online, especially for e-commerce. So it is important for e-marketers to understand the basics of branding, online or offline.

According to Anholt, the concept of ‘brand’ seems to be used in three entirely different ways:

• **Brand image** refers to the perceptions in the minds of consumers, which are difficult to influence directly.

• **Brand identity** refers to logos, slogans and communications campaigns that are among the instruments of brand managers and that can be used in commercial branding to build brand image and equity.

• **Brand purpose** refers to a common strategic vision that unites groups of people in order to produce change and thereby build reputation.

In general, brands should create promises and guide the delivery of values that determine your reputation and the level of engagement with your customers. However, the link between brand image, brand identity and brand purpose (that seems to exist in commercial branding) is not so evident in – what is often referred to as – place branding or destination branding. In fact, there is mounting evidence that the idea of representing places with logos, slogans and communications campaigns to improve reputation and image is nonsense.

Therefore, as also argued in the ETC/UNWTO *Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding* (2009), Anholt’s\(^1\) concept of competitive identity provides a much more potent paradigm.

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Brand Equity

The value of a commercial brand to the owners is referred to as brand equity. Brand equity has been defined as a set of “brand assets or liabilities linked to a brand’s name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service”.

The assets and liabilities will differ from context to context, but can be grouped into five categories:

1. Loyalty
2. Name awareness
3. Perceived quality
4. Associations in addition to perceived quality
5. Other proprietary assets such as trademarks or channel relationships

Based on this notion, Millward Brown Optimor, in conjunction with The Financial Times, developed the BrandZ Top 100 Most Powerful Brands. Top brand in April 2012 was Apple with a US$ 183 billion brand value, followed by IBM and Google.

Brand equity of places can also be ranked.

Anholt-GfK Roper Nation and City Brands Index

Brand equity research also involves consumer perception analysis, which is of similar relevance to places. Not specific to online, but certainly interesting, are the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index and City Brands Index. These are consumer perception rankings of the world’s place brands, in which tourism is one of six dimensions that are studied, and which guide destinations.

The way a country or city is perceived by international public opinion makes a critical difference to the success of its business, trade and tourism efforts, as well as its diplomatic and cultural relations with others.

Simon Anholt developed the Nation and City Brands Index in 2005 and 2006 as a way to measure the image and reputation of the world’s nations and cities, and to track their profiles as they rise or fall.

In partnership with GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, the studies poll nearly 29,000 people in 35 countries each year, asking more than 40 questions about their perceptions of 50 countries/cities. The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation and City Brands Index are unique, cost-effective and comprehensive systems for measuring and managing place reputation.

In 2011, the top three countries were the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom and the top three cities were Paris, London and Sydney respectively.


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3.2.3 Competitive Identity

Intensified globalisation has made people more mobile and has increased competition between counties, regions and cities. In a globalised world, competitive identity is therefore more important than ever, but it is also more dynamically constructed, particularly as a result of new technologies which create images through many different channels and formats.

‘Competitive identity’ focuses on purpose, strategy, policy, partnerships and symbolic actions. Places must shape their behaviours around a central defining purpose in order to allow real actions and substance (policies, investments, events, etc.) to influence perceived place image and purpose.

Competitive identity does this by:

- appreciating that the reputations and images of places should – and understanding how they can – incorporate the sense of place. Brand purpose and values should be based on the national, regional or urban identity, formulating an aspirational strategic vision, and making history with respect for the past;
- operationalizing such a vision into an all-encompassing strategy that formulates policies, partnerships and symbolic actions that dramatically improve the way that people will experience place, and, as a result, improve reputation;
- emphasising that such a strategy will facilitate marketing at the product level, i.e. for exports, tourism, investment promotion, attracting talented new residents, cultural diplomacy and political clout (Anholt’s Hexagon);
- understanding the current image and reputation of the nation, region or city and how it can be influenced by improving the way a place interacts with the outside world at the points of the hexagon (perceived image); and
- understanding and influencing the way in which such a programme of action sways the mainstream and social media agenda and therefore impacts the way in which the place is being talked about (projected image).

3.3 The E-marketing Challenge for Competitive Identity

Globalisation has created greater diversity in personal lifestyles, and traditional media are increasingly ill-equipped to build brand equity through emotional appeal. There is a move away from the one-way ‘push’ process of mass communication, fixed channels and two-dimensional media, to brand image creation by a dynamic, interactive process of creating, sharing, reflecting, selecting, debating and experiencing. It is happening with an increasing number and a variety of audiences, across an increasing number of media.

Branding has been about linking the product offering and the projected image to consumers’ perceived images. However, destination branding, which is about building the host-guest relationship, should be much more than that. The following sub-sections are based on the essential elements of place brands and their competitive identity according to Anholt, and the e-marketing challenges of destination branding identified by Munro.

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3.3.1 Strategy and Integration

Brand strategy requires a destination to decide on the one thing that makes it stand out and that it wants to show, or prove, to everybody else. Identifying this and creating your strategy around it will help all sectors, public and private, to reflect this aim in their actions and communications.

Integration is relevant from the perspective of strategy. You must make sure that as many tourism e-marketing initiatives as possible are on-brand and that competitive identity initiatives that offer opportunities for tourism development and marketing are integrated. Any attempts to generate mainstream media attention offline should also integrate online channels from the tourism e-marketing perspective.

3.3.2 Substance and Content

Substance is the activity that allows you to execute your brand strategy. This may be in the form of new economic, legal, political, social, cultural and/or educational activity. It is the actual innovations, structures, legislation, reforms, investments, institutions and policies that will bring about the desired progress.

In terms of e-marketing, content provides your destination brand substance online (see chapter 4 for information on content). Brand substance projects could lead to infrastructure or tourism product development, new events initiatives, distribution or network partnerships, or information delivery projects. With e-marketing, the distinction between campaigning and product development increasingly gets blurred, with developments such as Google Maps/Earth based information delivery; augmented reality; and location based services, information provision, peer-to-peer engagement and reviews. Co-operation between stakeholders and network channels is essential for this and feeding competitive identity initiatives into tourism e-marketing content creates tremendous opportunities for synergy and brand reinforcement. They can offer visitors e-experiences and engagement to enjoy before they travel to the real destinations via virtual experiences and enrich the brand experience while at the destination via augmented reality, location based services and engagement.

3.3.3 Symbolic Actions and Socialization

Symbolic actions are a particular species of substance that have an intrinsic communicative power. They might be innovations, structures, legislation, reforms, investments, institutions or policies that are especially suggestive, remarkable, memorable, picturesque, newsworthy, topical, poetic, touching, surprising or dramatic. Most importantly, they are symbolic of the strategy. They are, at the same time, a component of the destination’s story and the means of telling it.

Socialization in the e-marketing context is where symbolic actions as communications should build engagement. The growth of online social networking means that consumers are sharing their experiences, and stories that they are excited about, with others. Therefore, to improve socialization, competitive identity and e-marketing, initiatives should be linked to those qualities that are relevant to most people: love, friendship, ethics, social status, quality of life, good food and drink, environmental safety or fun. It always helps in this context to refer to Seth Godin’s concept of remarkability – literally, being remark-able, able to be remarked about.5

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Best Job in the World Campaign

Tourism Queensland’s Best Job in the World campaign is a good example of symbolic actions and socialization. It won the prestigious Cannes Lions PR Award and generated tremendous brand engagement with a limited budget. Instead of spending large sums on paid television advertising, Tourism Queensland posted classified ads all over the world offering what they called the ‘best job in the world’; a position as island caretaker with a US$ 8,800 a month salary and a rent-free three-bedroomed villa with plunge pool.

On day one of the campaign www.islandreefjob.com received four million hits an hour (more hits in the United Kingdom than google.com). After the six-week application process the website had received almost 3.5 million unique visitors and almost 35,000 video applications had been posted. This generated 6,000 news stories worldwide and an estimated US$ 80 million media coverage value. The socialization generated by the initiative (based on real content) was the key to success. People shared the story and the engagement experiences of applicants, because it exploited the dream of a better life that we all have. This resulted in a shockwave of word of mouth and mouse through social media, which was then picked up by news agencies and in television programs resulting in media-integration across channels.

Figure 3.1 Publication of Tourism Queensland concerning their ‘Best job in the world’ campaign

The Tourism Queensland campaign shows what e-branding can do in the age of the social web. Traditional marketing promotion and spin will not win the hearts and minds of a global audience any longer. Creative use of technologies will allow places to co-create identities, experiences and imaginaries. Involvement of stakeholders, public and private actors and civil society, as well as the global audience of vocal individuals who take part in the conversation is essential. On the other hand,
relying totally on the dynamics of the social web will also be risky. As Keen (2007)\(^6\) notes, the cult of the amateur might kill our culture and assault our economy, so, as the Queensland case illustrates, initiation, guidance and readjustment by public agencies is still needed. You should provide integration on brand strategy for your destination, but in a transparent, accessible and innovative manner which looks for dialogue and socialization, based on real substance.\(^7\)

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**The Hague: City of Peace and Justice**

The Dutch city of Den Haag (The Hague) has formulated a brand strategy focussed on being the “international city of peace and justice”. Being host to the International Criminal Court, Peace Palace and many international public, private and non-governmental organizations, the city has built itself a global reputation in this respect. Substance, such as the 2012 launch of the first international financial tribunal, and symbolic actions such as the organization of the 2009 conference on the future of Afghanistan, have strengthened this reputation. However, the internal branding was never as strong as the down-to-earth Hagenaren (people from The Hague) generally questioned what was in it for them.

Therefore the city of The Hague came up with a new symbolic action in 2010. The Hague War Child City was a large scale project that intended to engage and enthuse the city’s stakeholders, residents and the Dutch population in general, to work towards an on-brand common cause to collect money for War Child and enlarge peoples’ involvement in the positioning of the core values of the city as “International City of Peace and Justice”. The objectives were met by collecting close to €600,000 in donations as well as significant local free publicity. Co-ordinated by the municipality, the project was supported by the ‘Stad voor Stap naar vrede (Step/City by Step to Peace)’ campaign including a fully interactive website www.warchildcity.nl and six celebrity residents of The Hague being active as War Child City Ambassadors for a year. This also allowed for the enhancement of the city’s event calendar and hence its tourism product.

The Dutch Network for Citymarketing felt that the city of The Hague needed to be rewarded for their conceptual innovation linking a relevant international charity involved in the fight for peace and justice with the city brand, its tourism product and event calendar. In so doing, it facilitated an accessible, pragmatic, yet socially responsible and resident friendly brand implementation. The Jury also noted that the city makes clever use of co-branding with a strong, positive and relevant brand. It created a platform for the people of the city of The Hague to ‘live the brand’.

However, because of its internal focus and objectives, the tourism potential of this symbolic action received little acknowledgement. This led to limited integration of the initiative into the tourism product development and information delivery; insufficient embedding of content in other channels or among stakeholders and hence a complete failure towards socialization of the initiative; i.e. even though a fully functional interactive social media website was set-up, it never saw any activity. It clearly illustrates how a mismatch of branding and marketing can lead to missed opportunities.

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Figure 3.2 Screenshot of the Hague War Child City campaign

3.3.4 Measurement

A fourth essential element in dealing with destination brands online (in addition to strategy/integration, substance/content and symbolic actions/socialization) is measurement (see also chapter 19). Destination brands are created in a myriad of ways. Content published by the industry or users on websites or social media can add to, confuse or damage a brand. Perception measurement is therefore essential, as illustrated with the Anholt-GfK Roper Indices. However, so is projected image measurement (i.e. how a place is being talked about), which is also relevant to e-marketers.

New media, and particularly the internet, create opportunities for consumers to experience the perceptions of others much more easily. Using a website, the consumer is immersed in someone else’s (the designer’s) perceptions. In social media, the perceptions are those of another consumer. Printed brochures, or face-to-face conversations, represent similar stimuli, but the growth of various forms of rich media online is steadily increasing the immersive effect.

Systematic research into a brand and into the effectiveness of marketing efforts should include online content analysis. This involves the collection, description and analysis of images and the analysis of texts as well as social media monitoring. These methodologies, described in chapter 4, will help to identify possible gaps and overlaps in your destination’s images projected online, and guide e-marketing strategy by taking account of the brand strategy.

Social Media Analysis for Dubai and its competitors in the Middle East

Dubai is probably one of the best known examples of a city brand that has established itself in a very short period of time while riding the waves of globalization. This has resulted in a schizophrenic image among the global audience combining Middle Eastern stereotypes with images of a modern, rich, glamorous metropolis. However, while the image of modern Dubai has been challenged by the global financial crisis, it seems that competition in the region has stepped in.

Govers studied the competitive brand position of Dubai, compared to Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bahrain, through content analysis of global social media using Radian6. It shows that Dubai has attracted, and still attracts, most attention in mainstream as well as social media. This buzz is generally positive with the exception of the enormous amount of noise around the Dubai debt crisis announcement at the end of 2009. Nevertheless, the competition has been able to attract lots of positive attention for short periods of time occasionally overshadowing Dubai in recent years with the Abu Dhabi and Bahrain Grand Prix and the selection of Qatar as host for the 2022 FIFA soccer world cup. Lastly, a dramatic change occurred in the second quarter of 2011, in the fact that social media buzz (more so than mainstream media attention) for Bahrain drowned out the competition in the region. However, this consisted of generally very negative buzz around the opposition protests and government reactions. So, all in all, it seems that Dubai still has a lot going for itself.

Radian6, used here, provides content and sentiment analysis based on both mainstream and social media. It scans 150+ million blogs, 90+ million Tweets, 25k+ online mainstream news sites, 420+ video and image sharing sites, hundreds of thousands of discussion boards, Facebook, Friendfeed, and LinkedIn Answer in 17 international languages. The main metric used here is just the number of postings, but social media analysis usually also provides sentiment scores. Although the former is a straightforward quantitative count, the latter requires a more complex automated process of assessing whether the posts, and in particular their qualitative content, are positive, neutral or negative in sentiment. Automated sentiment analysis is still in its infancy, but promising. For more information on that, please refer to chapter 20, and for the sentiment results of the analysis reported in this case study, please refer to the journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy.

The daily number of postings in mainstream versus all media channels for the three year period June 30, 2008 to June 30, 2011, is depicted in Figure 3.3. It is clear that generally Dubai generates most of the buzz, also in ‘calm waters’ up to November 2009, after which there is a period of increased attention with the Dubai debt crisis, the inauguration of the Burj Dubai (and its simultaneous
renaming to Burj Khalifa) on January 4, 2010, as well as the Dubai Tennis Championship and simultaneous Hamas assassinations in Dubai during February 2010. However, since then, the competition has succeeded in occasionally attracting significant buzz, for instance, as mentioned above, with the Abu Dhabi and Bahrain Grand Prix.

In fact, it seems that the whole region is attracting more attention since the beginning of 2010, although this might also be a reflection of increased use of social media. Two events, however, had a dramatic impact on global attention. First, the election of Qatar by FIFA as host to the 2022 Soccer World Cup generated off-scale postings totaling 178,116 in all social media, including ‘only’ 2,433 postings on news-media websites. Then, the Bahrain protests as part of the Arab spring generated a tremendous amount of buzz over an extended period. The highest number of posts on one day was off-scale both in news-media and social media postings totaling 4,334 and an astonishing 214,631 respectively. These numbers are not visualized in Figure 3.3 where the scale is cut-off at 50,000 social media posts in order not to dwarf the rest of the graph into illegibility.

What is of particular interest is that some events gain news-media attention without much social media buzz, such as the April 2011 Doha summit on Libya or the Arab League summits, while other events generate relatively more social media buzz as opposed to mainstream media attention, such as the Bahrain protests or sports (related) events (also, indoor athletics and Formula 1 racing get similar coverage in the news media, but the latter generates much more buzz in social media). These are important insights with implications for the way in which places should invest in substance and symbolic actions and how they are linked to the integration of content and socialisation.

3.4 Action Points for E-marketing and Destination Brands

- Make sure the DMO’s e-marketing work gets ongoing professional brand guidance. The opportunities and complexities of online rich and social media should make the e-marketer the chief customer of the DMO’s brand management team.
- Develop online initiatives to support the destination’s brand strategy, and encourage your industry partners to get involved as well.
- Test, and go on testing, the online performance of all your brand language and visuals (chapter 20).
- Ensure that offline and online brand strategies are consistent (integration).
- Use rich media to achieve a high-involvement experience for customers (content).
- Make two-way use of user-generated content (socialization) (chapter 4, section 4.2.3).
- Control the domain names that affect the brand (chapter 6).

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3.5 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The strength of your brand online is related to the strength of your brand in a general sense. The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation and City Brands index, for example, and research around your destination’s brand image provides valuable context.

The strength of your brand online can be measured in the following ways:

- **Keyphrase research** – the extent to which people are searching for your destination and the type of keyphrases they are using to do that compared to your competitors (see chapter 8).

- **Brand monitoring** – across social media and mainstream media, assessing the number of mentions, where they are occurring and the nature of image associations and the sentiment of those mentions (see chapter 20).

- **Content audit** – a qualitative audit carried out as part of a content inventory. Assesses to what extent content and marketing messages support brand purpose and are in line with destination or place brand strategy, substance and symbolic actions (see chapter 4).

Further Reading


Chapter 4

Content

4.1 About this Chapter

This chapter discusses the critical role that content plays in destination and place marketing. It provides an overview of how to develop a content strategy that is in line with the business and marketing objectives of your destination. It goes on to discuss content planning, content development and the ongoing management of content – including selecting and implementing an appropriate content management system (CMS). The concepts presented in this chapter are critical to the success of any e-marketing programme.

Key Messages

• Content is fundamental to your e-marketing programme. Its creation and management requires the allocation of significant resources.

• This includes editorial content (both professionally produced and user-generated) and product data.

• Your content strategy needs to address your strategic objectives and requires a clear understanding of your target market segments i.e. your visitors.

• Research requirements include developing an understanding of the networks your (potential) visitors engage with and a content inventory that looks at existing content.

• A content calendar is a very useful planning tool that supports co-ordination across the DMO.

• Developing a taxonomy for your destination and your marketing activities is a foundation piece of work that underpins all of your e-marketing.

• Essential investments include an open data platform to take in and feed out content, and a good content management system with well-trained staff.

4.2 What is Content?

For tourism destinations content is everything it has to offer. It is much more than just information about the destination. At its most basic level it comprises the written word, images, audio and video. Content is distributed through an ever-increasing range of media.

This chapter focuses on content for (potential) visitors to your destination; content for other audiences is dealt with elsewhere in this handbook (for the information services a DMO should offer the media see chapter 17, for the travel trade in the destination’s source markets see chapter 16 and for what it should offer its own tourism supplier industry, see chapter 15).
4.2.1 Storage and Distribution Media

Content is stored separately from the various ways in which it is delivered. Increasingly the DMO needs to take a platform agnostic approach to planning for, developing and managing content about the destination and everything it has to offer. Although some of the information may be collected with a specific medium or target market in mind, the guiding principle is that wherever possible it should be capable of being formatted for any need.

Table 4.1  Range of media used for content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storage formats</th>
<th>Distribution media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>HTML web pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Static images</td>
<td>Flash and other web formats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recorded audio</td>
<td>Wireless mark-up language (WML) for mobile pages</td>
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<td>Recorded video</td>
<td>Mobile applications</td>
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<td>Tablet applications</td>
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<td>MP3 files</td>
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<td>Streaming video</td>
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<td>E-mail</td>
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<td>PDFs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Word and other formats of documents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voice, for example via a contact centre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Radio</td>
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<td></td>
<td>TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Distinguishing Between Editorial Content and Product Data

Content, in its broadest definition, covers everything about the destination. It is useful to distinguish between product data and editorial content. In many DMOs, staff and systems are more or less organized around this division:

- **Product data** – stored in structured databases, with a team originating or procuring the data, and monitoring the quality of it. These data are usually geo-referenced.
- **Editorial content** – this can be created in, or imported into, a content management system (CMS) but increasingly it exists on third party platforms and social networks. This content is usually classified using an appropriate taxonomy or metadata which often includes a place reference.

The division is a practical one. When presenting content to the user it must seamlessly deliver editorial content alongside product data or vice versa. For this reason it is important that product data are also managed within the marketing department.
4.2.3 User-generated Content

A lot has been written about user-generated content (UGC). Digital channels have driven a radical shift in consumer behaviour (see chapter 1) and this is evident in the visitor’s relationship with a destination and the active role the visitor takes in shaping the destination’s reputation.1 When it comes to deciding where to go on holiday our friends’ recommendations are frequently quoted as being the most influential factor. The web, and the wealth of open, interactive and user controlled applications it brings, supports the creation of informal networks and facilitates the flow of content across them. User-generated content exists in the same storage formats outlined in table 4.1 and is distributed across a huge range of media types and channels including:

- social networks;
- video and photo sharing sites;
- review sites;
- trip planners;
- maps and location based platforms;
- blogs; and
- discussion forums.

However, do not treat user-generated content in isolation. The combination of professionally produced content alongside user-generated content supports both credibility and authority in the eyes of the consumer and helps to achieve the destination’s specific marketing objectives.

For example, consumers are producing and sharing video content on sites like YouTube and Vimeo in huge numbers. Video provides an important tool for creating awareness and projecting brand values of the destination. When it is done well, it is powerful, emotive, personal and persuasive. The combination of UGC video and professionally produced video will continue to provide a mainstay of online travel communication between destinations and their visitors, and between visitors.

4.3 Developing a Content Strategy

4.3.1 Content Issues

For your content to be successful, it must meet the needs of your customers and support your key marketing objectives. This requires that you have the right approach to content and consider how the marketing environment you work in is changing.

An organization’s approach to content is often based on traditional approaches:2

- A media led approach puts the emphasis on driving traffic to your website by prioritising, for example, natural and paid search. Content is a function of delivering traffic and takes precedent over quality and relevance of content. Looking at measures regarding engagement with content rather than just traffic will help to address these issues.

- A creative and technical led approach puts the emphasis on creating a website that is functionally or aesthetically superior. It often leaves little budget or resources to support the creation of quality content on-site.

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The marketing environment you are operating in is also changing:

- Responsibility for content is increasingly becoming decentralized and more people across the organization are involved in the planning, management and creation of content. This can lead to fragmented content management across even a small organization.

- Everything the organization publishes can be shared and added to. Content has become much more dynamic and it is much more difficult to control and manage. Where user-generated content is concerned, it can take careful planning and a huge amount of effort to influence and ensure it supports your marketing objectives and reflects positively on your reputation.

- The ever-increasing range of media, platforms and devices, across which your content can be distributed, further adds to the fragmentation and the planning and resources required to support them.

Putting content at the centre of your e-marketing helps to address this problem and ensures that your content meets the needs of your customers and supports your key marketing objectives.

4.3.2 Strategic Context and Setting Objectives

Your content strategy needs to be aligned with the destination’s marketing and development strategy and it needs to:

- consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with both the destination itself and the resources it has for editorial content creation and data collection and management;

- clearly identify the brand values and brand purpose that need to be projected across professionally produced content – using appropriate brand toolkits (see chapter 3). This also provides the basis for planning and influencing user-generated content as well as engaging with conversational content across social media channels;

- remember the DMO forms part of a much wider content network – a content ecosystem across which content can be developed, aggregated and distributed. This includes destination marketing partners at the national, regional and local level, tourism businesses as well as the visitors themselves; and

- the sharing and combination of different types of content creates new content and information products that are valuable in their own right – traditionally referred to as ‘mash-ups’.

Marketing objectives for the destination might include:

- building the destination brand and sub brands;

- addressing any persistent negative stereotypes that exist for those brands;

- supporting the customer journey through dreaming and selecting, planning, booking, visit and post visit stages (see chapter 2.3.1 for more information).

- delivering specific revenue targets across specific products and regions;

- providing as inclusive and comprehensive information about the destination as possible;

- providing travel trade and tourism partners with content they can use to enhance their position; and

- underpinning specific destination marketing campaigns.
In order to reinforce destination marketing campaigns, the DMO needs to consider what is required to support marketing activity beyond brand communications and above-the-line or outbound marketing activities. For example:

- building authoritative content and linkable assets to support natural search strategies;
- developing on-page content to support relevance and paid search strategies;
- increasing engagement on-site and across third party and social sites; and
- supporting outreach and online PR across identified and valuable networks.

It is possible to set specific objectives for each piece of content within the context of the marketing objectives outlined above. Questions to ask in setting objectives for specific pieces of content include:

- For which target markets is the content relevant?
- How will they find or come across this content?
- Why is this content useful to them?
- How do you want users to engage with the content and what do you want them to do?
- How can they share the content or contribute to it?

4.3.3 Understanding the Visitor and the Marketing Priorities

Providing inclusive and comprehensive content for the destination and everything it has to offer the visitor is a common objective for the DMO. However it is likely that some priorities need to be established. Those priorities need to be based on both an understanding of the visitor and the marketing priorities associated with them:

- A clear description and prioritisation of target market segments (see chapter 2). This covers demographic segmentation and attitudinal and motivational based segmentation approaches.
- Undertaking appropriate user research to help develop a series of online ‘personas’ that cover the target market segments (see section 2.3.3). Beyond bringing those segments to life they also provide information about their specific motivations for going online, goals for visiting your site or engaging with your content and specific online behaviours. That includes the following:
  - Personal details – bringing the demographics to life;
  - motivations for going online – how your site or content will help them;
  - goals – often related to specific stages of the customer journey (see chapter 2);
  - keywords – the vocabulary they might use to search; and
  - contextual information about their online behaviour.
- Information about specific interests and holiday taking behaviours driven from a DMO’s customer database can supplement that provided through visitor segmentation and user research.
- Specific destination marketing objectives can help to define and prioritize objectives for content planning, development and management. For each of the target market segments which objectives are most important?
  - Maximising revenue per visitor?
  - Maximising number of visitors?
– Dispersing them around the destination and beyond the ‘honeypot’ areas?
– Dispersing them beyond the key seasons?
– Supporting particular destinations and products?

• Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the DMO needs to carefully consider where the biggest and most positive difference can be made – in light of understanding the visitor and the marketing priorities associated with the destination.

4.3.4 Content Inventory

Do you really know in detail what content you have on your website, where it all is, who is responsible for it and to what level your users engage with it? You probably have a general idea. You cannot put a proper content strategy together without proper research. We have already mentioned user research and that provides the starting point. The content inventory needs to look at what content you have on your existing site but it also needs to look beyond that – across the networks your (potential) visitors are present in and how they are behaving across the search channel.

A content inventory is an important audit tool and covers the following areas:3

• The quantitative audit includes:

  – What content do you have? – Identify the major sections of your site, the sub sections and the pages within them. Record the page name, URL, content type (e.g. brand copy, articles, promotions, product information, blogs, user-generated content) and content format (e.g. text, images, video, and audio).

  – How is the content organized? – Your audit needs to outline the structure across which content is organized. Parent (primary level) sections and secondary, tertiary levels beyond that. This can be achieved using an appropriate numbering system in the output Excel document.

  – Who creates the content? – This might be members of the internal team but equally it could include content produced by partners and content managers or contributors external to the organization e.g. guest bloggers.

  – Where does the content live? – A lot of your content will exist within your CMS and is referenced by the source URL associated with it, but increasingly sites are aggregating and pulling in content from external sources – that might be your own social spaces or other third party sources.

• The qualitative audit starts to look a little deeper and importantly looks at what is actually happening.

  – What does your content say? – Look beyond the page headline or paragraph sub headings and read what is on every page properly so you can record what topics, themes and messages are presented.

  – Is the content accurate? – The content needs to be up-to-date, the links need to work and it needs to be grammatically correct. Does the tone of voice support the destination’s brand values?

  – Is the content ‘on brand’ in line with destination’s brand identity and purpose? The content needs to support the provision of brand experiences and the sharing of the destination brand more broadly (see chapter 3).

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– Is the content useful and user friendly? – You can start to make a subjective assessment of whether the content works for the user and supports your marketing priorities. This can be supported by undertaking appropriate user experience testing (see chapter 19).

– Is the content used? – You need to look at your web analytics data alongside your content inventory. Key metrics for individual content pages include visits, bounce rates, entrance and exit paths, time on page and actions or goals completed whilst on page.

The content inventory can become increasingly specialised and the scope of any content audit depends on what the marketing objectives are:

• If supporting search engine optimization (SEO) is a key marketing objective for your organization then your content needs to be found and indexed by search engines. Working with SEO and data analysts can give further insight into the language that your visitors are actually using in searching for your destination as well as relative demand for content about specific themes and seasonality (see chapter 8).

• Metadata is information about information. It is the content attributes that allow search engines to find your content and index it. It can also help you to manage content and the publishing of that content on your website, social sites and other third party platforms. An assessment of the metadata associated with a piece of content might also need to form part of your content audit.

• If your website is going to target international audiences you also need to consider how the content meets the needs of the different countries you are targeting. Often referred to as website localization, this needs to address issues associated with language translation as well as cultural differences that exist across countries.

4.3.5 Network Research

Understanding the visitor within the context of your marketing priorities and undertaking a content inventory form the basis of your content strategy. Network research helps you to understand the networks around your destination and specific communities of interest. More specifically it helps you to understand:

• Where your destination is discussed online;
• what the themes and topics of conversation are about your destination;
• which networks your target market segments are present in;
• the content you might develop for these networks; and
• what the opportunity is to reach out to them and place content across them.

There is a variety of tools that you can use to investigate the networks that exist around your destination and create a list of the specific sites and communities that are present across specific themes (e.g. travel, activities, food, lifestyle, arts, and culture). These include:

• third party data providers e.g. Social Media Library and Google AdPlanner;
• trusted directory sites for the attractions and activities you offer as a destination;
• the search landscape around a particular theme or topic – based on relevant keywords; and
• special interest blogs – and looking at the blogs and communities they follow and endorse.
You will need to make an objective assessment across the list of sites and communities this research produces. Individual sites can be ranked by influence and reach within the specific theme and assessed using the following factors:

- Traffic – how large is the audience?
- Google PageRank – do they have authority?
- Followers (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, RSS) – how connected are they?
- Comments on site, social bookmarks – how engaged is their audience?
- Demographics – does the audience match your target market segments?
- Content – what type of content is working with the audience?
- Content placement – is there an opportunity to place content on the site?

Undertaking appropriate network research not only helps you to understand the content requirements of your users and target markets but also provides a basis for outreach activities – reaching out to those priority networks with content that they will find useful, engage in and ultimately share more widely. This also supports your search engine marketing activity (see chapter 8).

### 4.3.6 Developing a Content Plan

Content planning is never finished. It needs to support the development of content on your website, your social and third party platforms as well as the ongoing maintenance and evolution of that content in line with your marketing objectives and an ongoing measurement and evaluation programme.

A content calendar provides a useful way of aligning your content planning, development and management efforts – across your above-the-line campaigns, direct marketing, e-marketing and your online presence. It provides a way of co-ordinating the content about your destination and using it to its best effect. Your content might include the following on a weekly basis:

- Public and school holidays – in your destination and the markets you are targeting;
- major events that are happening in your destination;
- smaller and regional events e.g. sporting, music, literature, arts;
- your above-the-line campaigns and other direct or tactical marketing activity;
- TV and film productions within your destination; and
- your traditional PR programme and media relations programme.

You need to consider the following areas where planning for content is concerned:

- What content do we need to create and why?
- What content can we work with partners to provide?
- How will the content be structured?
- How will users find the content?
- How will users engage with the content?
- Who is going to produce the content?
- How do we manage the content, maintain it and develop it?
Your content plan should provide a basis for all your e-marketing activities and it is referred to throughout this handbook.

### 4.4 Information for Visitors

Content and the information services a DMO offers should be as inclusive as possible and serve the customer in each phase of the customer journey (see chapter 2.3.1). At the same time, it needs to support your marketing objectives and priorities. For example, driving awareness through natural search, increasing engagement across your social media channels or supporting your eCRM programme.

Table 4.2 lists many areas and types of information you may want to provide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2 Information areas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holidays and breaks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekend and short breaks</td>
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<td>Family holidays</td>
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<td>Activity holidays</td>
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<td>Romantic breaks</td>
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<td>City breaks</td>
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<td>Budget breaks</td>
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<td>Spa breaks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luxury breaks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Things to do</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sporting activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attractions – e.g. historical, cultural, scenic, sporting, children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Itineraries and tours – including themed tours e.g. walking, cycling, driving, gastronomic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music, arts and literature</td>
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<td>Gardens</td>
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<td>Nature and wildlife</td>
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<td>Food, drink and local produce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
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<td>Highlights</td>
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<td>Health and wellness</td>
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<td>Hobbies and special interest</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>Nightlife</td>
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<td>Local excursions</td>
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<td>Guiding services</td>
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<td><strong>Locations and destinations</strong></td>
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<td>Regions</td>
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<td>Cities</td>
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<td>About the destination</td>
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4.5 Quality Control

4.5.1 Quality and Trust

Establishing credibility and trust with the consumer is critical to e-marketing. These are qualities that are hard to establish and easy to lose. Content produced by the DMO therefore needs to be:

- impartial;
- accurate;
- timely;
- attractive; and
- motivational.

Accuracy and timeliness are paramount. No information is often better than bad information.

This is true for text and pictures in the structured databases just as much as the editorial content. Images should be selected according to brand guidelines to project the destination correctly. Too many stock pictures featuring models, for example, may undermine trust.

Be transparent about who produced the content, whether generated by or based on the DMO’s own work, or that of third parties. This applies to everything from weather forecasts and hotel reviews to blogs containing personal opinions. Advertorials and sponsored content should be identified as [Sponsored Article] or [Advertisement]. It should always be clear who is talking. Do not hesitate to use the logo of a partner where it is justified.

The DMO by its very nature has authority in the eyes of the customer. It is the official site and whilst this is, in many respects, seen as a positive quality it also comes with some negative connotations. It is possible to add credibility through the appropriate use of user-generated content that validates the messages you are trying to convey. At the same time the potential visitor is becoming used to how user reviews work – in this respect, 10 excellent reviews, 1 good one and 1 bad one may well be a more credible proposition than 12 excellent reviews.

4.5.2 Style and Taxonomy Guides

Every organization that publishes content should have an agreed approach to style and provide appropriate taxonomy guidelines. These provide a solid foundation for developing, curating and the ongoing management of content.

A style guide sets editorial standards that help to achieve consistency and support overarching marketing objectives. It might include some or all of the following:

- An outline of key page layouts and the specific objectives associated with each layout. This might include, for example, inspiration pages that support product and destination discovery, navigation pages that support browsing and finding content as well as editorial pages that cover specific topics in greater detail.

- The different editorial formats that are used on the site, the features or each specific format and character counts associated with each format. This might cover, for example, articles, blogs, images, audio, video, list, pull quotes, expert voice, infographics and itineraries. It describes the way editorial formats are used across key page layouts.

- Rules for preferred vocabulary, spelling of common words, abbreviations and the use of capital letters and italics, and punctuation. This would usually include guidance for how place names and regions should be dealt with. Your style guide for the written word and the mark-up of images also needs to consider your search engine marketing and keywords/phrases (see section 8.3.1).
• Tone of voice and associated brand guidelines to ensure that a destination's presence online supports an experience and specific messaging which is in line with the destination’s brand identity and brand purpose (see chapter 3).

• How editorial choice is dealt with within the context of specific requirements for inclusivity. That might include, for example, how items like ‘Top 10’ and featured products are dealt with alongside a full, inclusive and searchable dataset.

To ensure consistency across the destination’s websites, every contributor to the sites should have a copy, and undergo a training session. Regular contributors should monitor their own style against the guide from time to time, and a managing editor should make regular checks.

A taxonomy is a system for organizing and categorizing content. It is usually based on a hierarchical relationship but can include other relationships, including related topics, synonyms, regional variations, translations and misspellings.

Developing an appropriate taxonomy for your destination content can be considered a foundation piece of work that underpins all of your e-marketing. It helps to achieve:

• a system for classifying and organizing different types of content;
• a common language for creating, sharing and relating content;
• a framework where different information sources can be integrated across your CMS;
• the fine-tuning of content for search engines and site specific searches; and
• a common language for processes and initiatives across the organization.

Developing a taxonomy for your destination needs to consider:

• the destination itself, the specific strengths and weaknesses associated with it and what you have to offer the potential visitor. This must be considered in light of your marketing objectives. Your taxonomy needs to provide a mechanism for classifying content in a way which supports the messages you are trying to convey across your destination marketing;

• your visitors – their content requirements identified through the user research you have undertaken. This needs to include appropriate keyword research which identifies patterns across search and how you take advantage of those through the development of appropriate content on your site and across your social and third party channels (see chapter 7); and

• your eCRM activity and what you are trying to achieve through your database marketing. The data model you use to support this and any associated databases needs to use your taxonomy to classify content. At its simplest level your e-mail platform provides just another channel to get the right content to the right customer at the right time. Data fields should be defined and reviewed in conjunction with national and international standards.

If your taxonomy is going to be effective, it needs to be adopted and supported throughout the organization – providing an organization-wide mechanism for classifying content. The provision of training and an internal workflow will help to achieve this. It is also common to have a ‘taxonomy manager’ within the organization – someone you can manage and coordinate any updates to the taxonomy in line with, for example, new product development.

It is likely that your CMS will provide a toolset for managing and applying a taxonomy to the content held on the platform but the same categorization needs to be used across all of the platforms and databases you use to deliver your marketing activities.
4.5.3 Quality Standards

For internal quality control, the DMO should set standards and then audit them at regular intervals – frequently for volatile types of content, and annually for the rest. You may want to use an outsider to do this auditing for you, based on ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ standards, including:

- agreed tolerance levels for typographical errors and factual errors per 1,000 words;
- accuracy of product data:
  - placement of the right data in the right fields in the database;
  - proportion of known records that are updated at the correct intervals in the database; and
  - accuracy and completeness of data entered into the DMO system by tourism suppliers. If the DMO or other bodies operate visitor-facing quality rating schemes for accommodation and attractions (stars or other ratings), then the quality inspection should include an assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the descriptions that they provide;
- timeliness – are time-sensitive items made available as far ahead as the visitor needs them? Afterwards, are they de-activated promptly?
- taxonomy – to follow the manual that sets out what words mean, precisely; and
- copywriting – does this comply with guidelines for writing for the web? (see section 5.4)

Chapter 19 on Measurement and Evaluation provides more information about measuring quality.

4.6 Storing and Managing Product Data

4.6.1 Make Product Data Retrievable

Information is of no use if the user cannot find it easily, so it will need to be retrievable by search facilities on your website that look at specified fields in your database:

- Use data fields that allow you to relate the item to others in the database, using product codes. Cross-reference these product codes to the customer ‘interest’ codes in the CRM database (see chapter 14). This will be an important way for customer interests and content policies to be matched.
- If the data come from another owner, there may need to be a field that enables you to display the name or logo of the data owner.
- An editorial can be free and easy, but it must still be a data item, or series of data items, in the database. It can have any number of keyword associations.
- Photographs and video clips should have a date, location name, geocode, topic keywords, short description, and long description. A picture caption should be written to form the basis of the alternate text (sometimes called the ‘alt tag’) if it is used on a website.

All the data will need to respect and follow your style and taxonomy rules as discussed in section 4.5.2.

4.6.2 Create Multilingual Databases

Translation into the local language when a database item is displayed to a user on your website needs careful preparation, working with a software architect.

The name of the data item – the ‘field’ or ‘label’ – must be carefully defined in the DMO’s local language according to your taxonomy rules. Then all the labels can be translated into all the languages
used on your various websites. Take great care to use words in each language that have been carefully researched as being accurate and in line with international practice. Once done, this job does not need to be repeated.

Translation requirements can be minimised by careful design of the number and meaning of the database fields. This way, the labels do the work rather than the text that is in them. For example, if types of cuisine are an important factor in the destination’s marketing, each cuisine should be a data field, instead of entering text denoting the cuisine into a single field.

4.6.3 Geocodes, Geographic Information Systems and Maps

Geocodes are the latitude-longitude co-ordinates of all the tourism products in your database. For destination websites, the search for and display of records usually depends, at least in part, on the geocodes.

The customer may have a preference for search results to be shown on a map, or as a simple text list. In either case, the geocode is used for retrieval of geographically adjacent items that are otherwise not related – a restaurant near a self-catering cottage, for example.

Geo-referenced product data have become a prerequisite for tourism and travel-related databases. These enable a variety of mapping applications to be provided on your and your partners’ sites. Mapping functionality can be provided using a commercial Geographic Information System (GIS) that allows you to publish dynamic mapping drawn from your database. However, it is increasingly possible to achieve everything you need through the use of an open source mapping service such as Google Maps.

Beyond the provision of open source mapping on your site using tools such as Google Maps, the development of maps is a specialist discipline and as such it is often worth approaching this area through an appropriate partnership with a commercial specialist. Be careful not to try and reinvent what is already being done well elsewhere and can be integrated on your site to support your specific objectives.

Be cautious about investing in static maps based on images. Unless they are confined to very simple schematic designs, they will need to be updated at regular intervals.

4.7 Content Management Systems

A content management system (CMS) enables publishers to create, store and organize content, and to publish it on digital platforms. This may include their own and other people’s websites, mobile platforms and other digital platforms.

4.7.1 How a CMS Works

- A CMS separates content and its presentation.
- Editorial content generally exists within the CMS database whilst product data can be pulled into the CMS from your own databases, your partners’ or other external sources and presented on your website alongside appropriate editorial content.
- Presentation is carried out with templates, which are stored separately from the content. These templates can be updated to deliver site wide changes in the way editorial content and product data is presented. It is the combination of selected content – usually several content items – and a selected template that defines how it is presented to the user on any given platform.
4.7.2 Benefits of a CMS

All reasonably complete CMSs will:

- reduce the work needed to create and maintain a website. If text, a name or a picture needs changing, it is changed only once in the CMS system, even though it may appear in many places;

- enable the destination to share content across a range of separate websites. These may include all your language/market/theme sites for users, plus your sites for staff (intranet), the industry (extranet), and the media;

- allow many authors throughout an organization to contribute and maintain content, without needing technical skills. Staff can be given any combination of access and permission, so security and quality of the output can be controlled;

- maintain consistency of layout, by the use of standard input templates;

- help staff to insert metadata (tagging) for content items and allocate categories that exist across your content taxonomy. This is essential for search engine optimization (see chapter 8), internal search, and accessibility. It also improves site management, for example by noting the author and approval level, as well as quality control, for example by specifying the review date;

- help the destination to organize its content:
  - editors should be able to see where a piece of content is to be used;
  - editors can look at a complete page and see where the pieces of content are coming from, even if they do not have rights to edit all the pieces;
  - items can be given an in-house name within the system that makes sense to staff even though it may not to the outside audience, who will not see it;
  - relations between items can be set and will not be broken even if names are changed (which should be avoided nevertheless), because every item has a unique identifier within the system;
  - content can be annotated, with the notes being visible in some published versions but not others. For example, there may be a contact address in an organization that is for staff use only. The template used for an intranet page can show this information, but the one for the user-facing site hides it; and

- allow the creation and amendment of templates for pages or parts of pages into which the content is fed. This provides consistency of style as well as saving time. This task usually requires more advanced skills.

A more sophisticated CMS will:

- provide a workflow system that defines the authoring and approval process for different types of content;

- provide staging before publishing, to synchronise interdependent new items;

- provide the same content in other formats, for example to web, mobile, or other digital platforms;

- allow one site to be copied for other sites, using a master or ‘parent’ page or site to form the basis of a number of subsidiary ‘child’ sites (sometimes known as ‘blueprinting’). The child can then be maintained in line with the parent. Local editors may change each of these child sites, perhaps to form a different language or market version, but changes that are made to the parent site will still cascade down. The editor of the child site will be alerted to any changes made and can accept, reject or amend them on their site as necessary;
• make version control easier, and provide ‘roll-back’ if needed, so that a site can revert to previous content, for example after an event. Audit trails will also record what content was authored and approved, when and by whom;
• react to the website user actions, and serve content and presentation to rules set by the editor; and
• provide management information to assist with planning the volume of work.

Some of the latest trends in web content management and CMS platforms include:4
• A suite of tools that further support productivity across the DMO. These include in-content editing functionality that allows the content manager to edit content directly on a specific web page as well as using familiar desktop tools such as Word to do this. This reduces the amount of training required to enable staff with basic publishing requirements to use the CMS.
• Integration with other tools and platforms used by the DMO – including integration with eCRM systems, integration with analytics packages and measurement tools and the publishing of content across the social media channels.

The successful implementation of any CMS requires preparation, training and discipline among the staff that use it. This must be taken into account when planning the purchase and introduction of a new CMS system.

4.7.3 Finding the Right CMS

It is crucial that you take time to make the right decision when buying a CMS, in view of what you are trying to achieve with your e-marketing both now and in the future. Procuring and installing a new CMS is beyond the scope of this handbook but you need to consider the following areas when deciding on which CMS platform to buy and which vendor to buy it from:5

• What are your requirements? – It is likely that the decision will involve multiple stakeholders across the organization. It is becoming increasingly common for the selection and management of a CMS to be undertaken by the marketing department but the IT department will also need to be involved in the process and support the decisions being made. The CMS might be used by a wide variety of staff, with different levels of technical ability, so their specific requirements will need to be taken into consideration. It is likely that you will not be able to meet all of your requirements with the budget and resources you have so you will need to develop a list of priorities – covering requirements that are ‘must haves’ and those that are ‘nice to have’. Any new CMS implementation represents a significant project and needs to have appropriate project management allocated to it.
• Have you got the resources you require? – You will need to ensure you have the required internal resources to implement the CMS properly. Do not forget the content requirements! This is often one of the biggest tasks and all too often delays the launch of a new website. You need to ensure your content development plan is supported with the right level of resources – outsourced if required. Where costs are concerned make sure they include costs beyond just licensing or buying the technology itself – that includes hosting, ongoing consultancy and maintenance, training and support.
• Finding the right vendor – Are they the right size and scale to match your particular requirements? If they are too big your account might not ‘matter as much’ alongside larger clients they work for. If they are too small they may not be able to allocate the right level of resources to your project. They will need to be able to support the CMS implementation and it is likely that you are going to

require ongoing development, maintenance, training and support from them. Looking at the kinds of clients they work for and talking to them directly is a good starting point.

- Evaluating the technology – You need to have a clear list of requirements that you can judge specific CMS platforms against. It is also a good idea to create an initial shortlist and arrange demonstrations of the different CMS platforms on your shortlist. Make sure you involve a good cross section of staff that will use the CMS in these demonstrations. They will ask the right questions and highlight requirements you might not have considered in your initial specification. For any reasonably sized CMS implementation it is worth considering using a business or systems analyst to support the requirements specification and evaluation of different CMS technologies.

An Interview with John Balmond from Visit Britain

John Balmond was responsible for the team that worked on the development of Visit Britain’s new site.

How did you approach the requirements specification?

Visit Britain’s Digital Development Team developed an initial specification of “known” requirements. These included: a coupled content management and content delivery system, multilingual content presentation, and various performance and scalability requirements. In particular, we were looking for an object-based CMS that supported the reuse of content items, and back-end compatibility with other in-house software such as our eCRM software.

A requirements-gathering process undertaken with editorial staff then helped us to capture a more detailed set of requirements, including the tools necessary to manage editorial and translation workflows, create data-capture forms, and manage rich media assets and user-generated content.

Finally, an assessment of the desired functional requirements for the new website highlighted the need for the CMS to support flexible page layouts, a hierarchical taxonomy, dynamic content delivery (implicit / explicit personalisation and context-driven content) and outbound content syndication via RSS.

What were the biggest influencing factors around the selection of the vendor and platform?

- Total costs of ownership (licensing and maintenance costs for software modules);
- agency experience with web development using the selected CMS software;
- assessment of platform functionality against our initial requirements specification;
- vendor case studies showcasing the deployment of key features on live client websites; and
- performance and scalability against a set of appropriate benchmarks.

How long did the project take and what were the key stages?

Requirements-gathering for the project commenced in June 2008, and the first version of the new Visit Britain site was launched in June 2010. The same CMS platform was also used to re-develop the Enjoy England site, which was launched in April 2011. We applied a proprietary project management methodology developed by our web design and build agency which covered detailed specification stages, prototyping, build and user acceptance testing.
What about content? How was that planned and developed alongside the web development?

A content audit was conducted as part of the specification stage to help us to identify which content from the current site could be reused or re-purposed, as well as content gaps that needed to be addressed. Content to be re-used was extracted from the legacy CMS as XML and migrated across into the page templates for the new site during the build phase.

As part of the user acceptance testing editors were able to use the CMS to edit the migrated content in English and create new content as required – a separate project plan was drafted for this activity and managed alongside the plan for the development of the website.

As each content asset was completed in English, it was sent automatically (via the CMS) to an external translation agency for translation into 22 languages. Upon completion of the translations for each content asset, the various language versions were re-imported automatically into the CMS and made available for review and publication by the local site editors in each overseas market.

What were the biggest learning outcomes?

The importance of procuring consultancy from the CMS software vendor to validate the technical design of the site, suggest solutions for implementing desired functionality, and ensure that the site developers have a good working knowledge of the product and its capabilities.

The value of end-to-end testing using real-world examples of content and data – there will always be problems thrown up by “real content”, for example, error handling for unexpected non-alphanumeric characters.

Involve the staff who will use the CMS as much and as early as possible, including during the procurement stages – they will be more enthusiastic adopters (and helpful testers!) if they buy into the system at an early stage.

Further Information


4.8 Building Content

4.8.1 Using Content Partners

A DMO is unlikely to have the resources to be able, on its own, to create and then maintain the range of content it needs. Even if it did, a self-contained DMO information collection and distribution strategy is much too limiting when you consider the huge potential to support collaboration via the internet. For example, it is possible to use Google Maps on the DMO website, but equally possible to provide the DMO product data to Google Maps to use on their site.
This is why a DMO should find content partners:

- Technically, tourism product data sharing is now easy and comparatively low-cost. There is no need for the data to be all in one place, provided that there are sharing agreements.

- In most countries, the DMOs exist at national, regional, city and local level, and they each have strengths that they can apply to product data collection and management as well as developing, curating and managing editorial content.

- Major publishers and travel companies, whether their background is offline or online, have moved into gathering destination content. For example, Dorling Kindersley provides content solutions for multiple platforms – including all major destinations, maps and phrasebooks, from the Eyewitness Travel Guides and Rough Guides series (http://www.roughguide.biz).

- Often, national publishers with local publishing arms have the need, the resources and technical systems to aggregate data more easily than DMOs, even when there is a good partnership between local, regional and national DMOs.

- The growth of earned media and the critical key role this plays in a destination and specific products’ reputation provides a huge opportunity (see chapter 7).

### 4.8.2 The Destination Content Ecosystem

Destinations, by their very nature, have a huge number of individuals and organizations creating and curating all kinds of editorial content about the attractions and activities in that destination. That includes tourism businesses, the national, regional and city DMOs, related governmental organizations as well as visitors and everyone who lives and works in that destination.

This creates a potentially powerful ‘content ecosystem’ that can be leveraged to support the specific marketing objectives of those same individuals and organizations. Indeed, supporting the curation, sharing and ongoing distribution of great content about the destination is likely to be one of the DMO’s primary objectives.

When thinking about realising this opportunity for your destination it is worth considering the following:

- Social content platforms like Flickr and YouTube already provide a toolset to support the tagging and sharing of content uploaded to them. That includes the ability to set up groups, tag content with relevant keywords and widgets to support the integration and embedding of content into websites and social media.

- Where possible, content across key organizations (especially those involved in destination marketing) should be categorized using a common taxonomy (see section 4.5.2). This will facilitate the sharing of that content in line with specific marketing objectives. For example, if the destination is well known for watersports, each content or marketing partner should work to the same taxonomy when categorizing content about the watersports on offer. By making the taxonomy public, and providing appropriate guidelines about how it can be used, it is likely that more individuals and organizations will take the same approach.

- Where social media is concerned, it is becoming increasingly common to use hashtags to support the wider distribution of content. These can be based on the same common taxonomy or a specific campaign and used to support the development, curation and distribution of content across social media.

- Technologies such as RSS support the sharing of content across different websites and directly to individuals interested in particular news and topics (see section 5.8.6).
4.8.3 Acquiring Product Data

The starting point for any DMO should be to audit potential partners and then to divide resources between direct data collection and partnership building. Working in partnerships requires a commitment to create an open platform of shared product data. This is a corporate issue for the DMO and also relates to its approach to e-commerce (see chapter 11).

The platform will need to be:

• Designed to support the wider distribution of the content as well as collecting it. It should be used by as many distribution channels – public and private – as possible. It should not be driven solely by a wish to build the DMO’s own website; and

• designed to handle a flow of tourism product data in all directions – up from local sources, and down from central sources.

In reviewing the types of organizations that might be potential product data suppliers, factors include:

• Destinations:
  – The DMO’s place in the national tourism structure, and the respective current and potential abilities of local, regional and national DMOs to collect data. This will determine how much centralisation or decentralisation is best, in each product category;
  – most commercial and public sector regional bodies will probably be better able to organize data capture and maintenance of information from independent SMEs such as tourist attractions and providers of specialist tourist services;
  – centralised head office action may sometimes be the quickest and lowest cost option, especially to meet tactical needs when the marketers require a new topic to be covered at short notice.

• Commercial publishers:
  Newspaper and magazine companies may have highly developed databases of events and places to serve their network of local, regional and national websites and publications;

• National tourism suppliers:
  – Suppliers such as hotel groups can most efficiently pass their data to the national DMO, which can then distribute it to regional and local DMOs;
  – some national state-owned or voluntary groups may also be able to pass data in the same way (for example, a Ministry of Culture, or a museums’ association); and

• Local and regional tourism organizations.

Different business models may be needed for each approach – partnered in-house, contracted out, produced in partnership, bartered and bought. Product data distribution to partners for use by them on their websites and in other media, is covered in chapter 18.

4.8.4 Geocodes and Product Data

Many data gatherers generate geocodes from postcodes, but this method may be inaccurate, and will fail in some instances (mailbox numbers, for example), or may not exist at all (for a scenic spot).

Make your tourism suppliers aware of the importance of knowing the exact geocode they want you to use – their car park entrance or customer front door for example, not the side entrance where the mail is delivered.
Increasingly smartphone technology very easily supports the provision of accurately geo-referenced location based content and product data. It can also be captured by a handheld GIS device on site, or even plotted manually on mapping applications like Google Maps.

Areas with designated boundaries, such as country parks, need to have their perimeter geocoded at intervals to form a ‘polygon’ of geocodes. This information is usually available from the local planning authority, but for areas created purely for marketing purposes, such as ‘The Silk Road’, it may need to be specially plotted. Tourist routes or trails also need plotting. Once again, applications like Google Maps allow this to be done, published and shared very easily.

4.9 How to Provide Information About the Accessible Visitor Facility

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Andrew Daines for his inputs to this section.

It is beyond the scope of this handbook to provide detailed guidance of how to undertake all aspects of e-marketing from an accessibility perspective, but this section provides an introduction and an overview, together with some signposting to sources of further information.

4.9.1 What does ‘Accessible’ Mean?

Accessibility is about serving everyone, irrespective of any physical, sensory or mental conditions they may have. This includes people with disabilities, but goes much further than that.

Everyone in society benefits from environments, services and information that are accessible, but those who will benefit most include older people, people with young children, as well as those with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accessibility should be considered in terms of a number of perspectives, including a person’s mobility, visual or hearing impairments, learning difficulties and allergies.

This section deals with e-marketing and accessibility in terms of content and design.

4.9.2 Why Accessibility Information is Worthwhile

As well as contributing to a more inclusive society, and therefore providing a better welcome for more visitors, considering accessibility makes good business sense.

Across the world, there are over 785 million people – approximately 15% of the global population – who have a physical, mental or sensory disability. At the same time, the world’s population continues to age at a phenomenal pace; in 2009, there were over 730 million people aged 60 or over, equivalent to over 10% of the population, an increase of over 20% since 2000. By 2050, those aged over 60 years will have grown to over 20% of the world’s population, with a fifth of these being over 80.

These figures demonstrate the potential size of the market, but also bear in mind that older tourists and those with disabilities often travel with others, such as family members, friends or carers. Given the huge numbers of potential visitors who, either for themselves or their travelling companions, have access needs, accessibility should be considered a mainstream, rather than a specialist discipline.

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Finally, the arguments are equally strong in all forms of tourism, for example for delegates at conferences or meetings. Visitors who have particular access requirements do not need a special kind of tourism – they want to have the same experiences as everyone else.

4.9.3 What is Accessibility Content?

Without appropriate content, a potential visitor will not know if a product or service meets their individual access needs. For example, whether a tourism business has facilities such as ramps or hearing loops. The tourism business could provide information, such as the number of steps between a hotel’s reception and its restaurant. Or detail the services offered, such as catering for specific dietary needs.

Of course, all tourism businesses should seek to be as accessible as possible, but purely by providing accurate and up-to-date information, it allows potential visitors to make an informed decision as to whether it will be suitable for their needs.

The content will fall into one of two types; assessed content and non-assessed (or self-assessed content).

Assessed content normally takes the form of schemes that tourism businesses can opt to be part of, generally run either by a national or regional tourism organization or a disability organization:

- These schemes entail an inspection or access audit to pre-defined standards (often undertaken annually) by a trained assessor, who will then award a grading.
- There is no requirement for a business to be ‘completely accessible’ to be part of these schemes. There are often multiple levels of grades, including an entry level.
- It is straightforward to present tourism businesses that have achieved a certain accessible grade, and often there is a specific icon or badge that can be displayed to identify the grade awarded.
- It will be easily achievable to include these awards in product search engines or filter tools.

Non-assessed, or self-assessed, accessibility content generally takes the form of an Access Statement or structured data fields as part of a product database. Both of these types are generally the responsibility of the product owner to complete, rather than a trained assessor, and care needs to be taken by the business to provide accurate and up-to-date information.

An Access Statement gives a tourism business the opportunity to describe the facilities and services offered, often in a free format. Tourism organizations should consider providing some guidelines or an online tool to help businesses in the task of preparing an Access Statement, to ensure key elements are covered, and to provide a degree of consistency. VisitEngland is one organization that has produced an easy-to-use, step-by-step tool for businesses to produce an Access Statement, available online at http://www.access.tourismtools.co.uk.

4.9.4 Design Considerations

How content is presented on a website, mobile device or other platform has significant impact on who will be able to use it, including users with visual impairments using screen readers, those with hearing impairments for whom audio content may be difficult or impossible and users who require or desire to use the keyboard rather than a mouse – not to mention older users whose eyesight may be poor. A report by ENAT, published in January 2012, found that only 10 out of 39 national tourism organization websites across Europe, assessed in the summer of 2011, achieved a basic accessibility standard (W3C’s Accessibility Level A / WCAG level 1.0).9

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Accessible web design does not mean a website has to be dull or unimaginative, but some consideration is required for a website to be accessible to all potential users. Many aspects of accessible web design are just good practice and will benefit all users, and there is a strong element of crossover with a website’s usability – such as ensuring that ‘alternative text’ descriptions are in place for all non-text items (e.g. pictures and graphics).

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community for the development of web standards. An element of the consortium’s work, the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), has developed and published standards, (Web Content Accessible Guidelines) to help content be developed that is accessible to all; the second version of these was published in 2008.

Section 5.3 contains more information on website accessibility.

Further Information

Comprehensive information on how your web team can implement these standards, and achieve accessible website design can be found at: http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility.html.

This includes information and guidelines regarding accessing web content on mobile devices as well as through desktop or laptop computers.

4.10 Content Distribution to Third Parties

Investing in good content only makes sense when it is put to work for the destination in as many places as possible i.e. those networks across which your potential visitors are active. Extending the destination’s reach by distributing your content to third parties and important networks, can be very cost effective:

- It increases the media reach of the destination without spending huge budgets on advertising; and
- it can use the marketing budgets and brand equity of the DMO’s distribution partners to drive users to content that promotes and sells the destination.

When you compare the size of the potential audience by distributing your content to third party sites and other important networks with that of your own site it is easy to see the benefit this might create. Increasingly the game to be played is the ongoing distribution of both product data and editorial content farther and wider rather than purely driving traffic to the DMO website.

The DMO needs to take a strategic view across content development on its own site alongside content distribution to third parties and those networks that exist around the products and services your destination provides.

4.10.1 What Are Your Assets and Liabilities?

First, consider what content you have that is likely to be of most interest to potential distribution channels:

- E-commerce-enabled tourism products;
- product information data (non e-commerce-enabled); and
- editorial content (for example, destination guides, themed content, images, and video).
Then, check your assets:

- What do you have distribution rights for? Have you the right permissions from the content aggregators that supply you, and do they have permissions from each business? These should be routine data fields in the DMO product databases.

- Is it of sufficient quality? (see section 4.5).

- Will distribution to third parties force you to do more work than at present to ensure the content is kept relevant and up-to-date?

- Is it updated regularly, and are the updates of immediate interest to users, such as events information? If so, the content is ideal for RSS distribution (see next section).

- In what formats can the DMO deliver it to partners? The DMO will probably have databases with good search engines; it might have extensive editorial content in a content management system that can deliver to outside channels.

- Is the DMO prepared to offer white label (de-branded) content? Some distribution partners will value your data with your branding clearly shown. Others will want to absorb it into their own brand proposition.

### 4.10.2 Use RSS to Support Content Curation and Distribution

RSS stands for rich site summary but is often dubbed really simple syndication.

It is a convenient service for individuals to receive selected items from websites, whenever there are updates, without having to visit the site in order to collect them. It is also a way for websites to syndicate content to other sites. Both are automated.

Thus RSS is very powerful. It enables your own site content to reach out beyond its boundaries – to individual users and to other websites. It is also a way to enrich your own site with the latest news of other sites.

When users are on a page of your site, RSS enables them very easily to choose whether to receive notifications from you on a given subject. Then their PC looks regularly at your site for new notifications, and brings back each one, timed and dated, with a headline and an opening sentence, and a link to the full content. It is automatic and almost instantaneous, so it is convenient for both the publisher and the user.

RSS extends your website all day every day and it is most commonly applied to blogs and news feeds. It is useful for destinations to tell people about new events and attractions. It is generally considered good practice to offer RSS feeds on as many clearly-defined subjects as possible, so that you can serve users’ specific interests. You should place the RSS button:

- on each page where the service is worthwhile; and
- on a central list.

As with conventional media, syndicating means simultaneous publication, and in the case of RSS it is a multi-directional flow of content. RSS feeds are used not just by individuals: it is the main format for syndicating headline content to other websites, and receiving content in the same manner.
Once you have set up the service, any website can take your feed:

- Headlines can be used by the receiving site with no further work done by them; or
- alternatively, the recipient can gather the whole file and re-use it as desired.

There is normally no special legal agreement – using RSS generally infers you are happy to share the content more widely and with anyone.

### 4.10.3 Develop an API for Your Product Data

There are a number of ways the DMO can approach and support e-commerce (see chapters 11 and 18). Regardless of the e-commerce model applied, the DMO needs to think carefully about how best to integrate the provision of useful and engaging content alongside relevant product data on their website and other owned media.

This usually involves the development and use of an Application Programmable Interface (API) – which constitutes a set of protocols and an interface to allow software applications to communicate with each other. That includes your web content management system and the e-commerce platform you are using.

### 4.10.4 Other Potential Distribution Channels

There will be a wide range of potential distribution channels for your destination’s content – covering both editorial content as well as product data. Look for those where you can add value to their offer.

Investigate the following distribution opportunities:

- Travel and travel review sites;
- online travel and lifestyle magazines;
- portals;
- news sites with travel sections;
- travel and other special interest blogs;
- tour operators that sell your destination (see chapter 16);
- major hotel and attraction groups and major events organizers;
- other public bodies in allied sectors such as culture and sport;
- transport providers – airlines, coach companies, ferries, rail companies, car rental firms;
- mapping platforms and providers. Google Maps will accept DMO product data as an enhancement to their service on their own site, and provide potentially massive additional exposure to all your tourism suppliers.

Commercial websites (tourism and non-tourism) will view the potential uses of your content in a very different way to other public bodies, or to travel and lifestyle websites.

- A commercial distribution channel will seek a clear definition of the value proposition so that it can calculate the potential profitability of your content. How well does your bookable product fit in with theirs? If you have an extensive choice of guest accommodation, for example, it may be unique. Commission levels and volumes will be the main focus, which they will assess in relation to the amount of work they will have to do and how your product may improve or distract from their existing offers.
They may also be interested in magazine-style editorial content to increase the retention of their users on their site and thus to improve conversion rates. But they may expect to charge you to place your content on their site – effectively a form of advertorial. They may resist offering any links back to your own site. So you must decide whether a paid-for editorial presence on their site will result in them sending more visitors to your destination than you would achieve if you spent the money on advertising or PPC to drive traffic to your own site.

Case Study – TripAdvisor and South Africa Tourism – A Global Partnership

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Helena Egan and Sarah Mathews of TripAdvisor for providing this case study.

Figure 4.1  Screenshot from TripAdvisor, in association with South African Tourism

South African Tourism and TripAdvisor signed a three-year partnership to help bring South Africa in front of TripAdvisor’s audience of 200 million unique monthly visitors, looking for inspiration when planning their next trip on the site.
The partnership includes several first time accomplishments, such as entering the TGCSA hotel grading system on TripAdvisor for accommodation establishments in South Africa. South Africa will also become the first ever tourism board to sign up for a map-based interactive hub on DaoDao – TripAdvisor in China. The hub is also live on TripAdvisor domains in Australia, the United States of America, India, Brazil, China, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

South African Tourism will encourage local tourism suppliers to enhance their presence on the site and include information around working with TripAdvisor in their monthly newsletter and in educational events and webinars. TripAdvisor will, together with South African Tourism, arrange educational events in South Africa for the local travel industry suppliers to encourage content creation and interaction between suppliers and visitors to South Africa on TripAdvisor.

South Africa secured a unique sponsored positioning on the TripAdvisor homepage showcasing the Top 10 Things to Do, Accommodations and Restaurants, changing on a weekly basis.

TripAdvisor will report, on a regular basis, analysis of reviews and content submitted on the site that is relevant to South African Tourism to allow comparison and benchmarking between consumer ratings and official Tourism Grading Council star ratings. Including relevant user-generated TripAdvisor content on the South African Tourism website will also be part of this unique 3-year partnership.

An interview with South Africa Tourism’s CEO Thulani Nzima

**What made you choose TripAdvisor as your key global partner?**

Firstly, TripAdvisor is the world’s largest travel site and was an ideal place to engage with travellers from around the world with stories of South Africa as a leisure destination.

The nature of TripAdvisor reviews, which essentially use word of mouth content, is ideally suited to sharing stories about holidays in South Africa. We find that on TripAdvisor and elsewhere, visitors to South Africa have a very positive experience and it is wonderful for us to have those people share their stories that happen to be overwhelmingly positive.

Our relationship had seen great success over the 4 years since we started working with TripAdvisor, and the signature of our Joint Marketing Agreement cements this partnership confirming it until 2014 and gives us a solid basis to work with TripAdvisor on all levels available for partnership.

**How will South African Tourism suppliers be involved in this Agreement?**

Our tourism suppliers are at the heart of the agreement, as without their presence on TripAdvisor, users of the site would not be able to see the great South African travel stories there. We see our role as helping users of the site get to the information about our suppliers that are most suited to their travel desires. Once we have delivered them to the appropriate content, our suppliers then provide their famous welcome and hospitality.

We have for some time made seminars available to SA Tourism suppliers to learn first-hand from TripAdvisor experts how to make the best use of the tools TripAdvisor makes available to them. This education will continue and we have added a few new initiatives to ensure that the SA Tourism suppliers continue to engage in the most constructive way and reap the maximum benefit from TripAdvisor.
What do you see as key benefits of this agreement?

The key benefit of the agreement is that it has allowed us to approach our partnership in a holistic way. We have been careful to consider the user journey of visitors to TripAdvisor and then offer them the opportunity to engage with appropriate South African content where relevant which is a far better approach than to have a piecemeal approach which may present a disjointed offering to a user.

How will TGCSA be involved in this Agreement?

The TGCSA is one of leading quality assurance organisations in the world and we believe that its participation in this agreement demonstrates this leadership. The TGCSA, being the official star-rating organisation of South Africa shares its star grading of the properties with TripAdvisor. As its quality assurance process is more rigorous, thorough and up-to-date than any other body where South African properties are concerned, this agreement provides the user with not only reviews but the assurances that come with the official TGCSA star grading. We feel this adds to the quality information that users have to make a travel decision.

The TGCSA has a feedback process inviting compliments and complaints. The TGCSA will incorporate feedback from TripAdvisor as a way of enhancing this feedback.

Further, TGCSA will play an active and important role in educating and informing members of graded products on how to best utilise the tools and services available in the TripAdvisor Management Centre to leverage their presence on the site, and respond to or query reviews.

Which markets will this agreement be targeting?

The United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Brazil and China.

How important is it to South African Tourism to have a partner that can cover several key areas, (including industry education, reach, promotions, displaying the official TGCSA ratings)?

It is extremely important because it is more efficient to conduct one relationship and leverage the communication assets derived from that one relationship across all of our activities and to meet the needs of our various audiences.

What key analytics are you tracking and what are your key KPI’s?

There are a number of analytics being tracked. From our media placement point of view we track impressions, clicks and the click through rate to gauge the efficiency of our message. We track the number of page impressions of South African content and the number of South African products that we have on the platform.

Our key KPIs are to grow our page views, and click through ratio. We feel that the number of products on the web site has gained sufficient critical mass to deliver the required variety of a great South African experience.

South Africa Tourism and TripAdvisor have been working in partnership since 2009 and over that time they have experienced a significant uplift in page views on TripAdvisor.
4.11 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

Developing a suitable content strategy for your destination is fundamental to the development and successful implementation of your e-marketing programmes. Its success depends very much on the structures, processes and resources that are put in place to support it. That includes:

- understanding your visitors and target markets. Ensuring you have appropriate research and visitor personas in place to support the understanding of your users’ content requirements;
- identifying clear objectives for your content in line with your business objectives and specific marketing objectives. That usually includes supporting your destination brand image and purpose;
- allocating internal and external resources to content planning, development and optimization. This includes engaging regional, local and other partners in the process;
- quality control, style and taxonomy guidelines to support the creation, management and distribution of content – both editorial content and product data; and
- ensuring you have appropriate technology and platforms in place to support content management and distribution, product search, retrieval and distribution and, if relevant, the ability to book.

The measurement and evaluation of your content strategy, planning, development and optimization is intrinsically linked to the measurement and evaluation of your e-marketing programmes in a broader way. Where content is concerned this includes the following:

- **It must be findable** – measured through criteria like visibility in natural search, link profiles and contribution to non-brand organic natural search traffic (see chapter 8).
- **It must be useful and engaging** – measured using suitable metrics derived through your web and social analytics programmes covering both on and offsite engagement (see chapter 20).
- **It must be sharable** – also measured through web and social analytics but also including social media monitoring of the conversations that are going on about your content (see chapter 7).
Chapter 5

Websites

5.1 About this Chapter

This chapter will help you to create a successful, high quality website that provides an excellent user experience with optimal functionality. Your website provides a hub for your e-marketing activity, and chapter 6 explains how to choose the best domain name for your website. This chapter provides information on what to include on your website and how to structure it. Some quality criteria and critical success factors need more detailed treatment and these have dedicated chapters in this handbook, such as chapter 4 on content, chapter 8 on search engine optimization, chapter 11 on e-commerce and chapter 18 on income sources.

Key Messages

- Make accessibility and usability the basis for website quality.
- Follow research-based guidelines to create an easy-to-use website that builds trust and identity – or optimize your current site using the guidelines.
- Create a website that eases the path through the customer journey for the internet user.
- Think in terms of services – delivered and fulfilled by the content and functionality offered by the website.
- Think of your website as a hub – as a focus point for social media and other inbound marketing activities, for paid advertising and PR; as a point of departure for extending the relationship and driving engagement using social media, e-mail newsletters or RSS; as the place where users are to be converted into leads and visitors.
- Make testing a part of the design and development process, as well as part of the evaluation of existing sites.

5.2 Overview

A successful website creates an excellent user experience and satisfaction. In addition, visiting the website should be a memorable experience.1

The Website Audit offered as part of the UNWTO Destination Web Watch divides critical elements of a website, which determine its quality, effectiveness and its success, into the following categories:

- Accessibility
- Identity and trust
- Customisation and interactivity

This chapter advises on many of these critical elements. Advice on how to optimize the visibility of a website in search engines is given in chapter 8.

As explained in chapter 2, all web activities are, and should be viewed as, services. Successful e-marketing starts with a willingness to be of service. Winning websites provide the best service possible and aim to fulfill the user’s needs providing information, contact, relationship, transaction and entertainment services.

Your website should smooth the path through the customer journey described in chapter 2, and support the user right through the stages of dreaming, informing, selecting, planning, booking, travelling, visiting, recollecting, recommending, and repeating.

Your services should therefore encompass everything that makes this journey easy and enjoyable: from the highlights of the destination to inspirational elements such as image galleries and video; storytelling and recommendations for those still in the decision-making process; through to services supporting the user during their visit such as weather forecasts and information on attractions’ opening hours; and sharing experiences after the trip and buying souvenirs online.

A successful website functions optimally as the hub in the hub-and-spoke architecture supporting your e-marketing strategy and activities:

- As a focus point for all social media and other inbound marketing activities and for paid advertising;
- as a point of departure for traffic to other channels, such as Flickr, YouTube or Vimeo offering owned and user-generated/shared content, and at the same time functioning as a source of owned content;
- as a point of departure for extending the relationship and engagement using social media or signing up for your e-mail newsletters or RSS feeds;
- as a place where users are converted into fans and followers, leads and visitors.

See section 5.6 on how to optimize your website as a hub.

5.3 Accessibility as the Basis for Website Quality

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Franz Pühretmair and Gerhard Nussbaum of the Kompetenznetzwerk Informationstechnologie zur Förderung der Integration von Menschen mit Behinderungen (KI-I), www.ki-i-at, for contributing to this section.

5.3.1 About Accessibility

All users benefit from accessible websites, but some user groups depend on accessible interfaces that are filled with accessible content. The ageing population and the increasing spread of the internet further amplify the number of users that request information and services that are accessible.

Accessible web design is the proper use of standard techniques to design and operate web pages so that people with disabilities can use them, either with or without Assistive Technologies (AT), independently and without the help of someone else.
The web is evolving rapidly and there is a lot of interaction with other technologies and media. Notwithstanding the flexible and adaptable nature of the web, all information and all functionality provided on accessible web pages must be at least perceivable, operable and understandable in an accessible way.

Furthermore, these web pages have to cope with different handling and presentation options that suit a variety of devices, personal needs, preferences and situations of use. People access content not only with their personal computer or laptop, but also smart phones, televisions, self-service terminals and tablet PCs, which have different forms of interaction and often smaller screens. Thus, accessible web pages have to be independent of the device.

People with disabilities often use Assistive Technologies (AT), which could be either a hardware device and/or a piece of software that provides the functionality to meet the user’s requirements and acts in combination with the web browser as a user agent. Such AT could be alternative keyboards, alternative pointing devices, screen readers, text-to-speech software, speech recognition software, etc.

The context of use can influence the effectiveness of the user agent, e.g. in noisy environments it is difficult to perceive audio content or in environments where the user is affected by light and optical reflections on the screen it is difficult to see the information presented on the screen. The mobile network coverage can also reduce the bandwidth making the download of large content, including videos and images, very slow. These are common situations that people encounter when surfing the web. Thus, the designer must pay attention to the fact that many users do not operate in a standard environment. In particular, it is difficult for many web designers to combine effective, modern, usable and accessible design as the challenges and methods to support accessible web design are not well understood in their entirety.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) summarizes the different contexts, problems and barriers as follows:

- People may not be able to see, hear, move, or may not be able to process some types of information easily or at all.
- People may have difficulty reading or comprehending text.
- People may not have or be able to use a keyboard or mouse.
- People may have a text-only screen, a small screen, or a slow internet connection.
- People may not speak or understand fluently the language in which the document is written.
- People may be in a situation where their eyes, ears, or hands are busy or interfered with (e.g. driving to work, working in a loud environment, etc.).
- People may have an early version of a browser, a different browser entirely, a voice browser, or a different operating system.

Accessible web design therefore means to develop web pages that are accessible to the broadest user group possible. The W3C WAI has identified four basic principles to satisfy the criteria of accessible web design:

- **Perceivable** – information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
- **Operable** – user interface components and navigation must be operable.
- **Understandable** – information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.
- **Robust** – content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.
To reach this aim the requirements of people with disabilities also have to be considered. Unfortunately, these requirements are quite often unknown and are therefore ignored by the web designer. This results in barriers that cannot be handled by the AT. Common barriers in web pages are, for example:

- missing or inadequate alternative texts for images;
- missing labels for input fields in forms;
- bad structure of the content, e.g. no headings;
- insufficient contrast between text and background;
- textual information that is not scalable;
- invalid source code;
- wrong and inadequate use of tables (e.g. using tables to layout text);
- information which is only conveyed by colour; and
- non-expressive link texts like ‘read more’.

### 5.3.2 Guidelines

Several rules and guidelines like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) of the W3C WAI or the guidelines in Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act for creating accessible web pages have been developed. The use of these guidelines is already embodied in the legislation of many countries.

The WCAG are the most comprehensive guidelines and are widely accepted to be the framework for accessible web design. These guidelines show how to consider accessibility in web pages to make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these.

WCAG 1.0 and 2.0 introduce the conformance levels none, A, AA and AAA. These levels can be seen as the level of accessibility of websites:

- Level A must be satisfied to guarantee that a basic accessibility to some groups is provided.
- Level AA is reached when significant barriers are removed.
- Level AAA ensures that the website further improves its accessibility.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended to satisfy at least the conformance level AA.

**Figure 5.1 Logos indicating level of accessibility**


In WCAG 2.0, several layers of guidance are provided including four overall principles, 12 general guidelines and 61 testable success criteria. Furthermore, there is a rich collection of sufficient techniques, advisory techniques, and documented common failures with examples, resource links and codes. The guidelines require:
Principle 1: Perceivable – information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive

- Provide text alternatives for any non-text content. Screen readers cannot represent or interpret non-text information and blind people rely on it. E.g., use the alt-Attribute to provide a short alternative text (max. 150 characters) for images.
- Provide alternatives for time-based media (audio, video). People with hearing loss rely on them. E.g., provide captions for videos or transcripts for audio files.
- Create content that can be presented in different ways without information loss. Separate information and presentation. E.g.:
  - use Cascading Style Sheets for layout instead of tables;
  - use h1-h6 tags to identify headings;
  - use semantic tags like ‘strong’ and ‘em’ to mark special or emphasized text;
  - use tables for tabular information;
  - content should be ordered in a meaningful and consistent sequence;
  - instructions must not rely on sensory characteristics. E.g. press the red button, press the left button.
- Make it easier for users to see and hear content. E.g.:
  - use fonts that are readable (sans serif);
  - use proper colour contrasts. The colour of text and background should have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5 : 1;
  - text should be resizable up to 200% without loss of content and functionality;
  - sounds should not play automatically.

Principle 2: Operable – user interface components and navigation must be operable

- All functionality should be operable by keyboard only. Blind people cannot use a mouse so they rely on the keyboard. E.g., avoid keyboard traps and ensure keyboard control for all functionality.
- Provide users with enough time to read and use content. AT users may be very slow. E.g., time limits are adjustable. There should be a mechanism to stop or pause moving, blinking, scrolling or auto-updating information.
- Avoid content that could cause photosensitive epileptic reactions.
- Provide help to users to navigate and find content and to determine where they are. E.g.:
  - provide a mechanism to bypass blocks repeated on multiple web pages – add links at the top of each page that go directly to the content, menu, etc.;
  - provide descriptive titles for each web page;
  - use headings and labels;
  - ensure that the keyboard focus is visible.
Principle 3: Understandable – information and the operation of user interface must be understandable

- Make text content readable and understandable. E.g., define the language of the page and use the language attribute to identify language changes within the content. Do not use unnecessarily complex language.
- Organize content consistently from page to page and make interactive components behave in predictable ways.
- Help users avoid and correct mistakes when they fill in forms. E.g., if an input error occurs identify the item in error and provide help to correct the error. Provide information on expected data formats within labels and indicate required form controls.

Principle 4: Robust – content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies

- Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies. E.g.:
  - avoid deprecated features of HTML, use it according to its specification and validate the web page;
  - ensure that the name and role of user interface components can be programmatically determined.

5.3.3 Provide Help on Your Site

At the foot of your website, provide an ‘Accessibility’ link to information on accessibility and, for example, guidance on how the user can change their browser settings.

At the top or foot, offer a ‘Read this web page aloud service’.

Figure 5.2 Screenshot of http://www.myswitserland.com’s footer offering the facility to have a web page read aloud

By courtesy of Schweiz Tourismus.

The technology used is that of ReadSpeaker. ReadSpeaker offers online text-to-speech technology for websites, podcasts and mobile devices and apps in more than 35 languages. For more information: http://www.readspeaker.com (01-10-2012).

Further Information
The WCAG 2.0 documents provide the most useful information:
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Overview: http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0: http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/
- Understanding WCAG 2.0: http://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/
- Techniques for WCAG 2.0: http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/
- How to Meet WCAG 2.0: http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/quickref/ (01-10-2012)

5.4 Make it Easy to Use the Site
Section 5.3 explained why accessibility is the basis for website quality, what it entails and how to achieve it. Simply satisfying WCAG 2.0 is not enough. Just following technical accessibility guidelines like WCAG 2.0 does not automatically indicate if web pages are actually easy to use, simple to learn, or support efficient operation.

The consideration of accessibility and usability as well as content significantly reduces the complexity of a web page and leads to user-friendly websites that are essential for user satisfaction, loyalty, quality and success.

5.4.1 About Usability
Usability in general is essential for accessible web design. Ideally, a user centred design process comprises accessibility and usability tests with users of the website's target group.

Good usability is the result of getting all the design details right that have been outlined in this chapter. The ISO 9241 standard (www.iso.org) describes the ‘ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals’, and has three usability elements:

- **Effectiveness:** the accuracy and completeness with which specified users can achieve specified goals in particular environments.
- **Efficiency:** the resources expended in relation to the accuracy and completeness of goals achieved.
- **Satisfaction:** the comfort and acceptability of a system to its users and people affected by its use.2

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These are abstract definitions. The well-known usability expert Jakob Nielsen has five quality components for usability:3

- **Learnability**: how easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks the first time they encounter the design?
- **Efficiency**: once users have learned the design, how quickly can they perform tasks?
- **Memorability**: when users return to the design after a period of not using it, how easily can they re-establish proficiency?
- **Errors**: how many errors do users make, how severe are they, and how easily can they recover from them?
- **Satisfaction**: how pleasant is it to use the design?”

The only effective way to achieve the very best usability is to test it:

- Testing should be done before any newly designed feature goes to the development stage, and be repeated before it is launched.
- Good usability for one user group may not be the same for another. Test in each market that has strong cultural differences, and especially in those that use a different alphabet.
- There should be a genuine readiness to make changes to the design.
- The time and cost needed to make changes should be built into the project plan.
- Testing usability should be an ongoing process.

For usability testing methods see section 5.5.5 below, and chapter 19 on Measurement and Evaluation.

### 5.4.2 Write to Suit the On-screen Reader

It is an inescapable fact that internet users have only a few seconds of patience and scan pages on the screen rather than read them properly. Only when they have arrived at detailed information that they were looking for will they start to read it fully.

Writing for the web is very different to writing for print media. To make text easy to scan consider the following:

- Headings and sub-headings must be meaningful and relevant to the content that follows.
- Each new piece of information should have its own sub-heading.
- Content should be in very short paragraphs. About 25 to 40 words is a good target. The space around each paragraph is important too.
- Bulleted lists are very easy to scan and should be used when you can, but do not put too many in an unbroken list.

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• Use simple language:
  – short words rather than long ones;
  – common words, not unusual ones;
  – plain words, not buzzwords and jargon (unless you are writing for enthusiasts in a particular subject);
  – avoid acronyms, unless you explain them or they are commonly used by a specific audience.
• Be brief and to the point – no flowery language or gratuitous use of adjectives.

After drafting your text, aim to shorten it ruthlessly.

The traditional way of writing is to start with an introduction giving the subject and its background, then to introduce ideas, discuss them, and finally to reach a conclusion. This resembles a pyramid: it starts with a foundation that is built on, and ends in a conclusion where it all comes together.

When writing for the web, this is turned on its head, hence the inverted pyramid style:
• Start with the ‘conclusion’, that is, your main message;
• then give the ideas, reasons and additional information; and
• finally, provide any background.

This writing style, widely used in news journalism, is an important part of your site navigation: the reader can see immediately whether the content is of interest to them and whether ‘it is worth it’ to read on. If they think it is not, they are likely to leave the page to look elsewhere.
Figure 5.3 Screenshot of Holland.com showing the main message or short summary, also called ‘blurbs’, as introduction to articles and sections

By courtesy of NBTC.

Make Navigating the Website Easy

A website's navigation represents its information architecture – the structure of its content. How well you encourage users to navigate the content is one of the most important factors that determine the usability and thus success of a site.

5.4.3 About Navigation

Navigation should be as smooth as possible and should positively influence the user's frame of mind. Good navigation allows users to know, on every page:

- What site am I on?
- Where am I in the site?
- What can I do here?
- Where can I go from here?
- Where is the information I am looking for?

The most common components of site navigation are:

- Global navigation – shown on every page and reflecting main categories of content;
- local navigation – which appears only when you arrive in a particular part of the site, and takes you around it;
- contextual navigation – links on individual pages that go to related pages within the website. These are often embedded within text, or are lists of ‘See also’ pages, within the site or on an external site (‘referral links’); and
- supplemental navigation – additional tools such as site maps, site indexes, tag clouds and bread crumb-navigation.

Two further services are important:

- A keyword search engine. The type-in box for this is conventionally, and this best positioned, in the top right corner of the page; and
- an easy-to-use site map or site index. This is a list of the pages, showing all the main levels, and may be compiled automatically from your content management system so that it is always up-to-date.

Alternative Sites

You will also need to guide users to the correct site for their needs. This can be done (on every page) via:

- Drop-down menu, or ‘Change language’ link, for choice of the country the user is coming from, or language version; and
- text links at the foot or top of the website to separate sections or sites for Business visits, Press or Media, and Trade, About (DMO name) or other separate sites. (See chapter 17 for more on media sites, and chapter 16 for travel trade).
5.4.4 Some Navigation and Links Principles

- The global navigation must appear on every page and cover all content (information architecture).
- Ideally, the global navigation should support the stages of the customer journey, address specific audiences/target groups, and reveal the scope of products offered.
- All navigation menus must be logical, consistent and easy to read and understand. Labels should be unambiguous, consistent throughout the website, and have a similar syntax within a given navigation menu (i.e. noun-based, verb-based, or question-based). Navigation options should also be balanced in depth and breadth.
- The navigation should be easy to learn. This is hampered when options are concealed in rollover and dynamic menus.
- Every page must have a ‘Home’ link or icon. This should not rely on a clickable DMO or company logo.
- If the site has a succession of deeper pages, provide ‘breadcrumb navigation’; for example: Home > Regions > Cities > CityName > Nightlife
- This shows the path, and users should be able to return up the path by clicking on any of the words. The separator can be either > or /.
- If ‘active’ icons (ones you can click on) are used, their purpose must be obvious and internationally recognised. OnMouseOver text must be provided for each icon, that is, text that explains the meaning or purpose of the icon becomes visible when the user moves the cursor over the icon. This is done by adding a ‘title tag’ (which is not the same tag as the one containing the alt text) to each icon, as to each image and link.

5.4.5 Links – and the Text You Use for Them

A web editor should be a lively lateral thinker – a good site becomes more powerful when referral links arouse the reader’s interest to explore further and find new things. Links should support the user’s train of thought, but also offer creative alternatives:

- Anchor text (actual text contained within the clickable link) must tell the user what the next page is about. The link text should be identical or very similar to the title of the page that it goes to. Never use ‘click here’, because:
  - it does not comply with accessibility guidelines; and
  - it impairs search engine optimization (see chapter 8).
- Links must change colour after they have been used so that the user can see where they have already been if they come back to the page.
- If a link opens a new window, the anchor text and/or title tag must warn the user.
- Use ‘More’ or ‘Read on’ links or icons consistently.
5.4.6 Destination Site Navigation

Further requirements for tourism destination sites are:

- A separate search facility for each of your product databases (such as hotels, events, tourist attractions). Normally it will be best to have a ‘simple search’ page with limited criteria to choose from, and an ‘Advanced search’ to enable users to specify a range of detailed requirements.

- Navigation to pages that meet the needs of those with special interests (for example, activities, sports, hobbies).

- Navigation to pages that meet the needs of different groups.

- A geographically-based search facility. There are several ways in which this can be done:
  - A menu-driven path such as Regions > Cities > Neighbourhoods. The pages at each of these levels can provide links to internal or external geographically-based pages – national, regional and local.
  - A clickable map that works dynamically with your product database to display accommodation, attractions, events and other products on the map (see chapter 4 for maps and geocoding).
  - Search facility using a postcode. This is most useful on a site for domestic users.

5.4.7 Testing and Monitoring

Your structure and navigation will need:

- User testing in its early design and build phases, and whenever changes are planned, with laboratory testing, using for example eye tracking; and

- continual monitoring with the help of a web traffic analysis tool.

See section 5.11 below, and chapter 19, on Measurement and Evaluation, for methods of testing and monitoring.

5.5 Optimize Your Website as a Hub

Your website should function as a hub – as a focus point for inbound marketing activities, of paid advertising and PR; as a point of departure for extending the relationship and driving engagement using social media, e-mail newsletters or RSS; as the place where users are to be converted into leads and visitors. This section provides information on three ways you can optimize the website as a hub, namely calls-to-action, landing pages and social media integration.

5.5.1 Calls-to-action

Marketing is all about action. Calls-to-action include: links to click on, phone numbers to call, information to print out, sharing and follow buttons.

Aim to include a call-to-action in every website item that achieves new data capture and adds to your user knowledge, progressively enabling you to optimize your website and marketing efforts in general.
Calls-to-action are a key driver of lead generation and acquisition. Calls-to-action convert users into leads and leads into visitors. Therefore, create compelling calls-to-action to trigger lead generation and sales, using:

- text that is action-oriented, clear and specific;
- contrasting colors and/or unorthodox shapes;
- design that provides a sense of direction. For example, calls-to-action often include an arrow pointing to the right as that implies a natural next step for users reading from left to right;
- spacing and positioning; and
- product images or video.

Consider A/B Testing to test and optimize your calls-to-action (see chapter 19).

**Further Information**

Hubspot, a provider of all-in-one marketing software, have collected many inspiring examples of effective calls-to-action. You will find them in their publications:


### 5.5.2 Landing Pages

As your website functions as a hub for your social media and other inbound marketing activities, and as the focus point of paid advertising, pages of your website will function as landing pages. A landing page is where users arrive after they click on a call-to-action in a blog post, Tweet, Facebook or other social media item, or in one of your ads.

The content of a landing page should comply with the expectations created, be specific and contain a clear description of what you offer, and see to it that the decision to act on your call-to-action does not result in confusion or disappointment. At the same time, a landing page should be optimized in such a way that users do what you want them to do: for example, book accommodation, sign-up for an event, subscribe to your e-mail newsletter, download a free brochure, enter a competition, etc. Your website is an effective website if users are converted into leads and leads into visitors.

As with calls-to-action and many other aspects of your website: test, measure and iterate.

### 5.5.3 Encouraging the Use of Social Media and Tagging

Designing your website as a hub means inviting users to be kept up-to-date by utilizing different media, i.e. signing up for your e-mail newsletter and/or RSS feeds and to further engage with you by joining you on social media (e-mail marketing is discussed in chapter 9; RSS in section 5.8.6). With reference to social media, the following should be pointed out:

- Include social media ‘follow us’ icons in your website and provide clear ‘follow us’ calls-to-action;
- make a share bar a consistent part of all your articles or web pages so that recipients can share and tag your content;
• design share buttons carefully. When readers click on them, a default message is generated. See to it that the default message is compelling and attracts attention on the social network. There are different types of sharing buttons:
  – buttons offered by social networks;
  – catch-all solutions such as ShareThis or AddThis;\(^4\)
  – buttons coded in-house; and
• you may want to include Facebook, Twitter and other widgets featuring your latest communications and/or those of your followers as well as images of your followers.

Figure 5.4 NBTC’s www.holland.com offers an AddThis bookmark and share facility in each article

By courtesy of NBTC.


\(^4\) For more information see ShareThis, http://www.sharethis.com; and AddThis, http://www.addthis.com (10-06-2012).
5.6 Build Identity and Trust

Trust has been defined as “the user’s willingness to risk time, money and personal data on a website”.5

The key for DMOs is to offer information that builds the deepest possible trust.

5.6.1 Vital Confidence Builders

Ensure that you project your DMO’s trustworthiness as an official organization. Official sites can capitalise on their status:

• Choose the right domain and URLs (see chapter 6).
• Have a clear statement of the purpose of the site. A homepage strapline should support this role.
• Use the official logo prominently on every page (as in every other online presence) so that users see it whatever their entry page to the site.
• Use the graphic design of the site to portray the destination attractively, but honestly. Users may distrust obvious stock photos that use models.
• Keep the site accurate, up-to-date and thus authoritative.
• ‘Buttons’ or other advertisements placed by third parties on the site, that might be mistaken for editorial, should be marked [Advertisement], [Ad], [Sponsor] or an equivalent.
• Do not link to sites, and do not accept advertisements, that are not in keeping with the purpose of the organization and the destination’s brand values.
• Show the source of all third-party content, such as weather forecasts and e-commerce offers, and distinguish clearly between types of content, for example, your own content from content such as blogs or stories of travellers.

5.6.2 About Us/Contact Us

Best practice, and in some cases legal requirements, for an ‘About us’ page (or similar title in the language of the site) may include:

• name of organization;
• location and postal address;
• fax and telephone numbers;
• e-mail address;
• opening hours;
• profile or mission statement;
• corporate registration details; and
• name and contact details of the person in the organization responsible for site content.

5.6.3 Privacy Policy and Terms of Use of the Site

The privacy policy should state the purpose of personal data collection. The terms of use will include disclaimers and other statements. Both should be in the language of the site. Take advice from your legal advisor about specific requirements for all these pages.

It is an accepted convention to group text links such as ‘About us’, ‘Terms of use’, and ‘Privacy policy’ at the foot of every page of a site.

Chapter 22 provides more information on these and other legal issues you may encounter as e-marketer.

5.7 Providing Services

The internet is, in essence, a medium to offer and use services. The following sections illustrate examples of services to provide in websites, which can enhance the role your website plays as a hub and to ensure that visiting your website is a memorable experience.

5.7.1 Information Services

Information services offer information to the internet user. Information can be defined as ‘anything that is communicated in any form of language’. Text, images, audio, video, and other features of a website must, of course:

• add value with information that is comprehensive, up-to-date, and unbiased;
• enable the user to sort through, select and assemble information; and
• help to achieve the destination’s marketing objectives and brand values.

See chapter 4 on content for further advice.

5.7.2 Contact Services

Websites need contact services that allow users to get in touch with you as the owner of the site: for example, a ‘contact us by e-mail’ option, a telephone ‘call back’ button, the option of the support or a live person by web-based chat. Contact services allow you to get to know more about their wishes, and should include:

• a ‘Contact us’ link on every page. The link should open a web page offering a form and the items recommended in section 5.7.2. Do not offer only a clickable e-mail address opening the user’s e-mail programme. Such a new empty window would blot out some or all of your site; present a dauntingly empty e-mail screen that does not invite a response; and may not be perceived as a ‘service’; and
• a simple form to report errors or give feedback.

On-site services that may avoid the need for users to make contact should include:

• a ‘Help’ link or icon for key tasks; and
• a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. Make sure there is a version for each country or language. See chapter 4 for topics you may wish to address in the FAQ.
5.7.3 Transaction Services

Online real-time booking and paying for holiday services and allied merchandise is an essential element of the circle of services the website should facilitate, whether these are its own e-commerce services or those of partners. See chapter 11 for more information on e-commerce.

5.7.4 Entertainment Services

Entertainment services can take many forms. Fun, such as competitions, quizzes and games, can contribute to a positive experience of a site, and many offer both entertainment and information.

The term ‘Gamification’ has become a buzzword in recent years and refers to the use of game design techniques, game thinking and game mechanics to enhance non-game contexts. Gamification takes advantage of humans’ psychological predisposition to engage in gaming. It aims at influencing users’ behaviour and engagement, making tasks such as reading websites, completing surveys and shopping, more of a challenge and thus less boring. By, for example, the possibility to be rewarded points, achieve levels or badges, internet users are encouraged to share experiences on location-based platforms such as Facebook’s Place and Foursquare.

5.7.5 Relationship Services

Recruiting new customers is usually expensive and time-consuming. It is often easier to increase profits by selling more to existing customers. Destination websites can do this by encouraging site users to sign-up for ongoing ‘permission marketing’ services, that create and maintain long-term relationships. Permission marketing means permission is asked from and given by users – often by submitting their e-mail address – to keep them informed, for example by e-mail newsletters. These and social media offer great opportunities to turn existing clients into loyal clients, to maintain long-term relationships, to promote repeat visits, to attempt upselling and cross-selling, and to encourage recommendations to friends and family. Chapter 9 discusses e-mail marketing in detail and chapter 7 described how to make the most of the social web.

5.7.6 Combining and Integrating Services

It is a seamless combination of information, contact, transaction, entertainment and relationship services that distinguishes the internet from the off-line world. The user can look, choose, order, pay, engage and share. The destination can promote its tourism offer, enhance its reputation and its relationship with the user, as well as do business, all within one environment. The following sections will give three examples of combining and integrating services, namely RSS, online brochures and travel planners.

5.7.6.1 About RSS

RSS stands for Rich Site Summary (originally RDF Site Summary) or Really Simple Syndication.

An RSS document is called a “feed” or “web feed” and includes the full text, or a summary (including data such as publishing dates and authorship), of updates on your website or blog in a standardized XML format.

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6 A discussion of the term and references can be found in, for example, the Wikipedia article ‘Gamification’ (online), available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamification (01-06-2012).

RSS is a convenient and fully automated service – combining (customisable) information and relationship services – for individuals to choose to receive selected, customized items from your website whenever there are updates, without having to visit the site to collect them. Because every item has a link to your website, RSS feeds help to drive website traffic.

It is also a way to syndicate content to other powerful sites. RSS enables your own website content to reach out beyond its boundaries – to individual users and to other websites. It is especially useful for destinations to tell people about new events and attractions. It is also a way to enrich your own website with the news of other websites. For more information on content gathering and distribution, see chapter 4.

Encourage users to subscribe to your feeds by:

- offering an RSS button on each page of your website;
- offering a page listing the RSS feeds on as many clearly defined subjects as possible so that you can serve users’ specific interests;
- explaining to users that after they have subscribed to a feed a Reader will periodically check the website for new features and will display summaries for them to review in an e-mail-like format. Explain the benefit such as the fact that scanning these updates is far less time consuming than visiting websites to look for new content, as all the searching is done for them;
- taking them through the necessary steps:
  - setting up an RSS Reader, providing suggestions and links to RSS Readers such as the RSS Readers of: 8
    - Feedreader (desktop);
    - Internet Explorer (desktop);
    - Google Reader (web-based);
    - Netvibes (web-based);
    - Bloglines (web-based);
    - MyYahoo (web-based);
    - Subscribing to the RSS link using the RSS Reader; and
- referring to terms of use.

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8 For more information, see:
Feedreader, http://www.feedreader.com;
Netvibes, http://www.netvibes.com;
Bloglines, http://www.bloglines.com; and
5.7.6.2 Online brochures

Do not miss the chance to make online use of your (printed) brochures, if your destination produces them. There are two options:

1. Provide them as downloadable and printable PDFs. If the brochure is composed of two or more clear sections, make them into separate PDFs so that it is easier for the user to print only what they really need; or

2. put them on-screen as a virtual brochure or ‘page-turner’ and give users the illusion of turning the pages of a brochure, on-screen. They are usually viewed on-screen in double page spreads.

Clever features include:

- click-through to later pages (from an index, or map);
- click-through to website pages including booking page (from text, pictures or perhaps from advertisements);
- thumbnails of every page, running along the bottom of the screen;
- a yellow ‘post-it note’ that the user can put in the screen margin to make a short cut to a particular page.

Examples of application providers include Issuu and IntelliMagTM.9

5.7.6.3 Provide a travel planner

The web is the most important information source for trip preparation. However, it is difficult and time consuming for users to surf the many available web pages and then to gather up all the information they find.

There is a need for users to unite diverse information, ideally with the site taking into account their personal needs and preferences.

Tools that offer this service have been called ‘travel’, ‘trip’ and ‘itinerary’ planners, or ‘personalised’ and ‘dynamic’ tour guides.

There are two kinds of planner, and there is an argument for having both on your site:

- A planner that allows the user to collect items temporarily, view them and print them during that user session. The user does not have to register and can use it impulsively. His/her computer should allow cookies. The disadvantage is that the content may be lost after the user leaves the website. Such a planner suits people who act impulsively or who do not like giving personal data.

- A planner that requires the user to register. Then the user can save information, and add to it during later sessions. If you chose this option, be aware that asking too many personal details may deter users to sign-up. Creating an account by providing an e-mail address and password should suffice.

Either model could have extra features:

- to allow the user to add/remove their own text comments;
- a calendar where users can put their items in date order, and rearrange them later if they wish;
- a map of the tour that the user has compiled;

• presentation of nearby features the user has not chosen. It could present those that match the kind of interests the user has already chosen; and

• a good and comprehensive PDF and printer-friendly version of the user’s plan.

The registration model enables the site to offer more desirable features, such as easy ways to:

• forward the plan to friends and family;
• allow friends and family to amend the plan;
• turn the planner into a diary or album after the visit, adding more text and the user’s own pictures, so that they have an attractive record that they can send to friends. This has appreciable added marketing value for the DMO.

Other points to remember:

• Give a very brief overview of the planner’s functions and how best to use it, possibly using FAQs. However, do not rely on people reading the instructions. The planner needs to be intuitive. It certainly needs usability testing before you finalise your design.

• Offer the planner on every page and, if possible, keep its content, or a summary, visible.

• Be consistent with the type of items that can be saved and the clickable icons or links with which the user can add to the planner.

• Make the planner cover the whole site including theme or micro sites. Too often, users of a temporary planner lose collected items when clicking through to a theme site.

The Tourism New Zealand Trip Planner and the Korea Tourism Organization Travel Planner

Tourism New Zealand’s first Travel Planner went online in July 2005. In the current website a ‘Plan and Book’ feature appears on the right hand side of web pages (where relevant) offering ‘Nearby listings’ in the categories ‘Accommodation’, ‘Activities and Tours’, ‘Transport’, ‘Travel Seller’ and ‘Visitor Information’ and the opportunity to see and filter all listings.

A ‘Trip Planner’ can be used immediately without signing up and creating an account provided the user’s computer allows cookies. Users can:

• bookmark pages by clicking on the ‘Add to Trip Planner’ buttons positioned near descriptions of, for example, accommodation or attractions or transportation providers, and Tourism New Zealand and user-generated articles;

• click to view the full details of collected items, and revisit bookmarked pages;

• view the collected items on a map;

• find addresses and contact details of organizations and links to websites and booking facilities; and

• e-mail and ‘like’ their plan.

The Trip Planner can be accessed via a link and suitcase icon (showing the number of items added) at the top of the website or saved and accessed any time by signing up and creating an account. Signing up requires one’s e-mail address and a password or Facebook account (social sign-up). The account also offers the possibility create a personal profile and create and edit www.newzealand.com articles creating a website rich in user-generated content and great advice.
The Tourism New Zealand website offers more services that assist the user in planning his/her trip such as a ‘Travel Time and Distances’ calculator offering transportation options and providers and suggestions for driving routes, which can again be added to the Trip Planner.

**Figure 5.5 Screenshots of www.newzealand.com.**
The systems used to create travel planners can be grouped as follows:

- **Recommender Systems** use a sophisticated algorithm matching the users' preferences and constraints with options. The Recommender System may be based on practical and product-based user preferences. These may include budget, personal interests (gardens, walking, shopping, and so on), means of transport and type of party. The site will provide suggestions for itineraries by filtering the site content, perhaps including content from external partners' sites.

- **Adaptive Recommender Systems** may take the user profile, search history, evaluations of other users, product popularity and other variables into account.

- **Context-Aware Recommender Systems** exploit, in order to create relevant recommendations, not only the user's preferences, but also information about specific contextual factors and situations.
in which the recommended item will be consumed. Academic research aims at, for example, acquiring data about the dependency of the users’ evaluations on the context status and at developing a rating prediction model for context-aware recommendations.10

However, web-based travel planners accessed via a desktop PC do not meet the needs of users during all the various phases of planning and carrying out their trip. The rising availability of mobile devices among visitors drives the mobile media consumption, which includes browsing the mobile web, using mobile applications, or uploading and downloading content to and from the mobile web. Users move seamlessly between phone, tablet, computer and television and use the devices in a complementary way.

It is to be expected that the future will see further development and integration of the types of systems mentioned above with location-based services and current data on, for example, weather and traffic.

Safari Interactive Travel Magazine

Figure 5.6 Screenshots of the bi-monthly Safari Interactive Magazine (issue October-December 2012), the Safari newsletter announcing the new edition, the video showcasing and promoting the iPad version of the magazine on Vimeo and the Safari blog.

Make sure you have seen the latest issue!

African Geographic Safari

AFRICA’S AUTHENTIC ECOLODGES

Go HERE to get it FREE

“I just love the magazine... and living in the UK it takes me back to my life and travels in Africa. An hour of pure joy, which makes me more determined to get out to see more of my favourite continent.” - Safari Reader Jane Allin

Take a moment to escape to Africa with Safari - and you too will be inspired to travel this wonderful place!

Enjoy!
Paul Struyf
Editor of Safari

Top 4 Editor's Picks

Discover Chad - Jean Labuschagne lives in Chad's Zakouma National Park and reports on a land teeming with wildlife and traversed by colourful Sahelian nomads.

Mozambique Surf ‘N’ Turf Safari - Well off the traditional safari circuit, explore the deep, dark wilderness and tiny uninhabited islands of lesser-known northern Mozambique.

Photographic - Time-lapse photography has become a visual craze and is essential know-how for budding photographers.

Taste Fresh Food in Franschhoek - Holly Meadows heads to the culinary capital of South Africa and explores its grand, gourmet heritage.

REGISTER FOR SAFARI!

Register for FREE to find out when the next issue goes live and to receive updates from our BLOG.

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The showcase of 'Safari interactive magazine' for iPad®

This video is a showcase and teaser of a few of the highlights from our latest issue of Safari interactive magazine App.

Safari is a hot new interactive travel magazine from the award-winning Africa Geographic stable. Safari is all about evocative digital story telling, with rich multimedia content and travel features packed full of videos, music and photography. Our team of Africa-trotting travel journo's bring you spellbinding stories featuring sunsets over the Serengeti, gorilla trekking in the rainforests of Uganda, foodie finds from the souqs of Marrakech, and much much more.

Travel to Africa's most mesmerising destinations every two months with Safari interactive magazine, available for iPad® from the App Store.

Read More...
The Safari Interactive Magazine, a travel magazine about Africa, is truly one of the most innovative and engaging online destination web applications and campaigns published recently. It is a bimonthly published magazine offering 20-plus numbered pages’ packed with rich multi-media content with animated travel features: exciting videos, sound effects, music and stunning photography. It’s free. No registration is required to view the magazine online or offline via download. Past issues are available in the Safari archive.

Editor Paul Steyn:

“Our objective was to create a digital travel magazine experience from the ground up, embracing all the tools that digital could provide such as sound, animation, video, music, photos and text. We wanted to stretch the boundaries of what was considered a digital magazine, and show what could be done when forgetting old print norms.

We are targeting inbound travellers into Africa. People from all around the world that love Africa and appreciate the instantly available multimedia content that we produce about this great continent.

We started in May 2011 and have developed 10 issues of the magazine to date. We market the magazine using powerful e-mail campaigns as well as social media to get people talking about stories and forwarding the magazine to their friends. It’s very much an organic process.

We developed the entire magazine in-house at our agency, bigFIG Digital Media. We use the Africa Geographic footprint to market the magazine to the wider world.
Our business model comes from advertorial and display advertising in the magazine. We also offer a subscription option for iPad users, which is paid-for. And we have an affiliate commission-based booking engine through our magazine. We also run a successful blog called the Safari Blog, where we are planning to implement more display and click-related advertising. We plan on rolling out a few more revenue options in the future.

We use Google Analytics to measure the growth of the magazine. We have had a steady and successful growth of the magazine in America, Europe and Africa. Currently [November 2012 ed.] we receive about 70,000 unique readers per issue of our magazine and blog. We have 10,000 registered subscribers to the magazine and about 5,000 people have downloaded our iPad app.

This magazine provides a great case study of how e-marketing, and websites in particular, can be used to promote a destination. The format of the magazine provides a unique example, which enhances the user’s experience of the website. However, it should also be noted that the magazine is not optimized in terms of accessibility, as discussed in section 5.3. This highlights the challenges faced by web designers to combine effective, modern, usable and accessible design.

By courtesy of Paul Steyn and Safari Interactive Magazine.

For more information: Africa Geographic (online), http://www.africageographic.com; BigFig (online), http://www.bigfig.com; and Safari (online), http://africageographic.com/safari (07-11-2012).

5.8 Deliver Faultless Technical Performance

It is highly unusual for major sites to suffer from technical problems now, and destinations must measure up too. Problems not only frustrate impatient users, they may cause a loss of trust in the site and its owner – and a loss of traffic to rival sites that work better.

These are the basics that your developer should provide, and that your editing staff need to observe when they add new content:

- Pages must download quickly. If there is a good reason to keep a user waiting (for example, while an application downloads) then the user should be warned, and there should be a graphic indication that the download is in progress.
- Images and video should not be so large that they slow down the site. They should download correctly.
- All site elements should be compatible with the most recent versions of the most common browsers, such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Safari.
- Your site must use a web-compatible font.
- Pages should load correctly in the most used screen resolutions.
- External and internal links must all work correctly.
- The site must clearly indicate when additional software or plug-ins are necessary, and provide links to any necessary software.
- Pages must print properly, or a printable version be offered.
- Optimize your website for mobile viewing. Chapter 10 provides information on how to optimize your website for viewing and using on smart phones and tablets, as well as whether and how to create a mobile version of your website.
In addition, you must take every technical precaution to create safe interaction between the user and the DMO, such as for transactions. See chapter 11 on e-commerce and chapter 22 on the legal framework for e-marketing.

5.9 The Design and Building Process

5.9.1 A Structured Approach

Web projects need a structured approach in the same way as other ICT tasks. The project must:

- bring together the necessary skills, expertise, resources and ideas;
- achieve project goals and deadlines and meet budgets;
- meet the destination’s objectives, and the users’ requirements in general and those of specific target groups in particular;
- allow for adequate usability testing that follows research-based guidelines. This means allowing time, budget, and appropriate stages in the building process;
- deal with change and new insights that arise during the project; and
- have regular go/no-go moments to adapt requirements and review budgets.

There are many books dedicated to project management, so the following sections aim only to suggest stages and to highlight some essentials and methodologies. Chapter 19 on Measurement and Evaluation covers monitoring and evaluating websites that are already online.

5.9.2 Possible Approaches

PRINCE 2, an acronym for ‘PRojects IN Controlled Environments’, is globally recognised as a standard method for project management, and it is worthwhile to study the framework it offers. It covers a wide variety of activities, assists project managers to identify and manage risks, and to stay within the ‘business case’. It is most suitable for multi-discipline projects, combining in-house resources with external suppliers, as is typical for ICT-related projects.11

Agile frameworks, such as Scrum, are growing in popularity. Scrum is a way to prioritize large ‘to do’ items into manageable chunks of work. Scrum focusses on the work that matters most despite changes occurring and requiring the focus to be adapted. The Scrum Alliance formulates the principles as follows:

- A ‘product owner’ creates a prioritized wish list called a ‘product backlog’.
- During ‘sprint planning’, the ‘team’ pulls a small chunk from the top of that wish list, a ‘sprint backlog’, and decides how to implement those pieces.
- The team has a certain amount of time, a ‘sprint’, to complete its work – usually two to four weeks – but meets each day to assess its progress (daily scrum).
- Along the way, the ‘Scrum Master’ keeps the team focussed on its goal.
- At the end of the sprint, the work should be potentially shippable, as in ready to hand to a customer, put on a store shelf, or show to a stakeholder.
- The sprint ends with a ‘sprint review’ and retrospective.

• As the next sprint begins, the team chooses another chunk of the product backlog and begins working again.12

Project management frameworks typical for the design and development of multi-media applications feature three or more phases, depending on the complexity and type of the applications needed, for example:

• **Pre-production phase:**
  - briefing
  - concept development
  - determining objectives and defining target groups
  - determining the ‘information domain’ (the whole of the information to be stored, processed and presented)
  - defining requirements and constraints
  - drafting a global project description
  - drafting a detailed project plan and budget
  - developing mock-ups and/or prototypes
  - debriefing
  - go/no-go decision

• **Production phase:**
  - Gathering, selecting and structuring information
  - developing scripts/storyboards/key user paths
  - defining functions, navigation, site map, interaction and flowchart
  - determining the naming conventions
  - defining the media mix
  - development of the design
  - defining the asset list
  - developing new mock-up and/or prototypes
  - testing elements
  - reviewing and, if necessary, adapting budgets
  - go/no-go decision
  - asset and media production
  - application development
  - assembly

12 ScrumAlliance, http://www.scrumalliance.org/learn_about_scrum (01-09-2012)
– testing, bug tracking, and fixing
– go/no-go decision

• **Post-production phase:**
  – Seeing to implementation
  – final testing
  – formal acceptance
  – training and support
  – maintenance and other follow-up tasks

Content creation, design of interfaces and development of functionality should not be isolated processes and should, at all times, serve user needs and organizational goals.

Garrett therefore proposes a five step process for developing a website from an abstract conception of its objectives and user needs to a concrete product i.e. website determined by and offering information and functionality:

• **Strategy:** user needs and product objectives
• **Scope:** functional specifications and content requirements
• **Structure:** interaction design and information architecture
• **Skeleton:** interface design, navigation design, information design
• **Surface:** sensory design

If you consider outsourcing design and development work, you may wish to inquire in advance which approaches and methodologies a company uses and which training certificates they have. Familiarise yourself with those methodologies or attend a training so that you can be a good sparring partner for the company you hire.

### 5.9.3 Usability Testing as an Integral Part of the Design and Development Process

This section should be read in conjunction with section 19.5 covering laboratory testing.

We now have a thorough knowledge of the internet user’s behaviour, wishes and requirements, and thus we have a large number of research-based guidelines for usability. Reliable testing is possible and should be part of the design and development process, as well as part of the evaluation of existing sites.

One of the most helpful guides for developing ‘ usable and useful websites’ is offered by the US Department of Health and Human Services. This Step-by-Step Usability Guide takes you in detail through the tasks:

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Examples of methodologies that can be used in the early phases of the project are discussed below.

5.9.4 Card Sorting

Card Sorting is a quick, easy and inexpensive way to find out how people think your content should be organized. It is a useful approach for designing and optimizing the overall information architecture. It provides suggestions for navigation and menu structure. Card Sorting can also help to answer questions and identify trends, such as:

- How different are your user groups’ needs?
- Do users want to see the information grouped by subject or process?
- What should navigation menu items be called (taxonomy)?

You can do Card Sorting:

- **Offline**, inviting and observing collaborative groups or a number of individual participants to use paper index cards or post-it notes or at desktops using downloaded software.
- **Online**, using one of the online card sorting services available, in the same way as described above or remote, that is inviting users in, for example, other countries to participate.
There are more or less three Card Sorting methods:

- **Open Card Sorting**: Participants are given cards showing website topics and are asked to sort the cards into groups as they see appropriate. Participants are then asked to describe the group. Often participants are asked to talk aloud while conferring and thinking. This method is mainly generative and provides input for information structure.

- **Closed Card Sorting**: Participants are given cards showing website topics and a set of pre-established groups. They are asked to sort the cards into these groups. This method is mainly evaluative and useful for gaining additional feedback on an open card sort or proposed information structure or when one wants to add new content to an existing structure.

- **Reverse Card Sorting**, also called card-based classification and Treejack: Participants are given tasks and are asked to complete them navigating a set of cards. They are to find the most relevant card to the given task starting with a card from the top-level category. This method is evaluative and useful to assess whether a proposed or existing information structure offers the best way to find specific information (nullifying the effect of aspects such as visual design).

### 5.9.5 Scenarios

A scenario is a short story about a specific user with a specific goal who is using your site. Scenarios are very useful, perhaps critical, in designing websites and usability testing of them. They provide insight into what content the site must have, and how to make it findable and accessible.

Write several scenarios: questions users might ask, and tasks they have to perform. Remember, for example, the questions that the site navigation has to answer easily, if not intuitively.

In a usability test, ask users to write down their own scenarios as well as giving them those you have written yourselves.

### 5.9.6 Iterative Design and Prototyping

Create paper or digital prototypes to identify usability issues. Reiterate the prototypes (test, make changes, then test again) until the website meets the usability goals. ‘Low-fidelity prototyping’ uses simple drawings and mock-ups. ‘High-fidelity prototyping’ uses tools that show the prototype as close to the actual design as possible in terms of look and feel, interaction, and timing.

### 5.9.7 Testing with Users

Testing with and without users can be outsourced to specialist agencies. For those who wish to organize their own testing with users, the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), for example, provides ‘Better Practice Principles, Guides and Checklists’ for government organizations:

- Before starting:
  - consider the different methods of user testing (either methodologies mentioned above, or others found below in ‘Further information’);
  - define the goals of the user testing and identify what will be tested;
  - define what standards are acceptable and how results will be analyzed;
  - develop a test scenario or script;
  - develop feedback questions;
– determine how results will be collected; and
– consider testing the website throughout the process of creating the website.

• Setting up the test:
  – ensure that testing facilitators and support teams are prepared for their role;
  – ensure that testers are prepared for their role;
  – select testers carefully with in mind your target groups and/or personas;
  – consider how many users will be testing the resources and the scale of the testing;
  – arrange for relevant people to observe the test;
  – organize a suitable venue and equipment; and
  – conduct a ‘dry run’.

• After the test:
  – debrief testers and observers;
  – analyze and prioritize issues; and
  – disseminate results and follow-up.14

5.9.8 Further Advice

• ICT projects are notorious for going over the original budgets. It is wise to add at least 25% to your calculations for unforeseen expenses. But avoid this extra provision becoming general knowledge.

• Draft detailed lists of wishes and requirements and include them in your tenders and contracts.

• Look fully through this handbook and the websites and literature referred to. Forgetting, for example, to include compliance with W3C mark-up (source code) standards and WAI guidelines, may make a partial rebuild necessary, and cost you dearly.

• ICT related projects often get into trouble because too much has to be built at the same time. Make a three-year plan: describe the desired end result, and what is to be built in each phase.

• Evolution, not revolution, is best. Avoid a ‘big bang’. Radical changes can lose as much as they gain if you forget the lessons learnt in previous years.

• Make active use of the formal acceptance period in your contract with your developer. This might be two to four weeks or as much as three months, depending on what you negotiated into the contract. Use the period to test all markup and functionality aspects of the site.

• Standards keep improving. You will need to monitor new developments for their relevance to your site, and to plan for ongoing upgrades in future years.

5.10 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The quality, effectiveness and success of your website can be measured with the help of the following methods:

- **Expert audit and evaluation**, providing insight into the ‘percentage of perfection’. The UNWTO Destination Web Watch (DWW) offers such services, evaluating the website against quality criteria and critical success factors. The DWW Website Audit uses criteria in the categories accessibility, identity and trust, customisation and interactivity, search engine optimization and technical performance. The DWW Strategic Website Evaluation analyzes the content and services provided by a destination website in the context of the DMO’s strategy, opportunities and constraints. It measures the site by the quality of the services it offers, in the categories: information, contact, transaction, entertainment and relationship. See section 19.6.2 for details of the Destination Web Watch, or see www.destinationwebwatch.org. **Key metrics: percentage of perfection.**

- **Web analytics**, allowing monitoring and measuring of the performance of the site as a whole and of individual features in terms of internet data. Key metrics include web traffic data, such as page views, visits or sessions, unique users and response rates to (for example) competitions.

- **Online and offline user surveys**, allowing the measurement of consumer satisfaction and the impact of the website on consumer decision-making.

- **Online experiments and laboratory testing**, allowing testing of a wide variety of usability, content and other aspects of websites.

- **Evaluating the search performance focussing on three key areas:**
  - Visibility reporting – your ranking in SERPs for target keyphrases;
  - Authority – covering number and profile of links and social signals; and
  - Web analytics – focussing on natural search traffic.

See chapter 19 on Measurement and Evaluation, and chapter 20 on Web and Social Analytics.

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**English Riviera Tourism Company**

ETC-UNWTO are grateful to Carolyn Custerson, Chief Executive Officer of English Riviera Tourism Company, and to Matt Bassett, Tourism Accounts Manager of New Mind for their contribution to this case study.

The English Riviera Tourism Company (ERTC)’s e-marketing strategy formed part of the implementation of the ‘Turning the Tide for Tourism in Torbay’ strategy, adopted by Torbay Council in September 2009 to arrest the decline in visitor numbers and increase the value of tourism to the economy. It included the following elements:

- Creation of a new reinvigorated brand identity;
- investment in a market leading e-tourism solution from New Mind, incorporating a Destination Management System and the development of a brand new destination website;
- investment in inspirational new imagery and videos for the new destination site;

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15 Each criterion is given a standard weighting in the Destination Web Watch database, representing its relative importance. Each criterion is also given a maximum weighted score. This is the importance weighting multiplied by the maximum possible score for a criterion. The maximum weighted score defines an ideal. Once the Website Audit or Strategic Website Evaluation has been performed the total of the weighted scores is calculated and represents the ‘percentage of perfection’ of a website.
• initiation of an ongoing digital marketing campaign which encompassed SEO, online advertising, e-mail marketing and social media to raise awareness, increase traffic levels to the website, enhance user engagement with the English Riviera brand and ultimately to increase conversions;

• implementation of New Mind's Enterprise Content Management System (eCMS) to allow the in-house team at ERTC to have total control of the site's content and to create targeted microsites to support specialist campaigns;

• introduction of online social networking communication tools;

• investment in sophisticated website performance monitoring and reporting tools; and

• investment in online PR to complement offline PR activity.

The objectives were:

• to reposition the English Riviera as an inspiring year-round coastal destination;

• to increase the number of visitors to the English Riviera website;

• to arrest the decline in visitor numbers and spend; and

• to increase the value of tourism to the Torbay economy.

The website www.englishriviera.co.uk

“The e-marketing campaign and new website were launched in November 2011 to great acclaim from the industry” according to Carolyn Custerson, Chief Executive Officer of the ERTC.

“The ERTC’s new brand identity forms the foundations for the design of www.englishriviera.co.uk, supported by over 300 pages of inspirational imagery and content, recognising the importance that these elements play in the consumer’s decision making process when browsing the web.

The site is comprehensive in information, allowing the visitor to browse, plan and book their holiday with ease. The ability to plot results on maps, add to a personal itinerary, view ‘what’s nearby’, check the Trip Advisor reviews, or book online through a variety of booking platforms all facilitates visitor engagement and interaction and helps to convert browsers to bookers.

The site offers improved communication and increased booking potential for the English Riviera’s industry partners including over 200 accommodation providers. Banner adverts, highlighted products and image galleries are just some of the opportunities available for enhanced promotion.

During the planning stages of the website, a leading tourism digital marketing agency was hired to research user trends and identify the different ways in which people searched for holidays online. As a result of this process, the navigational structure of the website was developed to maximise the reach of the English Riviera website through the introduction of sections such as activity breaks, seasonal breaks, accommodation type, area and themed holidays (visit http://www.englishriviera.co.uk/where-to-stay for details).”
Video, Social and Mobile

Following the launch of the website, the ERTC has enhanced its digital presence by launching apps for both iPhone and Android devices and a mobile website is also currently in development for maximum flexibility. Visitors can access information on restaurants, shops or attractions, view more details and make contact whilst in location.

Social networking is at the forefront of the e-marketing strategy with Facebook updates feeding the website and the ability to “Like” or “Tweet” a business’s details so visitors can share with their friends on Facebook or Twitter. New Mind’s e-tourism functionality also enables tourism product searches to be performed within the Facebook platform itself. This has been complemented by a proactive social networking campaign to constantly keep followers up-to-date with the latest offers, events and news.

Investment has also been made in creating new videos to promote the bay, which have subsequently been uploaded to the main www.englishriviera.co.uk website and the English Riviera YouTube channel.

One particularly innovative step taken by ERTC was to invest in and assist with the making of a music video for leading the British band Metronomy, ensuring it was filmed entirely in location. The band’s popularity among 18-24 year olds and the ability to view and share on YouTube allowed the ERTC to challenge the traditional perceptions of the area and position the destination as a great place to visit. The video has had over 7.5 million views on YouTube and can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PnOG67flRA.

Working with Industry Partners

To encourage the spread of innovation in e-marketing from the English Riviera website to the organisation’s industry partners, widgets have been implemented that allow partners to host search functionality on their own sites using the ERTC product database. This means that users of the industry partner’s site can seamlessly access details of accommodation, attractions and events without visiting the main English Riviera site.

About Developing, Outsourcing and Investing

Carolyn Custerson: “New Mind supplied the e-tourism solution, incorporating a Destination Management System, Enterprise Content Management System (eCMS) and web development and design expertise for the new www.englishriviera.co.uk. The company also developed and implemented the mobile apps, social media and widgets functionality integration.

e-Strategy, the ERTC’s digital marketing agency, was responsible for the project management and Search Engine Optimisation elements of the e-marketing strategy.

The ERTC has invested over £100k in online destination marketing in the last 12 months.”

16 Interview conducted 10-10-2012.
Measuring Success

The success of the website is measured through a number of key metrics, including:

- unique visitors to the website;
- downloads of the App;
- number of brochure requests;
- referrals from Search Engines;
- number of Facebook fans; and
- independent web user research.

The tools used to measure these metrics include:

- Google Analytics;
- AW Stats (web stats); and
- management Reporting from the DMS.

Results So Far

The project, and therefore evaluation of results, is still ongoing. However indications are that the project is an overwhelming success:

- During the period 1 July 2012 to 31 August 31 2012, ERTC received a total of 199,097 visitors to the website; a year on year increase of 81% (109,811 visitors in 2011).
- On average, 3,211 people visited the ERTC website every day during this period, up from 1,771 visitors per day for the corresponding period in 2011.
- The website has reached its annual target of 500,000 visitors to the site, 3 months early in September.
- The iPhone and Android apps have had over 7,000 downloads.
- 150% increase in Facebook ‘fans’.
- 237% increase in user engagement.
- 265% increase in referring traffic to the website.
- 45% increase in website visitors.
- 60% increase in referring visitors from Google.
- Over 350 first page Google rankings achieved since site launch.
- 300% increase in brochure requests.

Furthermore, the ERTC now has a digital status that is respected by their businesses and their peers – in July 2012, the official destination website won a national award for ‘Best in Class’ at the British Resorts and Destinations Association’s annual conference.
Figure 5.8 Screenshots from the English Riviera Tourism Company’s websites
By courtesy of the English Riviera Tourism Company.
For more information:  
www.englishriviera.co.uk  
www.englishriviera.co.uk/agathachristie  
www.facebook.com/myriviera  
http://www.wollenmichelmore.co.uk/ (widget in bottom right)  
http://www.englishrivieratourism.co.uk/digital-marketing-opportunities.php (10-10-2012)
Further Information

Jakob Nielsen’s publications on usability (see bibliography) and his website and newsletter Alertbox: http://www.useit.com/alertbox (01-06-2012).

Findings of research into user behaviour and other aspects of ICT, travel and tourism are presented by academics and consultants at the annual ENTER conference organized by the International Federation for IT, Travel and Tourism (IFITT). Their work is published in the ENTER proceedings and in the Journal of Information Technology and Tourism (JITT). See http://www.ifitt.org (01-06-2012).

The International Institute for Information Design (IIID) brings together researchers and practitioners to discuss and improve the design, usability, and overall effectiveness of ‘content put into form’ – of verbal and visual messages shaped to meet the needs of particular audiences. Their Information Design Journal (IDJ) offers a forum for sharing ideas about the verbal, visual, and typographic design of print and online documents, multimedia presentations, illustrations, signage, interfaces, maps, quantitative displays, websites, and new media. See www.ifitt.org (01-06-2012).


For more information on Card Sorting, providers of Card Sorting tools, methods for preparing the development of and testing of websites:


Chapter 6

Domain Names

6.1 About this Chapter
Your website acts as a hub for your e-marketing activity and choosing a domain name is a major strategic decision that represents your brand and must be consistent with other elements of your e-marketing strategy. This chapter provides an overview of the issues around choosing a domain name, dealing with campaign landing pages and microsites, targeting international markets and the ongoing management of your destination’s domain names.

Key Messages

• Almost all campaigns using TV, press, posters and print feature the domain name as a primary response channel.

• Domains have a major brand-building function but also serve vital tactical requirements.

• Your approach to managing your domains must be consistent with your search engine marketing strategy.

• There is a variety of approaches for targeting international markets. There are pros and cons associated with each of them.

• The selection of the domain is therefore a major strategic issue that needs a long-term view that avoids short-term compromises.

• Owning and using multiple domains can make managing your domains more complex and time consuming as well as make your search engine marketing activity less effective or more complex.

6.2 What is a Domain Name?
A domain name is the address of a computer on the internet – text that corresponds to the unique numeric IP (internet protocol) address. It can be used for either a website, or for e-mail, or both.

A top-level domain (TLD) is at the highest level of the hierarchical domain name system of the internet. A TLD can exist at the generic level (gTLD) or at the country code level (ccTLD).

Generic top-level domains (gTLD) include: “.com”, “.net”, “.org”, “.gov”, “.info”.

Country code top-level domains (ccTLD) include for example: “.uk”, “.us”, “.ca”, “.fr”, “.de”, “.nl”, “.sa”.

The .travel TLD was introduced in 2005, requiring authentication by independent third parties to limit registrants to those that have a right to them. However, for a variety of reasons it was not widely supported by the travel industry and destinations. Ultimately, success depended on public awareness of the .travel domain and it becoming the first choice when guessing a travel organization’s or company’s domain name. A number of destinations have registered their .travel domains and users are currently redirected...
to their respective top level domain. Some destinations do however host their main destination site on their .travel domain e.g. www.germany.travel site.

6.3 Choosing a Domain Name

For destinations, the domain name can be the country name, region name or city name, or if that cannot be obtained, another word combined with it. For example, the word ‘visit’ is often associated with the destination for the main destination or DMO site. Check what domains similar organizations are using to give you inspiration and insight into what the options might be.

Case Study – Visit Britain and visitbritain.com

In 1997, the British Tourist Authority was unable to obtain the name Britain and instead launched visitbritain.com. Later it bought the domains of further visitbritain ccTLDs from other owners and changed the organization’s trading name to be synonymous with the domain name.

Key considerations in choosing a TLD and sub-domain combination are:

- It can be worth investing a large amount of money to get the right domain.
- The name must be memorable, and it is best if it is intuitive to spell.
- If it is likely to be misspelt, then the most common misspellings should be bought too.
- Avoid numbers, hyphens and underscores, but if it is possible that the user might hyphenate the word, buy the hyphenated version too.
- Try to guess what other people might guess it to be, and buy these.
- Buy the key language versions of your destination name.
- Buy as many of the generic TLD versions as you can.
- Buy all the country TLD versions that you might ever want to market in (see section 6.7 below).
- If your domain name and your DMO name are the same it can aid memorability.
- Always involve your legal advisor from the start.

6.4 Looking Up Domain Names

‘Whois’ is the term that refers to the information that is required whenever anyone registers a domain. It includes the registrant’s administrative and technical setting-up details.

For most domains, this information is readily accessible. See http://whois.domaintools.com.
6.5 Using Subdomains and Subfolders

Here are some definitions:

- **Parent domain** – the domain name you need to buy or register with a TLD extension e.g. destination.com.

- **Subdomain** – the ‘third’ level domain name that you create under any domain you control e.g. www.walking.destination.com.

- **Subfolders** – the folders behind a domain address e.g. www.destination.com/walking/, www.destination.com/blog/.

In order to choose the best approach for developing your domain you should consider how search engine metrics such as Google’s PageRank apply authority to a particular domain or subdomain when deciding what domain architecture to develop around your destination, products or services:

- You will inevitably be building authority in the eyes of search engines around the parent domain. Individual pages that exist on this domain benefit from that authority.

- Research would suggest that subdomains, e.g. walking.destination.com, do not inherit all of the authority that is applied to the parent domain.

- By contrast, subfolders do appear to benefit from the authority applied to the parent domain and therefore the content and pages within the folder also benefit from that authority.

The three points above suggest that parent domains are preferable, i.e. one subdomain on one parent domain and developing site architecture to support the different markets, products and services through the provision of subfolders with appropriate content in them. However, there are some exceptions to this rule, for example, if you are trying to saturate the search results with multiple listings or if you already have a subdomain that is ranking well for some of your target keywords.

**Further Information**

For further information on root domains, subdomains, subfolders and microsites see: www.seomoz.org/blog/understanding-root-domains-subdomains-vs-subfolders-microsites (14-12-2012).

6.6 Campaign Landing Pages and Microsites

A campaign landing page URL needs to reconcile two potentially conflicting aims:

1. The DMO’s marketing and branding manager should insist that the campaign spending helps to build awareness of the parent domain name.

2. However, if the campaign involves offline media, a memorable URL and dedicated landing page will be required which can be advertised, and then be used to optimize tracking and conversion. This difficulty will not arise if the whole campaign is online, because the click-through URL does not need to be immediately visible to the user.

This needs a consistent policy that can be maintained over time. The options are the following:

- Use a subfolder such as www.destination.com/specialoffer (rather than a subdomain for the reasons outlined above).

- Register a special domain such as www.destinationoffers.com. This is a less preferred option as it may dilute the parent domain awareness as well as prevent any link equity being passed onto the parent domain.
It is not uncommon for a DMO to develop specific microsites to support individual campaign activities. Indeed, there are reasons why you would want to do this beyond just optimizing campaign tracking:

- You are launching a product or service you want to brand completely differently from your parent domain e.g. in partnership with another organization or brand.
- If you do not want customers to associate the particular product or service with your brand e.g. promoting products to a specific niche where association with the official or government supported site would be perceived as a negative association.
- You have the exact match domain that relates to specific keywords you are targeting via natural search e.g. www.walkingdestination.com. Whilst the influence of exact match domains appears to be declining in search algorithms alongside other ranking factors it maintains influence.
- You might want to develop a presence on a domain with a relaxed ‘talkative’ style that enables you to support mainstream fashionable words, trending topics or memes and thus do something beyond your official communication channels.

The downside of using microsites is twofold. They inherit none of the authority associated with the parent domain and so neither does the content on them. Equally, any link equity that they develop is not passed onto the parent domain.

It is often useful to audit the domains that you currently own in terms of both the web metrics that are relevant to you as well as the authority associated with them. It might be worth considering a programme of rationalisation. Managing multiple domains and the sites/content on them can be both time consuming and complex. It can also dilute the authority that you might expect if you were building authority on a single parent domain.

**6.7 Targeting International Markets**

There are three main options where targeting international markets is concerned:

2. Using a subdomain on your parent domain, e.g. www.fr.destination.com.

Where an international market has significant brand potential, and the DMO has the resources to target that market i.e. develop brand awareness and support search engine optimization programmes in that market, the ideal approach would be:

- Own the ccTLD and develop content on that domain, based on both user research and keyword research about that specific market and language;
- locate the site and server in the country concerned; and
- generate an appropriate link profile from within the country concerned.

However, if resources do not allow this approach, it is worth considering the advantages and disadvantages of each of the following options:

- **Using the corresponding ccTLD:**
  - Benefits include: being able to clearly target the specific geographical market, the server location becomes less relevant, and it supports easy separation of sites designed to cater for specific markets. In some countries and some situations there are legal issues that require this approach.

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Concerns include: availability of the relevant ccTLD and it requires more infrastructure and domain management, which can be expensive, and resource intensive.

• **Using a subdomain on your parent domain:**
  
  – Benefits include: it is easy to set up, you can use webmaster tools to support geo-targeting and it allows different server locations as well as clear separation of the sites you provide for each specific market.
  
  – Concerns include: users might not recognize geo-targeting from the URL alone and it can be confused with language targeting. It also means you are not building authority on one parent domain.

• **Using subfolders on your parent domain:**
  
  – Benefits include: that it is easy to set up, you can use webmaster tools to support geo-targeting and it is in many respects the lowest maintenance option. It also supports building authority on the parent domain.
  
  – Concerns include: that it requires a single server location and separation of specific sites is a lot harder. Once again users might not recognise geo-targeting from the URL alone and it can be confused with language targeting.

Current thinking suggests that, for most DMOs, using subfolders on your parent domain and optimizing those pages for the specific market at which they are targeted is likely to represent the most preferable option. That does not prevent the DMO from owning the ccTLD and setting up a permanent redirect to the relevant subfolder on the parent domain (often .com)

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**Case study – Visit Britain’s revised domain strategy to support the launch of VB5**

When launching their new website in 2010 (VB5) and on the recommendation of an SEO marketing agency, the decision was taken to rationalise the numerous Visit Britain country-specific domains into the main VisitBritain.com domain. This decision was partly taken to avoid the duplication of English language content across multiple domains. However, it also helped to consolidate the value and authority associated with 20+ multiple country-level domains and ensure that all of the markets benefited from ongoing search engine marketing programmes.

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**6.8 Domain Name Management**

If you have protected the main domain and any related domains as fully as possible, you may have 25, 50 or 100s of domains to manage. There are online domain management services such as www.safenames.net that will reduce the administration costs, ensure that domains do not lapse, and help you if you operate in several countries. A management service can provide:

• facilities for the DMO to manage all the domains through one portal, including all the technical setting up and any necessary changes over time;

• central billing to the DMO;

• information about every country’s registration requirements; and

• a legal presence or company formation in countries that require this, where the DMO cannot easily comply otherwise.
6.9 Conflicting Domains

Ask your legal advisor to consider the options if someone sets up a domain that is designed to be confused with your own, or perhaps damage it:

- You may be confronted with a site where someone wants to express their opinion of the destination or DMO. If it is a fair criticism then there will be no scope for action except to fix the underlying problem or to explain your position.
- If it is libelous, misleading, an attempt to pass themselves off as being your DMO, or in bad faith, your legal advisor will decide on the best action.

If there is a cyber squatter with a domain that is not being used, but that you would rather have under your own control, and it is decided to try to buy them off:

- Do not overestimate the value of the domain to them – what they hold is just one of about 20 million registered domains.
- If you do buy the domain from a squatter, obtain a legally robust agreement that the squatter will not buy other domains in the future that might also affect the DMO’s interests.

6.10 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

Whilst there is no direct measure or set of metrics that allow you to evaluate the success of your domain strategy it needs to support your marketing and campaign objectives. This is particularly relevant to search engine optimization and building authority in key markets (and countries) to support your visibility in SERPs – the evaluation methods outlined in chapter 8 are relevant when evaluating the extent to which your domain name strategy supports your search engine optimization.

You might also consider the cost and effort required to manage and support your domain name strategy and to what extent this is appropriate to your marketing needs. This is particularly important where considering how to approach international markets from a domains point of view.

Finally, your approach to domain name management must ensure you have the right level of control across the range of potential domain names where you, or your customers, expect you to have a presence. You might also consider the campaign URLs you need to support your marketing activities both now and in the future.
Chapter 7

The Social Web

7.1 About this Chapter

This chapter aims to create an understanding of social media and how DMOs can integrate social media into their e-marketing strategy. Due to the dynamic nature of social media, this chapter does not provide a detailed manual to social networking sites, social bookmarking sites, multimedia sharing sites and other social media – with the exception of pointers for Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest. Social media change and frequently add features – they themselves provide excellent instructions in text and video. This chapter focuses on understanding the social web and provides guidelines for building an integrated marketing strategy. You may want to read chapter 1 on the development of the world wide web into a more social web and trends in consumer behaviour and e-marketing, as well as chapter 2 on strategy and planning, before reading this chapter.

Key Messages

• The growth of social media, and thus the social web, is significant and needs to be embraced by DMOs.

• Many travellers turn to social media when planning a trip to find destinations, deals, advice and reviews from other travellers.

• There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Use of social media depends on the DMO’s objectives, and different channels require different tactics.

• Social media offers you the opportunity to converse and engage with your customers – it is not about the hard sell.

• A Social Media Policy (with Communication guidelines) is essential to motivate staff and protect your organization’s reputation.

7.2 Overview

The social web is characterised by a blending of web-based and mobile technologies and social interaction for the co-creation of value. Users create, modify and share (user-generated) content. They connect, communicate and collaborate. The social web allows them to turn to each other to find answers to questions, to find and filter information, to form their opinions. As described in chapter 1, these users have become powerful consumers, whose opinions have a significant influence on brands and buying decisions because they are the opinions of trusted friends and peers; and who draw power from each other to, for example, buy online and secure discounts.
Recent years have seen the growth of:

- the number of users, the time they spend on social media and the number of interactions. Consumers continue to spend more time on social networks than on any other category of websites;
- the number and sophistication of the technologies underlying social media. These technologies can easily be integrated in channels and platforms, blurring the borders between social and ‘other’ media and adding to the convergence of media in general;
- the popularity of mobile social media;
- the number and variety of tools that allow marketers to search, track, and analyze conversation on the web – free, basic applications and more in-depth tools; and
- the dominance of certain brands of social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and content sharing sites like YouTube in large parts of the world, which is impressive but should not blind you to the expansive list of less prevalent social networks such as (location-based) niche social networks and forums.¹

Also, many travellers turn to social media when planning a trip, to find destinations, deals, advice and reviews from other travellers. Some DMOs have already fully embraced social media, others are in the process of making the move from organizations providing and publishing information to ones that create appealing and engaging content that people want to share, stimulate user-generated content and nurture relationships online.

DMO marketers are expected to solidify their e-marketing and specifically their inbound marketing strategy, to improve their social media tactics as a vital part of that strategy, link them to objectives and goals, allocate resources and prove results – all this in a fast moving media landscape. The following sections therefore describe the key features of the social web and provide guidelines for strategy building and effective use of social media.

Figure 7.1 shows the influence of social media on planning leisure travel. This relates to consumers of the United States of America in 2011. For the latest insights (and for other markets) consult the ETC Digital Portal, PhoCusWright’s reports or the resources given in annex I.²

7.3 Understanding Social Media

7.3.1 Building Blocks

Social media are in general user-friendly. Every social networking or content sharing sites offers ‘how to’ pages, best practice examples, FAQ pages or, as for example Facebook, ‘Help’ communities assisting users in personal and/or business use. To really understand the requirements of social media platforms and engagement it is useful to look at their building blocks. A useful framework is the ‘Honeycomb of Social Media’, as shown in Figure 7.2.
The honeycomb framework consists of the following seven blocks:

- **Conversations**: Represents the extent to which users communicate with other users.
- **Identity**: Represents the extent to which users reveal their identities.
- **Sharing**: Represents the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content.
- **Presence**: Represents the extent to which users can know if other users are accessible, including where they are, in the virtual world and/or real world, and whether they are available.
- **Relationships**: Represents the extent to which users can be related to other users. ‘Relating’ means that two or more users have some form of association that leads them, for example, to list each other as a fan, or to converse or share.
- **Reputation**: Represents the extent to which users can identify the standing of others, and themselves, in a social setting.
- **Groups**: Represents the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities.
Each of these aspects helps to make sense of the social media landscape, of a certain social media platform, of the social media engagement needs specific for that platform and of the implications of these needs for strategy and best practices. For example:

- Regarding ‘Conversations’, as an e-marketer you need to understand the differences in the frequency and content of a conversation on social networking sites as that requires differences in commitments and toolsets. Compare, for example, Twitter with a regular blog. You also need to understand audiences’ preferences for engaging with an organization in order to know when, how and how often to join the conversation.

- In the field of ‘Identity’, it is important to understand the extent to which audiences are sharing or protecting their identity and for e-marketers, tying different identities to the context of different social media platforms is crucial.

- As for ‘Presence’, you need to pay attention to the importance of user availability and locations and users’ preferences, for example, interacting in real-time.3

7.3.2 Classifications

Attempts to classify social media have had varying results. Classification is not easy because many social media platforms are composed of more than one of the above mentioned building blocks – one more dominant than the other – and because of the integration of technologies and convergence of media. Blogging, vlogging, video, photo and music sharing, posting status updates, tagging, e-mailing and chatting, voice-over-IP – some social networking sites facilitate several of these ways of communicating and interacting.

As it gives an insight into the types and wide variety of social media and helps to understand engagement and build strategy, two attempts of classification are described in the following sections.

7.3.2.1 Six types of social media

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein differentiate between six types of social media:4


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Kaplan differentiates mobile social media into four types:\(^5\)

1. **Space-timers**: location and time sensitive mobile social media, which are about the exchange of messages with relevance for one specific location at one specific point-in-time, for example Foursquare, http://www.foursquare.com.

2. **Space-locators**: only location sensitive mobile social media, which are about exchanging messages with relevance for one specific location and are tagged to a certain place and read later by others, for example Yelp, http://www.yelp.com.

3. **Quick-timers**: only time-sensitive mobile social media i.e. social media applications which have been transferred to mobile devices in order to create immediacy, for example Facebook status updates.

4. **Slow-timers**: neither location nor time sensitive mobile social media i.e. social media applications used on mobile devices, for example, watching a YouTube video.

### 7.3.2.2 The conversation prism

Brian Solis (Altimeter) and Jesse Thomas (JESS3) have created the well-known information graphic, The Conversation Prism.\(^6\) This infographic is too large to include in this handbook, but can be viewed and downloaded in several formats from http://www.thecommunicationprism.com. The Conversation Prism is the result of their attempt to classify and sort social media applications and to provide a template for building a strategy and ‘Conversation Workflow’.

Currently Brian Solis is working on version 4.0 of The Conversation Prism. He has invited ‘the crowd’ to help classify the current social media landscape and actualise the Conversation Prism. The current classification is:

- Comment and reputation
- Wisdom of the crowds
- Questions and answers
- Collaboration
- Social commerce
- Blog platforms
- Blogs/conversations
- Social curation
- Streams
- Nicheworking
- Co-creation
- Enterprise social networks

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The Social Web

- DIY + custom social networks
- Discussion boards and forums
- Social networks
- Listening
- Intelligence and targeting
- Business networking
- Reviews and ratings
- Location
- Video
- sCRM
- Documents/content
- Events
- Music
- Wiki
- Virtual worlds
- Livecasting
- Pictures
- Social bookmarks
- Social marketing management
- Influence
- Bio-social

At http://www.briansolis.com/2012/07/please-help-us-update-the-conversation-prism-v4-0/ you can find examples for each category, stay up-to-date with this project and/or contribute.7

Section 7.5.2 addresses the way the Conversation Prism can assist organizations and companies in developing their strategy and creating a ‘Conversation Workflow’.


7.4 What Social Media can do for DMOs

The above mentioned building blocks and classifications of social media applications illustrate that the Social Web is like a toolbox: a toolbox offering exciting opportunities to join the conversation and engage (potential) visitors, build relationships and influence the customer journey. In particular you can use social media to influence:

- **Brand awareness and health**: Social media offer you the opportunity to drive conversations that reference your brand, product or service and influence attitudes and behaviour towards your destination.
• **Reach:** Social bookmarking and content sharing are examples of how social media increase your media reach. One of the key attractions of using social media is the viral effect.

• **Visibility:** Search engines are becoming more social i.e. they have started to index social content and incorporate social signals into their ranking algorithm. Social media allow you to drive search rankings. Intricately connected and keyword rich social media can help to elevate visibility. Votes, bookmarks, tags, references and links make your content appear more authoritative in search engines. Social media sites such as Wikipedia, blogs, and social networks are also places where searches begin.

• **Online experience:** You can stimulate the creation of content such as storytelling, tips from travellers, video and photos, host it and mash it.

• **Knowledge:** Monitoring what is said may result in valuable insights into customer needs and behaviour as well as ideas for product development or service improvement.

• **Innovation:** Social media technologies allow you to co-create and collaborate with customers and stakeholders.

• **Customer service:** Use social media technologies to provide or improve the quality of customer care.

• **Operational efficiency:** Social media networking sites allow you to collect (free) information that may help you to better target your messages and paid media, lowering customer acquisition costs.

• **Marketing:** Social media allow you to communicate with consumers in all stages of their customer journey, offering the chance to identify prospects and build loyalty, turn customers into brand advocates.

• **Revenue generation:** Social media users, fans and followers, can be acquired as leads and converted into paying customers. Drive sales directly or indirectly by offering unique offers.

The social web does not only bring exciting opportunities, but also the requirement to change and face challenges. These are described in detail in chapter 1.

### 7.5 How to Develop Strategy and Select Tactics

Chapter 2 provided key concepts and useful frameworks for building your e-marketing strategy. It addressed the vital role of social media, especially for your inbound marketing and content marketing strategy. It also addressed the fact that e-marketing strategy and tactics are all about making smart choices as to owned, paid and earned media and content.

This section takes a closer look at making choices as to the integration of social media in your strategy and organization. There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to building your strategy and choosing your tactics. Your steps depend on your objectives and on where you are as to knowledge and experience gained or hired.

#### 7.5.1 How to Start

You may choose the following simple step-by-step plan:

• **Listen** – Begin by listening to achieve an understanding of the various channels and tools and their features available and the kind of audiences they attract.

• **Talk** – Set the stage by creating a presence for yourself and/or your destination or organization – create an account, if you have not already done so and start talking. Learn to socialize. Follow
the guidelines for best practice given in section 7.6. If all is well, you will find your ‘voice’ and a sense of purpose in this phase. Familiarise yourself further with the possibilities the social network site is offering.

- **Select** – New social media sites and tools are emerging constantly and you will need to make a selection and create your own specific social media landscape.

- **Strategize** – Your social media marketing strategy and tactics should tie in to your overall strategy rather than being based on the available social media channels and applications.

- **Organize** – Adapt your organization so that ‘webcare’ is addressed, i.e. service and support, monitoring and energising conversation, search engine optimization and online reputation management.

- **Monitor** – Social media are overcrowded places. Monitor and analyze results in order to be able to measure success and return-on-investment.

Prepare and take some time to study a channel in detail. Try using it for personal use and appoint staff members to do the same before creating a brand account.

Listening can be done by just searching and browsing (and not forgetting to research offline by listening to your visitors and finding out where your most active visitors and influencers spend their time online). But as time is costly a better option is to do it in a more systematic way from the beginning as conversations are increasingly dispersed:

- In order to find relevant blogs use Google’s Blogsearch or Technorati. To keep up-to-date subscribe to the RSS services offered in blogs you find relevant (see chapter 55 for more on RSS feeds).

- Use the search, subscribe and/or alert facilities that Twitter, Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, TripAdvisor and other media offer.

- Social Mention is an example of a free service which lets you receive mentions of search terms on several channels.8

From the start, look at what technology can do to assist you to monitor conversations; manage your contacts, calendars and communications; measure the effects of your efforts; and capture data. You may want to, for example:

- start with a free services like Keepstream to organize and save tweets or select a Twitter client such as TweetDeck;9

- use the 30 or more days’ free trial of more inclusive monitoring and management services such as offered by Hootsuite.10 There are well over 200 tools and platforms that offer social media measurement and monitoring. Familiarise yourself with using that technology in order to make smart choices;

- find out whether your existing CRM system is ready, or can be adapted, to assist you in collecting and analyzing important data. Read chapter 14 on CRM; and

- read chapters 19 and 20 on social media analytics and tools, social media measurement and social media monitoring.

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10 For a description of Hootsuite see section 21.6.4.
When exploring the social media landscape use the building blocks and classifications described above. Look further than number of fans and followers and ask common sense questions such as:

- Who is using a particular channel? Do the users include your target groups and personas?
- On which social media platforms do people talk most about your destination or specific types of tourism products?
- Who is the owner or moderator of a blog or forum and what is the tone of voice?
- What are the possibilities for communicating and promoting your brand?
- How are your competitors using the channel and what kind of images, videos or other objects do they post?
- Does your budget allow adopting this channel and do you have a member of your team to whom you can allocate channel management?

### 7.5.2 Using the Conversation Prism

If your preference is for a more sophisticated approach and if your organization is ready to truly and integrally socialize, then have another look at the Conversation Prism in section 7.3.2.2 as it provides a template for developing a social media strategy and a ‘Conversation Flow’.

Around the hub, which is your brand, follow the following steps:

- The first halo takes you from observing, listening, identifying, internalising, and prioritizing, to routing the conversations conducted in the social web;
- the second halo pertains to integrating social media in departments and for all purposes such as customer support, marketing and PR, corporate communications and crisis; and
- the third halo visualizes the need to support the ‘conversation workflow’ by continual listening, responding, and learning online and in the real world.

For a detailed description of this approach and examples of social maps you could make for yourself, see www.theconversationprism.com.

### 7.6 Guidelines for Best Practice

- When creating an account choose a username representing your destination name or brand as often it will be part of the URL, for example: http://www.facebook.com/visitqueensland and http://pinterest.com/visitqueensland.
- Use headers and profiles optimally. Include a link to your main website. Write profiles containing important keywords. Ensure that settings options that hide your profile from search engines are checked off so your profile can get indexed. Communicate clearly that the page is the official page of your DMO.
- Make your content findable by including tags, keywords, hashtags and links, when appropriate.
Integrate social media in your website, blog and e-mail newsletter. Add ‘follow us’ and ‘share’ bars and buttons. There are different types of sharing buttons:

- buttons offered by the content management system, e-mail marketing service, Blogware provider;
- buttons offered by developers of plug-ins;
- buttons offered by social networks;
- catch-all solutions such as ShareThis or AddThis\(^{11}\); and
- buttons coded in-house.

Social networks and developers offer a wide variety of widgets and plug-ins for your website and blog showing, for example, Facebook fans, Twitter followers and/or status updates.

Social media users do not want to feel marketed to. Don’t over-promote or over-sell. Where and what you can sell differs per platform and you should consult the terms and conditions.

Social media users want to feel a personal connection and their enthusiasm for your brand and desire to connect recognised. Rely less on broad-reaching generic messages, but use CRM and your personas to share highly targeted content. Communicate in an authentic, personal (not too corporate) style. Take into account differences in use of social media per market.

Be generous in every possible way: with sharing content, with commenting on reviews, with the ‘follow back’ button in Twitter, and with your time.

Use professional social networking services such as LinkedIn or Xing to build relationships with colleagues in the government, tourism industry and travel trade, to create a group and/or page for your DMO and use the status updates and news features these services offer. Use a corporate account in Twitter to keep stakeholders informed (see section 7.10 for more on Twitter).

Users expect a mobile friendly experience. See chapter 10 on Mobile.

Align your social presences to your website, so that there are not estranging contrasts in look and feel and tone of voice on, for example and especially, landing pages.

You may want to use social media to offer unique and exclusive (impulse) offers not found elsewhere, in order to make your fans and followers feel like VIPs.

Study login choices and settings to find out how to link activities in one channel to other channels, for example how to link Pinterest with Facebook and Twitter. But be careful with automatic feeds. Optimize content for each channel.

Target news aggregators and social bookmarking sites such as Digg, Delicious and Reddit\(^{12}\). These sites allow the community to ‘vote’ on submitted content, with the number of votes dictating the link’s prominence on the site.

Think in terms of service (see section 2.3.2 on internet services).

Protect your online reputation. Make sure you are monitoring online press, conversations, and review sites.

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\(^{11}\) ShareThis, http://www.sharethis.com; and AddThis, http://www.addthis.com (06-02-2013).

• Be creative if your budget is small. Leverage video via crowdsourcing and put it up on YouTube. Consider a branded YouTube channel, or crowdsource articles and images as Tourism New Zealand does (see figure 7.4).

• Do not forget calls to action and landing pages (see section 5.6).

• Back up! Facebook posts disappear. Tweets can be inadvertently deleted. If your social media channels and those you talk to become important to your business, you’ll want to protect your data and see to it that you have a backup policy and the necessary technology in place.

Figure 7.3  Screenshot of VisitNorway homepage with (on the right) follow-us buttons

By courtesy of Innovation Norway.

Figure 7.4 Screenshot of www.newzealand.com, showing articles written by travellers and travel businesses

By courtesy of Tourism New Zealand.


7.7 The Social Media Policy

A good Social Media Policy strikes the right balance between

• motivating staff members to use social media; and
• avoiding unnecessary risk and reputation damage.

Staff members can be the most valuable ambassadors of your organization and destination. They can develop into influencers i.e. key individuals that have greater than average influence over potential visitors and are opinion leaders. By blogging or by using social networks or content sharing sites they can contribute to a positive brand image and visibility.

However, having a Social Media Policy in place providing clear guidelines for all staff members is essential as:

• in the past communications went through a process of approval before leaving an organization. Today, any employee can communicate to thousands in real-time or turn a minor problem into a major PR crisis;
• it is easy to make a mistake and communicate something damaging the reputation of the organization or destination. Tweets, for example, cannot really be deleted, as some monitoring tools are still able to detect removed ones;
• borders between private life and work are blurring. Staff members use social media in both.

7.7.1 Elements of the Social Media Policy

The Social Media Policy should include:

• the destination’s brand definition and brand values, as well as the DMO’s vision and mission, as all communication needs to be grounded in these;
• an explanation of what social media are. Not all staff members will have the same level of knowledge;
• definitions of responsibilities, processes and goals of the use of social media;
• an overview of which channels and tools are available and which ones staff are allowed to use;
• guidelines for use of social media at work, for example whether to keep it to a minimum in order to not interfere with work commitments or not;
• practical guidelines and examples. Make sure, for example, that members of staff know the settings available in Facebook enabling them to keep private what should be private;
• ICT security issues of using the internet in general and social media in particular at the work place;
• the provision and requirement of disclaimers. Disclaimers of personal blogs should, for example, state that the views expressed by the author in the blog are the author’s alone and do not represent the views of the organization;
• reference to guidelines for crisis management (see chapter 21); and
• guidelines for best practice in using and communicating through social media (see next section).
7.7.2 Communication Guidelines

The Social Media Policy should address a wide variety of guidelines for communicating on social media as employees need to know:

- that it is important to be transparent, truthful and not misleading, and, for example, to use real names and to make clear that they work at the DMO, what their role is and that they have a vested interest in the discussion;

- how to post meaningful and respectful comments and not off-topic ones for self-promotional reasons;

- to not take action contrary to guidelines and terms and conditions set by the blogger or social networking site;

- how to respond to positive and negative remarks. To, for example, not ignore bad reviews, but to respond in an open and honest way. In case of expectations not met, to show understanding, but take position. In case of real complaints, to admit and offer solutions. Customers are forgiving if you apologise. And how not to become overly defensive when a situation becomes antagonistic, but to take a discussion off the platform by inviting the user to e-mail or talk or to disengage in a polite manner;

- how to protect intellectual property, for example, by never writing about projects on which your organization is currently working;

- how to comply with laws and regulations regarding disclosure of identity (privacy policy);

- not to link to or post material that may in any way harm the reputation of organization or destination;

- to avoid posting information that will cast his or her employee in a bad light or reflect poorly on their ability to do their job;

- how to respect copyright;

- how to avoid conflicts of interest by not promoting personal projects, causes or opinions;

- not to harm third party interests and not to mention partners or customers without their express consent;

- to ask the Corporate Communications or Public Relations Department for advise when in doubt; and

- to refer all mainstream media inquiries to the Corporate Communications or Public Relations Department.

7.7.3 Creating and Implementing Social Media Policy

The steps in creating and implementing a Social Media Policy are:

- deciding who and/or which department in the organization is responsible for the overall Social Media Policy (often the Corporate Communications or Public Relations department);

- bringing together a working group consisting of members of all parts and levels of the organization. They can give valuable input as they are in contact with visitors and the wide variety of stakeholders. By involving them you also create acceptance/support;

- drafting the Social Media Policy as part of, and consistent with, the overall communication policy and existing communication guidelines;
• announcing and distributing the Social Media Policy by, for example, publishing it on the intranet;
• providing training where necessary;
• requiring employee signoff, that is, have employees sign to acknowledge that they have received the Social Media Policy and read it; and
• organizing monitoring and enforcement of the guidelines without discouraging the use of social media.

7.8 Social Media Advertising

It requires a significant amount of time and effort to building a presence on social media, develop a community around it and engage that community in content and conversations about your destination. Using paid media to amplify the effort you are making across your owned social media and the earned media this creates provides the DMO with an opportunity to drive community growth and levels of engagement more quickly than might be achieved through just organic growth.

Chapter 12 on paid media provides definitions, options, formats and guidelines for best practice for paid media in general. Section 12.7 in that chapter focusses on social media advertising.

7.9 Blogging and Micro-blogging

7.9.1 Definitions and Developments

A blog (short for ‘web log’) cannot be defined precisely. The characteristics of this type of website originally included:

• discrete entries called blog ‘posts’;
• a diary format: the most recent post appears first;
• unfiltered content;
• interaction: the possibility to leave comments and discuss, making blogging a form of social networking;
• an informal tone; and
• themed on a single subject.

Developments in recent years include the emergence and/or growth of:

• Blogware, a specialised form of a content management system specifically designed for creating and maintaining blogs. Examples of these easy to use and free (or inexpensive) publishing tools are WordPress, Blogger and Typepad. In addition, a wide variety of widgets is becoming available that can be ‘plugged into’ the Blogware and enrich the website;
• multi-author blogs or collaborative blogs with posts written by small groups, or large numbers, of authors and professionally edited;
• other media type blogs than mostly textual blogs, such as photo blogs, sketch blogs, video blogs (‘vlogs’), audio blogs (‘podcasts’), music blogs (‘MP3 blogs’), and mixed media blogs;

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Blogger, http://www.blogger.com/;
• corporate and organizational blogs next to the personal blogs, for reasons of branding, marketing, PR or internal communication (and adopting a more formal tone);

• micro-blogging, that is, the practice of posting small pieces of content on the internet, for reasons of keeping in touch with friends and fans and updating visitors or the wider public, facilitated by platforms and tools such as Tumblr, Twitter and Sina Weibo.\(^{14}\) Also, social networking sites have their own micro-blogging features, usually referred to as ‘status updates’;

• genre blogs such as travel blog (travellogs), niche blogs, art blogs and mom blogs;

• the impact of blogging upon public opinion, mainstream media and thus also marketing;

• blogs defined by the type of device used to compose it, e.g. the moblog (short for mobile blog); and

• the ways and level in which blogs are interconnected and integrated in other media via:
  – permanent links or permalinks, i.e. the unique URLs of a single post;
  – linkbacks in the form of refbacks, pingbacks or trackbacks;\(^{15}\)
  – backlinks, also known as incoming links, inbound links, inlinks, and inward links;
  – comments; and
  – blogrolls, i.e. affiliation with and recommendation of other blogs, usually by providing links to them in a sidebar list.

7.9.2 Blog Aggregators and Search Engines

Interest in blogs keeps growing. By the end of 2011, NM Incite, a Nielsen/McKinsey company, tracked over 181 million blogs around the world, up from 36 million only five years earlier in 2006.\(^{16}\) The blogosphere, the collective community of all blogs, is expanding. The leading blog search engine and directory, Technorati, currently indexes the content of more than 1.3 million blogs, of which 15,747 are tagged ‘Travel’. The site is a major source of top stories, opinions, photos and videos emerging across news, entertainment, technology, lifestyle, sports, politics and business. Technorati.com tracks not only the authority and influence of blogs, but also the most comprehensive and current index of who and what is most popular in the blogosphere. Google offers the blog search engine bloglines.

\(^{14}\) Tumblr, http://www.tumblr.com/;
Twitter, http://twitter.com;

\(^{15}\) See your blog software manual or Wikipedia for a detailed technical specification of these links: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linkback (10-05-2012).


For Bloglines go to http://www.bloglines.com/.
7.9.3 Best Blog Ideas

If done well, blogs and micro-blogs can:

• be a direct channel between the DMO and one of your target audiences and help to have a conversation in a way that is a genuine supplement to other communication channels in use;

• help the DMO to perform its role of thought leader;

• provide immediacy – especially helpful when dealing with fast-breaking news or a crisis; and

• present a human face and real voice for your DMO, and a perception as more honest and untouched by public relations spin.

You might want to:

• find a member of staff who is a genuine, frequent, and expert holiday taker in your destination. Ask them to blog about what they have done and are planning. This blogger could hand over to a new person every month. Guide them carefully about how the brand values need to be projected and about Social Media Policy in general (see section 7.7);

• appoint a member of the DMO’s frontline walk-in information office staff, who serves visitors face-to-face every day, to recount their FAQs and the unusual and entertaining questions that tourist office staff always get asked. They can re-tell visitors’ happy stories, provide tips on what is good, and advise on what should be avoided;

• find locals who have fun blogging;

• sponsor a professional travel writer, who specialises in your destination, to start a blog;

• invite a (famous) guest blogger; and

• offer a corporate blog. Be generous in sharing knowledge. Show media and stakeholders – but also visitors – what you are doing and allow them behind-the-scenes.

Remember to:

• ensure that your blog platform is designed to be easily indexed by search engines and your blog is clearly visible to search spiders. Consult search experts;

• see to it that blogs are embedded in a strong content management/marketing strategy;

• have an editorial calendar or a content grid (see chapter 4);

• keep each of your blogs to a well-defined topic, event or audience; generalised content will just do what your main website should be doing, and not do it as well. Be ready to start up when you have a hot issue, and drop it when it runs out of steam;

• be memorable. Do not post mediocre pieces. Be creative with types of content: pictures, drawings, infographics, video and audio. Scrap the blog if you cannot create compelling content regularly;

• tag your content. Tagging is the attachment of searchable keywords by individuals or website owners to online content – pages, articles, images, video etc. These tags are used for saving, sorting and sharing content (social bookmarking) and for browsing content others found (e.g. Delicious, Digg and StumbleUpon). Offer tags for each blog post and offer a list of tags as a contents overview in your blog. Popular blogware, helps you to automate this;

• offer to keep users informed of new posts by RSS (see section 5.8);

• encourage people to read your new posts in your website, social networking sites and e-mail newsletters. Re-purpose blog posts for social media and drive traffic to the blog. Some blogware
allows you to get your messages on social sites with just a few clicks, but consider optimizing content for each channel separately;

- engage with your tribe. Encourage people to comment and do not forget to reply;
- make sure readers can contact you (see section 5.8.2);
- make a share bar a consistent part of all your blogs so that recipients can share your content. Use of the social share buttons will also provide insights into which social media is used by your recipients;
- re-purpose valuable e-mail content for social media and drive traffic to the e-mail archive. Good e-mail marketing service providers allow you to get your messages on social sites with just a few clicks, but consider optimizing content for each channel separately;
- if they are, honestly identify your blogs as corporately-run, or they will be condemned by other bloggers as ‘flogging’ (fake blogging);
- focus on a great design while observing accessibility and usability guidelines for websites in general (see section 5.3);
- test to see whether your blog is easy to read on mobile devices (see chapter 10);
- get found for keyword phrases. Chapter 8 reveals important techniques for search engine optimization. Make your life easy by installing one of those all-in-one-SEO plug-ins for WordPress and other blogware, such as WordPress SEO By Yoast or HeadSpace 2 SEO;17
- see your blog as a hub in your inbound, ‘hub-and-spoke’ strategy and to create strong calls-to-action in order to encourage the user to do whatever you want him or her to do (see section 2.4.1 and section 5.6.1); and
- connect your blog to your website, for example by showing blog post titles on the homepage.

7.10 “Markets are conversations” – Twitter

“Markets are conversations” originates from The Cluetrain Manifesto, which began as a website in 1999, when the authors posted 95 theses about the new reality of the networked marketplace.18 More than a decade after its original publication, their message remains more relevant than ever. The rise and popularity of Twitter – the number of accounts surpassed 500 million in 2012 – underlines that we live in a conversation economy.19

For more information on SEO plug-ins, see, for example, Aune, S. (2009), 20 of the Best SEO Plugins for WordPress (online), available: http://mashable.com/2009/03/20/wordpress-seo-plugins/;


Twitter is made up of 140-character messages called Tweets. Whether it is a micro-blogging site or a conversation tool, a social networking site or a collaboration tool is a matter of discussion, but it depends on how a person or organization uses Twitter. Twitter can be used for many purposes, from communicating with friends to communicating internally with colleagues, as a helpdesk and to express commercial or political messages and broadcast news headlines.

### New users of Twitter

Follow these links which give you direct access to a description of features and manuals for Twitter:

- **Help**: http://support.twitter.com/
- **Twitter basics**: http://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics#
- **Twitter for business**: http://business.twitter.com/

### 7.10.1 A few Hints for Using Twitter

- Twitter allows 160 characters worth of information to be displayed in your bio (compared to 140 characters in a Tweet) and thus the opportunity to include keywords and keyword phrases.

- Autotweeting is usually not a good idea. Optimize content for each channel, also for Twitter. Unless followers know your content, for example your blog, and there are reasons for them to get automatic updates, do not autotweet.

- Hashtags, a word prefixed with the symbol #, can be most useful. Hashtags provide a means of grouping messages. One can search for the hashtag and find the messages that contain it. Include trending hashtags in your tweets if they are relevant to those tweets. This will allow anyone to see your tweets who is looking for that particular hashtag i.e. topic. Research and choose them in advance if you wish to use them to promote and centre the conversation around an upcoming event or a specific theme. Use them wisely and not too much as that is counterproductive.

- Although tweets have 140 characters, make sure tweets have 10-20 characters spare length. This way your tweets, plus the keywords in them, are not partly deleted when a user shares your tweet via RT@username. In addition, data show that 120-130 character tweets have the highest click-through rate.

- See to it that you have a thorough understanding of settings and differences in messaging. Realise, for example, that the way you place the Twitter handle @username in your tweet determines who sees that tweet. Twitter differentiates between a ‘reply’ and a ‘mention’. If you start a retweet or reply with the '@' symbol the person you send the message to, and anyone who follows both the person you send it to and you, see the tweet. No one else sees it. This mistake is often made when retweeting a message. Start your tweet with a quotation mark (”) or even just a full stop (.) when retweeting or with ‘Thank you @ username’ if it concerns for example a positive remark and you wish the tweet to be seen by all users. In that case the Twitter handle is a mention not a reply.

- Use the option ‘Featured Tweets’ which allows you to feature a tweet at the top of your Twitter feed to highlight an event or campaign. Support it with great images or videos.

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Hyatt's Twitter concierge service enables twittering hotel guests to tweet concerns, questions or requests to @HyattConcierge. The account is staffed 24/7 by specially trained agents within the corporate customer service group who are available to assist with typical concierge fare like spa appointments, golf outings and dinner reservations. @HyattConcierge will also field assorted guest complaints and queries.
VisitSweden and the Curators of Sweden

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Johannes Karlsson, Head of PR and Social Media, and Susanne Stübs, Research Co-ordinator Business Intelligence of VisitSweden for their input to this case study.\(^a\)

Sweden was the first country in the world to hand over the country’s official Twitter account to its citizens. The project Curators of Sweden is an initiative of the Swedish Institute and VisitSweden, both part of NSU, the National Board for the promotion of Sweden. Since December 2011 every week another person receives exclusivity over the Twitter account @sweden, which aims to present the country of Sweden through the mix of skills, experiences and opinions it actually consists of. By means of the various curators’ narrations, not one Sweden is conveyed, but several.

Johannes Karlsson, Head of PR and Social Media:

“The idea behind Curators of Sweden is that each curator will share both their own and relevant third party’s thoughts, stories, information and other content that is somehow linked to Sweden. The objective is that the curators, through their tweets, create interest and arouse curiosity for Sweden and the wide range the country has to offer. The expectation is that the curators will paint a picture of Sweden, different to that usually obtained through traditional media. Our target group for this campaign: the global traveller. Our primary markets: Europe and the United States of America.

Primarily we used word of mouth on Twitter as this entire initiative is focussed to this particular channel. The message was also spread to traditional media through our twelve offices abroad. Centrally we spread the message to a handful of very influential online news sources with high credibility within the social media.

Some items were developed in-house and others outsourced. The initiative was a co-op between VisitSweden, The Swedish Institute and the bureau Volontaire. Our budget was SEK 500,000.

As to measuring success: we took into account PR-value, Klout Score and number of followers on Twitter.\(^b\) The most important metric for us is the Klout Score, this indicates if we’re creating a dialog that is spread all over the world and it indicates if we’re creating new relations.

The results so far are overwhelming. Our Klout Score has been as a high as 80, the PR-value is counted in hundreds of million SEK and the number of followers had gone from 8,000 to 67,000. The initiative has also been awarded more than ten times in a number of prestigious marketing and communication competitions. Amongst others it has been awarded with a Grand Prix in Cannes in the Cyber category, a Clio Awards for PR and a Gold Effie Award for “Small Budget”.”

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\(a\) For more information see: http://curatorsofsweden.com/about/ (11-01-2013).


\(b\) See for more information on this service http://klout.com (08-09-2013).
7.11 Facebook

Facebook is a social networking service launched in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook differs from many other networking sites by the level of customisation, the many types of communication and interaction Facebook has integrated and Facebook’s requirement that users give their true identity. Since April 2008 Facebook is the leading social networking site based on monthly unique visitors, having overtaken main competitor MySpace.\(^{21}\)

Figure 7.7 is from December 2012 and reveals that five social networks dominate. Facebook leads in 127 of the 137 countries worldwide tracked by Alexa: with over 1 billion monthly active users of which more than 600 million are mobile. The following five social networks are dominant in at least one country in the world: Facebook, QZone, V Kontakte, Odnoklassniki, and Cloob.\(^{22}\)

**Figure 7.7  Vincinzo Cosenza’s ‘World Map of Social Networks’**

![World Map of Social Networks](http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/ (05-01-2012)).

**New users of Facebook**

Follow these links which give you direct access to a description of features and manuals for Facebook:

- Creating an account: http://www.facebook.com/help/?ref=contextual#!/help/34512135559712/
- Getting started Facebook Pages: http://www.facebook.com/help/?ref=contextual#!/help/364458366957655/
- Help: http://www.facebook.com/help/?ref=contextual
- Differences between Pages and Groups: http://www.facebook.com/help/155275634539412/

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\(^{21}\) For these facts and figures and a history of Facebook see: Wikipedia, Facebook (online), available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook#cite_note-126 (6-6-2012).

\(^{22}\) Alexa is the leading provider of free, global web metrics. You can search Alexa to discover the most successful sites on the web by keyword, category, or country. http://www.alexa.com/ (06-06-2012).
7.11.1 A few Hints for Using Facebook

• Upload an eye-catching cover photo. Be aware that it is not allowed to include:
  - calls to action such as ‘book now’;
  - references to user interface elements such as ‘like’ or ‘share’;
  - price or purchase info such as ‘now 50% off’; or
  - contact info such as web addresses and phone numbers in the information section.

• Facebook’s EdgeRank is not always understood. It is an algorithm that determines what shows up in a user’s news feed. The EdgeRank algorithm uses three components, each referred to as an ‘edge’: affinity, weight, time.
  - Affinity: is determined by the amount of interaction between any two given Facebook users. The more you interact with a fan, the more likely your post will show up in that fan’s newsfeed.
  - Weight: refers to the type of post. A ‘Share’ carries more weight than a comment, a comment is weightier than a ‘Like’, and a ‘Like’ weighs more than a click on the post.
  - Time Decay: refers to post timeliness. The older it becomes, the less relevant and important and thus less likely to appear in newsfeeds.

On average only about 17% of a business page’s posts show up in a fan’s news feed. So your aim should be to boost your EdgeRank. You might like to try monitoring your EdgeRank using, for example, EdgeRankChecker.

• Make an art of making Facebook communications conversational. One strategy to ensure engagement is to ask fans questions that are quick and easy to answer. There is a huge difference between fan engagement for open and closed questions.

• Facebook offers the ability for brands to increase reach for important posts and updates. See section 12.7 for these and other paid options in Facebook.

• Launch contests to increase engagement. Keep in mind that Facebook has very specific guidelines about what you can and cannot do when running a contest on your page. Contests must be done using a Facebook Page App.

• Research what are optimal posting times and frequencies. Consider your audience demographic, both days of the week and hours of the day. Remember timeliness is an important factor in Facebook’s EdgeRank.


7.12 Pinterest

Pinterest launched a beta website in the United States of America in March 2010. Pinterest allows users to share, curate and discover new interests by posting images, videos, and other visual objects on virtual boards. It was only a matter of months before Pinterest became more popular than LinkedIn, Foursquare, Instagram and Google+ in the United States of America based on traffic volume. Early research shows that Pinterest is more effective at driving traffic compared to other social media sites.

New users of Pinterest

Follow these links which give you direct access to a description of features and manuals for Pinterest:

- Help: http://pinterest.com/about/help/
- Getting started: http://pinterest.com/about/help/
- Pinterest for business: http://business.pinterest.com/

7.12.1 A few Hints for Using Pinterest

- Your goal is for people to pin your content, to see the content you pinned yourself, by having pinners follow you and/or your boards and repin your content. In order to achieve that you need to define a strategy to increase followers at both the account and board level including:
  - featuring great visual content in websites and blogs;
  - make pinning your content easier by placing Pinterest “Pin it” button on your company website. Ensure your website allows it and does not block pinning;
  - engage with others’ pins by liking or commenting on or repinning them and following others as they might follow you back;
  - involve your users and Pinterest users by organizing competitions. Ask them, for example, to pin images on their own boards related to your destination or company or a certain theme and to mark them with a hashtag to making them findable for you and others. Repin that user-generated content on to a special board of your own. Consult the Pinterest term of use;
  - promote your Pinterest presence through other platforms and add the Pinterest “follow” button to your website.

- Invest in images, large, high-resolution and captivating and in videos. Think also of visual objects such as infographics and data charts, brochure covers, photos of visitors enjoying your destination or feature an offline event. Your aim should be to become the go-to Pinterest account for a certain topic.

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27 Examples of publications discussing Pinterest’s growth, user demography and other data:

  [Lunden, I. (2012), As Pinterest’s Hype Peaks, Growth May Be Slowing (online), available: http://techcrunch.com/2012/04/22/as-pinterests-hype-peaks-there-are-external-signs-that-its-growth-is-slowing/ (20-07-2012).]
You need to find creative ways to promote your destination or organization. Pinterest is very much about lifestyle, not about overly promoting products or services. Take time to define your approach for your brand account, and for each board, and aim to create the most inspiring board on a specific topic, preferably based on few core keywords that are already part of your SEO strategy.

Check your rights to use images and make sure you respect copyright restrictions, also when you, for example, repin images. If it is your wish to keep your website content off of Pinterest include the “nopin” tags Pinterest has developed for you.

Do not forget to embed channel management in the organization and to appoint a curator for an account as a whole or for individual pages, pinboards, who will see to regular updates.

### 7.13 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

Social media measurement tends to focus on the DMO’s social media brand platforms and its own social networks. Facebook Insights is a good example of a social media measurement tool – getting the most out of it is discussed in more detail in section 20.7.6.

Metrics generally include:

- **Audience size** (e.g. number of followers) and **network size** (a calculation based on the number of people your immediate followers are connected to);
- **Reach** – the viral impact of any content being shared by your audience across your network;
- **Engagement** – the number of interactions (e.g. comments and post likes);
- **Sentiment** – the nature of the response (positive or negative); and
- **Outcomes** – resulting traffic and specific conversion events.

It is likely that any social media campaigns you are running have targets for these kinds of metrics. It is important you have the measurement tools in place to track progress against these metrics and the specific targets you set for your own social media platforms and networks.

Social media monitoring (sometimes referred to as brand monitoring) is about listening to conversations on the web around your brand and your destination, often referred to as ‘buzz’, and seeks to understand the following questions:

- **How many mentions are taking place?**
- **Where are the mentions appearing?**
- **Are the mentions positive or negative?**
- **What sentiments are being expressed?**

Chapters 19 and 20 on Measurement and Evaluation and Web and Social Analytics will take you in more detail through these issues.
Further Reading


Chapter 8

Search Engine Optimization

8.1 About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which helps consumers to find your website(s). It includes basic principles, core concepts for on- and off-page optimization, through to running a fully integrated and ongoing programme of activities that aim to increase natural search traffic.

Key Messages

- The objective of search engine optimization (SEO) is to rank highly in natural search results for the keyphrases you are targeting.
- It is important to understand how your (potential) visitors are searching for what your destination has to offer within the context of your specific marketing objectives.
- You must ensure that your content management system and site information architecture supports visibility of your content in natural search and optimization for your target keyphrases.
- Whilst good on-page optimization is an important ranking factor for natural search, your success in ranking for what are likely to be competitive keyphrases is going to depend on developing site authority and socializing your content.
- ‘Social signals’ are becoming increasingly important as a ranking factor.
- Think carefully about how you approach the mobile channel and the effort you put behind optimizing for mobile devices.
- Successful search engine optimization is increasingly focussed on well integrated e-marketing campaigns and the development of online brand equity in general rather than delivering specific SEO tactics in isolation.

8.2 What Is Search Engine Optimization?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a website from search engines via ‘natural’ (‘organic’ or ‘algorithmic’) search results. It means ensuring that a website is accessible to search engines, selecting appropriate key search terms to target, manipulating the site content, and fulfilling other critical success factors.

The objective is to ensure that each page of the site is ranked highly for specified target terms when they are searched for on the different search engines e.g. Google, Bing and Yahoo.

SEO may be used as an alternative to, or together with, search engine advertising (SEA) – paid, sponsored or content network listings offered by search engines (via Google AdWords, for example, where the advertiser is charged each time someone clicks on one of their paid for placements and visits their site) (see section12.4 on paid-for advertising).
Search engine marketing (SEM) therefore comprises search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA).

SEO requires an understanding of:

- How search algorithms (the formulas by which rankings are calculated) may work, how they are developing and how any changes are likely to affect you. These formulas are a closely guarded secret and understanding them usually means drawing conclusions based on search engine rankings.

- How people using the web might search. This includes the words or phrases they might enter into a search engine when searching for what your destination has to offer, as well as the seasonal nature associated with different types of search.

- How a website’s coding, content, presentation and structure may influence the ability of search engines to navigate and parse (‘spider’ or ‘crawl’), and index content.

- How you can use strategies and techniques ‘off-page’, i.e. beyond your own site, to support your SEO and improve your rankings for your target keyphrases.

At its most basic level, success in SEO depends on the following areas:

- Understanding your customers – what are they searching for and how are they searching for it?

- Technical set-up and site structure – can the search engines index the content?

- Content and tagging – does it help search engines to find you as well as work for your customers?

- Links – do you have reputation and authority online?

- Social – can your customers interact and share the content across their own networks?

The structure of this chapter is based around these same areas and although a complete guide to SEO is beyond the scope of this handbook (we refer to plenty of additional resources) it should give you enough knowledge to be able to make well informed SEO decisions and get the basics right. In addition it will support you in any discussions you are having with a SEO or digital marketing agency about the subject.

There are plenty of estimates for the relative effect of each of these areas on success across natural search. However, for any competitive keyphrases, success depends on what you are doing offsite. Increasingly, and in line with the way the search algorithms are developing, success in SEO and natural search is becoming more about delivering better integrated e-marketing rather than specific SEO tactics in isolation.

### 8.2.1 Which Search Engines Matter?

Crawler-based search engines dominate. In a lot of countries across the world it is Google, Yahoo and Bing that dominate the search market – but by no means all. There is significant regional variation and this is something the DMO should consider in its international marketing efforts.

In the United States of America search market Google, Yahoo and Bing dominate almost 94% of the search market. Google currently delivers 65% of search engine queries from the United States whilst Yahoo and Bing deliver 16% and 13% respectively.\(^1\) At the present time Google continues to increase its market share, Yahoo is year on year losing market share and Bing is year on year making reasonably significant gains. In addition to the big players some markets also have local or specialist search engines operating within them – some powered by the major providers identified above, others based on

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\(^1\) comScore, http://www.comscore.com (01-02-2013).
directory models rather than crawler technology. The demographics associated with each search engine vary and this represents something else that you might consider when making decisions about which search engines you aim to optimize for.

Good examples of regional variations include the Chinese market, which is dominated by Baidu – delivering 73% of search engine queries. In Russia Yandex dominates – delivering 65% of market share and in Japan Yahoo occupies approximately 51% of the search engine market. It is important that you consult appropriate statistical research for each of the international markets in which you are active.2

8.2.2 How Do Crawler-Based Search Engines Work?

Crawler-based search engines have three major elements:3

- The spider or crawler visits a web page, reads it and then follows links to other pages available on the site. This is what is meant when we say a site is being ‘spidered’ or ‘crawled’. The spider returns to the site on a regular basis and looks for changes.

- The text and content of the pages the spider visits is ‘cached’ – it goes into the search engine’s index. If the spider finds pages that have changed, this index is updated accordingly.

- Search engine software forms the third element of any crawler-based search engine. It is this software, based on a complex set of algorithms, which associates a particular search query to a series of ordered results on the Search Engine Results Ranking pages (SERPs).

The entries shown in SERPs usually comprise a combination of:

- the page title – the HTML title tag: <title>your text</title> ;
- the meta description – the HTML meta tag: <meta name = "description" content = "your text">);
- the page URL or a shortened version of it;
- social share buttons (for example the Google ‘+1’ button);
- mouse over functionality to find out more information or see the cached page itself; and
- the provision of sitelinks, in some cases.

Search engines (to a certain extent) reward high ranking sites for attaining the top results in the SERPs by displaying a number of links to specific sections of the site – usually beneath the main listing. Sitelinks are particularly relevant for brand searches (where the searcher is using a brand name in their search query or, in the case of destinations, the name of the destination) and they can include up to twelve specific links. These can be managed via the relevant search engine’s webmaster tools.

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8.3 SEO Foundations

Before you embark on optimizing your own website, or any other SEO strategies to support your ranking for specific keyphrases, you need to get the right foundations in place. This includes ensuring that your website platform is search engine friendly and supports what you are trying to achieve in terms of search engine optimization.

Most importantly, you need to undertake research that will help you to understand how your customers are searching for the attractions and activities that your destination has to offer. Alongside your marketing objectives, this provides the basis for deciding which keyphrases to target and ultimately how you achieve high rankings for them in natural search.

8.3.1 Keyphrase Research

Keyphrase research, like developing a content strategy, represents a foundation piece of work and is core to the success of any search marketing programme whether it is search engine optimization or paid search (SEA). For any reasonably sized programme, we recommend that you engage specialists to help you to undertake the initial keyphrase research.

Source: www.google.co.uk.

The search engines frequently update the way they display results in the SERPs so it is important to monitor how your pages appear in searches. If necessary, make appropriate adjustments to the page mark-up (title tag and meta description) to support click-through from the results pages to your site.

You absolutely must try to rank on the first page of the results to see significant traffic coming from that particular search query. It is also important to try to rank as highly as possible on the first page. Research suggests that 60% of the click-through is coming from the top three results listed on the SERPs – the average click-through rate for a 1st, 2nd and 3rd result being 36%, 13% and 10% respectively.4

That, quite simply, defines the challenge – you need to rank highly for the keyphrases you are targeting, support click-through from the SERPs and convert users accordingly once they arrive at your site.

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4 Optify (online), available: http://www.optify.net (07-12-2011).
You need to be clear from the outset what you are trying to achieve with your search engine marketing. For example, if you are primarily concerned with raising awareness of your destination you are likely to be targeting a different set of keyphrases compared to if you are trying to drive leads and conversion for accommodation in your destination. You may be trying to do both of these things but it defines the starting point for your keyphrase research.

Keyphrase research can be approached in a number of different ways but broadly speaking the process involves the following stages:

- **Defining your marketing objectives**: Make sure you understand what you want to achieve with search engine marketing. That also includes the budget and resources that you are going to be able to allocate to this area of work (see chapter 2).

- **Developing a 'seed list'**: Consider your target segments and the words and phrases they might be using to search for what your destination has to offer and the products and services available in your destination. Ideally you will have developed visitor personas for each of your target segments and this will help you to understand their online behaviour and how they undertake research about your destination. Consider synonyms, colloquialisms and the vernacular. Include your brand terms, i.e. the name of your organization and the destination itself.

- **Keyphrase generation**: Based on the seed list you have developed this stage generally uses a range of free and paid for tools to generate what is essentially a large list of keyphrases that might or might not be relevant to your destination and your specific marketing objectives. This will help to identify a full list of keyphrase ‘variants’ – for example, the singular, plural, reverse word order, apostrophes, hyphens and of course misspellings. It will also help you to understand what kind of ‘modifiers’ people are using when searching for your products and services e.g. cheap, discount, luxury, family, romantic. These are words that make up longer keyphrase queries such as ‘cheap hotels’ and ‘luxury weekend breaks’.

- **Keyphrase analysis**: This will include associating monthly search volume to each of the keyphrases identified. It usually includes looking at the competition for each of those keyphrases and the types of categories that are emerging. Keyphrase tools use a variety of metrics to assess the level of competition associated with a particular keyphrase e.g. the average cost per click via paid search for that keyphrase. More in-depth SEO competition analysis looks at who is ranking for that keyphrase and what the profile of those competitor domains are – for example, overall domain authority, numbers of links to the domain and the make-up of their on-page mark-up (see section 8.12). Finally, it is worth taking note of seasonal variations throughout the year that will help to define appropriate and well-timed strategies.

- **Categorization**: The keyphrases need to be organized based on the patterns that are emerging. Once again, you will need to consider your marketing objectives and organise the keyphrases into key themes, products and services. This also needs to respect your content strategy, the information you are providing on your website (see chapter 4) and the way you are organizing this information on your website.

Keyphrase research helps you to gain a detailed understanding of the keyphrases that might be relevant in your pursuit of specific marketing objectives. The next stage is critical – you need to decide which keyphrases are a priority and which ones you are going to target. Consider the following:

- Consider each keyphrase in terms of how relevant it is to your marketing objectives and the potential you have to influence someone arriving at your site from that particular keyphrase. You need to be relevant and be able to convert that user. Conversion might include a variety of actions e.g. interacting with specific content, watching a video, ordering a brochure, signing up for a newsletter or searching for and purchasing specific products and services.

- Be clear about what the competition is for the keyphrases you are considering. It may be worth doing more in-depth SEO competition analysis at this stage around these keyphrases. Part of your search engine optimization strategy is likely to include developing site authority through
an appropriate link-building programme. In the longer term, this will make it easier for you to compete for keyphrases that are more competitive.

- You need to make sure there is enough volume for the keyphrases you are targeting to make it worthwhile developing a search engine optimization strategy around them. Search volume, relevance, conversion potential and competition are critical factors when deciding which keyphrases to target.

- Distinguishing between brand and non-brand search traffic is important. Brand search traffic relates to search queries that contain your brand name, name of your DMO or your destination name. Whilst that is important, targeting non-brand search traffic provides a clear opportunity for targeting people that have not yet decided to travel to your destination.

The number of keyphrases you target depends on the factors outlined above but as a guide you should at least define the following:

- A priority and secondary keyphrase – the basis of your primary mark-up (section 8.4.2); and
- a list of additional target keyphrases – the basis of your content vocabulary (section 8.4.3).

Although we recommend that you involve a specialist in this process there are many free tools that you can use to undertake keyphrase research yourself and monitor changes. They include:

- Google AdWords Keyword estimator – https://adwords.google.com;
- Microsoft AdCentre Keyword forecasting – http://advertising.microsoft.com; and
- Wordtracker’s free basic keyword demand – https://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/.

Further Information


8.3.2 The Importance of Technical Set-up and Site Structure

It is critical that a website structure and coding is search engine friendly. Many destination websites still have technical barriers that prevent search engine crawlers from indexing their content properly. For example, these include the following:

- **Flash generated pages, content and Flash navigation**: Flash is an application with which animations can be created and although Google can now index content held within Flash animations it cannot be guaranteed and other search engines may not be able to index it at all. The use of Flash is entirely acceptable although it might be better to embed it into pages that have the right primary mark-up (page URL, page title, meta description and <h1> tag) to support the indexing of those pages in search engines.
• **JavaScript navigation:** This is a programming language commonly used to provide dropdown or rollover subsidiary navigation menus. An easy test to perform on your website is to turn off JavaScript in your browser (often in the content settings). This will enable you to see the site, and its navigation, as a search engine crawler would see it.

• **Complex database driven URLs:** These should be masked with conventional URL formats (see below and section 5.2.6, Page URLs matter). If the content of a particular page is dynamically generated as a result of the user making a specific search on your site (and the search engines cannot replicate this search) the content on that page will not be indexed.

• **HTML Frame construction:** Often associated with older sites. HTML frames divide content in independent windows or sub windows. These multiple views offer designers a way to keep certain information visible, while other views are scrolled or replaced. This can create a barrier for search engine crawlers although the technique has largely been replaced by the use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) in website construction.

Careful consideration must be given to how you organize the information on your site. The practice of Information Architecture is concerned with how content is organized on a website to support both usability and search engine optimization. At its simplest level you need to make sure that your site structure provides individual and unique pages that you can optimize for the full range of specific priority and secondary target keyphrases identified through your keyphrase research (see section 8.3.1).

### Further Information

The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) provides useful guidelines – [http://www.w3.org/WAI/] (14-12-2012).


### 8.3.3 Choosing a Content Management System

You must ensure that your content management system (CMS) supports search engine optimization (see chapter 4). This is a prerequisite for any CMS and, whilst most modern CMSs do this as part of getting the basics right it is worth checking that your CMS allows you to do the following:

• Update or ‘rewrite’ the URLs to support your on-page optimization;

• update the ‘primary mark-up’ for a page – i.e. page title and meta description;

• use the HTML header and sub header code `<h1>`, `<h2>` tags to signify important headings which may contain the keywords you want to optimize a page for;

• add and edit alternate text to images;

• insert key search-term-rich links between pages and to other sites;

• support the implementation of ‘server side’ redirects – often referred to as 301 redirects; and

• create a custom 404 (‘page not found’) for those pages that are no longer found on the server.
8.3.4 Site Audits

A site audit provides a useful starting point for a SEO programme. Site audits support other areas of your e-marketing but they also give you a holistic overview when it comes to planning your SEO strategies. Site audits can get very detailed and in-depth and are usually carried out by specialists or your SEO agency. However, it is possible, with basic knowledge, to carry out your own audit reasonably quickly and identify what the significant problems might be.

Get an overview of your web analytics and uncover some of the patterns that are emerging (see chapter 20):

- Where site traffic is concerned look across the year, months and weeks and identify specific peaks in traffic. What are the trends and why are they emerging? Look at where that traffic is coming from – direct (people putting the URL into their browser), referral (from links on other sites) and search (both paid and natural).
- Where search is concerned, what is the balance between non-paid and paid search? What is the balance between brand and non-brand keywords (i.e. those keywords that do not mention your destination or your organization)?
- Which are the biggest referring sites and what is driving direct traffic? Getting to grips with integration across online and offline is a foundation of a good e-marketing strategy.
- What content are site users looking at and engaging with? That includes popular content pages, what is happening on the pages themselves and what are the user journeys across the site?
- Clearly you need to identify who these users are and look for user data that goes beyond web analytics – like geography, language and interestingly what browsers are being used.
- Most importantly, you need to understand what is happening in terms of conversion – across key user journeys and the set of goals you identify as conversion actions on your site.

Where your ability to support natural search is concerned you need to consider the following:

- Homepage – what are your first impressions? Are the page title, page description and <h1> heading in line with your target keyphrases? How does this compare to your major competitors and the sites you are trying to rank against?
- Navigation and site indexing – identify any immediate problems associated with the site structure. That includes tools like the use of JavaScript for site navigation but you also need to be sure that the navigation and structure allows the search engine crawlers to navigate through the sites.
- Category and hub pages – these are the pages that you need to optimize for your target keyphrases. They need to have appropriate primary mark-up to support the indexing of content on them. You also need to develop internal links to these pages from other pages within your site.
- Site indexing – ensuring search engines can and have indexed the site content. A simple test to see if the content of your web pages is indexed by the search engines is to paste some of the content from the deepest sections of your site into a search engine (in inverted commas) and see if that page is returned.

There are also technical questions and issues you should work with your web developer to investigate and address if needed. They include the following:

- You should have a robots.txt file on your ‘root domain’ (the top level of your domain) that allows search engines to index your site and prevents search engine site crawlers indexing content you might not want them to index. E.g. specific documents such as editor style guidelines you only want people to access through a link you have sent them.
• You should have appropriate redirects set up (often referred to as 301 redirects) for pages that no longer exist on your site but might still exist in search engines indexes or have links from external sites to them.

• The correct implementation of the ‘canonical tag’. Essentially this tells the search engines which page is the ‘main’ page and the one that should be indexed. For example, every website has a version associated with it that is the ‘www’ version and a ‘non www’ version e.g. http://destination.com. The canonical tag lets search engines know which of these is the main site.

• The frequency to which your site is being crawled and the last time it was crawled and the upload of a suitable Sitemap coded in Extensible Markup Language (XML) and HTML. Creating an XML sitemap or submission to search engines will help to ensure that the full site is crawled.

• The speed at which your pages are being delivered to your users. This also forms one of the ranking factors applied by the search engines so you need to make sure your pages are being served quickly enough and you have the right amount of server resource to maintain good page speed.

Other areas you need to consider as part of a site audit (which are covered in more detail elsewhere in this handbook) include the following:

• To rank for any reasonably competitive keyphrases you will need to develop suitable site authority in the eyes of the search engines. A variety of factors influence site authority but, quite simply, links matter. It is not just the quantity of links that are important but also the quality of those links – links from relevant sites that use appropriate anchor text (the keyphrases in the link text that should ideally contain the ones you want to optimize that page for). Reputation analysis is concerned with measuring site authority in relation to your competitors.

• Increasingly search engines are adding ‘social signals’ as a ranking factor. This means that your site and your e-marketing activities need to support the interaction and sharing of your content across social channels. You need to consider, as part of the site audit, what your site is doing to empower your community to act on your behalf and make sure it supports that through the addition of appropriate content and functionality (see section 8.6).

• Search engine optimization should not only be concerned with attracting consumers to your site. It also needs to consider what happens when they arrive there. You need to consider how you improve usability and support engagement and conversion across your site (see section 8.4.5).

**Further Information**

Danny Dover is a SEO consultant and writer. He also worked for SEOMoz.org as their Lead SEO. His book provides a useful and very pragmatic guide about carrying out site audits and implementing SEO:


**8.4 On-page Optimization for Your Website**

You need to ensure that your own web pages are optimized for the keyphrases that you are targeting. This includes primary mark-up (page title, meta description and headings) for each page as well as the text and other content elements that are on the page itself.
8.4.1 Page URLs Matter

The URL or address of a website page is important and forms part of the primary mark-up associated with that page. Beyond the parent domain (i.e. www.destination.com) it should, as far as possible, contain target search terms for that page.

If a site is database driven, the URLs should be rewritten with conventional page URLs that contain the right keyphrases for that page. For example:

- **Wrong:** www.destination.com/57429/22.bb.html/?profile=NDpMTOSbRGt+ty=234;
- **Right:** www.destination.com/accommodation.html

(For more information on domain names and page URLs see chapter 6).

8.4.2 Optimizing Primary Mark-up for Your Target Keyphrases

The following instructions contain technical terms and references to HTML code (title tag, meta description and <h1> or <h2>). Opinions do vary but this provides a basic introduction to optimizing the primary mark-up on a website page. If present in the website, you can see the HTML code by clicking in the browser menu on ‘View’ and then ‘Source’ or ‘Page source’ (depending on the browser). If necessary, ask your web developer for assistance when going through the steps for the first time. Almost all content management systems (section 4.7) will allow you to add primary mark-up yourself.

**Step 1:** Make sure you are clear about which keyphrases you want to optimize a page for.

- Generally, you allocate two keyphrases to each page – a primary and secondary keyphrase. Carrying out appropriate keyphrase research will ensure you are targeting the right search terms (see section 8.3.1).
- You need to consider your site structure in doing this, and if necessary, make changes to it, so that you can allocate your set of target keyphrases to specific pages on your site.

**Step 2:** Edit the URL so that it contains the primary and secondary keyphrases.

- Ensure that the URLs are not too long because they will be truncated in the SERPs and they will become cumbersome if you need to use them in offline or printed marketing materials. Long URLs are also less useful to the user.
- The specific keywords in a phrase can be separated using a dash e.g. www.destination.com/holiday-accommodation/hotels-and-guesthouses/
- Include the destination region and/or country name in text on the footer of each page to help to optimize search opportunities for the important geographical terms.

**Step 3:** Edit the title tag (maximum 70 characters) to include the target terms for each page.

- There are several schools of thought as to the ideal content for the HTML title tag, which will be visible to site users at the top of the browser window (usually in blue), and should be a clear statement of what that page is about. The choice, to a certain extent, depends on the strength of your brand. For a destination, region or town that is well known you should lead with that. For example:

  Destination | Priority keyphrase | Secondary keyphrase
  or
  Priority keyphrase | Secondary keyphrase | Destination
It might also be useful to make your official status clear in the HTML title tag but avoid using them purely for branding – and resist the temptation to repeat a long list of keywords. You need to be clear what keywords you want to optimize each page for.

**Step 4:** Edit the meta description for that page (maximum 156 characters).

The meta description is not currently used by search engines as a ranking factor for that page but it plays an important role in terms of generating click-through to that page form the SERPs. You need to think carefully about how best to describe the content on the page so that it is attractive for the user to click on and their expectations are met once they arrive at that page.

**Step 5:** Make sure your primary and secondary keywords appear in your page headings.

- Most importantly and generally at the top of the page you need to make sure they are included in the `<h1>` tag. There are different schools of thought about how to do this (and the extent to which they are used as a ranking factor) but it is a good example of where the text needs to work for the user as well as search engines. So make it readable but include your primary and secondary keyphrases where possible.

- The `<h2>` tag is less important in terms of influencing the indexing and ranking of a particular page but once again it can include relevant keyphrases and certainly helps to support good user experience across the page.

Much has been written about the value of adding keywords to the meta keywords text but the current consensus is that they are not used by search engines as a ranking and indexing factor so do not waste time including them. They will only serve as a quick and easy way to let your competitors know which keyphrases you are targeting! One possible exception to this rule is where you are using that part of the metadata to apply further taxonomy to the page (see chapter 4) and thus using it to manage and organize content in your CMS.

### 8.4.3 Optimizing On-page Content and Other On-page Elements

You should be targeting priority and secondary keyphrases for each page and use these to develop your primary mark-up. At most, you should be targeting three keyphrases in this way. That does not mean however that you cannot optimize your on-page content to cover a broader list of keyphrases – including those that are ‘medium’ priority.

Your keyphrase research will help you to develop a ‘vocabulary’ for each category, hub or otherwise important page on your website. You can use that vocabulary to develop on-page content beyond the primary mark-up. Use the following guide:

- Create a keyphrase ‘vocabulary’ of between 5 and 20 medium priority keywords for each page you want to optimize content for.

- You can include these keywords in the `<h2>` headings on the page. Although the search engines do not use `<h2>` tags as a critical ranking factor it provides a mechanism for creating sections of content that focus on your medium priority keywords.

- Include your medium priority keywords throughout the text on the page. Your keyphrase ‘vocabulary’ can be built into the content and style guidelines you provide to your editors (see chapter 4) that will be working on that page.

You can also support search engine optimization of on-page content using image ‘alt attributes’. Most CMSs will allow you to add meta information for each image and you can associate an alt attribute to each image on the page. Depending on what the image is and which page it is on you can select appropriate keyphrases from your priority keyphrases and keyphrase ‘vocabulary’.
Finally, remember that the content on your web pages needs to work for the user as much as the search engines. There is often a fine balance between optimizing content for the search engines and making it relevant, useful and engaging to your users. Ultimately, this will define your success across your e-marketing activities. If the content on the page has been developed primarily for search engines and looks odd to you then it probably will to the user. An assessment of this can be built into usability and user experience research (see chapter 19).

### 8.4.4 Developing Keyphrase-rich Anchor Internal Links

Consider how your internal links support your category or hub pages – the ones that you are optimizing for your priority primary and secondary keyphrases.

Make sure there are plenty of keyphrases rich text links between pages, whether or not the main menu(s) are text. The anchor text should contain the target search terms of the page it leads to. However, remember the links and text associated with them still need to be clear and readable for the user too!

Such links also provide useful alternative routes to key information for site users and can improve user experience across the site. For example:

- **Wrong:** Click here to book luxury hotels in (destination) now.
- **Right:** Book luxury hotels in (destination) online now.

### 8.4.5 Supporting On-site Engagement and Conversion

Ensuring your website content is optimized in line with the keyphrases you are targeting represents only a small part of what needs to be done on your own website to ensure you achieve your marketing objectives.

Ultimately, success will depend on your ability to engage the user and drive specific actions on site that represent key conversions and success in terms of your business and marketing objectives (see chapter 2).

### 8.5 Off-page Optimization – Beyond Your Own Website

For any search engine marketing programme the battle is usually won or lost off the page. Changes in the way the search engines work is making what you do beyond your own website increasingly important. The search engines will continue to reward well-developed and integrated e-marketing programmes. Search engine optimization, once defined as a discipline in itself, now needs to be delivered through other elements of your e-marketing activities and integrated with them. This defines the biggest SEO challenge!

#### 8.5.1 Developing Site Authority

Everything discussed so far forms a pre-requisite to any search engine marketing programme – ensuring your web marketing platform supports SEO, understanding how your customers are searching for what your destination has to offer and making sure your web pages are optimized for the target keyphrases associated with them.

However, this is usually not enough to rank highly for your priority keyphrases – especially in the competitive field of travel and tourism. The objective is simple – for the customers you are targeting, at the particular point in their customer journey you are trying to influence, your site should be regarded as the most useful source of information on the destination.
Achieving ‘authority’ in the eyes of the search engines is the goal of every SEO programme. Search engines strive, through their algorithms, to reflect the views of real people. As well as having the best content online, you must address two factors that affect ranking in all major search engines:

- Creating links from other relevant sites that already have authority; and
- developing useful, engaging content for your users that they will want to share.

### 8.5.2 Use Tools to Understand the Opportunities

You need to understand who is already linking to your site and the value of those links in terms of creating site authority. This will help you to develop strategies for building links, based on the quality links you are already attracting. You might also want to investigate the link profile of your competitors – those sites that are ranking for the keyphrases you are targeting. This will help you to understand where your competitors are getting links from, what the opportunities might be and therefore the gains you need to make to compete effectively.

Like the keyphrase analysis tools mentioned in section 8.3.1 above there are a range of free tools and paid for tools to support the analysis of a website’s link profile. They will provide the following kinds of metrics and information:

- Overall site and specific page authority;
- the number of internal links across the site;
- the number and authority of external links to the site and specific pages;
- the number of links which can be followed by the search engines; and
- detailed information about each of the links themselves – including the anchor text used.

As search engines increasingly incorporate social signals as a ranking factor, the same tools are starting to include an analysis of what is happening across your social media channels in terms of sharing and endorsements of your content.

Popular paid for link analysis tools include the following:

- Open Site Explorer (developed by SEOMoz) – http://www.opensiteexplorer.org/;
- Majestic SEO – http://www.majesticseo.com/; and

You can also use the free options provided by search engine webmaster tools and your web analytics package will provide you with all sorts of reporting options about, for example, referring sites and traffic via specific links to your site.

### 8.5.3 Link Building Strategies

The important part of any link building strategy is that you are developing links to other relevant sites. The combination of authority and relevance defines the quality of any in-bound link to your site. It is much better to develop fewer links with high authority and relevant sites than to focus on the number of links you have to your site. Quality is much more important than quantity.

You need to generate links for the right reasons. A link is the online manifestation of a relationship between individuals, organizations and businesses. Once again, it comes back to content and making
sure the content you have on your site is useful and engaging to those people that visit your site and, where link building is concerned, those people that will link to it.

There has been an ongoing debate around the value of, and risks associated with, paying for links. The major search engines such as Google and Bing have made it clear for some time that they consider paid for links to be against their guidelines. More recently changes to the way the algorithm deals with poor quality content and poor quality links (often referred to as Panda and Penguin) means buying links from a link broker is not recommended and is a particularly high-risk strategy. If you are going to buy directory links, or pursue free directory links, they absolutely must be of high authority and be reputable. Free directory listings are considered of little value and the value of them will continue to decline.

Paid for links might also include those that are negotiated as part of a package – for example with a blogger who has been hosted on a press trip and has been commissioned to write about your destination. Although this might appear unethical, it is no different from many traditional PR approaches employed by the DMO but you do need to make sure suitable disclosure is made on the blogger’s site.

The existing relationships that the DMO has, and the ones it builds through other marketing activities, represents one of the biggest strengths you can build on in terms of link building:

• Create links between your destination marketing partners at the national, regional and local level.
Pursue links with your tourism and travel trade partners. Make sure your existing relationships result in an appropriate link to your site.

• Many DMOs have grant and sponsorship programmes, for example, events that are taking place in their destination. Any programme of support or sponsorship, where possible, should include link acquisition as part of the deal.

• Build link acquisition into your ongoing PR strategy. This applies to traditional PR as much as online PR. Build links to useful and engaging content into your press releases. Try to negotiate a link with a journalist working for the national press or the online version of that newspaper.

• Leverage relationships with tourism businesses themselves. You can support this with content led initiatives such as creating a blog competition that places a ‘best blog’ widget on individual businesses’ sites containing a link back to your site.

Most importantly, you should be developing links as a result of the good quality content you are putting on your site and developing for your destination. If your users and the networks around your destination think your content is relevant, useful and engaging they will link to it. You can support this by thinking about the content you create as a ‘linkable asset’. Examples of linkable assets include:

• videos – from the inspirational to the specific e.g. covering a particular event or tourism product;

• widgets – that perform something useful e.g. accommodations search; and

• infographics – interesting, entertaining or surprising information about your destination.

Remember also to make the most of every link to your site:

• If your link analysis highlights broken links to your site (a 401 error in your webmaster tools) and that link is of potential value to your SEO you should at very least set up a 301 redirect for the landing page to make sure the link equity is passed on to your site. You should also contact the linking site to reconfigure the link correctly.

• Identify the links to your site that are ‘no-follow’. The no-follow tag instructs a search engine that that particular link should not influence the target website’s ranking. There are good reasons for sites using the no-follow tag – e.g. online advertising and reducing the likelihood of spam on forum and blog comments. However, if there is good reason for the link to be followed by search engines you should reconfigure it as such.
• Support the use of appropriate anchor text across the links to your site. You also need to make sure they are directed at appropriate sections of your website. For example, if you are targeting ‘family holidays’ as one of your priority keyphrases you should ensure that it is used in the anchor text and it links directly to the family holiday section on your site.

Link building requires a long term and sustained approach. It should be built into everything you do and become a central part of your e-marketing activities.

Case Study – Creating content to drive link building for Sovereign Luxury Holidays

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to the digital marketing agency Propellernet for providing this case study.

Figure 8.2 Screenshot for Sovereign Luxury Holidays

Source: Sovereign Luxury Holidays.
Having identified significant revenue potential around the keyphrases ‘family holidays’ and ‘luxury family holidays’, Sovereign Luxury Holidays worked with their search agency to develop the ‘Flourishing Family’ persona. Cyprus was identified as an attractive and relevant destination for this specific audience and the persona research helped them to understand the audience’s media consumption and content requirements.

A unique ‘insider’ destination guide, based on local knowledge, about some of the hidden delights of Cyprus was developed and included fun things to do with the family as well as recommended local restaurants and quirky festivals. Editorial content was created, optimized and edited to match the requirements as defined by the persona research.

The guide was made available on their website and PR and outreach activity was used to support the development of inbound links from relevant and authoritative sites. This included traditional PR such as pitching the guides to the agency’s network of travel writers, issuing press releases and newswire distribution. This created discussion online and valuable links from travel websites, luxury websites, silver surfer websites, blogs, online lifestyle magazines, trade and news sites.

Results included the following:

- Ranking for the keyphrase ‘Cyprus holidays’ increased from 29 to 6 in four months;
- year on year traffic increased for ‘Cyprus holidays’ by 1300% and Cyprus related traffic increased by 135%;
- there were 155 downloads of the guide in the first 6 months;
- they attained position one for the term ‘luxury family holidays’.

The link building activity supported search engine optimization more broadly including significant improvements in rankings for terms such as ‘luxury family holidays’ – attaining first position for this term.

The campaign won a Travel Marketing Award in 2010 for Best Use of SEO.

Source: Propellernet (www.propellernet.co.uk) on behalf of Sovereign Luxury Holidays.

8.6 The Importance of Social Signals

The search engine’s algorithms, and the way they apply different ranking factors to generate the results in the SERPs, continue to evolve. Updates in the way the algorithms work can have a significant effect on your ranking for a specific keyphrase.

For example, the much talked about and controversial ‘Panda’ or ‘Farmer’ update rolled out by Google in March 2011 fundamentally changed the way Google ranked sites in results pages. It reduced the effect of low value links to a site as a positive ranking factor and put much more emphasis on ‘social signals’. What people are saying about your content, how they are interacting with it and sharing it is becoming increasingly important as a ranking factor in natural search.

At the same time, some of the traditional SEO tactics are becoming comparatively less important. This includes, for example, having keywords in your domain name, the effectiveness of paid for links and using keyword rich anchor text in external links to your site. Beyond the increasing importance of social signals at both the domain and specific page level, relevant issues include the click-through rate from the SERPs and the experience that your site, specific pages and your content provides to users. These
changes are only uncovered through experience and have been qualified by specialists working in the field of SEO.5

Figure 8.3 Changes in the importance of different ranking factors

You need to take account of this increase in the use of social signals as a ranking factor when planning your e-marketing programmes. There are three key elements that distinguish ‘social search’ and the influence this has on search engine ranking:

1. Ratings (which can be positive or negative) can add considerable weight to a piece of content. There are numerous ways that users can rate specific pieces of content using social platforms and networks. For example, rating news through Digg (http://digg.com/).

2. Tagging content and categorizing it. This might happen alongside the rating of a piece of content but it also includes social bookmarking sites like Diigo (http://www.diigo.com/) and Delicious (http://www.delicious.com/)

3. Integrating and capitalizing on the influence of the ‘social graph’ by using the rating, tagging and sharing of content across the searchers social media networks to influence what appears in the SERPs for a particular search query. For example, if the searcher has a Google account and is logged in while searching on Google the results they see will be influenced by the content that has been rated, tagged and shared across the Google+ network.


This has important implications for the destination marketer. The SERPs you are trying to influence through your search engine marketing programmes will be increasingly disrupted and tailored to the specific person undertaking that search based on how your content has been rated, tagged and shared across that person’s own networks.

Once again, the provision of good quality content is a prerequisite. You need to make it easy for your users to rate and share that content by including appropriate sharing tools on the page. You need to understand the networks that exist around your potential visitors and you need to support the sharing of good quality content across your social media networks (see chapter 7).

This will have a positive effect on your ranking in natural search.

8.7 Supporting Your SEO

Your blog provides a great platform for supporting your SEO and link building strategy. Your content calendar should include regular updates to your blog based on the things that are going on in your destination, including those topics that are of interest to your users as well as to special interest communities and networks that exist around your destination. You can leverage those networks to create links back to content on your blog.

The network research you have undertaken will help you to understand the type of content that you can use to reach out to your networks, place content on specific sites within those networks and create links back to your site. It will also provide you with a mechanism for prioritizing which ones you reach out to.

Here is a simple example:

- Your destination has a lot to offer relating to food and gastronomy.
- Valentine’s Day is approaching and you have this on your content calendar.
- You have researched the networks that exist around food and gastronomy – they might include online national newspapers, food bloggers and special interest food and gastronomy sites. You have already started developing a relationship with some of these.
- You develop a ‘top 10 places to eat in your destination on Valentine’s Day’ guide and put this on your blog.
- You might even have supporting offers for some of the restaurants in the guide.
- You make a priority list of the sites that you are going to reach out to and you could develop an exclusive offer for those sites that are particularly valuable.

Hopefully, you will create relevant links back to your blog because the content is seen as useful and valuable to those networks you contact. You might also be able to include links back to your site as part of the deal, providing a value added offer to the specific site in question.

This is an ongoing process and clearly demonstrates the value of developing a planned approach to content and the distribution of that content across the networks that exist around you. It also demonstrates how success in search engine optimization is about delivering integrated e-marketing programmes across search, social and online PR.

8.8 Universal Search

Universal search delivers results to the SERPs from previously disparate silos on the web – news, video, books, blogs and increasingly social media. There is a big opportunity to gain additional coverage and attention from search engines for priority terms you are targeting.
The same rules apply to optimizing such content beyond your site as they do to optimizing content on your site. First of all, it needs to be useful and engaging content that will be shared more broadly but it is also possible to optimise the title and tagging of the content in a similar way to what is applied to primary on-page mark-up.

### 8.9 Using Paid Search

Many DMOs run paid search activity alongside their search engine optimisation programmes. The keyphrase research you have undertaken to support your SEO and the keyphrase priorities you have identified can also be used to develop paid search programmes (see section 8.3.1).

Paid search can be used to target priority terms in the short term for which you are not ranking in natural search. It can also be used to support tactical and seasonal activity where you are unlikely to take a long-term perspective and want to drive immediate results for a specific period of time.

Increasingly paid search is being used to support and to assist with developing SEO strategies. For example, you can use paid search to test whether you are converting against specific keyphrases and, if they are valuable, you can develop SEO tactics in pursuit of ranking for that term. Similarly, you can use paid search to identify additional keyphrases that you should be targeting via SEO.

### 8.10 Mobile Search

The growth in mobile search over the last two years has been phenomenal. Mobile search is also intrinsically linked to local search. Currently over 12% of travel related searches on Google happen on mobile platforms. For tourism businesses mobile and local search are certainly significant. Destinations also need to consider how to approach mobile and how optimizing for mobile search does or does not apply to their search marketing strategy.

Dealing with mobile is covered in much more detail in chapter 10.

Success does depend on your specific marketing objectives and the extent to which your customers are using mobile devices to search for the attractions and activities that your destination has to offer and the keyphrases you are targeting. Whilst there is much discussion about mobile search visibility, in reality there is often little difference between web search results and mobile search results. This is something you can test for yourself.

You need to consider the following:

- Ensure your site renders correctly on mobile devices for the priority searches you are targeting. Consider carefully whether you need a specific mobile site – they can create duplicate content issues, technical challenges and draw your focus and resources away from pursuing other opportunities.
- Where your marketing strategy requires the distribution of specific content via mobile devices consider how mobile application development might serve the purpose. Mobile apps provide a huge opportunity to immerse users in your brand and provide a tailored user experience.
- Mobile search is fundamentally linked to geography. If local search and influencing in-destination planning form part of your marketing objectives than you must consider mobile search as part of your SEO strategy and ensure your platforms support it.
- Where paid search and advertising is concerned there is a clear argument for looking at this within a mobile context. Paid search results can and do differ dramatically on mobile devices. Furthermore, cost per click is generally lower and you are likely to get different conversion rates compared to your web paid search activity.
8.11 Delivering SEO

8.11.1 A Continuous Cycle

Success requires a long term and sustained approach. If you are competing for competitive search terms it might take months to rank for them. If your domain is a new one it takes time to develop authority. Once you start to deliver significant traffic through natural search you need to continue to optimize your site and support on-site conversion. You need to review your position regularly and adjust your strategies accordingly.

Unfortunately there are no easy and sustainable ways to achieve this in the long term. Any techniques that you might use to trick the search engines in the short term are unlikely to work for long and they can harm your rankings permanently or even mean your pages are removed from a search engine’s index.

So-called ‘black hat’ techniques include the following and you should avoid them:

- Hidden text – for example text in the same colour as the background;
- Keyword ‘stuffing’ – such as small text on the page footer repeating keywords;
- Creation of ‘gateway’ or cloaking pages created only for search engines; and
- ‘Link farms’ – sites that exist only for the purpose of developing link popularity.

The algorithms of search engines change continuously as search engines learn from the behaviour and feedback of searchers. Keeping up-to-date with developments and sharing knowledge is fundamental to continued success in this area.

Whether you outsource optimization, or do it in-house, those responsible should have a clear programme of continuing professional development. This should involve joint working with others in their field, participation in forums, and online research through the resources provided by Google and others.

8.11.2 Redesigning Your Site

Destinations often take great pride in developing a new website but migrating to the new website needs to be approached very carefully. It is likely that your existing site(s) has (have) reasonable authority associated with it and unless migration to the new site is done properly you risk losing that authority.

When migrating to a new site you should consider the following:

- If possible, do not change the domain name.
- Where possible keep the URLs and primary mark-up of high authority pages the same.
- Where content is optimized and ranking high, aim to incorporate it in your new site.

Most importantly, you need to set up 301 redirects to support the migration to the new site:

- These must cover pages which are currently driving significant natural search traffic and for which the URL is changing. These pages can be identified via your site analytics.
- You need to map each of these pages to their respective new pages on your new site and set up a permanent 301 redirect for that page. This will ensure any link equity from external sites linking to the old page will be passed on as much as possible to the new page. It will also mean any pages from your old site that are appearing in SERPs immediately after the new site is launched will direct users to the respective new page.
- Once live, upload a site map of the new site via your search engine webmaster tools.
• Over time you should reconfigure the links from high authority sites so that they are linking directly to the new page on your new site and not via a 301 redirect.

### 8.11.3 In-house or Outsourcing

A lot depends on the size of the task and what you can support internally compared to what you can afford to outsource. Whilst SEO is increasingly becoming an integral part of integrated e-marketing strategies it does require specialist skills for activities such as keyphrase research, developing appropriate strategies and data analysis. Some of these activities may be outsourced as and when required. In many respects it is better to support delivery of SEO in-house.

The advantages of developing an in-house team include:

• You have full control of everything you do – from web development to social and online PR;
• you will develop detailed knowledge about the markets you are operating in;
• you will develop and retain more of the specialist expertise required within your organization.

The disadvantages of developing an in-house team include:

• It might take time to develop the knowledge and skills required;
• it can be difficult to find the right people with the right skills and expertise;
• your in-house team may be more adverse to taking risks and adopting innovative tactics.

The advantages of outsourcing your SEO include:

• The agency will have expertise in the area and be part of a community of experts;
• they should have a diverse client portfolio, which brings additional insight to your account;
• a full service agency supporting other areas of your marketing improves co-ordination.

The disadvantages of outsourcing your SEO include:

• Employee turnover sometimes means you lose the experience associated with your business;
• you do not always have the best people allocated to your account;
• any outsourced activity needs to be co-ordinated with your content and web development plan.

### Further Information

Successful search engine optimization is increasingly focussed on well-integrated e-marketing campaigns and the development of online brand equity in general sense. The following travel marketing and technology blogs provide relevant content and useful resources to support achieving this:

• Tnooz – http://www.tnooz.com (17-12-2012);
• Travelllll – http://travelllll.com (17-12-2012);
• Travolution – http://www.travolution.com (17-12-2012);
• Travel2dot0 blog – http://travel2dot0.com/thinking (17-12-2012).
Case Study – Slovenian Tourist Board – Optimizing www.Slovenia.info for Search

ETC and UNWTO are grateful to Tinkara Pavlović Kapitanović and Gregor Kralj of the Slovenian Tourist Board for providing this case study.

Figure 8.4 Screenshot of www.slovenia.info

Following initial research, carried out in 2006, it was clear that there was a big opportunity to increase traffic to www.slovenia.info by implementing major technical improvements, improving the site structure and undertaking an ongoing programme of search engine optimization.

Whilst most of the technical upgrades to the site were made as part of the ongoing maintenance programme the rest of the services were delivered by several carefully selected external SEO agencies. The programme was strictly monitored by the internal team to support quality assurance and alignment with the clear goals set out in the brief. Comprehensive monthly status reports outlined progress against an agreed programme of activities as well as trends in search engine rankings of priority keyphrases. The internal team supported the agency team through management of the social media presence and supporting link building activity by leveraging existing relationships with external websites, blogs, portals, and forums.
Identify priority search terms through keyphrase research

Free online tools like Google AdWords and Google Insights for Search, in combination with Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools, were used to identify priority search terms to target.

Google Global Market Finder proved to be a useful tool to estimate market competition and identify possible new niche markets for Slovenian tourism. More generic keywords were targeted globally whereas product oriented keywords were targeted in specific markets in line with Slovenia Tourist Board's marketing strategy. The programme focussed on the major search engines; Google (global and relevant local versions e.g. Google.de, Google.it…), Yahoo and Bing.

Technical set-up and site structure is hugely important

It was clear that the first challenge was to support improved indexing of the site and its content. Technical improvements focused on upgrades to the CMS platform, URL rewriting, improving HTML text tags, implementing alt-text on images and updates to the robots.txt file. All of the changes were checked and validated.

On-page optimization covers primary mark-up and on-page content

Selected landing pages were optimized for specific target keyphrases by ensuring they were included in primary mark-up (URL, title and H1 tag) as well as improving the internal link structure using appropriate anchor text, thus helping the search engines to recognize the hierarchy of the content structure.

Develop authority through link building with relevant sites, blogs and directories

The link building strategy focussed on getting relevant and valuable links rather than just a large number of potentially irrelevant links. This was supported through the provision of SEO optimized press releases on important online PR agencies and aggregators (e.g. www.prweb.com), related and relevant content on the main site some content editorials, RSS feeds and Wikiweb items.

It is clear that social signals are becoming an important factor in search engine rankings and some technical upgrades have already been implemented on the site. It is likely that social media and the provision of high quality and frequently updated content (by streamlining and strengthening the local administrative content network) will become increasingly important in the future.

Measure progress against clearly defined objectives

The success of implementing technical improvements and improving site structure was measured by tracking the number of indexed pages. Overall search visibility was monitored using several tools like Advanced Web Ranking and Google Webmaster Tools. The link building strategy was monitored through the number of links generated for each target keyphrase and measured by online tracking tools such as Google backlink count and Yahoo Site Explorer (now shut down).

However, a significant indicator for measuring the success of the SEO programme was Google Analytics data. Most importantly, the number of visitors to the site from search engines and the relative share of these visitors compared to all overall site traffic.
Following the implementation of technical improvements and improving the site structure there were significant improvements in the level of traffic from search engines after only a few months (see figure 8.5)

Figure 8.5 Comparing search engine traffic, 2007 and 2008

Since 2008, the search engines are maintaining a very high percentage of visitors to the site. Furthermore, there is a slight shift towards more traffic coming from referral sites (see table 8.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search traffic</td>
<td>58.64</td>
<td>81.00</td>
<td>83.55</td>
<td>81.30</td>
<td>80.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral traffic</td>
<td>27.06</td>
<td>12.08</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>12.29</td>
<td>13.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was clear that although search engine optimization does require some investment over the long term it is, in the end, economically more sustainable than driving a significant proportion of traffic through paid search.

8.12 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The evaluation of your search engine marketing strategies needs to be tied to your marketing objectives and a specific set of defined conversion events on your site. Setting up visibility reporting which tracks your ranking against the keyphrases you are targeting will help you to evaluate your progress over time. Your analytics will help you to track what is happening on site in relation to your defined set of conversion goals for your organic traffic.
Using a visibility reporting tool such as those provided by Raven Tools (http://raventools.com) or SEOmoz (www.seomoz.org) alongside a link analysis tool (see section 8.5.3) will support the following metrics:

- Ranking of target keyphrases (priority and secondary) – make sure they are all set up; and
- numbers and profile of inbound links (see audit and link analysis).

However, you need to ensure that you are reporting on the right set of keyphrases – the ones that are most relevant to your site and what you want to achieve. You can also rank keyphrases in terms of the traffic they are driving and conversion events or revenue they are supporting.

Your analytics reporting will support the provision of the following metrics:

- percentage of traffic via natural search;
- percentage of traffic driven via brand and non brand keywords (see section 8.3.1);
- top landing pages via natural search;
- top referring keywords via natural search;
- change over time (%); and
- conversion against your defined set of goals.

You can segment your analytics data for natural search into brand and non-brand traffic. It is also important to track trends and changes over time.

Whilst non-brand traffic is likely to be the focus of your SEO programmes brand exposure is also important for your long-term success. It will support your e-marketing and SEO efforts more broadly and once someone has found your site for the first time they are more likely to find it again if you appear in SERPs around your brand or destination. Tracking brand and destination terms will help you to understand how your brand reputation is changing over time.
Chapter 9

E-mail Marketing

9.1 About this Chapter

This chapter identifies the critical success factors for e-mail marketing. It explains how to build a quality e-mail list and a successful e-mail marketing program, as well as how to ensure that e-mail newsletters are delivered correctly and opened, their format is effective and their content engaging.

Key Messages

• E-mail marketing is most cost-effective and more powerful than ever when combined with social media. E-mail, social media and mobile use should work together to connect and engage with customers in different ways.

• The key drivers of e-mail marketing are segmentation, relevance, deliverability, transactional focus, testing, measuring and fine-tuning.

• Marketing and thus also e-mail marketing is all about action: aspects such as subject lines, content, calls-to-action, frequency and timing of sending, can all be adjusted to encourage recipients to do whatever you want them to do.

• Integrate the results of e-marketing activities into the CRM database and use that to send the right messages to the right people.

• The best results are achieved by those organizations that have a structured approach.

9.2 The Power of E-mail Marketing

In recent years a lot of attention has been given to the new and exciting opportunities offered by social media marketing and mobile marketing. E-mail marketing now strikes some as old-fashioned. E-mail marketing, however, is a most effective e-marketing tool as:

• e-mail is used by most internet users and, as some studies show, it is a more popular form of internet communication among adults than social media;

• while social media use a stream-based presentation of information, where new postings replace old ones and posts are subject to ranking mechanisms (such as Facebook's EdgeRank), a newsletter goes into a person's inbox and sits there;

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1 Wasserman, T. (2012), E-mail is more popular than social media (online), available: http://mashable.com/2012/03/27/e-mail-more-popular-social-media/ (07-09-2012).

Research shows that e-mail is still a more popular form of internet communication, with 85% using the internet for e-mail and only 62% for use of social media.

• newsletter subscribers are usually more loyal than the audience on social networks;³
• it is precisely because of social media that e-mail marketing is more powerful than ever as:
  – you can motivate recipients who are not yet interacting with you on social media to do so; and
  – activate fans and followers to subscribe to your newsletter;
  – social sharing boosts e-mail marketing engagement as seen, for example, in an increase of
  click-through rates; and, more generally;⁴
  – it is the combination of media – online and offline – that results in the multiple engagements
  necessary to build trust, keep your destination or organization at the forefront of people’s minds,
  build valuable relationships and retain customers;
• integration of e-mail and social media with mobile marketing offers even more opportunities to
  improve overall marketing efforts;
• e-mail marketing is most cost-effective and the return-on-investment of e-mail marketing is,
  according to the Direct Marketing Association and marketers, higher than that of other e-marketing
  channels.⁵
E-mail marketing still has a relevant role in business executives’ 2012 budgets, with 70% of them
planning to integrate social marketing efforts with e-mail and 44% of them planning to integrate mobile
marketing within e-mail campaigns.⁶
E-mail is the first thing people check when going online for work. As most people still prefer to receive
commercial messages via e-mail, rather than social media (preferring to use social media for updates
with friends), e-mail can play a vital role in keeping your contacts in the trade and industry up-to-date.⁷

9.3 E-mail Management Systems and E-mail Service Providers

E-mail marketing is not done using e-mail clients such as Outlook or Thunderbird which are one-to-one
e-mail programs. E-mail marketing requires a system or service that allows for professional one-to-many
e-mailing.

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3 Ib id.
4 Studies from GetResponse, based on analysis of its database of client campaigns, found that adding social sharing options
into e-mail content increases click-through rates by 115%. E-mail campaigns that urged recipients to share content saw
more than a 5% click-through on average, while messages lacking social integration got just 2.6%.
Andrzejewska, H. (2012), Social Sharing Boosts E-mail CTR up to 115% (online), available:
Kirkpatrick, D. (2012), E-mail Summit: Integrating Mobile, Social and E-mail Marketing Channels (online), available:
http://sherri blog.marketingsherpa.com/e-mail-marketing/integrating-mobile-social-e-mail/ (07-09-2012).
5 Econsultancy (2012), E-mail Marketing Census 2012 (online), available: http://econsultancy.com/uk/reports/e-mail-census
(04-08-2012), 70% of global company marketers interviewed rate e-mail marketing in terms of ROI either excellent (23%) or
good (47%).
DMA (Direct Marketing Association) 2012, Response Rate Report via E-mailStats (2012), De ROI van e-mail marketing
(online), available: http://www.e-mailstats.nl/roi-e-mail-marketing/ (04-08-2012). A tool to assist you to calculating the ROI of
your e-mail marketing activities is available at: http://www.marketingtoday.com/tools/roi_calculator.htm (07-09-2012).
6 MarketingSherpa (2012), The 2012 E-mail Marketing Benchmark Report (2012) (online), available:
https://www.meclabs.com/training/publications/benchmark-report/2012-e-mail-marketing/order (04-08-2012).
Jeffrey Rice, W. (2012), Marketing Research Chart: When is it time to hire out? Filling the gaps in e-mail marketing for 2012
Brian Solis at MarketingSherpa E-mail Summit 2012, via Kirkpatrick, D. (2012), E-mail Summit: Integrating Mobile, Social and
E-mail Marketing Channels (online), available: http://sherri blog.marketingsherpa.com/e-mail-marketing/integrating-mobile-social-e-mail/
(04-08-2012).
7 Constant Contact (2011), The State of E-mail Marketing (Infographic) (online), available:
http://img.constantcontact.com/mktg/marketing/infographics/e-mail-marketing/e-mailmarketing.png. (04-08-2012).
There are many systems on the market, which can either be installed as part of your own ICT system, or used as a service from an application service provider (ASP) – a web-based service that sits on the supplier’s server – in this case an E-mail Marketing Service Provider. These systems enforce the automation of best practices and their services include:

- easy-to-use templates for different e-mails formats, such as newsletters, promotions, announcements and surveys facilitating formatting control and cohesive branding;
- an easy-to-use newsletter compilation system for text, pictures, links and personalisation, with a document and image library;
- list management options such as segmentation, exporting of e-mail addresses and importing from other sources;
- integration with social media (see section 9.8);
- compliance to legal requirements (see chapter 22 on legal aspects of e-marketing);
- control of spelling and for words that may trigger spam filters;
- delivery services such as:
  - validating e-mail addresses by checking for syntax errors;
  - accreditation with anti-spam software at all the major ISPs in your source markets;
  - a newsletter content checker to identify material that would trigger spam filters;
  - the ability to get the entire message through filters to different e-mail clients such as Outlook, Thunderbird, Yahoo, Gmail, and AOL;
  - detecting targets that do not accept HTML e-mails, sending these text-only e-mails;
- ICT support;
- automated handling and reporting of subscriptions, undeliveredes, bouncebacks, soft bounces (such as out-of-office or mailbox full) and unsubscribes; and
- tracking and reporting.

Overviews and benchmarking of E-mail Marketing Service Providers and their services are available on the internet.  

9.4 Building an E-mail Program

The success of your e-mail marketing activities depends on genuinely compelling content. It is valuable content that builds trust, credibility and long-term relationships as recipients invest time to open and read your message.

Your e-mail marketing activities should, of course, be fully integrated with other e-marketing activities and embedded in your overall content strategy. See chapter 4 for advice on content marketing and management. Consider creating a content grid and see where exactly your e-mail fits in generally and individually.

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8 See, for example: TechMediaNetwork (2012), 2012 Best E-mail Marketing Service Comparisons and Reviews (online), available: http://e-mail-marketing-service-review.toptenreviews.com (04-08-2012).

Groundwire (n. d.), Groundwire’s 2012 e-mail service provider comparison report (online), available: http://groundwire.org/labs/e-mail-publishing/2012-e-mail-service-providers (04-08-2012).
The success of your e-mail marketing activities depends also on a structured approach to improving your e-mail marketing program through targeted e-mails designed to move readers through the various stages of the customer journey: from their initial interest to enthusing them with motivational content and specific ideas to purchase. You can also use it to maintain communication after the visitor has gone home, in order to help the visitor to re-endorse their choice after the trip, confirm their satisfaction, and relive their holiday and produce repeat visits, including cross-selling and upselling with new ideas that fit their profile as stored in the CRM database.

The real-time reporting of results, offered by good e-mail marketing systems and service providers, offers valuable information about readers’ interests and preferences, enabling the fine-tuning of the selection of customers and content. Your CRM capabilities will determine the extent to which you can send accurate, personalised messages that do all this (see chapter 14).

Choose the objectives of each e-mail communication carefully and then select the appropriate e-mail format suiting the objective and content, i.e., use several formats but similar designs. Choose e-mail newsletters for longer, more educational and informative content sent on a regular basis. Choose concise formats for campaign messages based on user interest and availability of matching offers. Choose concise formats also for alerts, e-coupons, e-postcards, promotions and invitations to events.

An architecture that allows you to use content dynamically, and an e-mail marketing system that allows you to create an e-mail marketing agenda and schedule e-mails in advance, help to reduce the work load.

It is often most effective to operate campaigns jointly with tourism suppliers. You may want to attract revenue from paid-for entries by suppliers (see chapter 18 on raising income).

Some organizations differentiate between a nursery program, an activation program and a retention program when structuring an e-mail marketing program. The nursery program targets new sign-ups with communications that aim to convert them from leads to prospects. These e-mail communications are informative and educational and promote brand values and key products and services. For the activation program see section 9.6.3. A retention program aims to build stronger relationships, increase lifetime value and loyalty. Segmentation is vital for a retention programme as it requires targeted, value added content, for example, providing relevant offers based on the clients’ preferences, as well as tactical e-mail ‘push’ alerts as part of separate sales cycles to drive conversion.9

9 Econsultancy (2012), E-mail Marketing Templates. Building an E-mail Marketing Program (online), available: http://econsultancy.com/reports/e-mail-marketing-digital-marketing-template-files (04-08-2012).
Mailing lists can be bought, but this is, of course, not the recommended approach. Many ESPs will also not allow you to use bought lists but require the opt-in methods described above.\(^\text{10}\)

Encourage people to join your e-mail list:

- Use every touch point to promote your e-mail newsletter, such as your website, social media presence, events, incoming and outgoing calls, e-mail signature, and visitor centre, and ask for e-mail addresses and permission to contact.
- Offer a ‘forward this e-mail’ link and sign-up box in your newsletter.
- Promise valuable content and ‘insider’ or VIP status for offers in the description of your newsletter and a call to action. A direct call to action usually converts better than a soft one, for example, “Enter your e-mail address today and ...”.

Keep your e-mail list clean, current and valuable:

- Make not only subscribing but also unsubscribing as easy as possible (for pointers see section 9.6.4 below).
- Manage invalid e-mail addresses and bounced e-mails.
- At intervals send a subscription reminder, asking whether your subscriber wishes to maintain the subscription, and take the opportunity to survey key interests and update contact details.
- Provide a link to update contact information at the foot of each e-mail communication.
- Allow subscribers to control what they receive and (if applicable) how often they receive your e-mail communication. Provide information at the bottom of every e-mail newsletter and offer subscriptions.
- Use the reporting tool to separate ‘cold’ contacts from ‘active’ recipients and try to activate the first by, for example:
  - testing other ‘Subject’ lines;
  - using stronger calls to action; and
  - changing content.
- Delete those addresses from your database of recipients who have never opened an e-mail or have opened once but never clicked on any of your links within a period of, for example, 12 months.

9.6 Encourage People to Read Your E-mails

E-mail marketing is permission-based: it is the delivery of professional e-mail communications containing valuable information to an audience that is interested in that information. Recipients have provided their e-mail address and given you permission to use it for your communications.

E-mail newsletters have an intimate character as they drop into the recipient’s personal inbox and generate stronger emotions than, for example, websites.

At the same time, the inbox has become a very crowded place and your e-mail communications face stiff competition for attention. One study shows that the average open rate for marketing e-mails in 2011 and the first quarter of 2012 was 20.1%. Although the open rate of e-mail is a fairly basic way of measuring the success of e-mail marketing activities, it is a useful benchmark. There is an opportunity

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\(^{10}\) Please note that there are also Robinson or Mail Preference Service (MPS) lists. This is an opt-out list of people who do not wish to receive marketing messages (whether via e-mail, postal mail, telephone, or fax).
for improving e-mail marketing undertaken by the travel and leisure industry, as it achieves some of the lowest open rates.

**Table 9.1 Unique open rate by industry, 2012 (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unique open rate by industry</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer services</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profits</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and publishing</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and construction</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer products</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer hardware, telecom and electronics</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and leisure</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Silverpop (2012).


Moth, D. (2012), E-mail Marketing Stats: Consumers Open Just 20% of Messages (online), available: http://econsultancy.com/nl/blog/10404-e-mail-marketing-stats-consumers-open-just-20-of-messages (04-08-2012).

Your challenge is to try to get recipients to spend their valuable time reading your message, and to ensure that your message is, at a glance, seen as a trusted source, attracts attention and builds credibility and valuable relationships. It has become more important than ever to closely observe the following guidelines.

### 9.6.1 Optimise the Signing-up Process

Offer an automated, smooth and welcoming sign-up process offering the customer:

- A sign-up box to enter the e-mail address only.

- A clear description of the type, content and frequency of your e-mail messages, day and time of sending, an image of what your e-mail newsletter looks like and if possible testimonials, thus setting clear expectations.

- The option to indicate preferences and interests to allow you to segment and offer targeted content.

- The choice between receiving an HTML or a text-only version of your e-mail newsletter.

- The option to provide names and additional contact information voluntarily.

- See section 9.5 on different levels of opt-in. Ask the recipient to add your e-mail address to their contact list (also called ‘safe senders’ and ‘white’ list) as that is the best guarantee that your message will not end up in spam filters.
• ‘Social login’ is a new possibility to make signing-up easy. See section 9.8 for more information on combining social media and e-mail marketing.

• Consistently brand all sign-up and unsubscribe interaction screens, automated e-mail messages and the newsletters themselves. Include your logo and other elements of your brand identity and avoid drastic changes. The graphic design should reflect the design of the parent (destination) website, especially if much of the newsletter is linking to pages of the parent site for further information.

• Re-assure subscribers that you protect subscribers’ data and provide a link to your privacy policy.

9.6.2 Encourage Opening of Your E-mails

• A good choice and consistent use of ‘From’ line and e-mail address are the most important factors in choosing to open an e-mail rather than delete it unopened. The e-mail address should be one that the recipient knows and trusts. In general using a personal name plus organization or brand name works best as the use of a personal name capitalizes on the personal character of e-mail. For DMOs, however, this may not be an option, and it is better to use the DMO name.

• Create great ‘Subject’ lines that set your communications apart from the many messages that clutter our inboxes these days. 30% of consumers say the ‘Subject’ line most often determines whether they open an e-mail or not. When writing a ‘Subject’ line, therefore, ask yourself whether it conveys:
  – a clear, specific and compelling promise; and
  – a certain urgency making the reader feel he really needs to read your e-mail now.

Other options include:
  – starting every ‘Subject’ line with the same identifier to inspire trust;
  – including numbers in the ‘Subject’ line. They work well as they make what you are saying quantifiable, lets readers know exactly what they can expect and imply easy to digest content;
  – keeping ‘Subject’ lines short. Short lines significantly outperform e-mails with long lines. Create ‘Subject’ lines of 30-40 characters maximum (including spaces), 5-8 words. For users of mobile devices 5 words are better than 7; and
  – avoid special characters in the ‘Subject’ line.

• Test ‘Subject’ lines and headlines by sending two different versions to two different groups and monitoring the results.

9.6.3 Refine Your E-mail Newsletter

• Personalise your newsletter by using the recipient’s name instead of opening with ‘Dear Recipient’.

• Hyperlink the logo as readers will be familiar with logos linking to a company’s website.

• Include a link at the top of your e-mail message to view the e-mail in a web browser in case the recipient cannot see the e-mail well in his e-mail program.

• Include one or two lines of text at the very top of the e-mail containing a description of what the e-mail is and that the unsubscribe instructions and an unsubscribe link can be found at the bottom of the e-mail. Also mention that “to ensure delivery to your mailbox, please add [e-mail address used by sender] to your contacts today” to avoid ending up in recipient’s spam filter.
• More generally, the first few lines of text are the most important. Focussing on high-value content at the start of a message has become more important in recent years as the inboxes are busier and recipients increasingly use the preview pane in their inbox, or receive a pop-up alert of new e-mails.

• Keep e-mail content concise and do not put too much content in an issue. Often it is a good idea to pick one idea and theme. Give each story a short headline, and then follow it with a very short, sharp paragraph. Host large pieces of information on your website.

• A clickable ‘Contents’ list at the top of a newsletter containing more topics is a bit formal, but often works well as not all recipients will scroll to the bottom.

• Marketing is all about action and so is e-mail marketing. Calls to action include: links to click on, phone numbers to call, information to print out, sharing and follow buttons. Aim to include a call to action in every e-mail that achieves new data capture and adds to your customer knowledge, progressively enabling you to personalise the relationship and optimize your marketing efforts. Invite comments, feedback and questions.

• Get the frequency and the timing right (see section 9.7 for some pointers).

• Always provide the option of receiving a text-only version of your e-mail newsletter.

• For the HTML version: the layout should be well-designed, simple, facilitating easy scanning and reading, without distractions.

• Observe the guidelines for accessibility and readability described in chapter 5 for websites, but applicable for all interaction screens. For e-mails especially, remember that:
  – text should sit on even background colours, never on designed backgrounds/images as images are not supported by all mail clients. Loading images is often made a choice by e-mail clients requiring action from recipient, therefore:
  – an alternative (alt) tag should be provided for each image, containing a concise description of what the image is and makes sense if the image is not visible.

• Ensure the HTML version is printer-friendly or provide a ‘print’ link to a print-friendly version.

• Ensure that people know that you are a legitimate company or organization and that you are contactable. Include your contact details and corporate registration details at the foot of the e-mail. Provide a link to your privacy policy at the foot of each e-mail newsletter. For more advice on the legal aspects of e-marketing see chapter 22.

9.6.4 Make Unsubscribing Easy

Make it easy for subscribers to stop receiving your e-mail communications:

• Automate the unsubscribe process and make it a one-click process. Offer a visible unsubscribe link at the bottom of each e-mail newsletter and on the web page dedicated to your newsletter. This alone communicates trust. Making it difficult to unsubscribe will make recipients add you to their spam blocker. If many recipients do that it will trigger blocking by servers of other recipients.

• Ask those who unsubscribe for feedback. Make this as easy as possible by offering several obvious reasons (e.g. content not relevant) as clickable options to choose from. Enable them to leave additional comments.

• Confirm the end of the subscription and the removal of the e-mail address from your list.
9.7 When and How Often to Send?

Schedule carefully when to send your e-mail messages. Some studies claim that Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are the best days of the week to send marketing e-mail newsletters. The best time of day to send is between 10:00 am and 03:00 pm. This seems logical looking at the average working week and the mindset of people.

There are also indications that Sunday has become a good day to send a newsletter as many people are spending time online to do some online shopping and catch up with friends. This is particularly the case when your e-mail messages are about leisure time and holidays.

Find out what the best day and time is to send your newsletter by dividing your list in two and send the same newsletter out at two different times. Then analyze the open rates and other metrics to compare the behaviour of the groups.

Take into account different time zones in case your messages are sent to an international audience.

Get the frequency right. The problems with sending too often are:

- recipients start feeling overloaded and do not open your newsletter anymore or may even hit the spam button and ruin your reputation; and
- the ROI of your e-mail marketing efforts drops.

Sending too infrequently has also pitfalls:

- Your organization is not at the forefront of people’s minds and recipients will have to familiarise themselves again with your organization and your newsletter.
- Customers may feel you are not doing enough to get their attention.
- E-mail addresses and preferences will change and you find the list becomes obsolete.

In general:

- E-mail regularly enough for the recipient to get to know you and your e-mails. For ‘normal’ e-mail newsletters once a month is about right.
- If the market segment takes last-minute short breaks, 10 days in advance might be right. For a long-haul trip, start a year ahead, and build up the messages.
- For forthcoming events, start with a short “Save the date” message announcing the event, then build excitement with more information leading up to the event and after.
- If you have collected their intended travel date, then a series of progressively more frequent e-mails is desirable.
- E-mail Marketing Service Providers’ autoresponder services lets you set up your communications and schedule them in advance.

9.8 Combining E-mail and Social Media

E-mail is often best used when combined with other media, offline and online. It is worthwhile to give special attention here to combining e-mail with social media – for further information on other online media see the other chapters in this handbook.
In order to make the most of e-mail and social media:

- see to it that both are embedded in a strong content management/marketing strategy;
- encourage people to join your mailing list on your social platforms, for example, by using a Facebook Page tab to describe your newsletter and the benefits of signing-up and provide a sign-up box;
- include social media ‘follow us’ icons in the sign-up area and in every e-mail;
- announce a new presence on social media in your e-mails and provide a clear call-to-action;
- make a share bar a consistent part of all your e-mails so that recipients can share your content. Use of the social share buttons will provide insights into which social media are used by your recipients;
- social login is an emerging feature in online browsing. Users can sign-in or register for a site using an account from, for example, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. If you offer social logins when requesting opt-ins users do not have to fill out a form. Each social network has different data it is willing to reveal. Some social networks allow you to pull in contact details from the user, such as an e-mail address. LinkedIn, for example, only allows you to pull in the photo and name of the user. The system then requests the user’s e-mail address to complete the account set-up process;
- consider focussed campaigns for sharing to build your list and achieve your marketing goals. Know what the audience shares: join them on their social networks and listen and watch for content and offers that get them excited and use that in your e-mail marketing activities;
- design share buttons carefully. When readers click them a default message is generated. See to it that the default message is compelling and attracts attention on the social network. There are different types of sharing buttons:
  - buttons offered by your ESP;
  - buttons offered by social networks;
  - catch-all solutions such as ShareThis or AddThis;¹¹
  - buttons coded in-house;
- repurpose valuable e-mail content for social media and drive traffic to the e-mail archive. Good e-mail marketing service providers allow you to get your messages on social sites with just a few clicks, but consider optimizing content for each channel separately.

### 9.9 Mobile Use

Many users read newsletters on their mobile devices. Figures differ per market, but indicate that at the end of 2011 more than one quarter of e-mails are opened on mobile devices and this percentage is expected to be on the increase.¹²

People are usually happy to browse mobile content during their spare time. Such mobile use is characterised by even more time pressure than desktop use. Or they find themselves in situations with time to spare and, research shows, more willing to look at longer content than they would normally invest while processing e-mail on their desktop. As a result you have to choose between sending short

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¹¹ See ShareThis (online), available: http://www.sharethis.com; and AddThis (online), available: http://www.addthis.com (04-08-2012).

to-the-point e-mail messages or longer content. Multiple factors such as format, type and length of content, timing, target group, etc. all need to be considered when developing your content strategy in general and your e-mail marketing strategy in particular.

Optimizing e-mail marketing for mobile also requires paying attention to the following:

• Signing-up for your e-mail newsletter can be difficult for users of mobile devices if you offer the sign-up box in the side bar or footer of your website. Mobile-friendly Wordpress themes, for example, show only the main content and the sign-up box in the sidebar is not visible. Offer the sign-up box on a page of its own. Add links to this page and calls to action for joining your mailing list to the bottom of the texts.

• Keep ‘Subject’ lines for mobile devices within 5 words.

• Include a text-only version of every HTML message. A good E-mail Marketing Service Provider offers this automatically.

• Using links should be easy even within the very small space offered by smart phone screens. Keep links clear and ensure they stand out.

• Create clear calls to action at the beginning, not the end of your message, for those on the go with only a few minutes to spare.

• Pay extra attention to accessibility and readability guidelines for HTML content, such as the need to include an alternative (alt) tag for images, which contains a concise description of what the image is and makes sense if the image is not visible.

• Your e-mail design should not be larger than 550-600 px width.

• Search Google for “mobile device simulator”. Test each e-mail using one of these simulators that will show you how your messages will appear on the various devices.

See chapter 10 on mobile tourism for more information on optimizing for mobile use.

9.10 Testing and Fine-tuning

Develop checklists to help you to maintain a consistent approach to quality control and evaluating e-mail messages. Ask questions such as:

• Has the copy been spell checked?

• Are all images displaying correctly?

• Does the e-mail render correctly across all key browsers?

• Does the ‘update my details’ link work correctly?

• And question other critical success factors mentioned in this chapter.

As mentioned before, your e-mail marketing activities should result in action on the part of the recipient. Evaluate your e-mail by checking whether it walks the recipient through a progression of steps, from ‘Subject’ line, to headline to first paragraph, body copy, call to action, to landing page, to further action and conversion.

Test each URL to ensure it is pulling through the correct tracking parameters. At intervals you may want to split test certain aspects of your e-mail newsletters for effectiveness.
9.10.1 Newsletter Audit Service

The E-mail Newsletter Audit, part of the UNWTO Destination Web Watch services, can also be of assistance to you. It includes a detailed survey of all the elements of e-mail newsletters:

- The subscribe page and process;
- settings and preference management;
- the newsletter itself; and
- unsubscribe process.

The report includes an action plan to improve the newsletter’s quality and effectiveness.13

9.11 The DMO Corporate E-mail Signature

Finally, a word about routine e-mails sent by all the DMO’s staff: do not forget that the corporate e-mail signature should be working hard too. The UNWTO Destination Web Watch mystery shopper tests have shown that DMOs often fail to conclude their e-mail messages with the name of the organization, strapline, link to (relevant pages in) the website and/or links to social media presence. The signature is also a good place for a one-liner that promotes a prominent forthcoming event.

9.12 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

An E-mail Newsletter Audit, a UNWTO Destination Web Watch service, is an expert evaluation of the quality of e-mail newsletters (see section 9.10.1).

As e-mail marketing systems and service providers offer tracking and live reporting you can measure your e-mail marketing activities precisely and use the reports and analysis to evaluate and optimize performance.

Core metric reporting includes:

- inbox delivery rate;
- open rate;
- click rate;
- unsubscribe rate; and
- bounce rate.

Ensure integration of the data generated by your e-mail marketing activities and web analytics. Campaign tracking codes should be added to all URLs in your e-mail. Google UTM (Urchin Tracking Module) tags, for example, allow you to add extra information to the link you create. When someone clicks on a URL with UTM parameters, those tags are sent back to your Google Analytics account for tracking. This extra information appears in the Google Analytics reports under ‘Traffic Sources’.

Decide what KPIs you will measure performance of your e-mail marketing activities against. Check whether your reporting tools capture and can be mined for the relevant data. You may wish to include, for example:

13 For more information see: Destination Web Watch (online), available: http://www.destinationwebwatch.org/services-page13931.html (04-08-2012).
• ESP performance: inbox delivery rate, taking into account hard bounces, occurring when e-mails are sent to an invalid e-mail address, and soft bounces, occurring when a temporary issue exists with the e-mail server messages to bounce back from a valid e-mail address.

• Relevance: for example, indicators such as the open rate, click rate and unsubscribe rate. Clicks tell you what topics your audience found interesting. You might want to save clickers in a special interest list to send follow-ups with targeted content.

• Engagement: average time on website, percentage of return users.

• Social impact: for example, identifying shares and likes, social mentions and visitor reviews.

• Value, measuring conversion rates, per visit value, repeat purchases.

• Attribution: look into assisted conversions whereby e-mail contributed to the conversion path. Studies show that 6% of the conversions from e-mail marketing arise from the first click-through from the e-mail, 94% of conversions arise from people visiting the website which can be converted later to finish the deal.

For more information on measurement and evaluation, and web and social analytics, see chapters 19 and 20.

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**Further Information**


Econsultancy (2012), *E-mail Marketing – Digital Marketing Template Files* (Electronic), available: http://econsultancy.com/reports/e-mail-marketing-digital-marketing-template-files (04-08-2012).

Each quarter, the company Epsilon tracks trends in, for example, open rates, click-through rates, and non-bounce rates. These (electronic) reports are available via: Direct Marketing Association: https://imis.the-dma.org/bookstore/ProductSingleChapters.cfm?p=0D45047FD799F4B5980D56670F601901E6057067&type=e (07-09-2012).

Chapter 10

Mobile Tourism

10.1 About this Chapter

The usage and penetration rates for mobile information and communication technologies have risen significantly over the past few years. These developments provide new opportunities and, at the same time, challenges for e-marketing strategies. This chapter provides you with an overview of mobile technologies and addresses the issues to be considered for the planning and implementation of a mobile marketing strategy.

Key Messages

- Smart mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, and their new features have led to a constantly connected lifestyle.
- Consumers increasingly engage seamlessly through a multitude of online touchpoints.
- Tablets have become the fourth screen for consumers, besides TV, PCs and smartphones, but each device is used for specific purposes.
- It is essential for successful mobile marketing that the usage patterns for each device and for each target group are clearly understood in order to reach the customers when they are most receptive.
- Whether your DMO opts for a native app, a mobile web app and/or a mobile website depends mainly on the DMO’s marketing objectives, target audience, and available budget.
- Mobile advertising provides new creative advertising formats and a high degree of user interactivity.
- The diversity of channels available for mobile marketing requires a wide set of performance evaluation methods.

10.2 Social – Local – Mobile: The Guiding Principles of M-tourism

Can you imagine leaving home without your mobile phone or smartphone? Probably not! Many people now feel uncomfortable if they cannot find their mobile and sometimes even show almost addictive symptoms when they look at their phone screens perpetually – probably in the hope of receiving a text or curiously checking social network sites.

The growing penetration of smartphones offers new opportunities for marketers to increase and improve communication with consumers and make it more persuasive. It also offers new channels to generate revenues through mobile advertising.
The increasing availability of mobile devices among consumers drives the mobile media consumption, which includes creating, consulting or downloading content through mobile web browsers and mobile applications. Smart mobile devices and their new features have led to a constantly connected lifestyle.\(^1\)

Mobile tourism (m-tourism) can be defined as the use of mobile information and communication technologies (ICTs) and devices linked to tourism activities. The rapid penetration of mobile tourism can considerably increase the efficiency, effectiveness and convenience of visitors’ experience.

While the use of smartphones has become commonplace in many regions around the world, adoption among emerging countries is still developing. China is the only country among the high-growth BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) markets where smartphones are predominant, owned by two-thirds of Chinese mobile subscribers as of the first half of 2012, according to Nielsen research. Emarketer estimates that worldwide smartphone penetration will reach 45% of mobile phone users in 2016.\(^2\)

Several characteristics distinguish mobile tourism applications:\(^3\)

- **Ubiquity**: Services and applications provided via wireless internet are available anywhere.
- **Location awareness**: The exact position of a mobile device can be identified via GPS, allowing for the provision of travel-related location-based services.
- **Immediacy**: Users can make spontaneous decisions as they can react in real-time to specific situations.
- **Personalisation**: The services and applications received via mobile devices can be customised to the user’s preferences and therefore meet the needs of customers more efficiently and effectively.
- **Broadcasting**: Information can be spread to a large population and users can share information with others.
- **Identification**: Users of mobile devices that include a SIM card can be identified. The SIM card can function as an electronic signature that enables electronic payment.
- **Connectivity**: The capability to connect users to machines, machines to machines and users to users.

These unique features of mobile information and communication technologies allow tourism service providers to supply tourists and travellers with real-time information throughout all the phases of the travel life cycle.

### 10.3 Developing a Mobile Marketing Strategy

The mobile marketing strategy should be in alignment with the overall marketing and communication strategy of the DMO, and in particular with its e-marketing strategy. However, the specific characteristics of mobile devices and their users, as well as of the mobile environment, will influence the final planning and implementation of mobile marketing campaigns.

The channels for mobile marketing communications are shown in figure 10.1.

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Before deciding upon which channels to use for the promotion of the destination and for the communication with your customers, the following questions should be answered:

- Who and where are the customers, what is their mobile consumption behaviour, and what are their information needs?
  
  E.g. age groups, travel motives, when do they access mobile content and where, what information do they need in the various trip phases, what platforms and mobile devices do they use in which situations etc.

- What budget is available for the mobile marketing campaign?
  
  Also: what can be achieved by your own staff and what needs to be outsourced to agencies?

- What message do you want to send through which channels and how can the channels be integrated?
  
  Every device caters for different user needs and therefore the message must be tailored to the situation in which the user is likely to receive the message.

- When is the best time to send the message and how often should the message be sent?
  
  E.g. tablets are used at different times of the day compared to smartphones.

- What reaction and interaction do you expect from the mobile user?
  
  E.g. sales, CRM, actions on DMO website.

- How can you measure the success of your campaigns?
  
  Define key performance indicators for each channel.

The following sections will help you answer these questions.
10.4 Mobile Communication Technologies

Several technologies are used for mobile communication. An overview of wireless network technologies for mobile communication is provided in table 10.1.

Table 10.1 Wireless network technologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network technology</th>
<th>Average range</th>
<th>Data rate (mb/s)</th>
<th>Frequency domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WWAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSM (2G)</td>
<td>Base station distance 100 m – 35 km</td>
<td>0.009-0.014</td>
<td>~ 900-2600 MHz, licensed spectrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPRS</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMTS (3G)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTE (4G)</td>
<td></td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WLAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEEE 802.11a</td>
<td>50 m</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>~2.4 and 5 GHz, not licensed spectrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEEE 802.11b</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WPAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>10 m</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>~2.4 not licensed spectrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IrDA</td>
<td>1 – 1.5 m, needs line of sight</td>
<td>1-16</td>
<td>not licensed spectrum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data collected by Christian Maurer (2012).

Wireless Wide Area Networks (WWAN): WWAN is the oldest and also slowest network for mobile communication is GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) which is often also referred to as 2nd generation (2G). Enhancements of the GSM network were GSM with GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) and GSM with EDGE (Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution). A quantum leap in terms of data transmission rates was the 3rd generation (3G) network technology UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunication System) which is still the standard network for most mobile devices. The fourth generation (4G) of mobile communications standards provides mobile ultra-broadband internet access and enables applications such as IP telephony, gaming services, high-definition mobile TV, video conferencing and 3D television. 4G network technologies are LTE (Long Term Evolution), which was first launched end of 2009 in Oslo and Stockholm, and HSPA+ (Evolved High-Speed Packet Access), which was established end of 2008. LTE promises download rates of up to 100 Mbit/s and is therefore much faster than UMTS – that means you can download your favourite song in about two seconds and a HD full-length movie in about 30 minutes.5

Wireless Local Area Networks (WLAN): WLAN, also known as Wireless-Fidelity® (Wi-Fi) uses radio technology called IEEE 802.11a and IEEE 802.11b. WLAN is particularly important for tourists who use mobile devices. Provided that the internet access via a public Wi-Fi hotspot is free of charge, users can avoid costs arising from data download and data roaming.

Wireless Personal Area Networks (WPAN): WPAN include Bluetooth and IrDA (Infrared Data Association). Bluetooth is a standard for short-range data transmission, usually up to ten metres. A device (e.g. a smartphone, tablet computer, printer, or car satnav) can be connected to multiple other devices simultaneously with Bluetooth. However, the data transmission speed is rather low compared with other technology standards such as WLAN or UMTS. IrDA is a kind of optical wireless communication that facilitates physically secure data transfer.

Near Field Communication (NFC): The NFC is a technology that allows two-way communication between enabled devices and the sharing of information at a distance of up to four centimetres using

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6 Wi-Fi is the name of a trademark held by the Wi-Fi Alliance, used to certify interoperability.
RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) and microchips. NFC technology is considered to become very popular in the next few years as it supports contactless mobile payments and therefore bears a great potential for mobile commerce. Mobile payments with NFC technology are currently trialed by Google Wallet and PayPal. A recent survey by Juniper Research\(^7\) forecast that NFC will facilitate transactions to the amount of US$ 74 billion by the year 2015, as it will be increasingly used for in-store payments and transportation tickets. For example, PayPal established a co-operation with the Spanish ticketing company Entradas.com to allow consumers to purchase tickets with a mobile phone and PayPal. The Austrian National Railway Company provides NFC payment for train tickets. However, as of August 2012 slightly more than twelve types of smartphones support NFC technology.

**Global Positioning System (GPS):** The space-based satellite navigation system GPS was installed by the United States in 1994 and is freely available. The European Commission and the European Space Agency work on a European positioning system called GALILEO, which is planned to be operational in 2014. Furthermore, there is a Russian satellite space navigation system called GLONASS and also a Japanese system (QZSS). However, neither of these is available globally.

The GPS consists of 24 satellites, which orbit Earth every 12 hours. The GPS receiver in the mobile device needs visual contact to four satellites simultaneously in order to calculate its exact three-dimensional geo-spatial position in terms of longitude, latitude and altitude. According to the Government of the United States of America, the GPS signal provides a ‘worst-case’ accuracy of 7.8 metres.\(^8\)

However, the accuracy depends on the atmospheric conditions and the physical location of the user themselves. Thus, it is practically impossible to locate one’s position inside a building or, for example, in caves with GPS.

Mobile devices with a built in GPS-receiver support a great variety of **location-based services and applications**.

**Augmented Reality (AR):** Augmented reality is the enhancement or augmentation of the real world with virtual objects. AR can be seen as one state on the continuum between the real and a virtual environment which is illustrated in figure 10.2.

*Figure 10.2 The Reality-virtuality-continuum*

![Reality-virtuality-continuum diagram](image)

Source: Adapted from Milgram et al. (1994).

Augmented reality enhances the user’s perception of and interaction with the real world, because virtual objects display information that a user cannot directly detect with one’s own senses.\(^9\) AR applications should fulfil three criteria:

1. the combination of the real and virtual environment;
2. real time interaction; and
3. three-dimensional referencing.\(^10\)

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\(^10\) Ibid.
An AR system consists of several components in order to track real environment, enhance it with virtual objects and allow for interaction. The technical framework\textsuperscript{11} for AR includes:

- tracking of objects in the real world;
- visualization of content; and
- interaction with augmented reality content.

There are two possibilities how to track the environment: visual and non-visual tracking.

**Visual tracking** captures images and extracts information in order to track the location based on this image. Artificial markers can provide additional information to the AR application. A ‘marker’ is a two- or three-dimensional object, which can be identified (i.e. tracked) by a camera due to its nature and form\textsuperscript{12}. There are various types of markers and Quick-Response Codes can also act as AR markers. If no markers can be used for whatever reason then there are two possibilities for visual tracking:

1. A three-dimensional model of the object to be tracked could be developed first; or
2. so-called feature points of an object facilitate its recognition.

In the latter case, it could be problematic if an object lacks distinctive feature points or if identification is impossible because of light or weather conditions. An example for an application that uses feature point recognition is the Android application Goggles by Google. Recognition of human faces would be another example of marker-less tracking.

**Non-visual tracking** involves a single or a combination of various existing measurement systems. It requires particular sensors to track the position of the user and the objects. Time of Flight (TOF) systems, such as GPS, form one group of non-visual tracking implementations. Inertial Tracking Sensing is another form of non-visual tracking which is used for gyroscopes and accelerometers. The magnetometer and compass rely on Direct Field Sensing, which also belongs to the non-visual tracking methods. When mobile devices use the above mentioned sensors for tracking the position of so-called points-of-interest (POI) this is called gravimetric Augmented Reality.\textsuperscript{13}

The visualization of both the real and the virtual environment can happen in various ways. The user interaction with the augmented reality content is possible in five ways:

1. selecting;
2. manipulating;
3. movements by the user;
4. way-finding; and
5. system settings.\textsuperscript{14}

Popular travel applications using augmented reality are: Wikitude, Tripwolf, Peak AR, Layar, and HRS.

**SMS / MMS:** Short messaging service (SMS) is a basic function of ‘normal’ cell phones. Multimedia messaging service (MMS) enables the user to send multimedia content such as pictures or videos in addition to the text message. MMS messages are usually more expensive than text messages. SMS and MMS can also be pushed to user’s mobile device. Various apps use the push-function for up-dates, reminders, advertising, warnings etc.

**E-mail:** Receiving and sending e-mail messages is possible with smartphones.

\textsuperscript{11} Tönnis, M. (2010), Augmented Reality – Einblicke in die Erweiterte Realität, Springer.


\textsuperscript{13} New Media Consortium 2011.

\textsuperscript{14} Tönnis, M. (2010), Augmented Reality – Einblicke in die Erweiterte Realität, Springer.
Mobile Web Browser: A mobile web browser enables web pages to be viewed on the smartphone, allowing for the smaller display of smart phones. Examples of popular mobile web browsers are Safari (Apple), Android (Google), BlackBerry (RIM), Firefox for mobile (Mozilla), Internet Explorer Mobile (Microsoft).

Quick Response Codes: Similar to the well-known one-dimensional bar codes, QR codes are two-dimensional graphical code (see figure 10.3) which can be used to encode various types of content such as text, pictures, videos, or website URL.

Encoding software is required to generate the code, and a user needs a device with a camera and a QR code reader (sometimes also called a QR scanner) installed on the device in order to decipher the encoded information. Both the encoder and the reader are usually free of charge, e.g. Kaywa, which can be accessed on http://qr.kaywa.com.

Figure 10.3 Quick Response code

Quick Response codes connect mobile with traditional marketing media and can be placed on all type of print and electronic media and products, including print brochures, product packaging (e.g. CD, DVD cases), web pages, TV, etc.

QR codes are an example of another touchpoint with consumers and illustrate how mobile marketing activities can be integrated into other campaigns in a creative and interactive way in order to satisfy specific information needs of the (potential) visitor.

10.5 Mobile Devices and Operating Systems

It is not always clear what counts as a mobile device and what does not. All types of devices from a mobile phone to a portable laptop can be regarded as “mobile”, e.g. a smartphone, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a netbook, an ultrabook, a tablet or a car satellite navigation system.

A desktop computer is usually regarded as a stationary device, although it may also be transportable. A laptop is a transportable device and normally not classified as a mobile device, but recent developments towards netbooks, ultrabooks and tablets qualify as mobile devices, similar to mobile feature phones and smartphones. This distinction is also supported by, for example, Google Analytics where smartphones (e.g. iPhone, Google phone, Blackberry) and tablets (e.g. iPad) are tracked as mobile devices.
10.5.1 Smartphones and Tablet Computers

Smartphones can be defined as the result of an evolution of the mobile phone overlapping with typical PDA (i.e. personal digital assistant) features. However, unlike ‘normal’ cell phones, smartphones have a specific operating system (OS) and a standardised application programming interface (API) which facilitates third party applications. Thus, smartphones are mobile phones that use platforms such as Google Android, Apple iOS, RIM Blackberry, Microsoft and other operating systems.

Besides the basic phone services, smartphones are used for a range of other activities, such as browsing the web, reading and writing e-mails, texting, listening to music, watching videos, gaming. Figure 10.4 illustrates the differences of an average American cell phone user compared with an average iPhone user. Smartphone users in this advanced market tend to spend more time on data transmission and media consumption than voice calls.

![Figure 10.4: Smartphone usage is about data and not voice](image)


The Encyclopedia Britannica defines a tablet computer as a “computer that is intermediate in size between a laptop and a smart phone”. Tablets usually lack a built-in keyboard but have a touch screen that can be used as a writing and drawing pad. Although tablet PCs have been available for several years, the release of the Apple iPad in 2010 lead to a paradigm shift in users’ ICT usage from a so-called “lean-forward” to a “lean-back” modus and laid the ground for a mass market for tablets. Users can consume content on a tablet in a more ubiquitous, personalised, intimate and interactive way.

Tablets differ from tablet PCs and combine actually features of PCs (including notebooks and netbooks) and smartphones. The main characteristics of a tablet are:

- a touch screen, with multi-touch possibilities;
- thin and very light in weight;
- 6 – 10 inch color, high-resolution screen;
- wireless internet connectivity (Wi-Fi, 3G/4G); and
- possibility to add apps that increase the functionality.

---

The main competitors for Apple are Android tablets from various manufacturers such as the Samsung Galaxy Tab, Motorola Xoom, HTC Flyer or LG Nexus.

Mobile devices are equipped with a variety of hardware components that can support applications installed on the device.

Table 10.2 gives an overview of common built in components and features at the example of Apple products.

### Table 10.2 Components and features in Apple mobile devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardware feature</th>
<th>iPhone</th>
<th>iPod</th>
<th>iPad</th>
<th>iPad 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orig.</td>
<td>3G</td>
<td>3GS</td>
<td>4G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular phone</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLAN</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerometer</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetometer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyroscope</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video camera</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Allan (2011).

The accelerometer measures acceleration (i.e. movement) of a mobile device on three axes. A simple practical application of an accelerometer in a smartphone is the change from panel to landscape view when the device is rotated. The gyroscope is used for measuring and maintaining orientation. Together with the magnetometer, both tools are needed for navigation but also for gaming applications.

Most devices have an integrated high-resolution digital camera, sometimes facing back and front for equally taking photos and capturing the user’s face for video communication. The camera in combination with e-mail and social media applications installed on the devices allows users to publish and share their snapshots and videos immediately online, for example on social media platforms.

Despite the technological advancements which we have seen in the past few years there are still some obstacles and shortcomings, which you need to consider for the planning and implementation of your mobile marketing activities:

- Slow loading times of apps if there is no 3G/4G or Wi-Fi available;
- phone bills can get very high for data services. Not all network carriers in all countries offer flat rate tariffs;
- data roaming costs are still very high which makes certain applications unattractive for users when abroad. There are EU initiatives, though, to reduce or even to remove data roaming costs in the short-term. Other options for users are to use free of charge public Wi-Fi hotspots or a local SIM card;
- GPS is still not yet available for the great majority of smartphones or tablets which means that they can only be used to a limited extent for location-based and augmented reality services;
• weaknesses of the device such as short battery life time, poor usability;
• mobile devices are sometimes difficult to use in poor weather conditions, e.g. low temperature, rain, snow, or direct sunlight falling on screen etc.; and
• there are still security concerns regarding data misuse and privacy.

Interestingly, the operating system of a smartphone or a tablet is more important for buyers than the device brand. It seems that consumers see more value in the mobile ecosystem, e.g. availability of apps, music and video, than in the device itself. Nokia and Samsung feature phones and smartphones account for the largest share of devices in North America and Europe. Regarding the smartphone market share, Apple is the leading brand in the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. In Germany, Italy and Spain Nokia is number one, whereas Samsung dominates in France and RIM Blackberry in Canada.17

The smartphone has a high potential for e-marketing campaigns, because:
• consumers always have the phone with them;
• the smartphone is (almost) always switched on;
• the smartphone is always in reach;
• the smartphone user’s location can be identified; and
• smartphones can be used for augmentation of the reality.18

Tablets are still growing in popularity but it seems that they will not replace mobile phones or computers.19 Each device is used for specific purposes and tablets contribute to the rise of the so-called “digital omnivore”20, consumers who engage seamlessly through a multitude of online touchpoints. This also drives the development of cloud-based services as the content needs to be synchronised across various devices.

Tablets have become the fourth screen for consumers, besides TV, PCs and smartphones. However, the digital media consumption patterns for connected devices such as the computer, smartphone and tablet are different throughout the day. Compared to smartphones or computers, tablets are likely to be used significantly more in the morning (around 6 to 8 am) and in the evening (around 9 pm) times and especially on the weekend.21 It is essential for successful mobile marketing campaigns that the usage patterns for each mobile device and for each target group are understood in order to reach the customers when they are most receptive.

19 comScore (online), available: www.comscore.com (26-05-2012).
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
10.5.2 The Mobile Ecosystem

The device used for mobile communication and mobile services, for example the smartphone, is only one part of the entire mobile ecosystem. The mobile system architecture comprises four layers:22

1. Mobile connectivity (provided by the carrier, network or a content aggregator);
2. mobile hardware (the actual device);
3. mobile operating system (including an application framework for developers); and
4. mobile application.

The mobile ecosystem is highly fragmented, with competing stakeholders, technologies and platforms. Many of these players are from different industries, which can cause technical, cultural and philosophical disparities.

Carriers such as AT&T, Vodafone or Orange provide a functioning cellular network.23 The mobile device operates with a specific operating system and developers can programme new applications for this operating system by means of application frameworks.

Operating systems (OS) can be grouped into legacy and next generation platforms.24 Nokia’s Symbian OS, Windows Mobile by Microsoft and the Blackberry OS of Research in Motion (RIM) would represent legacy platforms. Apple’s iOS, Android and Windows Phone are platforms specifically designed for mobile internet usage and belong to the next generation platforms.

A further differentiation can be drawn between licensed (e.g. Windows Phone), proprietary (e.g. Apple iOS) and open source (e.g. Android developed by the Open Handset Alliance) platforms.

The four operating systems iOS, Android, Blackberry, and Symbian have a market share of more than 96%.25 All OS but Symbian are expected to hold or even increase their market share in the mid-term due to the overall increase of smartphones and tablet sales. Which operating systems will prevail on this rapidly changing market in the long-term is impossible to foresee.

The different mobile OS have similar capabilities but use different programming languages for the development of applications. Symbian applies C++, Blackberry and Android use Java, Apple iOS is based on Objective-C and finally Windows Mobile and Windows Phone use C#. Furthermore, the Software Development Kits (SDK) provided to software developers are different for all operating systems. All OS are opens systems and by using Application Programming Interfaces (API) developers can access certain services and components of a mobile device, e.g. the camera or the GPS.

Android: Android has been developed by the Open Handset Alliance (OHA), which is led by Google. The use of an Android device with its full functionality usually requires a Google ID in order to access the Android Market, use Gmail including the calendar, YouTube or Google Maps.

Device manufacturers do not have to pay licence fees to Google. Although the OS is updated several times per year, updates are initially shared with preferred Google partners. Therefore, different Android versions with different market shares exist simultaneously. Every new version is given a very fanciful name, such as “Cupcake” (Android 1.5), “Froyo” (Android 2.2), “Gingerbread” (Android 2.3), “Honeycomb” (Android 3), and “Ice Cream Sandwich” (Android 4.0). The latest version at the time of


writing this handbook is Jelly Bean (Android 4.1.1). In September 2012, the Android OS was installed on 500 million devices worldwide (mainly on smartphones), increasing by 1.3 million every day. Android OS 2.3 (Gingerbread) is installed on more than half (57%) of the devices, Ice Cream Sandwich runs on 21% and the latest version, Jelly Bean, so far only on 1% of the mobile devices.26

Apple iOS: The Apple iOS is exclusively used for Apple products. Currently, these comprise the iPod Touch, iPhone, iPad and Apple TV. The latest version of the Apple operating system is iOS 6, released on 12 September 2012.

10.5.3 Application Stores and Software Development Kits

Native apps can either be pre-installed on a mobile device or they can be acquired from app stores. The app stores act as intermediaries between developers and consumers and create a marketplace of their own as it is illustrated in figure 10.5.

Figure 10.5 The app value chain

Source: Adapted from Holzer and Ondrus (2009).

There are hundreds of thousands of apps available in the various app stores. App stores include the Apple App Store, and the Android Market/Google Play, which are described in the boxes below. Other stores are Blackberry App World, Nokia Ovi Store, Palm App Catalogue, Windows Marketplace and GetJar (platform independent). App stores have become huge marketplaces over the past few years. For example, 900 million apps were downloaded in Germany in 2010 (+112% compared to 2009) generating a revenue of € 357 million (+88% increase from 2009).27

The worldwide mobile app store downloads surpass 45.6 billion in 2012. Free apps account for nearly 90% of the total downloads in 2012. Almost half of the downloads (21 billion) will be sourced from the Apple App Store, which represents an increase of 74% over 2011.28

The Apple app store

The Apple app store was founded in July 2008. The store can be accessed directly with an Apple device or via the media player iTunes. Two months after the opening of the store 3,000 apps were available for download, 600 of them free of charge. In total, consumers have downloaded over 40 billion apps (excluding re-downloads and updates, with nearly 20 billion in 2012 alone.a

Developers or providers who want to publish an app in the app store have to register on http://developer.apple.com. The Software Development Kit (SDK) is available free of charge, however there is an annual fee of US$ 99. New apps are assessed in terms of their functionality and quality

27 Bitkom (online), available www.bitkom.org (12-09-2012) and Research2Guidance (online), available: www.research2guidance.com (12-09-2012).
by the Apple team before they are released. This evaluation process takes on average 5.9 days. Developers can offer their apps either for free or for money – the average price for an app is US$ 1.21. Apple keeps 30% of the revenue.

By end of August 2012 there were more than 900,000 apps available in the App Store, of which around 200,000 were inactive. The apps are grouped into different categories for which the number of applications is given in table 10.3.

Table 10.3 Active application count by category in the Apple app store, August 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Application Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>126,436</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>71,626</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>68,745</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>65,344</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>60,584</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>43,138</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>37,386</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,390</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>27,698</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>23,807</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>20,467</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>19,153</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>18,902</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare and fitness</td>
<td>17,773</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>16,230</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>15,599</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>14,186</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>13,930</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation</td>
<td>10,827</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3,134</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>3,015</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogues</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and drink</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsstand</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>717,112</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.148apps.biz.

Travel apps rank on place eight with more than 36,000 travel apps available by the end of August 2012.

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b) 148apps.biz (online), available: www.148apps.biz (12-09-2012).

c) Ibid.
10.6 Mobile Commerce and Mobile Marketing

M-commerce is defined as a transaction that takes place via wireless internet-enabled technology (e.g. smartphones, tablets) while allowing for freedom of movement for the end user. The driving technology facilitating m-commerce is Wi-Fi.\footnote{Lee, J. K. and Mills, J. E. (2007), ‘Exploring Tourist Satisfaction with Mobile Technology’, in: Sigala, M, Mich, L., Murphy, J. (eds.), Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2007, Springer, Wien, pp. 175-194.}

Mobile devices are increasingly used for retail and commerce. Consumers consult their “new favourite shopping companion” – their smartphone – inside shops, thus bridging the gap between physical and digital worlds. The top in-store smartphone activities are:\footnote{comScore (2012), 2012 Mobile Future in Focus. Key Insights from 2011 and What They Mean for the Coming Year (online), available: http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Presentations_and_Whitepapers/2012/2012_Mobile_Future_in_Focus (01-03-2013).}

- taking a picture of a product;
- texting / calling friends / family about the product;
- scanning the product bar code or quick response code;
- sending picture of a product to family / friends;
- searching for store location;
- comparing product prices;
- finding coupons or deals;
- researching product features; and
- checking the product availability.

The challenge for DMO marketers is to recognize how the target groups use their mobile devices for searching for information and travel purchase and to identify opportunities to increase the touchpoints with their (potential) visitors.
10.7 Mobile Marketing Tool Kit for DMOs

It is essential to understand that the type of mobile device influences the way users consume digital content. Devices are not used isolated from each other but rather in a complimentary way. Hence, campaigns will work best when they are integrated and tailored to the users’ digital media consumption behaviour.

10.7.1 Native App, Mobile Web App, Mobile Website

Applications (apps) are drivers for the increasing popularity of smartphones and tablets. Apps are software programmes, which can be downloaded from app stores either free of charge or for a certain amount of money and are then installed on mobile devices. There are now hundreds of thousands of apps available and hundreds more are available every new day.

Two types of apps can be distinguished: web apps and native apps. A native app is an app for a certain operating system (iOS, Android) and a certain mobile device (smartphone, tablet, etc.). They are directly installed onto the device. Native apps usually have a more appealing look and feel and are often more interactive. However, a shortcoming of native apps is that they need to be downloaded first from an app store, such as the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Mobile web apps do not need to be installed on the device. They use XHTML, CSS, and JavaScript and run in a mobile web browser. Web apps have the advantage that programming them is relatively easy and they can adapt to different devices. However, they cannot make use of the hardware components of a given device to the same extent as native apps. The look and feel and navigation of mobile web apps can be similar to native apps.

A mobile website is optimized for mobile browsers to be viewed on mobile devices. If you already operate a mobile website, ensure that you redirect mobile users to the correct version. Set up a specific subdomain for the mobile website. Typically, the domain name is preceded by “m” or “mobile”, e.g. http://m.destination.com or http://mobile.destination.com. When a mobile user or mobile crawler (e.g. Googlebot-Mobile) accesses the desktop version of the URL, they will be redirected to the corresponding mobile version of the page. The content on the corresponding mobile/desktop pages should match as closely as possible. For instance, subpages of the desktop version should also redirect to the corresponding subpages on the mobile version and not simply to the mobile homepage.

Whether you opt for a native app, a mobile web app or a mobile website, or whether you create all three, mainly depends on your marketing objectives, target audience, technical requirements, available budget and so forth.

The advantages and disadvantages of native apps, mobile web apps and mobile websites are compared in table 10.4. Since web apps and mobile websites both run in a mobile web browser they are grouped together.

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### Table 10.4 Advantages and disadvantages of native apps, mobile web apps and mobile websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native app</th>
<th>Web app/mobile website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhanced user experience for consumers&lt;br&gt;• Shorter loading times&lt;br&gt;• Can be used offline (thus no costs arise for data download or data roaming)&lt;br&gt;• Can use the hardware and software features and components of the device, such as:&lt;br&gt;  – camera&lt;br&gt;  – microphone&lt;br&gt;  – GPS&lt;br&gt;  – accelerometer&lt;br&gt;  – magnetometer&lt;br&gt;  – gyroscope&lt;br&gt;  – content&lt;br&gt;  – media&lt;br&gt;• Integration of videos&lt;br&gt;• App store can act as an additional distribution channel and market place for the brand:&lt;br&gt;  – search topics&lt;br&gt;  – user ratings&lt;br&gt;  – screenshots&lt;br&gt;  – demo versions&lt;br&gt;• Icon of the app will be installed on the users’ device which supports branding&lt;br&gt;• App Store approval process can help assure users of the quality and safety of the app&lt;br&gt;• Carrier network independent&lt;br&gt;• Integrated billing service</td>
<td>• Each app must be developed for a certain platform (e.g. iOS, Android) and device (e.g. smartphone, tablet)&lt;br&gt;• Not scalable beyond one platform, needs extra resources to support additional platforms&lt;br&gt;• Software development kits (SDK), development tools and user interface elements are often provided by the manufacturer of the platform&lt;br&gt;• Programming the app is time- and cost-intensive&lt;br&gt;• Application approval process can take long and is unpredictable&lt;br&gt;• Can be used for generating income through in-app advertising&lt;br&gt;• Manual update process is cumbersome&lt;br&gt;• Users must manually download and install app updates – this leads to different users running different versions of the app&lt;br&gt;• Limited visibility beyond app stores requires additional marketing effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case study: Mobile marketing strategy of the Vienna Tourist Board www.vienna.info, Austria

Interview with Andrea Kostner, Team Manager Internet Marketing at the Vienna Tourist Board (VTB).

Can you please outline the mobile marketing strategy of the Vienna Tourist Board? What are your objectives and what activities (e.g. SMS, web apps, mobile website, QR-Codes, podcasts, location based services, mobile social web, mobile advertising) do you carry out in order to achieve your objectives?

The Vienna Tourist Board is following a non-app-policy, therefore the VTB has been concentrating on developing and updating its mobile website m.vienna.info. The mobile website is the heart of our mobile strategy. In addition we are supporting selected producers of apps by providing content for relevant app-productions. QR codes are used mainly on brochures and our Vienna Journal – the main aim is to promote our mobile website and to drive traffic there. The mobile website also has an “around me function” which enables users to find their way through Vienna and select relevant sights, restaurants and other POIs in Vienna and to navigate around the city. The mobile website also gives users the opportunity to share content on different social media platforms. The VTB has done some mobile advertising in the past but has not put a main focus on that.

The Vienna Tourist Board decided not to develop an app for smartphones but rather develop a mobile version of the website. What were the reasons?

We simply wanted to reach as many mobile users as possible. Developing apps would have implied that only smartphone users could have used the app. We would have had to produce apps for at least two or three operating systems (IOS, Android, Symbian, and Blackberry) to reach the majority of smartphone users – this would have stretched our budget both when developing the apps and in the future when updating them. In short: the decision for a mobile website was based on cost, practicality and reach. Since we launched the mobile website version we have had significantly more users per month and total page views.

From your experience, what are your recommendations for the development of a mobile version of a DMO website?

Do not simply make a mobile version of the existing website but adapt and rearrange the content for the mobile user – it is a completely different use case. Consider that tourists need different information when they are in the city – it is all about getting the right information as quickly as possible and to find your way around. Keep it simple, too much information is just as bad as too little. Make sure the mobile version works on every device (touch screen as well as other phones). Also provide a light-version in addition to the regular one – that will save costs when Wi-Fi is not available.

The Vienna Journal is available as an iPad app. Why an app for the iPad but not for smartphones?

The Vienna Journal is a magazine and is used differently than the website of the VTB. Tablets are especially popular for reading newspapers and magazines and to get inspired. We expect the users of the iPad app to read about Vienna before they get here – to get inspired and to make a decision to travel to Vienna. In Vienna they can use our mobile Website to find their way around. Since the iPad is still significantly dominating the tablet market, we decided to make an iPad app version only.
What are the 3 do’s and the 3 do not’s in mobile marketing you would recommend for DMOs?

Do’s:
1. Give the mobile users custom-made information which they need when they are in your destination.
2. Think carefully before you invest your budget.
3. When developing an app, also think of running costs.

Do not’s:
1. Don’t under estimate the mobile trend – it is the future and it is developing fast.
2. However, do not follow every trend that pops up – make sure the trend is also relevant for tourism and/or your destination.
3. Look at the use case and invest your budget wisely.

10.7.2 Mobile Search Engine Optimization

Make sure that your mobile destination website:

- is configured in a way so that it can be indexed by Google. If you develop a new mobile version of your desktop website, Googlebot may not be able to find it. Create a mobile sitemap (XML-sitemap) and submit it to Google; and

- is actually indexed by Google.

To create and upload a mobile sitemap:

1. Create an XML-sitemap for mobile website. An XML-sitemap can be created easily and for free, for example on www.xml-sitemaps.com.

2. Upload the sitemap into the domain root folder of your site, for example: http://www.destination.com/sitemap.xml.

3. Open www.google.com/webmasters/tools in a web browser and upload the sitemap file. This makes it easier for Google to find your mobile web pages.

Be aware that a search enquiry with identical keywords on a desktop computer and on a mobile device provides different search result pages as can be seen in figure 10.7 and figure 10.8. Google Maps is more prominently placed further to the top of the screen on a mobile compared to the desktop PC. Furthermore, the telephone number is taken automatically from the Google Places entry and users can call directly by tapping on the ‘Call’ button. Make sure that both the desktop version of your website as well as the mobile website achieve high rankings in search engines.

Figure 10.7 Desktop search for “croatia tourism” on www.google.com

Figure 10.8 Mobile search (iPhone) for “croatia tourism” on www.google.com

A detailed “Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide” which covers also SEO for mobile devices can be downloaded from the Google webmaster library http://support.google.com/webmasters.

Since more and more people consume content on their mobile devices, it makes sense to run advertising campaigns specifically for mobile audiences. Mobile search engine advertising (SEA) works in the same way as ‘traditional’ SEA with e.g. Google AdWords. Software tools such as Google AdWords offer various targeting and serving options. For details about mobile advertising visit: www.google.com/ads/mobile.

### 10.7.3 Creating a Mobile Landing Page

The best mobile advertising campaign is useless if the landing page to which users are led when they tap on an ad is of poor quality. Thus, mobile landing pages need to be designed and optimized specifically for mobile devices. On no account should the mobile users be directed to your desktop website. A quality mobile landing page should fulfil the following usability criteria:

- Use pictures with a small file size to ensure a fast loading time;
- reduce the amount of scrolling;
- have a clear and intuitive navigation;
- provide a link to the desktop version on all pages (in case a user wants to switch to the desktop version);
- use buttons instead of hyperlinks;
- avoid Flash;
- contain interesting content tailored to the users' consumption behaviour;
- use short sentences and paragraphs;
- be appealing in its look and feel;
- promote the brand;
- include a benefit for the user and a clear call to action (e.g. active telephone numbers);
- use Google maps; and
- test the mobile pages on various platforms.

### 10.8 Other Types of Mobile Advertising

Mobile advertising is very similar to advertising on any other medium. However, there are also some significant differences such as different creative specifications, richer interactive possibilities for consumers and different ways of measuring performance. One of the biggest advantages of mobile advertising is the high degree of user interactivity. The user can touch, tilt, shake or swipe an ad and the creative opportunities are almost unlimited. Mobile advertising formats include:

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• **Text messaging / SMS / MMS:**
  - Also known as SMS (i.e. short message service). Common Short Codes (CSC) are strings of five or six digits which can be placed on print or billboards and to which a mobile user can send a text message and receive information on return. CSC can be used by DMOs to connect and communicate with customers. SMS keywords can be used to receive specific content, enter sweepstakes, participate in voting, order brochures, or receive coupons or discounts. Short code services need to be approved by each participating carrier network.34
  - Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) is a rich media messaging service that allows mobile users to send and receive messages that can include graphics, photos, audio, video and text. Unlike the mobile web, the MMS stays on the user’s mobile phone and a data connection is not required to access the ad content once the message has been received. Inserting ads into MMS messages sent to users who are roaming abroad can generate additional user costs because mobile network operators typically charge roaming fees for MMS data usage.35

• **Mobile display ads:** Typically banners, interstitials and in-app ads etc. Consider where your ad will appear (mobile app or mobile web page), the size of the screens used, rich-media capabilities (e.g. Apple’s iOS does not support Flash). The most popular banner size on Android and iOS smartphones is the 320x50 pixels banner.36 There are various ad sizes used for tablets. The IAB recommends as standard banner sizes for tablets 728x90 pixels and 300x250 pixels. AdMob is one of the biggest networks for mobile ads and supports various platforms. For more information on how in-app advertising works visit: www.google.com/ads/admob

• **Video ads:** A major behavioural shift that can be observed in online video consumption is the increasing long-form video content viewing. This development indicates a growing video marketplace, both in volume and intensity. Visual information is very important in destination marketing (see chapter 1) and the DMO can distribute promotion videos through video sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube) or place ads in videos. Video ads deliver significantly higher CTRs on average than traditional display ads as the combination of sight, sound and motion of online video offers a particularly attractive venue for advertisers.37

• **Audio ads:** Can be played before or after a voice-based phone-conversation, voice-mail, or in music applications, such as Pandora or Spotify. Audio ads can be inserted between songs and may be combined with a display ad.

• **Podcasting:** A podcast is an audio, video or multimedia file that can be downloaded from a website or an app store for playback on a PC or a mobile device. A few years ago, many marketers and also consumers were quite enthusiastic about the potential of podcasting for advertising and promotion. It is difficult to say precisely to what extent podcasts are still used in the travel industry but it seems that the focus is now rather on apps and videos than on podcasts.

• **Mobile activation:** Typically, bar codes or quick response (QR) codes are used to interact with traditional media such as print, TV, outdoor. A new form of mobile activation is audio activation to unlock and promote online content by using e.g. the Shazam app (available for free in the Apple Appstore) on a smartphone. This creates new marketing opportunities in combination with radio or TV ads and programmes.

• **Location-based advertising:** Uses GPS technology or geo-location. Calls-to-action can include finding the nearest point of interest, checking in at certain destinations or locations (e.g. Foursquare, Gowalla, and Facebook Places), clicking to coupon, and clicking to call.

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34 Ibid.
36 IAB (online), available: www.iab.net.
10.8.1 Co-operation with Digital Guidebook Publishers

A number of well-resourced commercial publishers produce online destination guides, often available as native apps and as web apps, e.g. Tripwolf, Lonely Planet. Your DMO can establish relationships with guidebook publishers and distribute DMO content through these platforms. The questions to ask are:

- How well are the locations and topics within your destination covered by these platforms and what content can you contribute?
- In which markets and in which languages is the digital guide available?

10.8.2 Car Satellite Navigation Systems

In-car and mobile satellite navigation systems (satnav) have become very widespread, as many devices are already available for a relatively low price. Even smartphones and tablets are used increasingly as navigation systems while driving a motor vehicle.

Satnav maps are an ideal way to present tourist information – points of interests – to mobile device users. DMOs can establish content partnerships with satnav vendors such as:

- www.garmin.com;
- www.navigon.com;
- www.tomtom.com; and
- www.falk.de.

10.9 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The diversity and complexity of channels available for mobile marketing requires a whole set of evaluation methods. There are two types of measurement needed: audience measurement and ad effectiveness.

Audience measurement provides insight into the consumer behaviour in terms of size and demographics of the total users on a given mobile website or application, as well as metrics related to the engagement level of the users, such as registrations, transactions, or downloads. Mobile website traffic can be tracked analogously to PC-based websites with web analytical tools such as Google Analytics. However, there are technical barriers to an accurate measurement regarding the way different platforms and devices handle cookies. The performance of ads placed in search engines can be tracked with analytical tools such as Google AdWords.

As far as native apps are concerned, the DMO has to rely on the statistics provided from the app store operator.

Insights to the success of mobile marketing communications on social media networks, such as Facebook or YouTube, can be obtained on these platforms. Furthermore, social media monitoring tools, such as Trackur, Radian 6, TrustYou, can be used for sentiment analysis of user-generated content.

SMS campaigns are similar to e-mail and can be evaluated by measuring the user reactions during and after the campaign.

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### Table 10.5  Key metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobile advertising type</th>
<th>Typical KPIs</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Native app**          | • Number of downloads  
                          | • Frequency of use  
                          | • Time spent  
                          | • Revenue if the app is not provided free of charge  |
| **Mobile app / mobile web** | • Unique users  
                          | • Page views  
                          | • New / returning users  
                          | • Time spent  
                          | • Content clickstreams  
                          | • Conversions  
                          | • Device type  
                          | • Screen size  
                          | • Mobile Web browser  |
| **Mobile display advertising (including Video)** | • Ad Views  
                          | • Click-through rate  
                          | • Average CPC, CPM, CPA  
                          | • Conversions  |
| **Quick Response code** | • Number of scans  
                          | • Unique users  
                          | • User demographics  
                          | • Date / time of scan  
                          | • On-site clickstreams  |
| **SMS / MMS**           | • Open rates  
                          | • Response rates  |
| **Podcasts**            | • Number of downloads |
| **Mobile social media** | • Unique Users  
                          | • Number of shares, likes, comments  
                          | • CTR on ads  |
Chapter 11

B2C E-commerce for Destinations

11.1 About this Chapter

The primary tasks of a DMO are to position and promote the destination in domestic and/or international markets and to generate growth and value for the tourism and leisure industry. A DMO may be able to generate income through online selling of the destination's products and services, such as accommodation, tickets and merchandising goods, either directly or via strategic partners (see also chapter 18). This chapter deals with e-commerce between the DMO and (potential) visitors to the destination (i.e. B2C). It explains the scope and different types of e-commerce and provides various examples of possible e-commerce activities that can be conducted by DMOs.

Please be aware that the extent to which DMOs can leverage e-commerce activities is determined by legislation (e.g. state aid, competition law) and the core business objectives of a DMO.

Key Messages

- E-commerce is part of the transaction services that allow governments, companies, organizations and consumers to conduct business online and to make agreements. Electronic payments may be a part of these transactions.
- DMOs need to consider carefully the extent to which they will engage in e-commerce activities.
- DMOs need to identify effective ways to drive business to the suppliers in the destination.
- DMOs can generate income through commissions for booking transactions, affiliate programmes or sales revenue from selling products through an online shop.

11.2 What is E-commerce?

Although e-business and e-commerce are frequently used terms in the online environment, the words may have different connotations for different people.

Among academics and consultants there is an ongoing debate about the meaning and limitations of e-commerce and e-business. Some argue that e-commerce encompasses e-business; others argue that e-business is the more general term and encompasses e-commerce.

Most authors agree that e-commerce is the use of the internet for carrying out a digitally enabled transaction between and among organizations and individuals (e.g. B2C and B2B). Commercial transactions involve the exchange of value (e.g. money) in return for products and services. If there is no exchange of money, there is no e-commerce.1 Furthermore, e-commerce includes all processes and activities related to buying and selling, e.g. financial transactions, business data exchange and communication between suppliers and suppliers, suppliers and consumers, and consumers and consumers.2

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In practice, it makes sense to say that e-business is any activity carried out through the internet that does not include commercial transactions involving an exchange of value. Thus, when a user books a hotel online in real-time via a booking engine on a DMO website using a credit card then this can be considered as an e-commerce activity. When a user sends a room request via e-mail to an accommodation provider or subscribes to an e-mail newsletter on a destination website it is considered an e-business activity.

### 11.2.1 E-commerce Classification

E-commerce can be classified in various ways, depending how a business or an organization operates and/or which transaction parties are involved (see figure 11.1).

#### Figure 11.1 Classification of e-commerce

![Figure 11.1 Classification of e-commerce](image)

Businesses and organizations that carry out their operations entirely online are called virtual, whereas bricks-and-clicks businesses and organizations operate both online and in a physical space. Pure virtual businesses are, for example, booking.com or expedia.com and examples of bricks-and-clicks businesses are Accor.com and BritishAirways.com.

The virtual businesses can be further divided into direct sellers, intermediaries, fee-free and ad-based (e.g. Yahoo.com, eBay.com), and fee-based businesses (e.g. PhoCusWright.com).

Fully engaged bricks-and-clicks businesses provide their entire product portfolio online and sell directly to the consumer, e.g. low cost airlines. Partially engaged bricks-and-clicks businesses sell only part of their inventory online, either in order to avoid distribution channel conflicts (i.e. cannibalisation) or because not all products or services are suitable for online distribution.

E-commerce can also be categorized according to the parties involved in the online transactions. There are various possible combinations:

- **Business-to-Business (B2B):** online businesses selling to other businesses (e.g. DMO sells market research surveys to tourism businesses or organizations).
- **Business-to-Consumer (B2C):** a business sells directly to individual consumers (e.g. online accommodation bookings or ticket sales).
• **Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C):** consumers selling online to other consumers via a market maker such as the auction website eBay.

• **Consumer-to-Business (C2B):** consumers initiate online interactions and transactions to a business through reversed auctions in which consumers can bid a price for a product or service and businesses react to this bid (e.g., Priceline.com).

The increasing use of wireless technologies and connected devices (e.g., tablets, smartphones) will lead to a transition from e-commerce to **mobile commerce** (m-commerce) and **social commerce** (s-commerce).

### 11.3 Online Payment Methods

One of the most important processes in e-commerce is the payment and there are specific issues of:

- Data security; and
- Data privacy and identity.

Secure Socket Layer (SSL) is a protocol that creates an encrypted connection between computer systems so that data can be sent securely. Secure hypertext transfer protocol (shttp) is used to transmit messages. These two security systems complement each other for a secure transmission of data over the internet. 3

Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) is a standard that facilitates secure credit card transactions through the internet. It is used by all major e-commerce players, e.g., Visa, American Express, and MasterCard. SET allows sellers to verify a buyer’s identity and protects buyers since the credit card information is sent directly to the credit card company for verification and billing. Thus, the sellers are not able to access the buyer’s credit card information. Digital signature and digital certificate are additional methods to ensure the buyer’s identity.

Online payment possibilities include: 4

- payment via credit card (e.g., Visa, American Express, MasterCard, Discover);
- payment via stored-value payment systems (e.g., debit cards, prepaid cards, smart cards);
- payment via electronic cash systems (e.g., the peer-to-peer payment systems PayPal);
- payment via digital wallet (e.g., Google Wallet);
- payment via digital accumulating balance systems, which allow users to make purchases on the web for which they are billed after a certain period of time (e.g., monthly by the smartphone carrier); and
- wireless payment systems (e.g., Near Field Communication – NFC).

### 11.4 Development of an E-business Model

A business model is a set of planned activities designed to result in a profit in a marketplace. 5 An e-business model is a set of internet and non-internet related activities that enable an organization to generate sufficient money for long-term sustainability. 6 An e-commerce model aims to use and leverage the unique qualities and advantages of the internet and the web for generating income.

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3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
There is no golden rule for developing a viable e-business model but, to be successful, the approach should focus on the business objectives rather than on the technology. In practice, companies often use combinations of e-business models.

For the development of an e-commerce strategy, a DMO should answer the following questions: 7

1. **Value proposition:** Why should customers buy from your DMO and not from competitors or other service providers and what is the added value for your customers? For example:
   - convenience;
   - information depth, breadth and quality;
   - personalisation / customisation;
   - reduction of search costs and time;
   - price transparency;
   - wider choice of products and services;
   - product / service expertise;
   - facilitation of quicker fulfilment by offering online booking; and
   - DMO is a trustworthy source of information.

2. **Revenue model:** How will you earn money? There are five major ways one can generate money on the web: through advertising, subscription fees, transaction fees, sales of goods and services, and through affiliate programmes. Very often, a combination of revenue models is applied in practice (see also chapter 18 on raising income from e-marketing services). Transaction fees, sales revenues and affiliate programmes are the major income sources for B2C e-commerce.

3. **Market Opportunity:** What market space do you serve and what is its size and realistic revenue potential?

4. **Competitive environment:** Who are the competitors in the market space and how can you distinguish yourself from them? It is essential to analyze the:
   - number and size of competitors;
   - market share of each competitor;
   - profitability of the competitors; and
   - pricing strategies of competitors for their products.

5. **Competitive advantage:** What is your special advantage to the market space (e.g. first mover advantage, cost or technology leadership, network effects, DMO as a trustworthy source of information)?

6. **Market strategy:** How do you promote products and services to attract your target audience through various types of marketing activities and marketing channels?

7. **Organizational development:** What organizational and functional structure is needed to implement the e-commerce strategy? Which departments and units are involved and how is the interface management organized?

8. **Management team:** What experiences and skills does the management team need? A strong and competent team gives credibility to consumers and business partners alike.

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11.5 E-commerce System Requirements

DMOs have various possibilities for providing purchasable offers (e.g. accommodation, tickets, packages, etc.) on their website. In the simplest form, they can place links onto the DMO website to relevant supplier websites (e.g. carriers, travel search engines, accommodation providers, etc.). Another option is to co-operate with strategic partners. Furthermore, they can fully engage in e-commerce and build their own in-house e-commerce system or outsource the development and operation of the e-commerce solution entirely or partly to a third party provider.

In any case, the DMO should describe the e-commerce system design specifications that determine the main components and functions. A logical design includes a data flow diagram, which specifies the information flow and the processing functions in some detail. Figure 11.2 illustrates an example of a data flow diagram for an e-commerce solution (e.g. hotel search).

Figure 11.2 Simple data flow diagram for an e-commerce system

Thus, e-commerce system architecture consists of:

- general information about tourism offers available in the destination;
- search functions for various user types and user needs;
- electronic catalogue (online shop): offers with descriptions, pictures, videos, prices, availabilities, ratings etc.;
- order / request form;
- electronic shopping cart / online booking;
- secure electronic payment (SSL, SET);
- purchase confirmation / product distribution;
monitoring of online user behaviour and gathering data for market research and increasing market intelligence (i.e. CRM); and
• after-sales activities to facilitate customer retention (e.g. reviews, social media integration).

11.6 E-commerce Business Models for DMOs

Many DMOs are not-for-profit organizations and are either directly incorporated into the government or are operated by a designated agency reporting to public bodies and therefore they receive their funding – entirely or partly – from public bodies (i.e. State Aid). However, State Aid has the potential to distort competition and affect trade. The European Commission has investigated the rules relating to State Aid\(^8\) and has clarified that tourist boards and organizations should address the ways in which they co-operate with tourism businesses in terms of e-commerce activities (in particular bookings generated via DMO websites). The DMO needs to be able to show that there is a market failure, where the private sector is not adequately fulfilling an important consumer need and that the service provided is in the public interest.

The selection of an e-commerce strategy must be in alignment with the overall business strategy of your DMO. Depending on the legal framework of the country in which the DMO is located and the markets where your DMO operates, you may face legal obstacles to conducting your own e-commerce system and selling travel offers directly or indirectly to users.

Thus, DMOs can set up various forms of strategic alliances with e-commerce platforms. Options include:
• own e-commerce system operated by the DMO;
• DMO conducts e-commerce via a Destination Management System (DMS);
• public private partnership (PPP) with one or several commercial partners;
• appointing a single commercial third party company as a strategic partner; and
• promoting suppliers in partnership with several commercial third party operators as tactical partners.

It is crucial for DMOs to evaluate the available options. Each option should be considered with respect to the key strategic issues in terms of:\(^9\)

• **Suitability:** Does the solution support the DMO to achieve its objectives?
• **Feasibility:** Is the solution feasible in relation to the competencies and resources available in the DMO?
• **Acceptability:** Is the solution acceptable to the stakeholders (e.g. customers, hoteliers, tour operators, government) of the DMO?
• **Scope for gaining a competitive advantage:** Does the option create an advantage for the DMO and its suppliers over competitors? The level of the competitive advantage will also influence the acceptability of the solution.

In order to be successful and viable, it is essential to plan for the change that an e-commerce system creates for all stakeholders within a destination in order to avoid conflicts and resistance.

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\(^8\) For more information on state aid visit: [https://www.gov.uk/state-aid](https://www.gov.uk/state-aid)

11.6.1 Own E-commerce System Operated by a DMO

The administrative, commercial, marketing and technical challenges of this approach need to be considered carefully by the DMO, in particular it needs to be analyzed whether the DMO:

- will simply duplicate the content of existing e-commerce providers or regional DMOs offering e-commerce to SMTEs (e.g. through a DMS);
- has the market knowledge and staff resources to gain enough inventory that is attractive, competitively priced and timely;
- is prepared to devote marketing resources to short-term sales rather than long-term branding;
- can distribute the inventory to third party distribution channels effectively to produce an economy of scale, and if so will the SMTEs accept the commission costs; or
- has the ICT expertise to build or buy the required systems?

11.6.2 DMO Conducts E-commerce via DMS

The multitude of objectives and tasks a DMO has to achieve (e.g. branding and promotion, marketing research, knowledge transfer, supporting the suppliers in the destination, communication with visitors) could be conducted through a number of different systems (e.g. website, extranet, CRM, booking engine etc.). However, it is much more efficient to have one system that integrates all these functions and serves everyone in the destination. Such software solutions are called Destination Management Systems (DMS). A DMS differs from other technologies in the way that it incorporates different organizations as stakeholders and is suitable for selling the inventory of SMTEs.

A DMS is a collection of digital information about a destination and it supports the development and management of destinations and acts as a major promotion, distribution and operational tool for both the SMTEs and the destination. In particular it:

- helps to improve the functions and performance of a DMO;
- satisfies information and reservation needs of visitors;
- supports a destination in strengthening its competitiveness;
- includes information on attractions and facilities; and
- supports travellers to create a personalised destination experience.

There are specialised technology providers that offer customisable DMS solutions for DMOs, which integrate the suppliers within the destination via an extranet. The UNWTO suggests the following step-by-step framework for the development and implementation of a DMS:10

1. Develop a strategic overview, brand, look and feel of the destination.
2. Prepare an e-business and e-commerce strategy in alignment with your overall DMO strategy.
3. Secure specialist support from ICT, marketing and DMS experts.
4. Advise and consult with all key stakeholders in the destination.
5. Determine functional specifications and the e-commerce approach of the website.

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7. Request for tenders and decide on / learn from the partners working on the project.
8. Select system suppliers and / or software developers.
9. Organize the data collection and input into content management tools.
10. Build a pilot system and test the DMS and the website.
11. Host and maintain the DMS and the various sites.
12. Plan for search engine optimization, search engine advertising, and other marketing communications.
13. Provide analysis of users and their usage of the site.
14. Develop feedback mechanisms.
15. Establish long-term strategy and account for technological upgrades.

An example of a DMO that provides online booking for accommodation for visitors via a DMS is the Slovenian Tourism Organization, www.slovenia.info.

11.6.3 Public Private Partnership with Commercial Partners

A public private partnership (PPP) is a co-operation between a DMO (i.e. the public organization) and one or several private commercial businesses. The advantages of PPPs include:

- speedy, efficient and cost effective delivery of projects;
- value for money for the taxpayer through optimal risk transfer and risk management;
- creation of added value through synergies between public authorities and private sector businesses, especially through the integration and transfer of public and private sector skills, knowledge and expertise;
- innovation and diversity in the provision of public services; and
- effective utilization of state assets to the benefit of all users of public services.

However, PPPs can also cause problems for the DMO in terms of:

- lack of control over the co-operation;
- political interference;
- increased costs; and
- acceptability by all stakeholders in the destination.

Examples of DMOs that apply PPPs are:

- VisitNorway and their partner BookNorway;
- the co-operation between Swiss Tourism, Swiss Rail and Hotellerie Suisse; and
- VisitDenmark's co-operation with TouristOnline A/S.
11.6.4 Co-operation with One or Several Commercial Third Party Companies as Strategic Partners

A DMO can appoint a single commercial third party company as a strategic partner or can promote the suppliers in partnership with several third party operators as strategic partners. The strategic partners can be online travel agencies (OTA), internet distribution systems (IDS), meta travel search engines (MTSE) or global distribution systems (GDS).

11.6.4.1 Co-operation with a OTAs, IDS or GDS

Online travel agencies (e.g. expedia.com, priceline.com, travelocity.com) and internet distribution systems (e.g. hrs.com, booking.com) are commission-based intermediaries that have direct contracts with suppliers. The commissions for bookings range from 15-25% and can be even higher for special arrangements.

Online travel agencies (OTA) are horizontally integrated and offer travel products such as accommodation, transportation, rental cars, cruises, packages etc. Internet distribution systems (IDS) normally specialise in accommodation distribution.

Global distribution systems (GDS) are mainly distribution environments for airlines, rental car companies and chain hotels. However, they also deliver content (e.g. hotels, rental cars, cruises) to ca. 163,000 travel agencies worldwide through their agency software solutions. The four major GDSs are Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre and Worldspan. The costs for GDS distribution are relatively high. All GDS companies own one or more OTAs, provide one or more online booking tools to the corporate travel market and offer a range of e-commerce services to travel intermediaries and suppliers alike.

A DMO can choose either type of intermediary as a commercial partner and can collect fees or commissions on click-throughs, on referring links or from booking transactions. However, it is important to ensure that as many suppliers in the destination as possible are represented in the OTA/IDS database. Furthermore, the actual booking volume for various markets and accommodation types of the distribution platform should be evaluated and considered in relation to the expected bookings generated through the DMO website. Other issues to be considered include the cost of commissions and the terms and conditions both for the participating SMTEs as well as for the customer.

The advantage of a co-operation with an OTA over an IDS is that users will be able to search for and purchase various travel products. Moreover, since OTAs/IDSs charge commissions from the suppliers, the DMO should carefully select a partner and ideally integrate suppliers or their representatives in the decision-making process in order to avoid complaints by suppliers.

OTAs and IDSs provide so-called white label solutions that can be geared to the corporate design of the DMO. Normally, the information “Powered by ...” needs to be included on the search page. There are two possibilities how an OTA/IDS can be integrated into the DMO website:

- **Partial integration:** Only the search box is integrated on the DMO website. After the user has put in the travel related data (e.g. destination, type of accommodation, and duration of stay) the user is transferred to the branded website of the OTA/IDS where the search results are displayed.

- **Full integration:** The search box and the search results are displayed on the DMO website with the look and feel of the DMO’s website design. The booking can happen either on the OTA/IDS website or on the DMO website.

Since the OTA/IDS negotiates the contracts with the suppliers, the DMO has only limited control over the content and data quality of the inventory in the OTA/IDS. The display and ranking of the results may also not be in favour of smaller accommodation establishments.

The Vienna Tourist Board has implemented the IDS hrs.com in their website as can be seen in figure 11.3.
11.6.4.2 Co-operation with a Meta Travel Search Engine as a Strategic Partner

Meta-search engines – such as kayak.com, trivago.com, checkfelix.com, skyscanner.com – are relatively new types of online intermediaries that have changed the travel distribution landscape. They can be seen as “meta-mediaries” which aggregate offers from suppliers and other intermediaries.

The co-operation with a meta travel search engine allows the DMO to ensure that as many suppliers as possible are displayed. Most meta travel search engines offer so-called white label solutions, which mean that the user interface can be adjusted to the corporate design of the DMO. There are two possibilities for how a meta travel search can be integrated into the DMO website:

- **Partial integration:** Only the search box is integrated on the DMO website. After the user has put in the travel related data (e.g. destination, type of accommodation, and duration of stay) the user is transferred to the branded website of the meta travel search engine where the search results are displayed.

- **Full integration:** The search box and the search results are displayed on the DMO website with the look and feel of the DMO’s website design. The users are referred to the supplier’s website for the purchase.

Either way, the users are led away from the DMO’s website. Another shortcoming is that the DMO has only limited control over the content and data quality of the inventory in the meta travel search engine. The display and ranking of the results may also not be in favour of smaller accommodation establishments.

Meta travel search engines allow users to compare tourism offers from a great number of providers. The benefit they offer for intermediaries is a greater exposure to users while they can retain control over bookings and thus commissions. For suppliers, meta travel search engines mean an additional
distribution channel that can lead to increased customer loyalty through direct user handling. However, meta travel search engines may also destroy the brand, if the users only focus on the price.

Meta travel search engines generate revenues through referral fees and advertising.

DMO examples are:
- the Austrian National Tourist Office has integrated Trivago.com; and
- the Dutch Tourism Board’s co-operation with SkyScanner.com.

11.6.4.3 Open Platform for Third-party Operators

As an example, Visit Britain displays various OTAs/IDSs on their website from which the users can choose.

The advantage of this approach for the DMO is that they include all relevant booking platforms and do not promote one company exclusively. Moreover, the DMO can charge an advertising fee from the displayed companies and thus generate additional income. A shortcoming is that the users have to leave the DMO website in order to search on the third-party operator’s website. This can have a negative impact on the customer’s loyalty and trust toward the DMO.

This solution is more complex for users as they do not know which provider contains the best and the most relevant offers. Moreover, it reduces the convenience, as the users have to make more effort to search.

11.7 Selling Merchandise and Travel Related Products

DMOs can distribute souvenirs, merchandising products or travel related products (e.g. guidebooks, tickets, passes etc.) via their websites and offer uses a one-stop-shop experience.

Selling souvenirs and merchandising goods related to the destination brand has positive marketing effects, besides generating income, and supports the brand awareness and brand loyalty. The customers who purchase souvenirs and other goods act as brand ambassadors to other potential customers.

However, the design and logistics of a web shop need to be carefully considered in advance, including the number of souvenirs and goods needed on stock, the quality and quantity of the content, storage and distribution costs, shipping, payment methods, and customer complaint management.

The DMO can either place links to third party companies, establish affiliate programmes (e.g. Amazon), or develop an online shop through which the goods can be sold.

The Tirol Tourism Board sells branded merchandise products both through a walk-in shop in Innsbruck, the capital of the Tirol, as well as through an online shop on their website, as can be seen in figure 11.4.
Questions to consider for the implementation of an online shop include:

- In which languages, and for which markets, should the shop be available?
- What is the amount of resources needed to operate the shop?
- Are there enough and attractive items for customers?
- What payment methods do you offer buyers?
- What shipping costs arise for the products on sale?
- What amount of fulfilment is required in-house?
- How do you deal with customer complaints?
- Will the shop cover the administrative, operation costs?

It is recommended to seek legal advice for the formulation of the terms and conditions.
11.8 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The success and impact of the DMO’s e-commerce activities can be measured in two ways: audience measurement and booking conversions.

Audience measurement provides insight into the user behaviour in terms of the volume and demographics of users using the booking and/or shopping facilities on the website. Furthermore, the actual conversion rate of sales via the DMO website is an indicator of customer acceptance and value for SMTEs.

Key metrics include:

- number of users that use the booking engine;
- abandonment rate;
- bounce rate;
- number of users that click on links to third party e-commerce partner;
- conversion rate;
- look-to-book ratio;
- booking revenue for different accommodation types;
- booking revenue for different markets;
- average number of cross/up sells added per visit;
- revenue for DMO;
- revenue for SMTEs;
- revenue for strategic partners;
- clickstream analysis;
- cost per acquisition (into the sales funnel); and
- cost per booking (per transaction).
12.1 About this Chapter

Paid media – as opposed to owned and earned media – refers to a form of advertising where the advertiser pays an agreed amount of money to the publisher. Typical paid media channels include display ads, paid search engine advertising, sponsorships, and social media advertising. This chapter describes the different paid media channels, their benefits and challenges, and provides you with best practice guidelines.

Key Messages

- The strategic role of paid media advertising has shifted from mere branding and traffic generation to a catalyst that feeds owned media and creates earned media.
- Display ads can be targeted to internet users in many different ways in order to reach the advertiser’s most relevant audience.
- New formats are available to meet marketers’ communications needs across the purchase funnel; such as the so-called ‘Rising Stars’ formats and in-stream video ads.
- Search engine advertising is highly targeted, allowing the advertiser to control the budget and the advertised text, to measure the ad performance in real-time and react immediately.
- Social media advertising must support your social media strategy and your overall marketing objectives in order to build your presence, develop your community and engage the community to drive specific actions.

12.2 Overview

Search engine advertising, social media marketing and display advertising are the most frequently applied paid for online marketing activities. With earned media increasing in importance, the strategic role of paid media advertising has shifted from mere branding and traffic generation to a catalyst that feeds owned and creates earned media1 (see also chapter 2 on strategy and planning). The major benefits of paid media are:

- in-demand usage;
- immediacy (can be delivered immediately);
- scalability (in terms of ad impressions); and
- control (tracking of ad performance and ROI).

However, declining response and click-through rates, poor credibility and advertising clutter require a greater effort in the planning, creation and implementation of paid media campaigns.

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The formats available to the DMO for online ads are determined by two factors:

1. The objectives of the ad; and
2. the platform where the ad will be displayed.

The objectives of ads can be defined by the DMO, however, which ad formats are available on specific platforms is decided by the operator, e.g. ads on search engines are text-only with a limited amount of text lines and characters.

12.3 Paid Media Cost Models

Costs can be considered in terms of the cost of getting a user to your website(s), and the cost of achieving the outcomes during their visit. There are four common cost models for paying a publisher (and/or advertising agency) for carrying your advertisements:

- **CPM (cost per thousand ad impressions):** In most cases this is used for banner ads. The ‘M’ (i.e. mille, Latin for one thousand) is used because the ad impressions are sold in bulks of one thousand, e.g. you can buy one million ad impressions. The CPM will depend on the website (e.g. brand awareness, traffic volume) and market where you want to place your ads, but they vary typically from around € 5 to € 70 or even more for exclusive placements.

- **CPC (cost per click):** The advertiser only pays each time a user clicks on the ad. This cost model can also be applied for all other formats of paid media advertising but is typically used for search engine advertising. The CPC usually ranges from a few cents to a few Euros depending on the keywords.

- **CPA (cost per action):** A certain amount of money is paid to the publisher if the user completes an action from the ad, e.g. subscribing to a newsletter, purchase, phone call, participating in a sweepstake. Ensure that the resulting action can be tracked accurately.

- **Flat Rate:** This cost model is not performance based. A fixed or negotiated price is paid to the publisher, depending on the ad’s size (in pixels), position (e.g. homepage, sub-page, newsletter etc.) and duration (e.g. days, weeks, months, one year).

12.4 Online Display Advertisements

**Display advertising** appears on web pages in many forms, including web banners. These adverts can consist of static or animated images, as well as interactive media that may include audio and video elements. Display advertising on the internet is widely used for branding. This is why metrics like interaction time are becoming more relevant. Display advertising is becoming much more targeted to users, similar to search engine ads which are based on what they are searching for.

Online display ad standards have changed over the years to larger sizes, in part due to increased resolution of standard monitors and browsers, in part to provide advertisers with more impact for their investment. Display ads can be targeted to internet users in many different ways in order to reach the advertiser’s most relevant audience. Online display ads are sometimes also referred to as ‘banner ads’, however, since ‘banner’ is also used to describe a specific ad dimension (i.e. 468 x 60 pixels) the term online display ads is more appropriate.

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2 Chaffey, D. and Smith, P. R. (2008), eMarketing eXcellence – Planning and Optimizing Your Digital Marketing, Elsevier.
3 Often also referred to as pay per click (PPC).
Online display ads are very often simply regarded as traffic builders. However, they can serve both persuasive as well as informative objectives. They can:

- deliver content, providing information on-site to help to communicate the DMO’s offering;
- enable transactions and increase sales (e.g. bookings);
- shape attitudes and help to build brand awareness;
- solicit responses, identify new leads or as a start for two-way communication;
- encourage retention, reminding users about the DMO and its offerings; and
- improve cross-media awareness, making users aware of e.g. social media channels.

Typical weaknesses of online display ads are:

- poor and diminishing click-through rates (user nuisance, ad-blockers in web browsers);
- relatively high costs for the production and the ad placement; and
- impact on branding is difficult to measure.

### 12.4.1 Online Ad Serving and Targeting

**Ad serving** is an important activity of third-party advertising agencies. It matches an advertiser’s need for targeted ad placement with a publisher’s need for revenue-generating ad on its site. Ad serving comprises the hardware, software and personnel required to deliver advertisements to websites and ad-supported software. It also includes the monitoring of click-throughs and required reporting to the ad purchasers and website publishers.

**Advertising networks** help website publishers to sell more advertising inventory and thus generate more revenue. Networks agencies usually have special agreements with publishers so that contextual ads are delivered to participating websites. Networks can vary in terms of reach, cost model, contextual targeting possibilities and performance metrics provided.

**Targeting options** of online advertising networks include:

- demographic targeting (e.g. age, gender, household income);
- behavioural targeting (e.g. last-minute bookers);
- contextual targeting (i.e. page content determines which ads are shown to the user);
- channel targeting (e.g. hospitality, transportation, entertainment, health, eco-friendly);
- geographic targeting (e.g. city, country, region); and
- re-targeting (i.e. tracking a user over time through cookies).

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4 Chaffey, D. and Smith, P. R. (2008), *eMarketing eXcellence – Planning and Optimizing Your Digital Marketing*, Elsevier
6 PCMAg.com (2013), Encyclopedia (online), available: http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term/0,1237,t=ad-serving&sl=37491,00.asp (03-01-2013).
There are three basic types of behavioural targeting:

1. Targeting identified users who have logged in to a website;
2. targeting unidentified users by using tracking tags (e.g. cookies); and
3. targeting with predictive models (also called pixel-less targeting) based on CRM data to predict future customer or prospect behaviour (see also chapter 14 on customer relationship management).

12.4.2 Options and Formats

There is a great variety of online display ad. They can include the following types:

- **Static:** images (including graphic and text) with no movement.

- **Rich Media Ads:** ads that permit users to interact with them, as opposed to simply being animated. Rich media ad formats include transitional and various over-the-page units such as floating ads, page take-overs and tear-backs using technologies such as audio, video, Flash, Shockwave, and programming languages such as Java, JavaScript and DHTML.

- **Pop-ups, pop-unders, and interstitials:** including expanding or floating ads and microsites. The browser window in which the ad appears often does not include the usual browser control buttons. The only way to close it is to click the small close button of the window’s frame. Many users regard these forms of obtrusive advertising as extremely annoying.

The standard display ad sizes are called interactive marketing unit (IMU) ad formats. The sizes of many online display ad formats have been standardized by the IAB, for example:

- **Full banner:** 468 x 60 pixels
- **Leaderboard:** 728 x 90 pixels, placed across the top or bottom of the page
- **Half banner:** 234 x 60 pixels
- **Buttons:** 120 x 60 pixels and 125 x 125 pixels
- **Skyscrapers:** 120 x 600 pixels and 160 x 600 pixels, placed on the left or right side of a web page
- **Medium and large rectangles:** 300 x 250 pixels and 336 x 280 pixels, can be used within a paragraph of text

The Interactive Advertising Bureau, in co-operation with major advertising platforms, developed new formats that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher viewer impact. A new IAB Standard Ad Unit Portfolio was introduced in June 2011, which includes a new range of formats designed to meet marketers’ communications needs across the purchase funnel. These new so-called ‘Rising Stars’ formats include:

- **Billboard:** 970 x 250 pixels (developed by Google/YouTube)
- **Filmstrip:** 300 x 600 pixels (developed by Microsoft)
- **Portrait:** 300 x 1050 pixels (developed by AOL)

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10 It should be mentioned that all display ads technically have a rectangular shape even if they do not appear so to the user.

• **Pushdown:** 970 x 90 pixels (developed by Pictela)
• **Sidekick:** 300 x 250 pixels, 300 x 600 pixel, 970 x 250 pixels (developed by Unicast)
• **Slider:** 970 x 90 pixels (developed by Genex, built by MediaMind and Unicast)

For more details on the dimensions, requirements, implementations, metrics and best practices of the rising stars and other display formats visit the IAB’s *Display Advertising Guidelines* (www.iab.net/displayguidelines).

12.4.3 Other Forms of Display Advertising

Driven by the ongoing convergence of media and channels, other popular forms of display advertising include:

- advertorials (see guidelines for advertorials in chapter 18);
- interactive TV advertising (see section 13.4 on interactive TV advertising);
- mobile advertising (see chapter 10 on mobile tourism);
- in-game advertising; and
- in-stream video advertising.

An abundance of advertising opportunities exist across the different gaming platforms (see figure 12.1). Ads can also be placed in online games, which can either be available through the internet or via game consoles. The Interactive Advertising Bureau suggests various methods of *in-game advertising*[^12], including:

- static in-game;
- dynamic in-game;
- inter-level ads;
- game skinning;
- product placement;
- sponsorship;
- post-game;
- pre-game; and
- advergames.

Figure 12.1 Types of in-game advertising

Display
- Ex. banners, digital video ads, downloadable content on console services

In-game environment ads

In-game immersive ads

Interactive elements
- Ex. computer terminals, branded racing cars, cell phones, downloadable items within game

Advergames

Interactive elements
- Ex. game specifically designed around product or service being advertised

Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau (2010).

**Video advertising** is one of the fastest-growing opportunities online today, as well as one of the most promising online advertising formats. Video has penetrated virtually every aspect of our lives. Consumers watch a lot of video on a various devices, such as PC, smartphone, tablet and TV. Surveys\(^\text{13}\) revealed that the click-through rates of in-stream video ads are significantly higher compared to rich media ads and also show higher user interaction rates.

The emotional draw of the television experience, consumers’ adoption of broadband and subsequent change in internet content, capabilities, and consumption, all contribute to driving this growth. The operating ecosystem for video advertising can be complex and contains various entities, all of which play a different but vital role in the development, production and distribution of video advertising.\(^\text{14}\)

There are two main in-stream video ad product categories:\(^\text{15}\)

1. **Linear video ads** – are presented before, in the middle of, or after the video content is consumed by the user, in very much the same way a TV commercial can play before, during or after the chosen programme. One of the key characteristics of a linear video ad is that the user watches the ad instead of the content as the ad takes over the full view of the video.

2. **Non-linear video ads** run parallel to the video content so the users see the ad while viewing the content. Non-linear video ads can be delivered as text, graphical ads, or as video overlays. Common non-linear video ad products include:
   - overlays, which are shown directly over the content video; and
   - product placements, which are ads placed within the video content.

Both linear and non-linear video ad products have the option of being paired with what is commonly referred to as a companion ad. The primary purpose of the companion ad is to offer sustained visibility of the sponsor throughout the video content experience.

\(^{13}\) For example see MediaMind (2012), Video is Everywhere: The In-Stream Benchmark Research (online), available: http://www2.mediamind.com/Data/Uploads/ResourceLibrary/MediaMind_in-stream_video.pdf (03-01-2013).


12.4.4 Guidelines for Best Practice

The following guidelines should be considered for planning, creating and implementing online display ads:16

• Begin with market research in order to understand the online advertising context, your competitors, your target audience, how they use the web and which sites they use;
• keep it simple;
• tell a compelling story;
• include a call to action;
• use people – human faces are appealing;
• add sound, video and Flash with player control buttons;
• keep the banner and control panel as one integrated piece;
• ensure the landing page and the website make it easy for users to take the action;
• keep the file size small so that the ad will load smoothly and quickly;
• use a strong, attention-grabbing headline;
• choose colours that are appropriate for the sites on which your ad will appear;
• choose websites which are appropriate for your target audiences;
• graphic content should arouse user curiosity, without being too obscure;
• put banner ads at the top of the page, rather than further down; and
• test your ads on a continuous basis (e.g. A/B testing) and improve them if necessary.

12.5 Paid Search Engine Advertising

Although many users click on the listings in the organic search result pages, a sufficient number of users click on the sponsored ads in search engines (apparently, about 95% of Google’s revenue originates from paid search). Paid search engine advertising means that advertisers bid on keywords associated with their brand, products and services and which they assume to be relevant for consumers. Search engine advertising refers to the concept of matching the users’ keywords with links to the pages that will satisfy the information needs of those users.17 Every time a user clicks on an ad, the advertiser has to pay a certain fee to the search engine operator (i.e. pay per click) depending on the chosen keywords.

All search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo!, Bing) provide free software tools for placing, managing and monitoring ad placements in their search networks:

- Google AdWords;
- Yahoo! Search Marketing; and
- Microsoft adCenter.

12.5.1 Benefits and Challenges

The strategic use of paid search is to gain tactical visibility in the short term, as a means of identifying opportunities that you then target through natural search strategies, avoiding over reliance on paid traffic. The benefits of search engine advertising are that the advertiser can control the budget and the advertised text, can measure the ad performance in real-time and react immediately if the ad is not performing well. Additionally, search engine advertising is highly targeted, so there is limited wastage compared to other media channels.

Although search engine advertising is usually used for acquisition, repeated exposure in the sponsored ads can also support branding strategies.

A challenge is that the advertisers have to manage two aspects in the keyword bidding process: the maximum cost per click (max. CPC) they are willing to pay for each keyword or keyword phrase and the quality of the keywords. Both affect the position of the rank and whether the ad is shown at all. The quality of keywords includes the keyword’s click-through rate, ad text relevance (e.g. keywords included in ad), overall historical keyword performance in a search engine, and user experience on the landing page. Thus, the ad rank can be improved through optimization of the quality and performance of an ad.

12.5.2 Options and Formats

Search engine ads are usually text-based and there are two different cost models in use that also determine where the ads are shown:

1. **Keyword-targeted campaigns:**
   - Ads appear on a search engine’s search network
   - Pricing model: cost per click (CPC)

2. **Site-targeted campaigns:**
   - Ads appear on selected sites of the search engine’s content network (channel or contextual targeting)
   - Pricing model: cost-per-thousand impressions (CPM)
12.5.3 Guidelines for Best Practice

When embarking on a paid search engine advertising campaign, the following questions need to be answered:

1. Where are your customers located?
2. What language will your ad be written in?
3. What website will your ad link to?
4. What is the copy text of the ad?
5. Which keywords do you want to trigger your ad?
6. What is your available budget?

When the search engine advertising campaign is running, its performance needs to be closely monitored and optimized if necessary. Optimization strategies include:

- adding a few new keywords or keyword phrases;
- using keyword matching options (i.e. broad match, phrase match, exact match, negative keywords);
- making sure keywords relate to the product / service promoted;
- using keyword variations (synonyms, alternate spellings);
- creating similar keyword groupings or themes in each ad group and ads that focus on that group;
- writing clear and compelling text;
- including keywords in the ad text and title;
- including a call to action in the ad text;
- sending users to the best possible landing page;
- rewriting ads, testing multiple ads per ad group;
- changing targeting options; and
- adjusting maximum CPC bids for keywords.

Regarding the keyword selection, advertisers should also consider the ‘long tail of keywords’. This concept refers to the fact that the most popular keywords are usually also the most expensive ones. The more specific the keywords, the fewer competitors will bid for them and thus they will be much cheaper.18

It must be mentioned that planning, running, monitoring and optimizing search engine advertising campaigns with hundreds of keywords and dozens of ad texts is very time-consuming without the professional expertise and professional monitoring tools. Therefore, you should decide whether search engine advertising campaigns are outsourced to third-party service agencies or conducted in-house. In the latter case, specialised staff will be required but, at the same time, useful data about consumer behaviour can be obtained.

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12.6 Online Sponsorship

Online sponsorship can be defined as the linking of a brand with related content or context for the purpose of creating brand awareness and strengthening brand appeal, in a form that is clearly distinguishable from a banner, button or other standardised ad unit.19

12.6.1 Benefits and Challenges

For the DMO, online sponsorship has the advantage of being associated with a brand that is already familiar to the site user. Thus, sponsorship builds on this existing relationship and trust. The idea is that the quality of the event or information set will carry over to the company’s products, services, or brands. Online sponsorship is usually a long-term arrangement used to build brand images and develop reputations rather than to generate immediate sales.20

12.6.2 Options and Formats

There is not one defined set of sponsoring opportunities. A DMO can either sponsor certain events, applications (e.g. for smartphones, tablets, TV), online and/or offline video games, or media productions. Sponsored microsites can be used for e-permission marketing. By using attractive incentives, microsite users can be persuaded to opt-in to an online dialogue – e-mail addresses, profiling information and customer communication preferences can then be captured and e-mails can be sent to continue the dialogue and build the relationship towards customer engagement and/or sale.21

12.6.3 Guidelines for Best Practice

Online sponsoring requires careful planning and implementation and the following general guidelines need to be considered:

- Ensure that your brand fits to the sponsored event, content or context;
- define the target audience precisely;
- stick to a few key messages;
- develop a plot line;
- deliver exclusivity;
- deliver relevance; and
- plan for the before and after sponsoring.

12.7 Social Media Advertising

Consumers continue to spend an increasingly large proportion of their time on social media and destination marketers are allocating more and more resources to social media channels. Building a presence on social media, developing a community around it and engaging that community in content and conversations about your destination requires a significant amount of time and effort. Using paid media to amplify the effort you are making across your owned social media and the earned media this creates provides the DMO with an opportunity to scale its efforts, drive community growth and levels of engagement more quickly than might be achieved through just organic growth.

Social media advertising is a good example of converged media where destinations can use paid media to promote their branded content across their owned social media and sponsor user-generated content derived from earned media. As such, it represents well-integrated e-marketing.

Social media advertising is paid for advertising on social media. It can include display advertising on social networks but generally refers to specific advertising formats that leverage the interconnected nature of social media. The terms ‘social media advertising’ and ‘social advertising’ are often used interchangeably but the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) defines social advertising as a particular form of social media advertising:

“The online ad that incorporates user interactions that the consumer has agreed to display and be shared. The resulting ad displays these interactions along with the user’s persona (picture and/or name) within the ad content”

More recently the term ‘native advertising’ has become popular. Definitions differ but broadly speaking it refers to an advertising format that is built into the visual design of the channel and the ads take the form of content. Native advertising aims to supplement the user experience by providing relevant and high quality content delivered ‘in-stream’ so not to interrupt user interaction and experience.

12.7.1 Benefits and Challenges

Supporters of social media advertising suggest that it might offer a cure for ‘banner blindness’, where the consumer learns to ignore digital advertising formats in favour of the content and conversations that represent their desired focus. This is particularly relevant for social media where consumer and buying behaviour is likely to be very different from traditional websites.

It is the interconnected nature of social media that makes it such a potentially powerful advertising platform. More specifically:

- **Targeting:** With over 1 billion active users worldwide on Facebook alone, and increasing levels of penetration across previously less active demographics, social media offers huge potential reach. Users provide a wealth of information that can be used to support accurate and focussed segmentation and targeting – including how old they are, where they live, what their interests are, which brands they like and what they are doing.

- **Relationships:** Based on their ‘social graph’ each user brings with them a network of relationships based on personal interactions. Paid advertising on social media takes advantage of those relationships – content, messages and specific actions such as a ‘like’ or comment can be shared across an individual’s personal network. For the advertiser this facilitates and supports word of mouth type communication between individuals.

• **Relevance:** Based on the ability to accurately target a specific user profile, and the credible nature of content and actions undertaken by those you have a personal relationship with, it is possible to create very relevant content, messages and communications.

### 12.7.2 Options and Formats

Social media advertising is a rapidly developing area and the specific options and formats available to the advertiser are likely to evolve further. What follows is a summary of the types of format currently available across the three major consumer social media channels: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Depending on the network and specific advertising format, social media advertising can be bought on a cost per thousand impressions basis (CPM), a sponsorship basis (negotiated fee) or via a performance based model – usually cost per click (CPC) but sometimes cost per acquisition or specific action (CPA).

#### 12.7.2.1 Facebook

Facebook currently supports two main types of advertising: ads (paid placement of brand content) and sponsored stories (sponsored user and brand created content or conversations).

Ads and sponsored stories run on the right hand side of Facebook’s homepage or a user’s profile page. There is a range of formats that can be used to advertise a page, app or an event. The ads can be set up to click-through to a Facebook page, app or event as well as an external site. Sponsored stories are created automatically to support your advertising.

When advertising a page you will be provided with three options:

- **Get more page likes** – you design your ad including the headline, body copy and the image and it will include a page like button. Sponsored stories are also created, for example, when a user’s friend likes the page that is being advertised.

- **Promote page posts** – provides you with the option to select a specific post or your most recent post and increase the reach of that content. Sponsored stories are created when a user likes your post, comments on your post and shares your post.

- **Advanced options** – allows you to select the pricing option (CPM or CPC) and see all of the creative options.

When advertising an app or an event, a similar range of options is provided. When advertising an external website, if a user shares links from the website they will also be eligible for sponsored stories and will be visible to a user’s friends if they are in the target audience you define.

Targeting can be based on location, age, gender, precise interests or broad categories (determined by what users are connected to on Facebook). You can also set up how user’s friends are included in your ads and sponsored stories through the connections option when selecting your audience.

#### 12.7.2.2 Twitter

Twitter currently supports three main types of advertising:

1. **Promoted Accounts:** Featured in the ‘Who to follow’ section on Twitter search results and a user’s profile page and used to quickly scale the number of followers you have for your destination or brand.

2. **Promoted Tweets:** Featured in Twitter search results and a user’s timeline and used to amplify the messages you create to your followers and users with a similar profile to your followers.
3. Promoted Trends: Featured in the ‘Trends’ section on Twitter search results and a user’s profile page and used to drive attention for your destination or brand around current trending topics on Twitter. Targeting can be based on specific keywords as well as users with specific profiles or similar profiles to your current followers. Twitter offers a small business programme with no minimum spend and the ability to set a maximum daily expenditure.

12.7.2.3 YouTube

YouTube currently offers a range of advertising solutions across their desktop and mobile platforms including:

• developing a specific channel for your destination or brand;
• in-video advertising delivered as an advertising break in partner videos;
• homepage and a variety of display (text and banner) advertising formats; and
• sponsored video advertising.

12.7.3 Guidelines for Best Practice

Your use of paid media on social media channels must support your social media strategy and your overall marketing objectives. You must take an integrated approach to building your presence, developing your community and engaging that community to drive the specific actions that relate to your marketing objectives. Whether that is undertaking customer research, supporting product development and innovation, driving traffic and sales or deepening the relationship you have with your current and potential customers, the use of paid advertising on social media can help to amplify your efforts.

Whilst it is likely that over time consumers will begin to understand the role and value of paid advertising across the social networks, especially if the message is highly relevant to them, you must consider how best to add value to their overall user experience. That often means not being overly sales orientated. Above all else, you must develop an approach that is based on ‘test and learn’ and ensures that you create learning and insight that means your efforts improve over time.

Many principles of best practice digital or display advertising apply to social media advertising and social advertising:

• **Targeting:** Use the wealth of information that users provide to target them with relevant and specific messages. That includes preferences and profile information which, when applied correctly, is likely to have a demonstrable effect on click-through rates and total conversions. Having clear and well-defined personas will help to you achieve this.

• **Creative:** Most social media advertising formats are small so the text, images and creative you use has to work hard. Ensure you have a clear call to action. Avoid using logos in place of pictures or video. Some advertising formats have the call to action integrated within them e.g. like, follow, vote or share. Think carefully about which is most appropriate and likely to be the most effective.

• **Landing pages:** Make sure the format and functionality of any landing pages support your overall purpose. The effectiveness of your landing page is likely to be the most important factor in driving conversion. Think carefully about where you are driving traffic and for what purpose. Developing your community in the short term (by driving page likes or followers of your profile) might represent a more successful long-term strategy than driving traffic to an external site in the short term.

Ensure the specific channels you are running advertising across take account of good practice and the data protection principles that apply to the use of paid advertising on social media and social...
advertising. This includes the application of an opt-in mechanic for profile creation and incorporating consumer profiles in an ad with an appropriate preview process\textsuperscript{25} i.e. the user is made aware of exactly how their profile will be used in social media advertising and they have been given the opportunity to opt-in to this happening.

### 12.8 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

There are various software tools that help to measure the impact of a paid media campaign. Search engine and social media platform operators usually provide free tools for running and monitoring paid advertising campaigns (e.g. Google AdWords, Facebook Insights).

The most important key metrics include:

- ad impressions;
- ad clicks;
- click-through rate;
- average CPC;
- average CPM;
- average CPA;
- landing page activities (clicks on-site);
- conversions;
- interaction time;
- return on investment (ROI);
- return on communication (ROC).

For more details on measurement, see chapter 19 on measurement and evaluation.

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**Further Reading**


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Chapter 13

Interactive and Smart Television –
Increased Interactivity and
Convergence of Services and Media

13.1 About this Chapter

Similar to smartphones, smart television (TV) integrates television, internet technologies and social media. Smart TV increases the interactivity of the viewer with the TV set and provides great opportunities for the travel industry. DMOs can launch their own smart TV apps with information, pictures and videos about the destination and also enable bookings via connected devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet, and laptop). This chapter deals with the tools and technologies needed for interactive and smart TV, and gives an overview of the advertising formats that you can use.

Key Messages

• The TV viewing experience is becoming increasingly more interactive and integrates various devices, applications and services.

• Nowadays, when TV is watched, another screen is being used simultaneously – most commonly smartphones.

• Smart TVs integrate the internet and Web 2.0 features into TV sets and drive the convergence between TVs, computers, and connected devices.

• Interactive advertising gives TV audiences the chance to interact with broadcast commercials and offers great opportunities for advertisers.

• Content and elements required for an interactive TV ad campaign must be considered in the creative planning process.

13.2 The Digital Television Ecosystem

Digital television has already become state-of-the art. Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) and Interactive TV (iTV) create opportunities to make the television viewing experience more interactive and to integrate and converge devices, applications and services. The penetration of internet-enabled TVs is expected to grow rapidly and online purchasing from smart TVs will become widespread.¹ For example, viewers will be able to book the destination or hotel they saw and liked in a TV programme or advert on television.

Digital television uses compressed signals which are transmitted via cable, terrestrial, satellite, and the internet. Digital TV in Europe is mostly encoded in the open Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB) standard and allows high resolutions for High Definition (HD) TV sets. Once the signals have been received they require decoding by either:

- a standard receiver with a set-top box (STB);
- a television set with a built-in decoder; or
- a PC fitted with a television card.

An ecosystem of alternative platforms and devices providing video delivery has emerged which bypass cable, satellite and telecommunications television services (e.g. Google TV). These so-called over-the-top video delivery platforms (OTT) typically access content via the internet or through a digital terrestrial connection via an alternative set-top box.

### 13.2.1 IPTV, Internet TV, Internet Video, Web TV

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) defines Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) as multimedia services such as television, video, audio, text, graphics, and data, which are provided by an operator over a managed IP-based network for delivery to the consumer with respect to the required level of service and experience, security, interactivity and reliability. In this wider sense, IPTV encompasses not only linear video services but also other ancillary services, such as video on demand (VOD), web browsing, advanced e-mail and messaging services. IPTV providers usually include, in the set-top box (STB) or on the network, a personal video recorder (PVR) or digital video recorder (DVR) which allows the users “time-shifted” viewing of TV broadcasts or “catch-up” viewing if the viewer pauses a live broadcast programme.

Hybrid IPTV refers to the combination of traditional broadcast TV services and video delivered over either managed IP networks or the public internet. Hybrid IPTV has grown in popularity as a result of two major drivers:

1. Traditional pay TV operators have come under increasing pressure to provide their subscribers access to internet-based video content published on video aggregation sites (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo).
2. IP-based operators (often telecommunications providers) are pushed to offer analogue and digital terrestrial services to their subscribers.

A hybrid IPTV set-top box grants access to content from a wide range of sources, such as terrestrial broadcast, satellite, cable, and video delivered over the internet. The Hybrid Broadcast Broadband TV (HbbTV) consortium has initiated a promotional initiative for hybrid digital TV to harmonise the broadcast, IPTV and broadband delivery of entertainment to the end-consumer through connected TVs (Smart TVs) and set-top boxes. Several countries worldwide, and in Europe in particular, have adopted HbbTV services, e.g. Austria, Australia, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States of America.

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2 A set-top box is a device at the user’s home that decodes and decrypts TV and VOD content and displays it on the TV screen.
5 HbbTV (online), available: http://www.hbbtv.org (20-12-2012).
6 Hybrid Broadcast Broadband TV (online), available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybrid_Broadcast_Broadband_TV (20-12-2012).
Internet TV or Internet video offered over the public internet are a different concept than IPTV. Internet TV and video tend to lack a quality of service standard and are without any real control over the production quality. Table 13.1 summarises the differences between IPTV and Internet TV and Internet Video.

### Table 13.1 Comparison of IPTV, Internet TV, Internet video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPTV</th>
<th>Internet TV</th>
<th>Internet video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Users</strong></td>
<td>Subscribers only, closed network</td>
<td>Free, often ad-based service</td>
<td>Free, ad-based service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services</strong></td>
<td>Live TV, VOD, interactive services</td>
<td>VOD and/or live TV and internet in multi-task environment</td>
<td>Video clips only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Network</strong></td>
<td>IP-based platform, managed network</td>
<td>Public internet, peer-to-peer</td>
<td>Public internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video production</strong></td>
<td>Professional video only</td>
<td>Professional video only</td>
<td>Amateur, user-generated video, professional video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video quality</strong></td>
<td>Managed quality of service, MPEG 2 to MPEG 4, MSVCI</td>
<td>Managed quality of service, MPEG 2 to MPEG 4</td>
<td>Unmanaged quality of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receiver device</strong></td>
<td>Set-top box with TV or PC</td>
<td>PC, smartphone, tablet</td>
<td>PC, smartphone, tablet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Web TV means surfing the web, e-mailing and chatting via the TV screen. The term Web TV also might be used to describe any computerized system that enables viewing of TV programming that is delivered via the Web. These different devices include PCs, mobile devices and internet-connected TVs. Sometimes the terms Web TV and Internet TV are used interchangeably.

### 13.3 Interactive TV

Interactive TV (iTV) can be described as “lean back” interaction, because users are typically relaxing together at home in the living room with a remote control or another connected device in their hand. This is in contrast with the “lean forward” experience of using a PC with a keyboard, mouse and monitor.

Viewers are able to interact with television content while they view it. The IAB Interactive TV Committee defines interactive television as a participatory television viewing experience that allows users to request or send information back to the programmer or advertiser. Applications allow users to navigate the experience and select options by using the remote control or modified ancillary screens, such as smartphones, tablet PCs or laptops. This form of two-way communication creates an engaging interactive experience. This interaction can range from polls and surveys to multi-platform telescoping, product placement and social media integration in advertisements and programmes.

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10 Telescoping is an interactive prompt that directly links viewers to on demand content by pressing a button on their remote control. Thus, consumers can quickly and easily view long form video and gather more in-depth information on a product or service (source: www.comcastspotlight.com).
To be genuinely interactive, the viewer must be able to change the viewing experience (e.g. selecting different camera angles) or return information to the broadcaster. This “return path” or “feedback channel” between the receiver and the transmitter can be facilitated by telephone, text messages (SMS), radio signal, digital subscriber lines (ADSL), cable or broadband internet connection. Cable TV viewers can use the same cable as a return path. Satellite viewers usually return information to the broadcaster via their regular telephone lines or a broadband internet connection.

Satellite, cable and telecommunication companies have adopted new industry standards, such as the Enhanced TV Binary Interchange Format (EBIF), which facilitates cross-generational set-top box-compatibility. The ever increasing bandwidth is an additional driver for interactive services.

### 13.3.1 Synchronized TV / Enhanced TV

Interactive TV is not limited to “one-screen” forms of interaction. There are also “two-screen” solutions. In this case, the second screen can be a smartphone, laptop PC or tablet connected to a website application that may be synchronized with the TV broadcast or advertisement, or a website that contains further information about the brand, product or service. This type of iTV, where two devices run “in synch”, is sometimes called “Enhanced TV”. However, more appropriate terms, which are increasingly used, are “Synchronized TV”, “2-screen” or “Second Screen”. With 2-screen Interactive TV, someone watching TV can separately use a computer, mobile or another device to interact with that TV programme, the network operator, the programme’s viewers and/or advertisers.\(^\text{11}\)

The second screen is also referred to as a “companion device” or “companion app” (in case of a software application). The use of the second screen provides a parallel communication path, where the viewer can become an active agent in the broadcast or advertising content.

This development is also a result of the trend that, now, most of the time when TV is watched, another screen is being used simultaneously. Seventy-seven per cent of viewers use at least one mobile device while watching TV, where smartphones are used most frequently. Very often users search for information on a second screen additional to the content they view on TV. Not only should brands give consumers the opportunity to find them with multi-device search campaigns, strategies such as keyword parity across devices can ensure consumers can find the brand when resuming their search.

During simultaneous usage, content viewed on one device can trigger specific behaviour on the other. Thus, the TV advertising strategy should be closely aligned and integrated with the marketing strategies for other digital devices. Marketing and websites should reflect the needs of a consumer on a specific screen, and conversion goals should be adjusted to account for the inherent differences in each device.\(^\text{12}\)

### 13.3.2 Smart TV

Smart TV – sometimes also called connected TV or hybrid TV – refers to the integration of the internet and Web 2.0 features into TV sets and set-top boxes and the convergence between TVs, computers, tablets and smartphones.\(^\text{13}\) Thus, the focus is more on the distribution and consumption of online interactive media, over-the-top content, music, podcasts, and VOD and less on traditional broadcast media.

A smart TV allows users to install and run more advanced applications or plugins and add-ons based on a specific operating system (e.g. Symbian, Android, Apple iOS). Therefore, this type of TV sets show similarities to smartphones. Figure 13.1 illustrates the concept of smart TV.

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Interactive and Smart Television – Increased Interactivity and Convergence of Services and Media

**Figure 13.1 The concept of Smart TV**

Viewers can download apps from an application store and can install and uninstall applications themselves. Third-party developers can create applications by using a publicly available Software Development Kit (SDK) and/or Native Development Kit (NDK).

Smart TV also provides access to user-generated content, which can be either stored on an external hard drive or in the cloud, and to interactive and streaming services, such as YouTube.

Smart TV will doubtlessly lead to a more personalized, interactive TV experience with full integration of the four-screen environment (i.e. TV, smartphone, tablet, PC – see section 10.3) and social media. However, despite the great future that smart TV may have for the tourism industry, at the time of writing the concept is still in its infancy.

### 13.4 Interactive TV Advertising

Interactive advertising gives TV audiences the chance to interact with broadcast commercials and offers great opportunities for advertisers. Various surveys revealed that iTV leads to an increased unaided brand recall and an increased likelihood to purchase and/or to request more information about a brand.\(^\text{14}\) Interactivity extends the time that viewers are exposed to a brand and thus gives them a deeper brand experience.

Additionally, the impact of iTV advertising can be measured in a more reliable way than the traditional TV commercials. Measures can include, for instance, the exact number of people who interacted with the advert or programme as well as the length and intensity of interaction.\(^\text{15}\)

During the commercial, an interactive trigger (i.e. a call-to-action) appears on screen and prompts the viewer to press, for example, the red button on the remote control. Once the application has loaded, the viewer can navigate through the content on screen, interact, or enter information into preset fields. Forms of interactivity can include, but are not limited to:

- convey additional information on screen;
- play a video;
- request more information about a brand, product or service;
- capture customer data and generate leads by enabling the ordering of brochures and requests for telephone call-back;

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\(^{15}\) Chaffey, D. and Smith, P. R. (2008), *eMarketing eXcellence – Planning and Optimizing Your Digital Marketing*, Elsevier.
• drive leads to dealers, industry partners, and travel agents;
• enable direct purchase; and
• enhance the brand message.

13.4.1 Formats, Standards and Tools for Interactive Advertising

At the time of writing there is not yet one standard Interactive Advertising unit. Nevertheless, marketers can already choose from a great variety of available interactive advertising formats, ranging from simple overlays on top of commercials to rather complex applications.16

ITV advertisements consist of two parts:

1. Entry points; and
2. destinations.

Entry points are touch points on the TV screen where a viewer is first exposed to the brand promoted in the interactive advertisement. Entry points can be integrated in commercial or programme content, or can be displayed within the user interface screens or menus of the set top box (e.g. channel guide, electronic programme guide, video on demand menu) or other connected devices.17

Destinations are the follow-on experiences viewers can engage with once interactivity has been initiated through an entry point.18 In this sense, destination is used as an industry standard term to indicate an end point, and should not be confused with the term destination in a tourism context.

Types of entry points:19

• Enhanced commercial spot: e.g., banner overlay and/or integrated video element that viewers can click on. This type of entry point can be used for telescoping20, quick-click request for information (RIF) offerings, or customised calls to action;
• interactive/electronic programme guide banner: placed on the bottom, left, or right side of the electronic programme guide (EPG) that can be used to lead viewers to other channels’ video on demand (VOD) content or other areas of the user interface;
• main menu placement: displayed on the main menu of an iTV portal. Can be used to navigate to another feature or for launching other interactive advertising elements;
• channel guide listing: invites viewers to select a dedicated brand channel;
• showcase grid: including branded thumbnails or banners which can be expanded or which direct viewers to other interactive features;
• interactive tags in commercials: additional information or graphics appear with a call to action when the commercial runs;
• pause/delete screen banner: placed within the digital video recorder (DVR) user interface in the pause or delete menu. Can be used to direct viewers to other channels; and

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., see pp. 7-10 for examples.
20 Telescoping is an interactive prompt that directly links viewers to on demand content by pressing a button on their remote control. Thus, consumers can quickly and easily view long form video and gather more in-depth information on a product or service (source: www.comcastspotlight.com).
• pre-, mid-, and post-roll advertisements: an interstitial displayed before, during, and after a video clip. Video on demand dynamic ad insertion (VOD DAI) is a technology that allows ads to be inserted and refreshed in pre-, mid- and post-roll-positions, so that ads are always fresh and relevant.

Destinations can be:21

• Brand microsite/showcase: can offer viewers multiple layers of interactivity as well as access to other forms of branded content, such as videos, product information, games;
• promotions on demand: a VOD destination where viewers can get valuable offers;
• sponsored VOD: ads running within or next to video on demand;
• branded static billboard: can be used to provide product information or initiate RFI;
• widgets: applications available on internet-connected TVs in which viewers can dynamically receive content such as banner ads, links to other features;
• games: viewers engage with a brand through games that have the ability to educate and entertain simultaneously (i.e. edutainment and infotainment);
• customized applications: standalone branded applications;
• request for information: viewer gives permission to be contacted by the advertiser in order to provide more information (e.g. send e-mail, brochure, enter sweepstakes). The viewers’ contact information can either be obtained from the viewers’ TV service provider account or is entered through an interactive interface (e.g. remote control);
• click for callback: viewer grants permission to be called via phone by the advertiser;
• survey, voting, polling: used to gather further information from consumers and/or to encourage longer brand engagement;
• telescoping to VOD or brand destination: viewers are directed directly to branded VOD or a branded channel;
• social media: integration of social media platforms such as Facebook, Google+ or Twitter. Viewers can “like” a brand on Facebook by pressing a button on their TV remote control;
• interactive product information: viewers can get more detailed product information by browsing through an interactive product page; and
• video gallery: a collection of branded video clips.

A request for information (RFI) is one of the most engaging and measurable iTV products according to IAB.22 Through an RFI the viewer requests (through the cable, telecommunication or satellite provider) to receive additional information from the advertiser such as a brochure, a quote, a coupon, a sample or any other offer or service. Normally, the viewer responds by pressing YES, OK, or SELECT on the remote control and therefore gives the TV provider the permission to instruct the advertiser to send the requested offer. Alternatively, due to enhanced multi-platform integration, a smart phone or a tablet PC can be used for the selection and/or fulfilment of the order. If the platforms allows, advertisers can send an e-mail or an SMS to the consumer or initiate a call back. When electronic ordering is implemented (i.e. television commerce) it is essential to provide the consumer with the immediate possibility to complete the order, e.g. through adding items to a shopping cart, fill in an order form or share via social media.

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It is essential to respect and protect the privacy of the viewers. It is important for the viewer to know exactly how their information will be used, for how long it will be stored and whether it will be shared with other parties. Before an iTV provider is allowed to send information about the viewer to the advertiser, the viewer must explicitly grant permission, e.g. confirmation through pressing YES on the remote control. After submitting an RFI the iTV provider will collect and process information about the viewer according to their policies. Practices to protect privacy include:

- use of a “trusted third party” for a blind match of subscriber and marketer data;
- use of widely available demographic information that is not personally identifiable;
- implementation of multiple “opt-out” mechanisms;
- strict and secure data encryption standards; and
- mandatory destruction of all mailing data by all parties in the value chain after the campaign is completed.

### 13.4.2 Costs for Interactive Advertising

Aside from the cost of content creation and production, the costs of interactive advertising are similar to TV advertising costs and thus vary and depend on factors such as:

- time of the year (e.g. summer months are cheap, November and December are the most expensive months);
- channel and time of the day (most expensive commercial time is before evening news and weather forecast, and before and during special events such as sport or cultural events);
- target audience (e.g. young people, people interested in news, history, sports, sitcoms etc.); and
- length of commercial (usually, commercials are 30 seconds in length, but they can run 15, 45 or 60 seconds; often additional fees incur for commercials with a duration deviating from the standard lengths).

### 13.4.3 Challenges

In spite of the increasing penetration and acceptance of iTV among consumers and advertisers there are still some challenges that need to be faced when planning and implementing iTV campaigns. The key challenges include:

- **Lack of clear definition** of what iTV actually is: for example, www.itvdictionary.com lists more than thirty terms related to iTV.
- **Lack of content by the brand**: the elements required for an iTV ad campaign are often neglected during the creative planning process. Marketing managers and creative agencies should consider the requirements for various platforms.
- **Lack of technology awareness**: both consumers and marketers still lack awareness of the advanced iTV technology.

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23 Ibid.
25 IAB (2011), An Interactive Television Advertising Overview (online), available:
13.5 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The impact of iTV campaigns can be measured by using the data logged on the set-top box. The analysis of these data enables marketers to measure each remote click to and within an interactive TV ad experience and provides them with a better understanding of the campaign performance, intensity and value of brand engagement. The cross-channel impact of iTV campaigns and conversion can be evaluated by correlating set-top box data with other performance metrics from e.g. the brand websites, social media platforms, e-mail campaigns, QR code campaigns etc.

Key metrics include:

- total number of households reached;
- total number of set-top boxed reached;
- click-through rates of iTV entry points;
- cost per click;
- time spent on interactive ad;
- total number of individual telescoping overlays presented and actions taken;
- user activity/engagement on interactive ad destination;
- number of video plays initiated;
- average length of video views;
- number of brochure orders;
- conversions; and
- RFI: number of actions taken, actual consumer data including name, postal address, e-mail address, phone number, number of duplicate RFIs.

Further Information

A guide to the production techniques used for interactive television
www.interaktivetelevisionproduction.com

Interactive Advertising Bureau
www.iab.net

Interactive Television Alliance (website contains resources and a list of companies specialising in iTV)
www.itvalliance.org

Interactive Television Dictionary and Business Index
www.itvdictionary.com

International Telecommunication Union
www.itu.int

Webopedia is an online dictionary for words, phrases and abbreviations that are related to computer and internet technology
www.webopedia.com
Chapter 14

Customer Relationship Management

14.1 About this Chapter

This chapter describes the benefits of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for a DMO. Customers of the DMO may include both visitors (B2C) and tourism businesses (B2B). This chapter highlights the critical success factors for CRM implementation and its use for sales and marketing campaigns. Other chapters in this handbook explain how you use the gathered customer data to benefit various e-marketing activities (e.g. chapter 9 on e-mail marketing, and chapter 7 on the social web), to engage customers and create relationships.

Key Messages

- CRM processes and technology are at the core of e-marketing.
- CRM systems improve customer communication, customer acquisition and customer retention.
- CRM is essential for customer segmentation\(^1\) and helps to identify customer demands quicker.
- CRM supports the provision of targeted sales and marketing campaigns.
- CRM must be seen holistically and with a long-term view.
- CRM implementation causes substantial changes to a DMO and its stakeholders, and requires careful planning and professional project management.

14.2 Overview

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) helps a DMO to establish a relationship with consumers and tourism businesses, turn them into customers and maintain, enhance, commercialise and personalise these customer relationships. CRM aims to serve customers better and consequently the focus is on customer engagement, loyalty, and retention:

- Customer engagement is the long-term interaction between a prospect and a brand;
- customer loyalty is the acceptance, trust and positive attitude towards the brand (see chapter 3 on branding); and
- customer retention involves returning customers, cross-buying and recommending brand to others.

Therefore, CRM is a business strategy, which includes all processes that allow a DMO to record, understand and meet the needs and wants of customers (both B2C and B2B). An electronic CRM software system (eCRM) is a repository of information from all contact/touch points a customer can have with a DMO through various channels. The analysis of this information facilitates the creation of customer segments that are fundamental for effective targeted sales and marketing activities.

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14.3 The Principles of eCRM

Consumers use a great variety of offline and online media to find information and purchase products and services. They browse various websites; make phone calls; use mobile apps; read brochures, papers and magazines; watch TV; listen to the radio; go to exhibitions and fairs; subscribe to e-mail newsletters, and visit tourist information centres.

The information needs of the visitor before, during and after a trip are different. Therefore, detailed information about the visitor, their interests, travel, information search and purchasing behaviour is fundamental for DMOs in order to conduct effective sales and marketing campaigns. Cross-media CRM should be a key part of a DMO’s business processes and eCRM systems can be used to support them.

eCRM is the process of creating relationships between a DMO and its customers through service-automated processes, information gathering and processing, and self-service applications in order to create value for customers.

Therefore, the DMO needs to develop a customer-oriented strategy where all internal and external business processes and responsibilities are aligned with customers’ needs and wants.

eCRM typically includes three types of user applications:²

1. User-facing applications that enable customers to search for and order products and services and get support;
2. sales- and marketing-facing applications that support the sales and marketing divisions in planning, conducting and monitoring sales and marketing activities; and
3. management-facing applications to analyze data and provide management reports.

The implementation of an eCRM software system that is able to integrate all relevant customer channels, to collect information and to synchronise all interaction channels is key to success, as can be seen in figure 14.1. The goal of an integrated CRM approach is to get ‘one face’ of the customer.

Figure 14.1 Integrated CRM model


There are two levels of CRM:

1. Operational CRM; and
2. Analytical CRM

Operational CRM means that all possible communication channels that customers may use should be integrated and all data collected from customer interactions are stored in a relation database. Operational CRM is primarily implemented in the marketing, sales and service departments and is applied for the concept, design and implementation of customer-related communication.

Analytical CRM comprises all activities dealing with data collection, storage and analysis and the support of decision-making processes regarding customer relationships.

At the heart of the eCRM database are the online analytical processing tool (OLAP) and data analysis algorithms. Customer data are stored in a data warehouse for further analysis.

Therefore, the main CRM processes are:

- data gathering;
- data storage and maintenance;
- data analysis and reporting; and
- campaign planning using the data.

### 14.3.1 Data Gathering

Ideally, structured data from all customer touch points should be collected. Data from websites, social media platforms, online and offline request forms, telephone-call-routines, surveys, log files etc. help to gather customer records in a way that can be further processed automatically or semi-automatically without great effort. The user interface for the data input should allow fast and accurate data input including algorithms for error detection and correction. Interfaces should also support automated data import from other sources, e.g. from partners.

The DMO’s specific business objectives will define what sort of information is relevant and in what breadth and depth. Furthermore, legal issues regarding data collection, storage, processing and usage must be considered and it is important to respect the customers’ need for privacy and data protection. Pay close attention to the relevant laws and regulations (see chapter 22 on the legal framework for e-marketing). You should keep a record regarding the purpose of the data collected, as it was stated to the customers when they gave permission for its use.

### 14.3.2 Data Storage and Maintenance

The data need to be stored safely, carefully cleansed and analyzed and made available to all departments. Data cleansing is a major task that is often underestimated. Data entry standards need to be defined from the very beginning of the system implementation and these standards must be communicated to all CRM users during their training.
To keep customer records as up-to-date and accurate as possible, the CRM data need regular cleaning in terms of:

- e-mail address validation;
- duplicate detection;
- validation against the official national postal address file of each market; and
- check whether customer e-mail addresses are listed in opt-out lists (e.g. Robinson lists) (see chapter 9 for further information on e-mail lists).

### 14.3.3 Data Analysis and Reporting

Data analysis is a set of automatic or semi-automatic analytical techniques in order to discover patterns in the stored data sets, extract information and transform it into a structure (e.g. mailing list) for further usage. Analytical CRM provides information on marketing know-how, products, customer data, contact history, competitors, and much more. Some of these data will be explicitly given by customers, and some will be implicitly deduced from their actions through the various touch points.

Customer profiles can contain information such as:

- the customer's relationship history with the DMO;
- demographics (e.g. gender, age, income, education, size of household, location, occupation, travel party etc.);
- psychographics (e.g. values, personality, emotional factors connected with buying patterns etc.) and lifestyle (e.g. leisure, entertainment, interests, hobbies, holidays etc.);
- life stage (e.g. pre-teens, teens, families with young children, empty nesters, retired); and
- contact history (e.g. most recent contact, frequency, monetary value, e-mail responses, and website log data if available).

Based on these data sets, the following types of analysis can be carried out:

- **Clustering**: discovering data sets which fall into the same structure or segment because they show the same or similar features;
- **classification**: applying known structures to new data records (e.g. classifying a new record as part of a specific customer segment due to special markers);
- **anomaly detection**: identification of unusual data sets (e.g. special occasions or errors);
- **relationships between variables**: e.g. buying habits of different customer segments; and
- **reporting and visualizations** for various purposes and needs.

There are three types of reports:

1. Real-time reports for campaign performance;
2. regular standard reports about customer segments; and
3. special reports for specific purposes.

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14.3.4 Using the Data for Marketing and Sales Campaigns

For each campaign, you should define:

- the purpose of the campaign;
- the segment you want to address;
- the channels through which the campaign is to be delivered;
- fulfilment rules (e.g. what happens if the recipient clicks on a specific link); and
- metrics for how the campaign success can be measured.

Your CRM data can help you with this.

14.4 CRM Benefits for DMOs

There are many benefits of using CRM in tourism. It enables the DMO to gear its services and products to the diversity of its customer segments. Other benefits may include:

- proactive selling through automated offer management;
- cost reductions through automated sales, administrations, service and marketing activities;
- increased profit through cross-selling and/or up-selling;
- information about product and services acceptance that can be used for product development;
- enhanced relationships with customers;
- increased knowledge about customers and markets and thus anticipate tourism and consumer trends to act proactively;
- customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction;
- improved image of the DMO;
- personalisation of products and services; and
- adjusting products to seasonal variations.
14.5 CRM Implementation

The implementation of an organization-wide CRM strategy and eCRM system requires careful planning in order to avoid failure. The implementation process is illustrated in figure 14.2.

Figure 14.2 CRM implementation process

As emphasised above, it is very important that the CRM strategy for the DMO is carefully defined, to reduce the risk of failure. All business processes that will be affected by the CRM implementation must be analyzed and mapped. The implementation should help to improve the quality of the DMO’s business processes, positively influencing the customers’ perception of the destination’s products and services and eventually leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Professional project and change management will help to achieve the set goals.

The success of an eCRM software solution depends on certain decision criteria that should be considered during the planning process. Most importantly, the DMO needs to decide what kind of eCRM solution it intends to purchase. In this respect, the following criteria set can be identified:

- Functionality and usability of the tool;
- flexibility in incorporating changes;
- scalability with growth;
- fit with existing ICT architecture;
- fit with global best practices; and
- commercial impact (ROI) based on the lifetime of the solution.

Frequent CRM implementation failures include:

- underestimated costs for project management and eCRM system implementation;
- poor project management (especially if the focus is mainly on technology);
- poor design and usability of CRM system due to lack of user integration in the planning process;

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• poor data quality management algorithms;
• employees’ lack of motivation for using the CRM system;
• lack of co-operation between departments and business units;
• no clear definition of responsibilities for data input, maintenance, usage;
• weak commitment of the management board;
• lack of instructions, training and support in terms of both relational and technological knowledge; and
• no monitoring of the implementation process.

Success factors for CRM implementation include:
• clear definition of implementation strategy and implementation timeline;
• prioritization of business areas that need to be addressed;
• definition and, if necessary, re-engineering the work-flow of the business processes for these business areas;
• clear and transparent definition of the required organizational changes to support the strategy;
• choosing a system that really meets the DMO’s objectives;
• continuous training and support for the users;
• monitor and make adjustments to keep the strategy on target; and
• periodically review and adapt to changing requirements of the DMO and strategy.

Case Study: Implementation of a new eCRM at the Polish National Tourist Office

The Polish National Tourist Office is planning to replace the current eCRM system. At present, the Polish National Tourist Office uses a third-party software system for maintaining simple user profiles, distributing newsletters and creating basic statistics. The monthly charges of the system depend on the number of addresses (i.e. users) and the activities (i.e. number of newsletters and their weight counted in Kilobyte). To date, the database contains approximately 70,000 users, of which 52% are from abroad. This database will be transferred into a new CRM.

The project for a new eCRM system was started at the beginning of 2012. After a detailed analysis of the requirements, the tender specification was prepared and published in April 2012. Consequently, the contract was signed with the successful bidder. The system implementation started in September 2012 and was completed in April 2013.

Objectives and goals for the implementation of a new eCRM

The main objective for a new eCRM system is to create a tool for advanced direct marketing for the Polish National Tourist Office and its 14 offices abroad as well as for Regional Tourist Organizations in Poland. The aim is to achieve an increase in visitors coming to Poland and its regions.
The eCRM system should contribute to:

- increasing the effectiveness of promotional campaigns carried out both in Poland and abroad; and
- a higher customer loyalty due to a better understanding of the customers’ needs.

**Functions and features of the new eCRM system include:**

- managing the profiles of actual and prospective visitors to Poland in a single database;
- CRM module for newsletter distribution and campaign management;
- integration of CRM with other systems to exchange data (such as www.poland.travel, Contact Centre, SPSS and other systems);
- analysis of various user characteristics and creating user statistics;
- automatic monitoring and adjustment of interest profiles;
- modular structure of the various software components, such as:
  - e-mail management;
  - dynamic profiling;
  - analysis and reports (advanced reporting capabilities for automated, periodic evaluation by target groups, messages or system statistics; and real-time reporting of key performance indicators such as bounces, opening rates, clicks on all or specific hyperlinks, conversions, webcasting);
  - event-newsletter shipping (time and event controlled dispatch);
  - automated processing of bounces (inbound management); and
  - multi-client functionality and multi-language.

**How will the Polish National Tourist Offices’ customers benefit from the new eCRM system?**

The will get better access to the information they are interested in and it will be customized according to their profiles.

**How will the Polish National Tourist Office and its stakeholders benefit from the new eCRM system?**

- Considerably improved opportunities for customized promotional campaigns;
- automation of processes, such as the integration of data from various sources, distribution of newsletters, management of database; and
- regional tourist organizations can use a powerful promotional tool that otherwise they would not be able to finance.
What are the expected challenges concerning the implementation of the new eCRM system?

The main challenge will be to convince all interested parties to use the full capabilities of the system. This will also require continuous training.

What are the lessons learned so far?

At this stage, one lesson learned is that this project, which involves so many stakeholders, requires ongoing consultations so that the needs of all stakeholders are met.


14.6 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The efficiency and effectiveness of a CRM system depends on two factors:

1. The users of the system; and
2. the data quantity and quality in the CRM system (i.e. data warehouse).

Regarding the users, it is essential that there are explicit guidelines for the data collection, data input and quality assurance in order to reduce the probability of errors and duplicates for new data entries.

Key metrics related to the CRM usage are:

- number of users;
- number of user logins in a given time period;
- number of corrupt entries;
- number of duplicates; and
- number of reports generated.

Key metrics for the quantity and quality of the CRM database are:

- database volume;
- number of new entries per year;
- number of inactives;
- completeness of customer profiles;
- number of bounces during campaigns;
- profitability / conversion rate of campaigns; and
- customer frequency and recent use.
Chapter 15

E-marketing Activities to Support the Tourism Suppliers in the Destination

15.1 About this Chapter

This chapter describes how DMOs can support suppliers to increase their marketing expertise and attract more visitors. It covers the type of information that you should provide online for the tourism suppliers in your destination. The main suppliers of tourism offers and services in the destination are transportation, accommodation providers, food and beverage establishments, attractions, leisure and nature parks, shops, entertainment facilities (e.g. theatres, cinemas), museums, and leisure facilities (e.g. sport centres, public spas and pools).

Key Messages

- Providing information for, and communication with, the tourism suppliers in your destination is best conducted through a dedicated website channel and online news services.
- Content on the sub-sites for tourism suppliers should include information and services to create opportunities for co-operation.
- Key performance indicators to measure your success include the frequency and quality of your contacts with tourism suppliers.

15.2 Objectives of a DMO

The objective of a DMO is to act as a partnership organization between the private and public sectors and to promote and co-ordinate tourism in a region. Furthermore, a DMO should facilitate and encourage networking and e-marketing partnerships between suppliers along the tourism value chain (e.g. accommodation, transportation, attractions). This may involve the creation of a visitor information centre, public transport connections, online marketing activities and quality management with regard to certification programmes, quality labels or, for example, the co-ordination of opening times of attractions and restaurants.

E-marketers in the DMO should provide marketing communication tools and services that enable information and knowledge exchange between the suppliers but also towards the visitor.

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The basic tools for this purpose are:

- dedicated website sections with information for and communication with the tourism suppliers in the destination; and

- news services:
  - an industry e-mail newsletter / RSS feed (see chapter 5) to provide industry updates and increase awareness of new information on the website. This can also be a vital tool in times of crisis (see chapter 21); and
  - a social media information channel, e.g. a corporate blog (see figure 15.1 below), a Facebook and/or Google+ page, Twitter tweets, and/or professional business networks (e.g. LinkedIn, Xing). However, in practice, frequently updated corporate blogs or social network pages, which also attract a large number of readers and contributors, are rare to find among DMOs.

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### Case study: B2B Weblog of Tourism Salzburg, Austria

The B2B Weblog of the City of Salzburg Tourism Board has been published since July 2007. The objective of the blog is to provide an information platform for tourism stakeholders in the city of Salzburg, where they can find up-to-date and in-depth information on marketing, co-operation opportunities, politics and legal issues, events, market research and trends.

#### Editorial organization

The blog posts are written by nine authors. There is no fixed editorial plan and new posts are published whenever interesting news arises.

#### Audience

The readers of the blog are hoteliers, restaurant owners, incoming tour operators, travel agents, and event organizers.

#### Key performance indicators for 2012

- Unique users: 5,982
- Visits: 6,827
- Page views: 11,482
- Page views per visit: 1.68
- 86.4% of posts were not commented on by readers
- 13.6% of posts received one comment
E-marketing Activities to Support the Tourism Suppliers in the Destination

Figure 15.1  B2B weblog of the City of Salzburg Tourism Board

Source: blog.salzburg.info/b2b/ (03-01-2013)

15.3 Useful Information for Tourism Suppliers

DMOs should provide an open website for communication and information exchange with their tourism suppliers in order to gain maximum spread. The use of an extranet with the barrier of password protection only makes sense if the DMO operates a membership or partner scheme that provides exclusive benefits for registered users.

Content on the sub-site for tourism suppliers should include information about, and services for, the co-operation opportunities you offer. However, the level of detail will depend on the type of DMO (national, regional or local) and the available staff and financial resources. Hence, the following content checklist can be adapted as needed:

- Directories of destination-based incoming agencies and destination management companies (DMCs), ideally split by their specialisation (e.g. region, target groups, themes);
- lists of tour operators;
- lists of carriers (e.g. airlines, airports, rail, rental car companies, boat cruises);
- suggestions for tour programmes and contact information for relevant partners. If you provide itineraries or an itinerary planner on the visitor website link to these;
- list of tour guides;
- list of relevant television and radio channels, newspapers and magazines;
- news about current or forthcoming tourism product developments in the destination;
- information about familiarisation trips and ideally an online application form;
- forthcoming industry events (e.g. conferences, workshops, exhibitions, etc.) in the local market and at the destination;
- links to other sales tools and sales assistance that you provide:
  - details of your paid-for and free marketing opportunities (such as campaigns, promotions, exhibitions, etc.) which help to promote suppliers’ businesses, ideally with an online application form;
  - branding guidelines and the destination marketing strategy;
  - quality assurance schemes (e.g. criteria for star ratings and quality labels);
  - media database (e.g. photos, videos, etc.);
  - market research information;
  - information about tenders organized by the DMO;
  - useful links for further research;
- information and order details about brochures and give-aways (e.g. posters, DVDs, CDs, merchandise, etc.);
- contact details for sales and marketing staff;
- business start-up and development advice; and
- an invitation to subscribe to a travel industry e-mail newsletter and/or RSS feeds for receiving updates on developments in the destination. Ideally, subscribers can choose their preferences.
Examples of well-developed industry-facing websites are www.austria-tourism.com of the Austrian National Tourism Organization and trade.visitorlando.com of Orlando, Florida. Both websites offer a lot of useful information about the DMO’s business objectives, branding, marketing research, co-operation opportunities, and industry events.

15.4 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The effectiveness of your communication with suppliers, and the services you offer, can be evaluated by:

- the interest in the information provided on your website or in e-mail newsletters can be measured with web analytics tools, e.g. Google Analytics;
- feedback from suppliers can be collected via online and offline satisfaction surveys; and
- an analysis of participant lists for exhibitions, road shows, workshops etc.

The following key metrics can help to measure the success of online sales support given to suppliers of tourism products and services:

- Website analytics (page views, visits, unique users, content pages viewed, new versus returning users, traffic sources, time spent on website etc.);
- e-mail newsletter metrics (e.g. delivery rate, opening rate, click-through rate, bounces, number of new subscribers, number of unsubscribers);
- number and value of enrolments to events and marketing activities via online forms;
- number of downloads of sales tools such as brochures, catalogues, CDs/DVDs, photos;
- number of telephone / e-mail contacts;
- number of participants in exhibitions, road shows, workshops etc.; and
- number of research information downloads.
Chapter 16

Supporting the Travel Trade in Source Markets

16.1 About this Chapter

This chapter describes how DMOs can support the travel trade (i.e. tour operators and travel agents) and what information and services should be provided for them. Providing the travel intermediaries with up-to-date information and support, primarily through designated areas on your website, e-mail newsletters, RSS feeds and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or a corporate B2B blog), enables and motivates them to sell your destination rather than a competitor. Note that e-marketing with tourism suppliers in your destination is covered in chapter 15.

**Key Messages**

- Online sales support for the travel trade can create significant additional business and bring more travellers to your destination.
- To be effective, information and support materials need to be focussed on the major markets and industry sectors.
- The main tools are websites, e-mail newsletters and e-learning modules.

16.2 Working with Tour Operators and Travel Agents

DMOs should provide valuable and useful information online to travel companies, such as tour operators and travel agents, that actively sells the destination in source markets. Such companies often have representatives in the source markets and may operate online and/or offline.

16.2.1 Website for the Travel Trade

Ideally, create a dedicated sub-site for the travel trade. Provide a direct link to this section from both the visitor as well as from the B2B website. Either the link can be placed in the page footer or it may appear in the main menu bar. Typical labels are “Trade”, “Travel Trade”, “Trade Corner”, “Professionals”, or “B2B”. Figure 16.1 demonstrates the solution of the Danish Tourism Board.
Figure 16.1 Link to the Travel Trade section in the header of the homepage

![Link to the Travel Trade section in the header of the homepage](image)


Within the travel trade sub-site, create a channel for each of your main industry sales sectors so that they can find relevant information quickly. Ideally, provide the content in the languages of your main source markets. Typical sales sectors are:

- tour operators;
- retail travel agents;
- conference and meeting organizers;
- incentive travel organizers; and
- exhibition organizers.

Content on the sub-site for the travel trade should provide information about the services you offer and co-operation opportunities for bringing as many visitors to your destination as possible. It should include some or all of the following:

- Comprehensive information about the destination in order to educate tour operators and travel agents about the travel ideas your destination has to offer, e.g. a destination guide, online training programmes (see section 16.2.2);
- directories of destination-based incoming agencies and destination management companies (DMCs), ideally split by their specialisation (e.g. region, target groups, themes);
- lists of tour operators;
- lists of carriers (e.g. airlines, airports, rail, rental car companies, boat cruises);
- suggestions for tour programmes and contact information for relevant partners. If you provide itineraries or an itinerary planner on the visitor website link to these;
- list of tour guides;
- list of relevant television and radio channels, newspapers and magazines;
- links to the visitor website:
  - general travel information (e.g. visas, currency, weather);
  - accommodation directories of recommended hotels and hotel groups or accommodation search database;
  - places and attractions to visit;
  - event search; and
  - conference venues and incentive destinations;
Supporting the Travel Trade in Source Markets

• news about current or forthcoming tourism product developments in the destination;
• information about familiarisation trips and ideally an online application form;
• forthcoming industry events (e.g. conferences, workshops, exhibitions, etc.) in the local market and at the destination;
• links to other sales tools and sales assistance that you provide:
  – details of your marketing activities (such as campaigns, promotions, exhibitions, workshops, online training etc.) which can be joined by the travel trade, ideally with online application form;
  – branding guidelines and destination marketing strategy;
  – media database (i.e. photos, videos);
  – market research information;
  – social media (e.g. B2B blog, Facebook page, Twitter account, LinkedIn);
  – useful links for further research;
• information and order details about brochures and give-aways (e.g. posters, DVDs, CDs, merchandise, etc.);
• contact details and opening hours of the travel information centre (if you operate one) and/or sales unit;
• contact details for your PR department and links to press releases and media clippings; and
• an invitation to subscribe to a travel trade e-mail newsletter and/or RSS feeds for receiving travel trade updates. Ideally, subscribers can choose their preferences. (See chapter 5 on websites for more information about RSS feeds).

16.2.2 Online Training for Travel Agents

Some DMOs offer online (e-learning) courses and accreditation to retail travel agents to become “destination experts”. This service can be provided either directly by the DMO or in co-operation with a specialist company.

Good practice examples for e-learning modules provided by DMOs are:

• BritAgent (www.britagent.com) on the website of the British Tourist Board;
• Austria Expert Programme (www.austria.info/us_b2b/austria-expert-program) provided by the Austrian National Tourism Organization;
• Switzerland Travel Academy (www.myswitzerland.com/academy) on the website of the Swiss Tourist Board; and
• Puerto Vallarta PRO Specialist (www.pv-pro.com), the training site of the Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board, Mexico.

An example of a commercial company is the Travel Agent University website, www.tauniv.com. Such a platform may attract a wider range of travel agents, however it also lists training programmes of potential competitors.
16.3 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

The effectiveness of your communication with the travel trade, and the services you offer, can be evaluated:

- The interest in the information provided on your website or in e-mail newsletters can be measured with web analytics tools, e.g. Google Analytics.
- Feedback from suppliers can be collected via online and offline satisfaction surveys.
- An analysis of participant lists for exhibitions, road shows, workshops etc. can be evaluated.

The following key metrics can help to measure the success of online sales support given to tour operators and agents in source markets:

- Website analytics (page views, visits, unique users, content pages viewed, new versus returning users, traffic sources, time spent on website, etc.);
- e-mail newsletter metrics (e.g. delivery rate, opening rate, click-through rate, bounces, number of new subscribers, number of unsubscribers);
- number and value of enrolments to events and marketing activities via online forms;
- number of downloads of sales tools such as brochures, catalogues, CDs/DVDs, photos;
- number and quality of telephone / e-mail contacts;
- number of participants in e-learning programmes; and
- number of participants who finished the e-learning tutorials and passed the exam.
Chapter 17

PR and Media Relations

17.1 About this chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the constantly changing landscape that the social web offers those responsible for PR and Media Relations and the knowledge and skills required to use it effectively.

**Key Messages**

- Using media relations to create coverage about your destination is a very effective tool in the organization’s marketing toolkit.

- The internet, and especially the transformation of the web into a social web, has changed the landscape for those responsible for PR and Media Relations, requiring new knowledge and skills.

- A successful online Destination Media Centre is one that integrates tools, packages content in a variety of formats, makes this content shareable and quotable, and anticipates the different needs of writers, researchers and journalists for content and mode of communication.

17.2 Potential of the Social Web for PR and Media Relations

PR and Media Relations have always been about owned media and earned media; communicating about (in your case) a destination (owned media) in such a way that others – the media, public, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders – are persuaded to maintain and voice a certain point of view about your destination (earned media). It is about building and maintaining relationships with key media and trusted and influential persons such as journalists, professional advisers and industry analysts, who have the power to amplify the message. Thus practicing PR and Media Relations before the arrival of the internet and after are, in essence, the same.

However, the internet, and especially the transformation of the web into a social web, has changed the landscape for those responsible for PR and Media Relations. Characteristics of this new landscape include:

- a breakdown of traditional audiences, such as employees, consumers, journalists and so on. It is no longer possible to compartmentalise audiences and messages;

- a close collaboration between the disciplines of PR, (online) marketing, advertising, and customer service in order to communicate (brand) effectively;

- a daunting fragmentation: more channels and media, more devices and formats, and also more users and participants in the ‘public’ debate; and

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• a change in the way people look for information: quick searches resulting in huge amounts of information.

These changes and characteristics are described in more detail in chapter 1.

For those responsible for PR and Media Relations within a DMO this requires:

• up-to-date knowledge, as the press release continues to evolve into multiple formats for a variety of audiences, channels, devices and situations. These may include the more traditional news release sent by postal mail, fax or e-mail; a press release published on a website; a blog post or comment, Facebook Page post or tweet; a text message to a journalist referring him to a web page or to a podcast or a video message from the CEO;

• mastering all these channels and formats, as the challenge is to reach the majority of a target audience using one or more of these channels at a certain moment in a certain situation. This chapter does not cover these channels, formats and situations in detail as you can find dedicated chapters elsewhere in this handbook, such as chapter 7 on the use of social media and blogging, chapter 9 on how to make the most of e-mail, and chapter 21 on crisis management;

• skills in identifying and building relationships with influencers (see section 17.3.2 for more information about influencer marketing); and

• learning about search engine optimization (SEO) best practices in order to improve the visibility of your messages for search engines. SEO is explained in detail in chapter 8.

17.3 Identifying Media and Partners

17.3.1 Identifying Appropriate Media

It is important to understand where your visitors or trade audiences get their news and information from and how they consume content. This will allow you to identify the best offline and online media to engage with, which will have the most relevant readers, listeners and viewers in your particularly niche, understand who they connect with and how they develop their readership. Finding the names and e-mail addresses of travel website editors and active bloggers in your target markets should be as important as identifying editors of printed publication, radio and TV.

17.3.2 Influencer Marketing

Knowledge of what is called Influencer Marketing is most useful for all marketers, but especially for PR practitioners. Influencer marketing comprises:

• the identification of influencers and ranking them in order of importance;

• marketing to these influencers to increase their awareness of (in your case) the destination and destination related topics and hopefully turning them into advocates; and

• marketing through and with these influencers to increase the awareness of the destination amongst target markets and to get your messages amplified.

Influencers are specific key individuals that have greater than average influence over potential visitors and are opinion leaders. They can be visitors themselves or so-called value added influencers such as journalists, travel bloggers and professional advisors.
Identifying key influencers requires searching and researching, for example by:

- investigating the ‘blogosphere’ using blog search engines such as bloglines, Technorati and Google Blog Search;\(^2\)
- searching networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for professionals and topics related to your destination or specific field of interest, looking at the number and quality of fans and followers of personal accounts and business pages; and
- looking at other metrics such as the number of times a post is cited or re-tweeted, the number of comments on a blog post and the number of unique users of a website. For more information, see chapters 19 and 20 on Measurement and Evaluation and Web and Social Analytics.

### 17.3.3 Working with Superpromoters

Increasingly companies actively search for and train enthusiastic customers and employees to become ‘advocates’, ‘ambassadors’, ‘influencers’ or ‘superpromoters’ and do PR for them. By sharing their enthusiasm about products, brands and companies they are influencing other people. They can function as (co-)creators of content and generators of earned content. The Netherlands Board of Tourism and Congresses (NBTC) is an example of a DMO actively recruiting ‘Holland Ambassadors’ in key markets and remunerates them for these and a variety of other webcare tasks.\(^3\) The lines between owned, paid and earned media are blurring and some form of compensation to brand advocates is becoming more common.\(^4\)

### 17.3.4 Use CRM Techniques

An important aspect of any media relations strategy is the need to build effective relationships and trust with a large number of travel editors, their staff, freelancers and key bloggers. CRM techniques (see chapter 14) are therefore essential for media relations, especially when working globally.

The Media department should have a tailor-made version of the CRM database. Start by drawing up a clear functional specification to the marketing or ICT department of the data capture, storage and usage requirements, so that you can efficiently analyze and re-use information about your contacts. The aim must be to have sufficient accuracy and depth of information to send the right stories to the right journalists, and to avoid being regarded as a spammer.

Media relations executives should be prime users of the DMO CRM system:

- Aim to build up a detailed knowledge of each travel media contact, their interests and their past outputs (in general and relating to your destination).
- It is important that you try to engage with these media contacts, giving them the opportunity to learn more about the benefits to the visitor, rather than simply pitching your destination to them.
- As with the consumer CRM database, if you have overseas offices then they will need their own local version of the system, and the head office will need an overall view.

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17.3.5 Use External Online Expertise

If the DMO is just getting started with travel media relations in a new market, and if your resources are slim, the internet can be particularly helpful:

- Consider buying a subscription to a media contacts database.
- Alternatively, the local market search engines will soon help you to build up a list of media, and then an e-mail request to each one will usually yield their local correspondent.
- Give priority to the newswires – such as Agence France Presse, Press Association, and Associated Press. The key agencies will vary from country to country.\(^5\)
- You can also pay to have your stories distributed to travel editors and writers. There are associations of travel writers in many countries that offer this as a commercial service. There are also commercial companies such as Travmedia that will send out your stories as e-mail alerts as well as listing them in their online newsroom.\(^6\) Destinations that subscribe to Travmedia also have their pictures displayed in the Travmedia online photo library, and have their own destination ‘media centre’. You should be able to select distribution by world region and/or by travel industry sector.

17.3.6 PR Newswire Services

A newswire service will augment your press release distribution, with basic services usually at no charge. They will post it as a web page. If you place your keywords in the headline, sub-headline and early lines of text, then news search engines will pick it up and the story will have valuable direct-to-consumer attention.

If you include a call to action with a link to a dedicated landing page, then you can measure results directly. Look for a service that has a track record in achieving good search engine optimization, such as PRWeb.\(^7\) There are ancillary services such as a link back to blogs that choose to link to your story; this encourages the blogger to make the link.

Examples of other online newswire services are: BusinessWire’s Smart News Release, MultiVu Multimedia News Release (MNR) and Pitch Engine.\(^8\)

Examples of online platforms facilitating journalists and PR professionals are Media Kitty, ProfNet by PR Newswire, and Help A Reporter Out (HARO).\(^9\)

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\(^5\) AFP (online), available: http://www.afp.com/en/ (20-01-2013);
Press Association (online), available: http://www.pressassociation.com/ (20-01-2013);

\(^6\) TravMedia (online), available: http://www.travmedia.com/ (29-01-2013).

\(^7\) PRWeb (online), available: http://www.prweb.com (20-01-2013).

\(^8\) Smart News Release (online), available: http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/smart-news-release/ (20-01-2012);
PRNewswire (online), available: http://prnewswire.com (20-01-2012);

\(^9\) Media Kitty (online), available: http://www.mediakitty.com (20-01-2013);
ProfNet (online), available: http://www.prnewswire.com/profnet/ (20-01-2013);
17.3.7 Work with Partners

Identify other key customer and trade websites within the destination and set up reciprocal links. Participate in regional tourism portal sites such as www.visiteurope.com, www.visiteuropeancities.info and www.onecaribbean.org.

TravelMole.com and TravelMole.TV publish 15 e-newsletters and broadcast hundreds of videos to over 450,000 travel and tourism industry professional registered members and subscribers, as well as 30 million consumers in 132 countries. Travel Daily News is an example of a travel and tourism news portal and e-mail service for the international travel trade market.10

17.4 What to Put in the DMO Web ‘Media Centre’

Create a section of the customer website that is dedicated to the media. Provide a direct link to it from the customer site homepage; it is usual to make the link as text words at the foot of the page, rather than in the main navigation, for example Press Centre or Media.

The Media Centre should cover the destination as a whole: regions; visitor segments such as the youth market; and interests such as cultural tourism or the environment. These core pages can be adapted for each market and language by destinations that are active in several markets, using your content management system. Consider packaging a downloadable ‘media toolkit’ on particular themes or topics, containing a variety of the resources listed below. Keep in mind that (potential) visitors also use media centers for information and inspiration.

The Media Centre can include:

- a list of DMO and industry media contacts, locally and at head office, and details of enquiry response times;
- a concise and visually compelling introduction to the destination including:
  - one page summary descriptions;
  - ready-made feature articles;
  - story ideas; and
  - fact sheets including unusual facts and figures about the destination;
- RSS feeds, which should be for specific topics to which journalists can subscribe. RSS is a vital channel for communicating headline news to journalists (see chapter 5, section 5.8 for more on RSS feeds);
- copies of recently issued press releases and access to an archive of older news stories. Ensure archived press releases are dated and include contact details;
- information on current and forthcoming events (for consumers, trade and media);
- the DMO’s corporate online image, video and podcast library should have special facilities for the media, with fast-track service, no fees, and an easy-to-search collection of selected images that correctly reflect the brand and have known appeal to editors. There should be a special catalogue of short sound and movie clips. Normally all material will need to be free of copyright and available for instant download;
- corporate information designed to appeal not just to the travel media but to the business media. This could include an explanation of the destination’s markets and brand positioning as well as the

DMO’s own policies and business plans. It could be dealt with by a link to the DMO’s corporate site;

- suggested itineraries and opportunities for media familiarisation trips;
- social media integration such as Twitter feeds, Flickr images, Facebook ‘likes’ and opportunities to register for news updates;
- links to related resources such as movie locations identified by movie investment agencies;
- local market celebrity endorsement stories and pictures, including talking heads; and
- an accurate and easy-to-use site search facility.

One example of this is VisitBritain’s media centre, which offers access to news releases, video (b-roll and short film) and images. It offers information on upcoming events and story ideas, social media and RSS sign-up buttons and widgets as well as contact details of the PR department. By registering for a ‘Press Pass’ one can access tailored information and receive regular e-mailed press releases on specific fields of interest.11

17.5 How to Place Your Stories on Important Websites

17.5.1 Websites and Message Boards

To get an editorial mention on a third-party website, the initial task is the same as in offline media and is part of the same process. In each market you should:

- decide which are the biggest sites or the ones that appeal most to the target segments. In every country, there are clear market leaders – news sites or general portals;
- look for those with a travel channel. You may also target specialist sites for specialist campaigns and stories;
- assess how much destination news content they carry; and
- find out who edits them.

Some sites also present the chance to supply core content rather than, or as well as, news stories. Most destinations are not yet exploring these opportunities actively, as they sometimes fall between the PR and the marketing functions.

Participation in message boards on these sites may also be worthwhile in some markets.

17.5.2 Blogs

Tactics for capitalising on blogs include:

- try to identify key active bloggers – see section 17.3.2 on Influencer Marketing – and to notify them of new stories as you issue them. Do not expect them to use the story in its own right, but do give them a short summary of it. It is important to set up the news release as a web page to which they can link. The link should be an HTML page and not to a Word document that could be edited by other people, or to a PDF;
- allocate responsibility for responding promptly to negative or inaccurate blogs. Demonstrate a willingness to accept and act on criticism but avoid prolonging the discussion;

11 Visit Britain Media Centre (online), available: http://media.visitbritain.com (01-10-2012).
• consider inviting influential bloggers, but avoid inviting them together with journalists to familiarisation trips;\textsuperscript{12}

• ask newsletter recipients to blog about their visit; and

• start blogging yourself. See section 7.9 for more information on blogs and blogging;

17.6 Writing Effective Online Press Releases

Pointers for writing effective press releases include:

• deliver the content of your press release in several formats optimized for different devices and media;

• write for the online reader. See chapter 5, sections 5.4 and 5.5 for advice;

• keep headlines short (especially for mobile viewers) and get to the point in the first paragraph;

• study carefully chapter 8 on Search Engine Optimization and optimize your message for important keywords and keyphrases;

• send all relevant information such as PowerPoint presentations, research results and reports, images and video, with the press release and/or include links to that information, so that journalists and bloggers do not have to spend time collecting the information you are referring to;

• observe the best practices for e-mail messages described in chapter 9; and

• furthermore, keep in mind that your press release may also be read by consumers.

17.7 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

There are several ways in which a destination can measure, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the effectiveness of its online PR and media relations programme:

• **Online alerts service:** DMOs can understand the number and nature of mentions about their destination based on a defined set of keywords. Alerts are created each time relevant content is indexed by the search engine, thus helping the DMO to track a developing news item or story.\textsuperscript{13}

• **Social media monitoring:** Use services that allow you to listen, engage, manage and measure social media releases within one (mobile) interface. For more information see chapter 20, section 20.7.3.

• **Social media reach and engagement:** As well as monitoring statistics such as numbers of Twitter followers and Facebook fans, use analytics, such as Facebook Insights API or Klout, to determine engagement levels.\textsuperscript{14}

• **Press clippings:** The traditional press clippings service has now been extended to include online news sites, e-zines, blogs and news wires. Some providers will also calculate the equivalent advertising value of the coverage.

\textsuperscript{12} For an example of such a campaign see: TripAdvisor Blog as a PR Agent (online), available: http://www.nbtc.nl/nl/homepage/Artikel/franse-bloggers-op-stedentrip-naar-amsterdam-en-rotterdam.htm (20-01-2013).

\textsuperscript{13} Google Alerts (online), available: http://www.google.com/alerts (10-10-2012).

\textsuperscript{14} Insights (online), available: https://developers.facebook.com/docs/insights/ (20-01-2013).

• **Track press releases:** Some news wire services such as Marketwire provide reports on how many times each press release you distribute via wire gets syndicated on portal sites.\(^{15}\)

• **Web analytics:** Use Google Analytics to understand how people are finding you online, such as via a search engine, social media or a referral site.

• **Link analysis:** Use a link analysis tool to evaluate how successful your PR and Media relations programme is in terms of creating relevant and high authority links back to your site.

• **Competitors:** Consider also using Google Alerts to measure how your destination compares with similar or competing destinations in terms of online media mentions and coverage.

• **CRM measurement tools:** Use a management tool, such as Net Promoter to evaluate the loyalty of your organization’s customer relationships on an ongoing basis.\(^{16}\)

• **Ask your users:** Incorporate a quick question within online forms, such as brochure requests, how your users heard about your destination/website.

• **Regularly review:** Use any of these methods to illustrate the success, or otherwise, of specific campaigns or promotions. Review them regularly to monitor progress.

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**Further Information**


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\(^{15}\) Marketwire (online), available: [http://www.marketwire.com](http://www.marketwire.com) (01-10-2012).

Chapter 18

Raising Income
from E-marketing Services

18.1 About this Chapter

Although most DMOs receive public funding, raising income through marketing activities and/or selling ad space on the DMO’s e-marketing channels has become a widely used practice for many tourism organizations, especially when facing budget cuts. This chapter deals with the pros and cons of a commercial approach and describes various income opportunities for DMOs, such as selling display advertisements and advertorials on their websites, or affiliate marketing arrangements.

Key Messages

• There are several opportunities for DMOs to raise revenue.
• You must consider the legal framework in which your DMO operates before choosing a commercial approach.
• Adverts and advertisers should be consistent with your own destination brand and campaign goals.
• Avoid advertising clutter and adverts which do not benefit your customers.

18.2 Advantages and Considerations of a Commercial Approach

DMOs are funded in different ways. Some entities are public organizations that receive their budget from the government, often in combination with official organizations (e.g. chamber of commerce). Some others are financed through a mix of private and public funds and can generate additional income through other activities, including e-marketing activities. Therefore, in order to avoid conflicts with stakeholders and/or other businesses, the legal framework in which your DMO operates and your business objectives should be considered first before you opt for a commercial approach.\(^1\)

A commercial approach provides a number of advantages:

• It provides additional revenue for the DMO, which may help to either encourage the provision of additional public funding or compensate for lack of funding.
• It helps the businesses at your destination to reach and attract more visitors by providing additional advertising space.
• Attractive offers from advertisers may increase the usefulness of your website for users.
• Engaging directly with commercial partners and advertisers will bring new and valuable expertise and insights and can help to position the DMO as a knowledge base.
• Co-operation with commercial partners and advertising may help to develop new marketing activities and to establish public-private partnerships.

\(^1\) See also European Travel Commission and World Tourism Organization (2010), Budgets of National Tourism Organizations, 2008-2009, UNWTO, Madrid.
However, some aspects require careful consideration:

- You need to apply a strict and transparent policy regarding advertisers and adverts you do and do not accept (ideally available in written form), because some of the commercial messages may compete with your own campaign goals and content or may even cause distracting ‘noise’.

- Some advertisements may not be aligned with the destination brand or the corporate design of your DMO. Hence, you need to develop explicit style guidelines for co-branding and cross-marketing campaigns and for advertisements you accept.2

- Your image as an independent, impartial information source may be compromised in the eyes of the consumer if marketing communications do not provide an obvious benefit to your customers.

- Advertising clutter on your website, e-mail newsletter or on other channels may have a negative impact on their usability and thus annoy users.

- Success in raising revenue from your e-marketing activities may lead to cuts in public funding. Ensure that the true costs of raising income are clear to all stakeholders and to the bodies that provide you with public funding in particular.

- Your activities may cause distortion of competition in some markets if your services are either too expensive or too cheap with respect to those of profit-oriented businesses.

18.3 Income Sources for DMOs

Opportunities to raise income include:

- selling display advertisements (e.g. banners) and advertorials on your website, e-mail newsletters or other channels (e.g. social media);

- selling enhanced and more prominent entries (e.g. text link, business profile, slide show) to tourism suppliers and other businesses;

- receiving commissions from ads that are delivered to your website by Google or Yahoo;

- charging fees for the integration of a Point of Interest (POI) in interactive maps;

- participation in cross-marketing campaigns (e.g. a combination of online and offline activities);

- revenue from affiliate programmes;

- charging commissions or fees for bookings generated through a booking engine on the DMO website; and

- getting sales revenue from an online merchandise shop.

The last two list items, commissions from bookings and revenue from an online shop, are dealt with in detail in chapter 11 on e-commerce.

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2 See also ETC/UNWTO (2009), Handbook on Tourism Destinations Branding, UNWTO, Madrid.
18.3.1 Display Advertising on Your Websites

Space sold on your website for display adverts, such as banners, pop-ups, and rich-media, is charged according to the size of space and the number of expected or actual ad impressions and/or clicks on the ad in a given period (see also chapter 12 on paid media).

There are three different cost models for display ads:

1. A flat rate for integrating the ad on the website for a certain period of time;
2. a set price for one thousand ad impressions, usually referred to as cost per mille (CPM); and
3. performance-based payment with a set amount of money for every click on the ad, i.e. cost per click (CPC), or a price for the completion of a specific action / goal (e.g. conversion, subscription, phone call). In the latter case this is called cost per action (CPA).

You can combine and refine these cost models depending on your campaign and target customers.

Figure 18.1 shows an example of integrated display adverts on the homepage of the Swedish Tourism Office www.visitsweden.com. Note that adverts can bring additional revenue, but must be marked as advertising.

Figure 18.1 Example of integrated display advert on www.visitsweden.com

For more detailed information on guidelines, formats and targeting options of display advertising see section 12.4 on online display advertisements.

Apart from the decision about what and how much space you sell, and what prices you charge, you need to consider how the ads will be integrated onto your websites. There are two possibilities how you can do this:

1. The advertisements can be either loaded manually e.g. by means of your own content management system (CMS); or
2. you can co-operate with professional advertising companies or networks.
Manual loading by your own staff is ideal when:

- a flat rate is charged for a defined period of time or a certain number of ad impressions;
- the DMO sells its advertising space directly to the industry, maybe in combination with a selection of other marketing activities;
- the total amount of advertisements is rather small;
- the ad serving and targeting options are simple; and
- live reporting of ad performance measurement is not provided.

Selling space via advertising networks is useful when:

- You have large scale advertisers (e.g. airlines, hotel chains) who run campaigns across a number of websites and who therefore co-operate with an advertising agency to plan and run the campaigns for them;
- your content management system is not able to provide automated serving of a variety of ads geared to content and/or demographic target groups of web pages; and
- you may allocate a proportion of your inventory to an advertising network. However, take into account that they expect to buy from you at a large discount. It is advisable that you negotiate the terms and conditions.

Furthermore, consider how you will measure the performance of the ads and what performance indicators you will report to the advertiser and in what format.

18.3.2 Selling Advertorials on your Website and in your E-mail Newsletters

An advertorial is a form of advert that looks like an editorial, however it is paid for content providing information about the product or service of the advertiser. Legal regulations in most countries demand that advertorials are marked as such so that the consumers are not mislead (see chapter 22 on the legal framework for e-marketing).

Advertorials can be included on different levels and in various channels on your website, in your e-mail newsletters or on all other forms of e-marketing communications such as social media, video and games.

Advertorials can mean a real win-win situation for the user, the advertiser and the DMO: the users get extra information that they will appreciate, the advertiser can take advantage of the image and international presence of the DMO and the DMO can earn revenue. This implies that the quality and appropriateness of the advertorial is crucially important.

Advertorials are not limited to one article on one page only. In order to arouse user interest the article can be split into several information units which are placed on several website levels, e.g. a preview picture and a teaser text on the home page → click → a big picture and more detailed text → click → the user is transferred to the website of the advertiser.

Advertorials work best if they are part of a campaign package. It will then be supported by other activities that drive traffic to the website.

Figure 18.2 illustrates an example of an advertorial on the BritishStates od Am version of the Austrian National Tourist Office.
Consider the following guidelines for advertorials:

- Copy text content should be verified, or at least proof-read and edited, by the DMO’s own professional copy writers or content managers in order to be aligned with corporate identity and corporate design.

- Do not accept poorly written copy text from any advertiser as this might compromise the quality of your website. Apply the ‘inverted pyramid principle’ and place the most important and interesting information at the beginning.

- Customize the copy text for target groups of your website.

- Use photos and illustrations of high quality and if the advertiser provides you with photos make sure you do not infringe copyrights (see also chapter 22 on the legal framework for e-marketing).

- Make sure that hyperlinks to and from the advertorial are all functioning.

- Indicate clearly that the advertorial is sponsored and, if applicable, by whom.

- If the advertorial promotes time-bound events or offers ensure it does not become out of date.

Figure 18.2 Advertorial with preview photo and teaser text

Source: www.austria.info/uk.

3 The inverted pyramid is a metaphor used by journalists and other writers to illustrate the placing of the most important information first within a text. It is a common method for writing news stories and advertisements. See also Inverted Pyramid (online), available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted_pyramid (01-02-2013).
18.3.3 Sell Enhanced Entries to Tourism Suppliers

You can offer businesses the opportunity to pay for enhancement of the free entry they usually get in the DMO’s product database, e.g. enhanced presence through additional pictures and text and special services.

18.3.4 Placing Context-Sensitive Ads on Your Website

Google AdSense, Yahoo Publisher or MIVA are popular examples of advertising services that place ads on your website, which are geared to relevant content and keywords on selected pages. Google AdSense allows various settings and adjustments, e.g. language settings or to exclude inappropriate ads from being displayed. The services and revenue models are explained in detail on the respective websites (www.google.com/adsense, publisher.yahoo.com, www.miva.com).

The advantage for the website operator is that it provides additional income through advertising. The advantage for the user is obtaining additional information about products and services related to specific content. However, too much advertising can also annoy users. Thus, the approach taken should ensure that only useful and appropriate advertisers are displayed.

18.3.5 Integration of a Major E-commerce Provider Paying Commission

Possible co-operation partners include:

- an affiliate partner, e.g. airlines, rail or car rental companies which integrate their search engine on the DMO website and pay a flat rate or commissions for bookings;
- ticket providers; and
- a merchandise retailer.

See chapter 11 on e-commerce for more information on commissions from bookings and revenue from an online shop. Note that the terms and conditions (e.g. duration, commission, exclusivity) for integrating potential partners and businesses into your website should be determined and negotiated for each individual case.

Affiliate marketing is a commission-based arrangement between your DMO and an e-commerce website. In its simplest form, a hyperlink to the third-party website is integrated onto the DMO site; however, sometimes even branded or white-label search boxes can be integrated in order to arouse more interest in the user.

The product/service provider pays the DMO an agreed fee every time a sale or lead is generated through the DMO website. The revenue model can be commission-based on sales (e.g. 2% of the purchased service), fee-based on the number of click-throughs (e.g. € 1 per click), flat rate-based (e.g. € 100 per month), or a combination of these. Figure 18.3 illustrates the affiliate marketing process.
The key benefit of affiliate marketing is that it works on a “pay-for-performance” basis. Besides the additional income source, another advantage for the DMO is the presence of another company’s logo or brand on the DMO website, which can help to increase prestige and credibility. Furthermore, the conscious selection of co-operation partners can add additional benefits to the users and reduces switching costs.

To simplify the process of finding affiliate partners, tracking clicks and arranging payments you can use an affiliate network (sometimes called affiliate broker or affiliate manager) such as Trade Doubler, Trade Tracker, or Commission Junction.4

Case study: Paid for e-marketing activities of the Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO)

The Austrian National Tourist Office generates additional income from e-marketing campaigns, such as:

- banner ads and advertorials on their website www.austria.info and sub-sites;
- newsletter-teasers and newsletter-advertorials in their monthly e-mail newsletter; and
- combinations of online and offline activities.

Advertorials and banners

- Available ad formats: individual ad spaces and packages of different spaces on owned and paid media
- Duration for ads: normally 1 month
- Advertising clients: Austrian hotels and regions

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4 Trade Doubler (online), available www.tradedouble.com (20-03-2013).
Trade Tracker (online), available: www.tradetracker.com (20-03-2013).
Commission Junction (online), available www.cj.com (20-03-2013).
• Cost model: mostly flat rate for 1 month, sometimes also cost per click:
  – Advertorial: € 599/month
  – Content ad: € 499/month
• Skyscraper banner: € 999/month
• Performance measurement: ad views, clicks, click-through rate, average time on page that contains the ad clicks

**Advertisement in e-mail newsletter**

• Available ad formats: teaser and advertorial
• Duration for ads: once in the monthly newsletter
  – newsletter-advertorial: € 499
  – newsletter-teaser: € 399
• Advertising clients: Austrian hotels and regions
• Cost model: flat rate for one newsletter

Performance measurement: ad clicks

**Cross-marketing campaigns**

• Available ad formats: combination of online and offline ads, such as ads in print magazines and cost per click online ads
• Duration for ads: depends on the campaign
• Advertising clients: Austrian hotels and regions
• Cost model: negotiated rate depending on the campaign
• Performance measurement: ad clicks

18.4 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

Your commercial approach can be evaluated by the following methods:

- Advertisers will expect comprehensive reports on performance metrics before, during and after the campaigns. Web analytics tools such as Google Analytics can be used for this purpose;
- user feedback survey on the integration of advertisers on your websites, newsletters and other online channels, e.g. by means of an online questionnaire on your website;
- advertiser feedback survey on their satisfaction with the available options and their effectiveness; and
- cost/benefit analysis can be used to evaluate the benefit of a given policy. This is an analysis of the expected balance of benefits (e.g. income through e-marketing activities, creating business for stakeholders) and costs (e.g. staff costs, training, software licences), including an account of foregone alternatives and the status quo.

Furthermore, the DMO needs to define key metrics in order to measure the success of its commercial efforts. These metrics will include:

- adViews, click-through rates (CTR) of ads, opening rates and CTR of newsletters;
- net revenue after deducting staff and software costs;
- revenues broken down by ad format (e.g. display ads, advertorials, newsletter ads); and
- number of advertisers participating in your paid-for and free e-marketing activities.
Chapter 19

Measurement and Evaluation

19.1 About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of measurement and evaluation, which should form a fundamental part of any e-marketing programme. It covers the continuous measurement of e-marketing activities as well as the periodic evaluation of e-marketing programmes. It should be read in conjunction with chapter 20 on web and social analytics and the chapters covering specific channels in more detail.

Key Messages

- Any measurement and evaluation programme must be based on a clear understanding of the business and marketing objectives and support the development of an associated set of KPIs and success criteria.

- Key requirements of any measurement and evaluation programme include tracking progress against a defined set of strategic objectives (particularly relevant to senior management teams) and the ongoing optimisation of marketing activities (particularly relevant to operational teams).

- Increasingly, marketers require a programme of continuous measurement that is supported by research-led analysis of specific elements of an e-marketing programme in greater depth.

- Measurement can be platform-focussed or channel-focussed. This can be supplemented by considering customers’ views and competitor analysis.

- Developing an appropriate measurement framework, that helps to understand key elements of the customer journey, becomes more important as that journey becomes increasingly complex.

- Attribution analysis provides a means of understanding cause and effect. It includes tracking the journey between online and offline channels as well as the contribution made by different digital channels. At the present time it is very difficult to track the journey between multiple devices.

19.2 The Measurement Challenge

It is perhaps ironic that whilst one of virtues of e-marketing is the capability to provide a wealth of excellent management information (and almost everything can be measured to a greater or lesser extent) many DMOs still struggle to make sense of the data they create through their e-marketing activities. The challenge is therefore turning those data into information that is timely, relevant and can be acted upon.

Your measurement and evaluation programme needs to be based on a clear understanding of what your business and marketing objectives are. You need to ensure that you are measuring the right criteria and the reports you produce support the following requirements:

- Marketing teams need to continually optimize their marketing programmes and improve operational performance. Increasingly, they require data in real time and it is becoming critical that
intelligence concerning what is working and what is not reaches the marketing team responsible for managing activities as quickly as possible.

- Senior management need to be able to track progress against a specific set of strategic objectives and understand return on investment (ROI) associated with e-marketing programmes. The level of detail they require will probably differ from that required by the operational marketing teams.

E-marketing continues to evolve and different methods require different approaches to measurement. When e-marketing activity is all about driving traffic to the DMO website, metrics like site traffic, numbers of unique users, the amount of content viewed and on-site conversion still apply. Where success depends on what is happening off-site, aspects such as the size of your networks and the quality and sentiment of the conversations carried out across those communities becomes increasingly important.

### 19.3 The Different Types of Measurement

Web analytics and social analytics are dealt with in more detail in chapter 20. These represent measurement approaches that are generally platform-focussed. They look at what is happening across the media platforms owned by the destination and DMO i.e. website, third party social platforms and e-mail. They generally deal with metrics derived from clickstream data.

However, this represents only one area of measurement (see figure 19.1). Internet data in the broadest sense cover much more than just clickstream data and includes:

- **The voice of the customer** – through the use of user surveys, laboratory testing, user experience studies, social media and direct feedback, the DMO can gain greater understanding into what is working or not working for its customers as well as the overall strength of the destination brand and how it is being influenced.

- **Understanding what your competitors are doing** – by using free and paid tools and services the DMO can start to gain insight into what its competitors are doing and benchmark its performance to help to identify new opportunities (see section 19.6.1).

- Increasingly, marketers involved in managing digital channels require continuous measurement, characterised by real time reporting and an ongoing programme of optimisation. This applies to both paid media activity as well as earned media activity. The speed at which insight can reach those responsible for the ongoing optimisation of e-marketing programmes and in two-way conversations dictates how agile and responsive the DMO can be.

- Many of the measurement methods are embedded within the specific chapters of this handbook and they are generally channel-focussed. They include marketing activities, which drive traffic to a DMO’s owned media and engagement with the destination’s content. These include paid media such as paid search, display advertising and interactive TV but also earned media such as natural search, online PR and social media.

- Finally, some of the methods covered here and elsewhere in this handbook are research-focussed and are primarily concerned with driving greater understanding of a particular area with the aim of informing future strategy and planning. This type of periodic evaluation includes website and other types of audit as well as specific pieces of brand and consumer research.
The DMO needs to understand what its measurement and evaluation requirement is within the context of its particular strategic objectives. The DMO needs to develop an evaluation framework that helps them to understand increasingly-complex customer journeys and how they are influencing them (see section 19.4.4).

19.3.1 Platform-focussed Measurement

Platform-focussed measurement covers web analytics, social analytics, e-mail analytics, customer relationship management, mobile analytics, online surveys, online experiments and e-commerce analytics. They are covered in more detail in the respective chapters in this handbook and summarised here.

### Table 19.1 Overview of platform-focussed measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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</table>
| Websites and social media           | (see chapters 5, 7 and 20) Web analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimising usage of the website. It helps to gain an understanding of the following questions:  
  1. How is your website supporting your marketing objectives and what is your progress against them?  
  2. What is not working and how can you improve user experience across your site?  
  3. Where should you be focussing your efforts (and budget) for the best return on investment?  
  4. How can you make your site more efficient and improve overall levels of user satisfaction?  
  Key performance indicators and metrics cover the following three areas:  
  1. How you are driving traffic to your website and new customer acquisition – e.g. visits, unique visitors, new visits (%), bounce rate (%);  
  2. What you want people to do when they are on your site – e.g. page depth, loyalty, events/visit; and  
  3. Which specific outcomes deliver against your marketing objectives – conversion rate (%), assisted conversions (%). |
**Method** | **Summary**
--- | ---
Social analytics | Social analytics modules (often called insight or analytics) can help you to understand how social media contributes to qualities like brand health, marketing optimisation, revenue generation, operational efficiency, customer experience and innovation. It covers both social media measurement and social media monitoring. Social media measurement focusses on the DMO’s social media presence and its own social networks. Metrics generally include:
- audience size – i.e. number of followers and connections;
- reach – the number of unique people that saw your post or content;
- engagement – the number of interactions with your content;
- sentiment – the nature of those reactions (positive or negative); and
- outcomes – the resultant traffic and conversion events.
Social media monitoring focusses on conversations and coverage around your brand or destination more widely on the web and across social networks. It can help to understand the following:
- How many mentions are occurring?
- Where are those mentions appearing?
- Are those mentions positive or negative?
- What specific sentiments are being expressed?

**E-mail and Customer Relationship Management** (see chapters 9 and 14)

**E-mail analytics** | E-mail marketing platforms provide tracking and live reporting to support the evaluation of e-mail marketing performance, the relevance of the messages being sent, the level of engagement and overall impact – including:
- How many e-mails were sent and delivered?
- What percentage of subscribers opened each e-mail?
- Who opened and clicked through each e-mail?
- Which links generated the most click-throughs?
- How many and who removed themselves from your list?
In addition, the following CRM metrics apply:
- monthly increase in size of the e-mail list;
- what channels are contributing to its growth;
- who is opting out and why; and
- how many and what contacts have forwarded an e-mail to a friend.
Comparing your performance with industry benchmarks can be insightful.

**Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** | The efficiency and effectiveness of a CRM depends on both the users of the system and the data quantity and quality in the CRM system. Metrics related to CRM usage include:
- number of users;
- number of user logins in a given time period;
- number of corrupt entries;
- number of duplicates; and
- number of reports generated.
Metrics for the quantity and quality of the CRM database include:
- Database volume;
- number of new entries per year;
- number of inactives;
- completeness of customer profiles;
- number of bounces during campaigns;
### Method Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Relationship Management (CRM)</td>
<td>• profitability / conversion rate of campaigns; and • customer frequency and recent activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Mobile tourism (see chapter 10)

**Mobile analytics**

Mobile analytics covers the following key areas:

- mobile website analytics – tracking user behaviour on a mobile website;
- applications and podcasts – available via the relevant application store;
- mobile social media – available via the relevant social network; and
- advertising – covering mobile display, mobile paid search, SMS.

Important key performance indicators and metrics include:

- web metrics – e.g. unique users, page views, new visitors, time spent;
- number of application or podcast downloads;
- frequency of application use;
- time spent on application;
- advertising metrics – e.g. impressions, click-through rate and conversions; and
- social media metrics – e.g. followers, shares, likes, comments.

#### The voice of the customer (see section 19.5)

**Online user surveys**

Online surveys provide an effective means of understanding what your customers want and what their intentions might be – both at the time of their visit to your site and in the future. Questions can cover the following:

- The type of information users were looking for and whether they found it;
- the importance of the different elements of a destination website;
- their rating of these elements in relation to the website in question;
- their likelihood of re-visiting the site;
- their likelihood of visiting the destination;
- the type of trip planned; and
- whether they have visited the destination before.

For ROI evaluation, there is a need for a follow-up survey, online or offline, to ask whether the respondent visited the destination, and trip details including spending, when they visited, size of party, where they stayed and for how long, and their likelihood of re-visiting in the future.

**Online experiments**

Online experiments include both A/B testing and multivariate. They can form part of an ongoing programme of website optimisation and test the effectiveness of, for example:

- web pages – different design, copy, and animation treatments including the number, the appearance and the position of the various elements;
- whole websites – including the structure;
- different data capture tactics – only one or two fields to fill in, for example, versus several; and
- individual links – for example, the wording or the icon or image that anchors a link.

#### B2C E-commerce (see chapter 11)

**E-commerce analytics**

Pre-transaction and transaction measures, including:

- number of users that used the booking engine;
- abandonment rate;
- bounce rate;
- number of users that clicked on links to third party e-commerce partner;
- conversion rate;
- look-to-book ratio;
Method Summary

E-commerce analytics
- booking revenue for different accommodation types;
- booking revenue for different markets;
- average number of cross/up sells added per visit;
- revenue for DMO;
- revenue for SMTEs;
- revenue for strategic co-operation partners;
- cost per acquisition (into the sales funnel); and
- cost per booking (per transaction)

19.3.2 Channel-focussed Measurement

Channel-focussed measurement covers natural search, paid search, display search, PR and media relations, social media and interactive TV. They are covered in more detail in the respective chapters in this handbook and summarised here.

Table 19.2 Overview of channel-focussed measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search engine optimisation</strong></td>
<td>(see chapter 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural search</td>
<td>Evaluating the success of marketing programmes that support search engine optimisation focusses on three key areas:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- visibility reporting – your ranking in SERPs for target keyphrases;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- authority – covering number and profile of links and social signals; and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- web analytics – focussing on natural search traffic.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The following key performance indicators apply:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- percentage of traffic via natural search;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- percentage of traffic driven via brand and non-brand keywords;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- top landing pages via natural search;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- top referring keywords via natural search;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- change over time (%); and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- conversions and conversion rate (%) against defined micro and macro conversions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid media</td>
<td>(see chapter 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid search</td>
<td>Paid search follows a performance-based model. Key metrics include;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ad impressions;</td>
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<td>- clicks;</td>
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<td>- click-through rate (CTR);</td>
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<td>- landing page arrivals;</td>
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<td>- equivalent cost per thousand impressions (CPM);</td>
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<td>- average position;</td>
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<td>- cost per click (CPC); and</td>
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<td>- conversions and conversion rate (%) against defined micro and macro conversions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Display advertising    | Display advertising can be purchased on a CPM model (cost per mille or thousand impressions), a CPC model (cost per click i.e. performance based) and even a CPA model (cost per acquisition). Key metrics include:  
  • ad impressions;  
  • clicks;  
  • click-through rate (CTR);  
  • landing page arrivals; and  
  • conversions and conversion rate (%) against defined micro and macro conversions; |
| PR and media relations  | Tracking the success of an online PR and Media Relations Programme can include some or all of the following, depending on the specific objectives:  
  • Online alerts service – tracking the quantity and nature of online mentions around your destination based on a defined keyword set. You can monitor your competitors in a similar way;  
  • social media monitoring and measurement – allowing you to monitor, measure and engage social media releases as well as track their reach;  
  • online clippings service – similar to a traditional press clippings service but applied to online channels;  
  • press release tracking – newswire services that allow you to track how many times your content gets syndicated on other sites;  
  • web analytics – tracking referral traffic to site as a result of your PR and media relations efforts;  
  • link analysis – tracking inbound links to site as a result of PR and media relations efforts;  
  • CRM – using metrics like Net Promoter to track the strength of your existing relationships and how that changes over time; and  
  • online surveys – asking users how they found your destination and website. |
| Social web             | Social analytics are summarised in figure 19.1 above. This covers both social media measurement (more platform-focussed) and social media monitoring (more channel-focussed). Clearly social media can be considered a brand-controlled channel (i.e. owned media) as well as a channel in its own right which drives customer engagement and customer created content (i.e. earned media). Where understanding social media ROI is concerned, the critical first step is understanding what your business objectives are for social media. That might include all or some of the following:  
  • brand health – measuring attitudes, conversation and behaviour towards your destination;  
  • marketing optimisation – improving the effectiveness of your marketing programmes;  
  • revenue generation – where and how your organization generates revenue;  
  • operational efficiency – where and how your organization reduces costs;  
  • customer experience – the relationship your customers have with the destination; and  
  • innovation – collaborating with your customers and marketing partners. |
Interactive and smart television (see chapter 13)

Interactive TV

The impact of iTV campaigns can be measured by using the data logged on the set-top box. The cross-channel impact of iTV campaigns and conversion can be evaluated by correlating set-top box data with other performance metrics from e.g. the brand websites, social media platforms, e-mail campaigns, QR code campaigns. Key metrics include:

- total number of households reached;
- total number of set-top boxed reached;
- click-through rates of iTV entry points;
- cost per click;
- time spent on interactive ad;
- total number of individual telescoping overlays and actions taken;
- user activity/engagement on interactive ad destination;
- number of video plays initiated;
- average length of video views;
- number of brochure orders;
- request for information (RFI): number of actions taken, actual consumer data including name, postal address, e-mail address, phone number, number of duplicate RFIs; and
- conversions/sales.

19.3.3 Research-led Evaluation

Research-led evaluation covers keyphrase research, network analysis, competitor intelligence, expert audit, laboratory testing and branding. They are covered in more detail in the respective chapters in this handbook and summarised here.

Table 19.3 Overview of research-led evaluation

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<th>Method</th>
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| Keyphrase research| Keyphrase research helps you to understand the search patterns around the products and services your destination has to offer and the level and type of competition for those keyphrases. This includes:  
  - monthly search volumes for keyphrases and categories of key phrase;  
  - how you rank alongside competitors for those keyphrases;  
  - the level of competition for those keyphrases and opportunities to compete;  
  - how you might organize content and target specific keyphrase categories;  
  - the cost of targeting keyphrases via paid search.  
  Keyphrase research represents a foundation piece of research for any search marketing programme and it can provide valuable insight to support all e-marketing activities. |
### Method Summary

#### Network analysis
Network research helps you to understand the networks and the specific communities of interest that are present around your destination and the activities there. That includes:
- where your destination is discussed online;
- what the themes and topics of conversation around your destination are;
- which networks your target market segments are present in;
- the content you might develop for these networks; and
- what the opportunity is to reach out to them and place content across them.

#### Research activity to support your e-marketing programmes (see section 19.6)

**Competitor intelligence**
The analysis of competitor data can help to inform your own e-marketing strategy. Common uses of competitor intelligence include:
- long term traffic trends across specific domains;
- looking at upstream and downstream sites for a specific domain;
- understanding who your competitors are and their performance; and
- search and keyword analysis.

Search engine data provides a primary and reliable source of competitor intelligence covering paid search, specific search terms and the trends associated with them as well as display advertising and audience insight.

Beyond search engine data there are three main types of competitor intelligence, some of which are free but more often accessible through a subscription-based service.
- Tool bar data – derived from user installed toolbars that provide additional browser functionality and collect data about user behaviour online.
- Panel data – based on recruited participants that install monitoring software on their browsers to support data collection.
- ISP (Network) data – based on server data from Internet Service Providers.

**Expert audit (including desk research, validation of code and testing of other technical aspects of the website)**
The Destination Web Watch (DWW) Website Audit is a paid service that assesses some 150 quality criteria and critical success factors for websites in six categories:
1. Accessibility and readability;
2. Identity and trust;
3. Customisation and interactivity;
4. Navigation;
5. Ability to find the website and search engine optimisation; and

Site audits to support the development and implementation of a programme to support search engine optimisation include an appraisal of your web analytics, homepage, site structure and navigation, category and hub pages, technical configuration and reputation analysis (covering link analysis and social signals).

**Expert evaluation (including desk research, testing of technical aspects of the website, and mystery shopping)**
This type of evaluation assesses the qualities of a site in terms of its performance in meeting the DMO’s strategic requirements. The DWW Strategic Website Evaluation consists of more than 120 criteria. These relate to the presence, quality and performance of:
- information services;
- contact services;
- relationship services;
- transaction services; and
- entertainment services.
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<th>Method</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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| Laboratory testing | Users undertaking specific tasks in laboratory conditions can help the DMO to understand user experience in terms of both usability and functional effectiveness. Participants can be selected in terms of demographic and lifestyle profiles and thus more accurately than with online experiments. Specifically, this helps to understand the following areas:  
• The information and user experience the customer is expecting;  
• degree of accessibility of information posted on the site;  
• the way in which the information is evaluated and understood by the consumer;  
• moments of frustration and doubt during navigation; and  
• dead ends (moments of ‘going nowhere’).  
Remote user testing and research also provides an attractive and cost-effective option for carrying out research activity. Including:  
• usability and user experience studies;  
• card-sorting and information architecture research; and  
• heat maps and click maps. |
| Audit (e-mail)   | The quality criteria and critical success factors used by DWW in auditing an e-mail promotion reflect:  
• data protection and privacy regulations in the main tourism-generating markets;  
• regulations governing the sending of unsolicited e-mails;  
• good practice of permission-based marketing;  
• subscription, confirmation and personal settings management;  
• promotion of trust;  
• proven editorial techniques;  
• principles of technical performance; and  
• good practices of newsletter management. |
| Branding (see chapter 3) | The strength of your brand online is related to the strength of your brand in a general sense. Research around your destination’s brand image provides valuable context. The strength of your brand online can be measured in the following ways:  
• Keyphrase research – the extent to which people are searching for your destination and the type of keyphrases they are using to do that compared to your competitors.  
• Brand monitoring – across social media and mainstream media, assessing the number of mentions, where they are occurring and the nature of image associations and the sentiment of those mentions.  
• Content Audit – a qualitative audit carried out as part of a content inventory. Assesses to what extent content and marketing messages support brand purpose and are in line with destination or place brand strategy, substance and symbolic actions. |
19.4 Develop an Integrated Measurement Framework

19.4.1 The Customer Journey is Increasingly Complex

The customer journey has become, and continues to become, more complex.

The beginning of this journey is still ensuring that the customers you are targeting are aware of your destination and what it has to offer. The end of that journey is usually defined as a set of specific actions or conversion events and ultimately booking a visit, whether that is on the DMO site, a third party site or direct with a tour operator or business. However there are an ever-increasing range of factors and channels that influence customer choice and ultimately the decision-making journey customers take, from beginning to end.

The DMO needs to make sense of this increasingly-complex customer journey and understand the influence that can be brought to bear on it within the context of specific business and marketing objectives.

19.4.2 Customer Engagement is Becoming More Important

The true value of customer engagement and the return on investment derived from customer engagement programmes is an ongoing debate. However, the general consensus is that increasing overall levels of customer engagement has a positive relationship with brand recognition and brand perception. This too can be measured and, depending on your business and marketing objectives, could form an important part of your e-marketing programme.

It is also true that some of your most valuable customers might not necessarily be the ones that spend the most in your destination. You only need to look at Facebook Insights for your destination's presence on Facebook (see section 20.7.6) to see that the demographics of those people that like your page may be quite different from the demographics of those people that you are reaching via the Facebook channel. For example, the people that live in the destination often play a critical role in spreading the messages you are trying to convey further afield and through their own networks.

The DMO needs to understand how it engages different types of customers, as well as those that form an intermediary between the destination and its visitors, to drive conversion, brand awareness and brand engagement.

19.4.3 The Move Towards Off-site Engagement

The e-marketing landscape continues to evolve. The primary objective used to be driving traffic to the DMO site and influencing user behaviour on that site. It is now becoming much more about engagement with the destination's content in those networks that are important to the destination. Increasingly the battle for attention and customer engagement is happening away from the main DMO site. This is certainly true of social media but also a wealth of other sites that represent the places online where a destination's customers visit. Network analysis (see section 4.3.5) helps to identify what those sites are and online PR, outreach and social media programmes proactively target them.

The DMO needs to understand how it targets, engages and influences customers across the networks that are important to them and how this helps to achieve its objectives.
19.4.4 Assign Metrics to Different Types of Engagement

Different methods require different approaches to measurement. Traditional metrics based on one-way communication channels and on-site actions fail to describe the complete picture. There are four types of engagement that can be measured to help to describe the whole story:

- **Do people know about you and are they aware of your content?**
  This covers awareness-raising activity and marketing programmes that drive traffic to the DMO’s owned media such as its website and social media sites. Metrics include site visits, time spent on site, pages viewed, search rankings, advertising impressions and social media reach. This is usually measured through your web and social analytics.

- **What are they doing and are they using your content?**
  This covers specific actions on the DMO’s owned media and it usually covers a set of specifically defined conversion events that contribute to the DMO achieving its marketing objectives. That might include, for example, a brochure request or download, a sign-up for ongoing communication or a product search but it can also include blog comments, reviews, forum contributions and the upload of other forms of user-generated content. This is usually measured through your web and social analytics.

- **What are they saying and what do they think of the destination?**
  Clearly, an engagement can be both positive and negative. An assessment of conversation sentiment helps to understand opinions, perspectives and passion for a particular destination. It includes sentiment tracking on third party sites (news, blogs forums and review sites) and sentiment tracking of contributions on the DMO site and its social media sites through brand and social media monitoring as well as customer surveys.

- **How likely are they to share content and spread positive messages?**
  Covers the likelihood that a customer will influence someone else to engage with the destination or a particular product. It includes qualities like net-promoter score (the difference between the number of and extent customers would or would not recommend you), reviews and ratings as well as the sharing or content and user-generated commentary on other influential sites. Once again, it is measured through brand and social media monitoring as well as customer surveys.

The specific set of metrics that you need to track depends on what your marketing objectives are:

- If your marketing activity is primarily about awareness-raising and creating a positive perception of the destination brand via paid and earned media it is likely you will focus on metrics around involvement, intimacy and influence.

- If driving specific transactions is the focus of your marketing programme it is likely that you will focus on involvement, interaction and influence.

- For loyalty programmes, intimacy and influence are likely to become increasingly important.

19.5 Consider the Voice of the Customer

So many of the questions and issues destination marketers and their agencies face can be answered or addressed by simply asking the customer. Customer surveys are an obvious starting point. For many DMOs they provide an extremely valuable mode of continuous measurement. They can form part of a comprehensive research programme but equally they can easily be deployed on the destination’s website or social media to help to answer specific questions or provide information about particular issues.

Where the management and development of the DMO website is concerned, an ongoing programme of testing can help to inform development decisions and highlight current issues. Furthermore, it might...
actually be quicker, more cost effective and reliable to test different ways of doing something side by side than investing a huge amount of time and effort deliberating between them!

19.5.1 Online Surveys

Online surveys provide an extremely effective method of listening to what your customers have to say and they provide a source of immediately actionable insight. There are numerous options for deploying them and they are both cost-effective and scalable. Sampling methods include:

- a survey form positioned on your own website. Site-level surveys work across all of the pages on your website and are generally used to collect information about customer intent, behaviour and customer experience. They can be deployed via a pop-up (using a technology like Ajax) or through a permission-based model where users are first invited to participate in a survey and then served the survey at the end of the visit (sometimes called a pop under). Page level surveys usually focus on a specific question or task. Deployment can be the same as site-level surveys but they often exist on the page itself and include a few specific questions. The sampling method can be adjusted as required e.g. after a certain amount of time or on certain pages. Cookies can be used so that once a user has completed the survey they will not be served the same survey again;

- a survey invitation distributed via a link in an e-mail sent to contacts in your customer database or specific segments of customers. This can provide information about all customers irrespective of their previous or current contact channel with the DMO;

- increasingly social media provides an opportunity to survey people interested in or already visiting your destination. Facebook for example offers plenty of opportunities to pose opened-ended questions (by posting on the wall of your Facebook page) or through a wide range of apps which run a wide variety of surveys and polls.

Online surveys can be used by marketing managers (for customer data acquisition as well as optimizing marketing programmes) and research managers (to support longer-term and more structured research). Where personal information is being collected, regulations associated with the collection of that data must be adhered to, and CRM or research activity should be planned so that appropriately regular contact with customers is maintained.

Surveys formats include yes/no opinion polls, multiple choice questions, single question and more extensive questionnaires. The single biggest mistake is to ask too much and create surveys that are simply too long. If you create a survey that is shorter and more focussed it will have a positive effect on your response rates.

Do it yourself surveys

There are many free or low priced survey tools available online e.g. www.surveymonkey.com. Many vendors offer free trials and pricing can be based on monthly subscriptions or numbers of surveys completed. When choosing a survey tool consider the following:

- Analysis – tracking and interrogating data, including segmentation, visualization and export
- Formats – deploying different types (e.g. pop up, on exit survey) and creating the required code
- Options – supporting a range question types (e.g. closed, rating, multiple option and open)
- Design – offering alternative layouts and the option to add your branding
- Language – the ability to support international markets
• Frequency – the ability to adjust how and when it is deployed (including the use of cookies)
• Management – multiple user accounts and user specific rights
• Data – the ability to export the data or maintain it beyond any subscription expiring; and
• Support – online in the form of FAQs and tutorials as well as customer support

The DMO’s research department should have the necessary experience of practical social research including questionnaire design, which can be drawn upon and combined with an understanding of how customers behave online. It is equally important to have experience in translating the results into clear insights that are actionable.

### Using a research agency

All market research agencies now offer online techniques. You will almost certainly wish to use an agency if you need coordinated planning and delivery of research that uses a combination of methods – online, telephone, postal, personal interview, and group discussions.

Use an agency that specializes in tourism. Even where an online tool as described in the previous section is planned, but you do not have the capacity or skills to manage the survey, an agency with specialist tourism knowledge can manage the work on your behalf.

Such agencies exist in most markets. They can help you to specify your requirements, then translate them into a research brief and manage a tender process for you. They may then go on to manage the project for you and analyze the results, if that is required.

### 19.5.2 Online Experiments

There are two key types of online experiments – A/B testing and multivariate testing. These techniques can form part of a continuous testing programme and provide a valuable source of customer insight based on actual events and outcomes. It can be applied to a wide variety of issues on your website – including, for example, improving landing pages, conversions paths, page layouts, etc. However, experiments do not need to be constrained to understanding user behaviour on your web site but can be applied more broadly across your e-marketing programmes.

### A/B testing

A/B testing determines which is the better of two alternatives, A or B.

Visitors are randomly divided into two groups. Each group is shown a different version of a web page to determine which version leads to higher conversion rates, average basket value, brochure download, or other target. For example, if you have to make a decision about which text would be best for a campaign, you can send text A to 50% of your public and text B to the other 50%.

Then compare the differences in reactions of both groups. The approach can be extended beyond just two alternatives – comparing four different web pages would of course be an ABCD test.

A/B testing is the easiest but often least valuable way to improve effectiveness. This is because it is seldom just one element that improves a page and thus improves measurable performance – for example the look-to-book ratio, where many page views and bookings are necessary to be able to derive conclusions.
**Multivariate testing**

Multiple variable testing isolates the elements on a page and helps to find out what elements matter, and which combination is the strongest.

A multivariate test involves doing multiple A/B tests on the same web page. For the test, different alternatives of certain elements on a page, like an image or text link, are created. It is important to show each alternative independent from the others. If you show image A, it should be possible to combine this with text links A and B.

The output of these multiple A/B tests is the cumulative conversion performance of each combination. Doing the tests separately would take much more time, and the advantage of multivariable testing over A/B split testing is that you can nearly always find a recipe that outperforms the existing one. It is best to limit testing to three elements and not more than two alternatives, otherwise the number of combinations becomes too large, and deriving conclusive information is too difficult.

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**19.6 Research Activity to Support your E-marketing Programmes**

Research activity to evaluate or support the success of e-marketing programmes can focus on the DMO website and presence on social media as well as the specific channels it is active across. Some research activity, such as keyphrase research (see chapter 8), network analysis (see chapter 4) and competitor intelligence forms an essential building block for developing e-marketing strategy and any e-marketing programme.

**19.6.1 Sources of Competitor Intelligence**

Competitor intelligence is internet data about your competitors. The analysis of competitor data can help to inform your own e-marketing strategy. Such intelligence used to be something you had to pay for but now a lot of it is freely available. It is important to remember however, that where competitor intelligence is concerned, trends are often more important than absolute numbers. Although limitations around data collection can mean there are big differences between the data derived from sources of competitor intelligence compared to actual company data this kind of intelligence is hugely valuable.

Common uses of competitor intelligence include the following:

- long term traffic trends across specific domains;
- looking at upstream (referrals) and downstream (destinations) sites for a specific domain;
- understanding exactly who your competitors are and how they are performing; and
- search and keyword analysis (see chapter 8).

Search engine data are a primary source of competitor intelligence. The depth and breadth of these data and the fact it comes directly from the search engine means it can be used with a high degree of confidence – and it is largely free. Where Google is concerned that includes the following:

- paid search
  
  Google External Keyword Tool: https://adwords.google.com/KeywordTool

- specific search terms and trends
  
  Google Trends: http://www.google.com/trends
display advertising and audience planning
AdPlanner: https://www.google.com/adplanner

Beyond search engine data there are three main types of competitor intelligence:

1. **Toolbar data** – derived from toolbar ‘add ons’ that provide additional functionality for web browsers and collect data about which sites are visited, the search terms used, behaviour on-site and a user’s next destination. It includes those toolbars provided by the search engines themselves but also others too. Alexa is a good example of toolbar-derived data (www.alexa.com/) that can provide in-depth traffic analysis of competitor websites.

2. **Panel data** – based on a panel of recruited participants, each of which have monitoring software installed on their browsers. Bias can be created through aspects such as privacy restrictions that some businesses and networks apply to web monitoring software or the recruitment approach that creates demographic or attitudinal bias. Nevertheless, for sites with large volumes of traffic, panel data provides a good source of competitor intelligence. Compete (www.compete.com) is a good example of competitor intelligence derived through panel data.

3. **ISP (Network) data** – based on server data from Internet Service Providers (ISP) this can provide a huge sample size, which makes it a very reliable source of competitor intelligence. Hitwise (www.hitwise.com) is a good example and has a sample size worldwide of well over 25 million. As such, this provides a primary source of competitor intelligence that can be supplemented with toolbar and panel data.

Whilst some of these data can be freely accessed, more in-depth analysis is usually available via a subscription-based service. Where ISP derived competitor intelligence is concerned this can become quite expensive. Consider what value you derive from accessing these data and whether you need to access it on an ongoing basis or just for a specific period of time, for example, to support strategy development.

Beyond the sources outlined above there is a huge amount of competitor intelligence available via research reports, white papers, industry media and other online sources.

### 19.6.2 Website and Newsletter Expert Audit and Evaluation

It is wise to use experts to undertake an audit and evaluation of a website or a newsletter. It should be based on a set of accepted quality criteria and critical success factors, such as those that have been developed for Destination Web Watch (DWW) (www.destinationwebwatch.org).

The DWW website audit has been designed to provide DMOs with a quick and reliable tool to evaluate the quality of their websites. The DWW audit also enables a DMO to benchmark the performance of its site against other DMO sites. The audit is non-sector and non-subject specific. It is a sound initial assessment of the minimum standards a good website should meet.

The DWW audit assesses approximately 150 quality criteria and critical success factors for websites in six key categories: accessibility and readability, identity and trust, customisation and interactivity, navigation, ability to find the website and search engine optimisation, and technical performance.

The criteria are based on sources including:

- the guidelines and recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) for the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) that assures unrestricted access to the web for everyone, regardless of disability;
- surveys of the factors that determine the apparent trustworthiness and usability of websites and legal requirements in key travel and tourism markets;
• search behaviour and the factors that may influence ranking in search engines;
• the insights and experiences of people with practical, hands-on experience of making websites work.

Similar audit and benchmarking services are available for e-mail newsletters.

The in-depth strategy-based DWW website evaluation covers the qualities of the site as a destination marketing site, and judges the DMO’s performance as an online marketer. The evaluation takes as its starting point what the DMO is trying to communicate and its overall marketing strategy.

The evaluation of online marketing activities is also undertaken in the context of knowledge of the political, financial and operational constraints within which the DMO is operating.

The content and functions of a website are evaluated in terms of the presence, quality and performance of information, contact, relationship, transaction and entertainment services.

Offline methods are more appropriate for qualitative subjects and to gather information on more difficult subjects, such as spending, in order to determine ROI.

For multi-national research, it would be desirable to use an agency with branches or associate companies in at least the main source markets. For surveys of an international audience, telephone is likely to be the most cost-effective method.

Offline surveys need contact information – address or phone number. This is often not available from website users, unless the user has specifically provided it for the purpose, or while making a booking, or for the delivery of a brochure, and has given permission to be contacted for research or marketing purposes.

Site audits within the context of search engine optimisation are discussed in chapter 8.

19.6.3 Laboratory Testing

This section should be read in conjunction the section on usability testing (see section 19.5)

Laboratory testing is used to support an understanding of user experience. It focusses on analysing the usability and functional effectiveness of websites.

The laboratory is usually a suite of rooms, including a control room from which the content of different websites can be sent to individual PCs located in another room or rooms.

A selection of typical users, often relating to key segments the website is targeting, are seated at separate PCs and each is asked to perform a series of tasks. An observer of each user records the user’s decision-making processes as they navigate the site or sites in real time, noting their verbal comments and attitudes as well.

Afterwards, there will be a one-to-one in-depth interview, and later the researcher examines the log file to analyze the way in which they used the site.

By evaluating the variables that determine the efficiency of a particular website, including task difficulty, degree of accessibility of information and dead ends, the strengths and weaknesses of the website will be identified.

Respondents are recruited from consumer panels. A total of 30 customers should be sufficient to generate reliable and valid recommendations. In DWW, data are collected in four phases:

1. Warm-up task;
2. main experimental task;
3. questionnaire; and
4. interview.

The whole procedure of the four phases and the data collection usually takes about a month. The end result is a sound assessment of the user-friendliness and effectiveness of the website's overall navigation and functions.

Laboratory testing also has experimental aspects. Observation of customer behaviour in using a site may include the use of techniques such as eye tracking and heat maps.

A second objective of the laboratory test is an in-depth analysis of customers’ own evaluations of websites, such as appearance, navigation and clarity of the site, and the format of the data on it.

Laboratory testing differs from online experiments because the test users can be accurately selected according to demographic and lifestyle profiles, whereas with online experiments only the IP address and the operating system of the user are known.

19.6.4 Online Enabled Research

Some of the research options discussed so far can be labour intensive and quite expensive to deliver. Where competitor intelligence is concerned there is a wealth of online sources, free and paid, available to the researcher (see section 19.6.1). Increasingly the web offers online alternatives to traditional user research. That includes:

- usability testing and user experience research – selecting a remote user group to carry out a defined set of tasks on your live site, prototype or an image of a web page you would like to test;
- card sorting – to help to develop and improve how you organize information on your website and provide effective navigation using a remotely recruited user group to sort specific items into categories you have defined (closed sort) or categories that the user defines (open sort);
- heat or click maps – using artificially intelligent computer generated eye tracking heat maps or click maps created through the addition of a tracking code or web analytics snippet on your live website.

19.7 Understanding Cause and Effect

Integration and multichannel represent important themes and ones that reoccur throughout this handbook. As marketers, you understand the need to deploy multiple messages across multiple channels in order to meet your marketing objectives. The customer journey and the ways you try to influence it, are becoming increasingly complex.

Attribution analysis is all about trying to associate cause and effect, the ultimate aim being to deploy and coordinate our marketing programmes so that it drives the greatest return for the brand or destination. It is a new and evolving discipline that will no doubt continue to develop both in terms of the methodologies that are used as well as the tools that support them.

Where attribution and e-marketing is concerned, there are four types of challenge:

1. Tracking the journey from offline to online media;
2. tracking the journey from online to offline media;
3. tracking the journey across multiple digital channels; and
4. tracking the journey between multiple digital devices.
There are a number of proven methods for tracking the journey between online and offline channels. None are perfect but between them they provide a number of useful methods to track this kind of transition.

To track the journey **between offline and online media** you can use the following:

- A campaign specific URL and redirect – This offers an effective and reasonably simple method that can be applied to all offline media but is often associated with tracking TV campaigns. You should select a URL that is easy to remember and ensure that it is set-up as a permanent redirect on your web server. The redirect can incorporate a variety of tracking parameters that can uniquely identify specific media.
- Redeemable coupons and offer codes – Where you are asking the customer to do something of value to them or a specific transaction you can ask them to enter a specific code that allows them to access a preferential rate or other value added offer. Clearly this is very relevant where you are running e-commerce on your site.
- Surveys – Literally ask your customers i.e. “what prompted you to visit our website today?” These can form part of a fuller research programme and can be included in online surveys you are already running (see section 19.5.1). You can also ask about their intent on exiting your website i.e. as a result of your visit to our website today how likely are you to …?
- Identify patterns – Through visualizing data and using mathematical analysis you can begin to understand the relationship between what you are doing offline (cause) and what is happening online (effect).

To track the journey **between online and offline media** the options available are similar:

- Redeemable coupons and offer codes – These can be provided for download and printing or even sent directly to a mobile device for redemption at a tourism business.
- Identify patterns – It is perhaps more difficult to prove a relationship between what you are doing online and the direct effect of that in terms of real action. In some circumstances, visualization and mathematical analysis can help to establish a link.
- Surveys – Exit and pop-up surveys can be used to gauge customer intent. Where you capture customers contact details and have permission to contact them in the future a re-contact survey can ask questions about outcomes and specific actions i.e. did you visit as a result of the information you received from us?
- Regional preference – Much as a retail store can look at which stores are most looked at via their store locator it is possible to understand the level of interest in specific regions or areas through your web analytics. That might also include using unique telephone numbers on your website for specific tourist information centres.

Using your web analytics it is possible to begin to understand the effect of **multiple digital channels** and the role that each channel is playing in terms of ‘assisting’ a conversion (driving traffic to your site prior to a conversion) and driving an actual conversion (the ‘last click’ a user makes prior to completing a conversion event). Google Analytics, for example, now has a section under ‘Conversions’ called multichannel funnels that provide this kind of analysis:

- For a long time, analysts and evaluation approaches have often attributed all of the value to the ‘last click’. There is a variety of alternative approaches, including applying a weighting to each specific channel i.e. direct, natural search, paid search, display, social and e-mail.
- Multiple channel attribution has helped analysts and marketers to understand the role and true value of each specific channel in taking a customer from initial contact through to conversion. That knowledge is being used to optimize marketing programmes as well as support decisions around budget allocation. Whilst attribution analysis might help to confirm what you already understand it is likely it will throw up some surprises too.
It would appear that some channels play a more prominent role in assisting a conversion (direct and social) whilst other channels play an important role in supporting a conversion event (paid search). Of course, a lot depends on how the channels are used within the context of your overall marketing objectives. For a DMO, natural search might be used to support awareness-raising activities and e-mail could be used to either maintain the prominence of the destination or drive business around specific offers – each having an effect on the role those channels play in driving value.

So far we have only considered one device. For example, your web browser on your computer/machine. Tracking the customer journey across multiple digital devices is challenging. Imagine the following scenario:

“I searched around holidays in Britain on my iPad having seen a TV commercial and I clicked on a paid search advert. The following day I read some reviews on TripAdvisor whilst on the train using my smartphone… and finally booked a hotel in London on my laptop at the weekend.”

At the moment tracking multiple channels across multiple devices represents a blind spot in the world of attribution analysis. This will no doubt be addressed in the future through innovation in tracking tools and methodologies, so watch this space.
20.1 About this Chapter

This chapter covers the fundamentals of web and social analytics, including basic definitions and reporting tools, issues for data collection and selecting an appropriate web and social analytics tool. The importance of looking beyond just clickstream data (or web traffic data) is discussed alongside understanding your objectives and selecting appropriate KPIs. It provides an overview of the web analytics journey an organization is likely to take, from tracking data to closed loop optimization in real time. Social media analytics are discussed within the context of both social media measurement and social media monitoring.

Key Messages

- Web and social analytics can be used to track progress against your marketing objectives and help you to optimize your marketing efforts across your own website and social media.
- Make sure you understand your objectives. Develop specific KPIs which help you to understand how you drive traffic and what your users do when they arrive within the context of defined conversion events.
- Web and social analytics is a journey and one which should progress gradually and for which you should adopt a ‘test and learn’ approach. Invest in people that can interpret and act on it as well as the technology.
- Social business has created a new type of online analytics which includes social media measurement (platform-focussed) and social media monitoring (network-focussed).
- Selecting an analytics tool is complex. You need to assess each tool within the context of your specific business needs, the support you require and the resources at your disposal.

20.2 What is Web and Social Analytics?

Managing a website and understanding web analytics should go hand in hand.

We have come a long way from the days when the only web metric anyone discussed was ‘hits’. This is often, and incorrectly, equated to the number of individual visits to a website or specific web page. In fact it actually represents the number of individual files requested from a web server. Somewhat different from visits and a lot larger!

Historically, web analytics was extremely data driven and the link between data, information and insight was a tenuous one. Times have changed. The software and tools have become less complex and organizations have become more adept at using them. The widespread use of Google Analytics has gone a long way to support understanding and adoption of web analytics. Web analytics now represents a core business intelligence tool for anyone involved in marketing.
According to the Digital Analytics Association, “web analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage”. The advent of social media has brought with it the need to understand and optimize not only your own site but also your third party brand platforms such as your Facebook page. Increasingly social analytics tools are becoming integrated into web analytics tools although web and social analytics represent disciplines in their own right and concern themselves with the way consumers engage with each specific channel.

Web analytics concerns itself with the collection and interpretation of internet data and uses web analytics software and tools to support that. However, to be successful, the DMO must not only invest in good web analytics technology but they must also invest in staff and the process to make sure the right information reaches the right people at every level of the organization.

This chapter focuses on how to understand and optimize your own website and social media platforms through the analysis of onsite data. It refers to offsite data sources too and should be read in conjunction with chapter 19 that discusses integrated approaches to measurement and evaluation in more detail.

### 20.2.1 What Can Web Analytics Do?

Web analytics helps the DMO to gain an understanding of the following:

- How is your website supporting your marketing objectives and what is your progress against them?
- What is not working and how can you improve user experience across your site?
- Where should you be focusing your effort (and budget) for the best return on investment?
- How can you make your website more efficient and improve overall levels of user satisfaction?

The successful application of any web analytics programme depends on a well-designed and structured measurement model that is built on a clear understanding of the DMO’s specific marketing objectives.

### 20.2.2 The definition of basic reporting elements

The Digital Analytics Association undertakes public consultation about the definition of web metrics. It has published definitions, including what they consider to be the four building block terms that form a foundation for all web measurement. These include unique users, visits/sessions, page views and events:

- **Unique user (or unique visitor)** – the number of inferred individual people (filtered for spiders and robots), within a designated reporting timeframe, with activity consisting of one or more visits to a site. Each individual is counted only once for the reporting period.

- **Page view (or page impression)** – the number of times a page (typically the page seen in a browser) was viewed:
  - Most web analytics tools allow the client to specify what types of files or requests qualify as a ‘page’.
  - Certain technologies including (but not limited to) Flash, AJAX, media files, downloads, documents and PDFs do not follow the typical page paradigm but may be definable as pages in specific tools.

- **Visit or session** – an interaction, by an individual, with a website consisting of one or more requests for a unit of content (for example a page view):

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– If an individual has not taken another action on the site within a specified time period (typically 30 minutes), the visit (or session) will terminate. Different tool providers use different methodologies to track sessions. Ask your provider how this metric is computed.

– A visit typically consists of one or more page views. However, in the case of sites where interaction consists solely of file downloads, streaming media, Flash or other HTML content, a request for this content may or may not be defined as a page in a specific web analytics programme but could still be viewed as a valid request as part of a visit.

• **Event** – any logged or recorded action that has a specific date and time assigned to it by either the browser or server:
  – Events are activities that happen within a page. Events can also be associated with advanced web technologies, such as Ajax and Flash.
  – Because an Event can be both a dimension and a count, a web analytics report may show “number of events” (event as a count), or it may show specific events and how many page views, visits, or unique users were associated with the events (event as a dimension).

### 20.2.3 Beyond Web Traffic or Clickstream Data

Collecting and analyzing web traffic data or clickstream data is only part of the task.

Internet data includes clickstream data as well as data from usability studies, transactional database systems, user data capture, online surveys and web server performance monitoring systems. Web analytics is not only about clickstream data although it does provide a foundation for any web analytics programme.

Clickstream data records every click made on your website. Users navigating your site, content and engaging with the functionality your site offers creates a huge amount of data. These data will help you to understand what is happening on your website. What pages did people visit? What sources did they come from? What keywords delivered natural search traffic? What did they do while they were visiting your site? To gain a proper insight and understanding of your e-marketing programmes you need to consider qualitative and quantitative data from your site and the competition. These will help you to answer equally important questions like: Why is this happening? How is this affecting our business? What are we missing?

More specifically, you must focus on the following when analyzing and interpreting internet data:

• **Focus on business outcomes.** Think beyond outputs and those metrics derived from the analysis of clickstream data e.g. visits, users and page views. As much as possible you need to relate outputs to business outcomes and your specific marketing objectives.

• **Continue to test and learn.** You can gain as much insight from what does not work as from what does. Implementing an ongoing programme to test alternatives against each other (often referred to as A/B or multivariate testing) will support ongoing improvement and understanding.

• **Find out what your users are saying.** Through user surveys, usability testing, user experience studies and direct feedback you can understand what is actually working and not working for your users.

• **Use competitor intelligence.** Understanding how you are performing against your competitors will help you to benchmark your performance, improve and identify new opportunities.

Clearly there is a risk of data or information overload, and this is one of the challenges when trying to develop and embed a web analytics programme in the DMO. It is really important that both marketing teams and senior management understand the value created by actionable insight, and take a data-driven approach to evaluating their e-marketing programmes. This is no small task. Chapter 19 of this handbook provides guidance to help you with this.
20.2.4 Understand your Objectives and Develop Key Performance Indicators

Looking at your web traffic data is certainly very interesting but you will only be able to derive meaningful insights from this information if you have a clear understanding of what your business and marketing objectives are. Once you understand what your objectives are you will then be able to associate specific goals to each of those objectives. Only then will you be able to develop specific metrics or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that enable progress to be tracked against the goals you have identified.

The goals and the metrics you develop for your site are likely to cover the following areas:

- **How will you drive traffic to your website and new customer acquisition?** This might include paid channels such as search and display advertising but it could also include offline direct marketing channels and TV advertising. It is likely to include natural search but also earned media such as online PR and social media.

- **What do you want people to do when they are on your site?** This definitely includes: what content you would like them to engage with, how you might expect them to navigate your site, and the specific actions you would like them to complete while on your site.

- **Which specific outcomes deliver against your objectives?** It is likely that some of the specific actions you are hoping people undertake while on your site represent key ‘conversion events’ that are related to specific business objectives.

The process needs of understanding objectives and setting KPIs needs to include the following steps:

1. Mapping and understanding the stakeholders within and beyond the DMO. This will need to involve senior management, and discussions with each of the stakeholders will help you to agree what the business and marketing objectives are. The key question is why do you exist?

2. Develop appropriate site goals. What do the business and marketing objectives mean from the point of view of what you are trying to achieve via your site? These help to describe specific strategies that help you to achieve your business and marketing objectives.

3. Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). A KPI is used to measure performance and progress against a specific website goal. They need to be actionable and accountable. If performance measured by a specific KPI is not as planned you should know who you need to speak to and it should help to define an ongoing course of action.

4. Identify targets for each of the KPIs. This might be based on previous performance (and this certainly needs to be taken into account) but they can also be developed top down based on your specific objectives and site goals. At the outset, and in the absence of benchmark data, it is better to have ‘best guess’ targets rather than no targets at all. You can always update them later.

5. Consider associating specific KPIs with particular segments. Consider what is the most useful segmentation. Segments can be based on the target markets you have defined but also specific segments in terms of traffic sources, on-site behaviour and conversion events.
Table 20.1: Example Objectives and KPIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>Increase Sales</td>
<td>Establish Brand</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>Improve Conversion Rate</td>
<td>Drive New Visits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase spending per Transaction</td>
<td>Build Facebook Followers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KPIs</strong></td>
<td>Conversion Rate</td>
<td>% New Visits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Average Transaction Value</td>
<td>Number of Facebook Followers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Targets</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td><strong>Segments</strong></td>
<td>Natural vs. Paid Search Traffic</td>
<td>Natural vs. Paid Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook Referrals</td>
<td>E-mail Referrals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20.2.5 Define Specific Conversion Events

The term ‘conversion’ is often used to describe an action that represents a sale. For an e-commerce site, a conversion means a customer completing a purchase. This also applies to the DMO where they are selling products and services online.

Where the DMO does not sell direct to the customer there will still be significant actions the customer can complete and which represent significant progress towards business objectives.

A conversion event is deemed to be any action that adds value in relation to the DMO’s marketing objectives. At its most basic level it represents an action that is deemed more valuable than a standard page view. Conversion events are usually defined as ‘goals’ within your web analytics toolset and thus can be used to support tracking of on and off-site activity against a pre-defined set of specific goals.

The conversion events you define will relate to your specific KPIs.

Examples of such conversion events include:

- requesting a brochure – a download or postal request;
- signing-up for e-mail and ongoing communication;
- following via social networks; and
- product search – the referral of associated leads.

The conversion events you define for your site might also include softer measures of conversion such as watching specific video content or even engaging with a specific number of pages of content on the site.

20.2.6 Ten Great Web Metrics

Your web analytics package will produce a huge amount of information and specific metrics about what is happening on your website and across the campaigns you are running. Make sure you take a structured approach to understanding your objectives and setting appropriate KPIs (see section 20.2.4). The specific metrics that become your KPIs depend very much on your marketing objectives and what you are trying to achieve.

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Here are ten web metrics that are likely to be useful in understanding any e-marketing programme:

**A. How are you driving website traffic and new customer acquisition?**

1. **Cost per Acquisition ($CPA) or Significant Action**
   
   (The cost of a specific piece of campaign activity / the number of customers acquired or significant actions)

   This is a great cross-channel comparison metric. The cost of acquiring a new customer can be calculated on a per channel basis. For example, you might want to compare the cost of signing up a new customer for ongoing communications across display advertising, paid search, natural search and social media. Remember, you will need to take account of media and agency costs as well as the in-house resources required to support the programme. This metric can be applied to softer measures of conversion that represent a significant action in helping you to achieve your objectives.

2. **Click-through rate (CTR %)**
   
   (The total number of impressions / the number of people that clicked on a specific call-to-action)

   This will help you to look at the creativity and relevance of your campaign activity. That includes whether you are using the right call-to-action in your campaigns. This can be applied to the campaigns you are running across display advertising, paid search, social media and e-mail. It is also a good proxy for relevance. If people are not clicking on the call-to-action you have placed in front of them, then it might not be relevant i.e. you might be targeting the wrong people.

3. **New Visits (%)**
   
   (The percentage of traffic to your site that has not previously visited your site)

   For destinations and DMO websites this is often quite high. The campaigns they run are often focussed on awareness and consideration i.e. targeting those people that have not yet considered visiting the destination. Where objectives start to focus on relationship building and driving repeat visits, this changes – that might include domestic markets where visitors are taking multiple short breaks or specific products and niches where users are returning for the latest information and news.

4. **Bounce rate (%)**
   
   (The percentage of people that left your site after only viewing one page)

   This provides a really important health check. Most sites have a bounce rate of over 25% i.e. 30% is pretty good and comparative or trend data are often more useful than the actual values. You need to be aware of issues around site structure that can affect the bounce rate. For example, if your blog is hosted on a subdomain, that can mean people going straight to your blog from your homepage are reported as a ‘bounce’. High bounce rates for your homepage or a specific landing page are an indication that you might be targeting the wrong people or the content you have on that page is not working for the audience you are driving to the page.

5. **Conversion abandonment rate (%)**
   
   (For a specific conversion path the amount of people who did not complete / the number that started)

   The most common application of this metric is to help to understand where people are dropping out when progressing through a series of specific steps as part of a transaction process. Clearly applicable where you are delivering e-commerce on your site but it can also be applied to other conversion events such as requesting a brochure, signing-up for e-mail and other events you define as being significant.
B. What are people doing when they are on your site?

6. Page Depth
   *(The percentage of people that looked at X number of pages on your site)*

Slightly different to the average number of pages viewed per user session, this metric looks at the percentage of total users that visited say one, two, three or more than three pages i.e. the distribution of numbers of pages viewed. It provides a proxy for the level of content consumption and engagement. You can segment those different types of user and compare them in terms of traffic source and specific outcomes. The overall objective is to understand what results in a positive outcome and how you can drive more of that type of traffic.

7. Loyalty
   *(The percentage of people who returned X number of times)*

Once again this will help you to understand customer behaviour in relation to specific outcomes and traffic sources. Whereas page depth helps you to optimize your site based on a single session, loyalty helps you to understand what is happening across multiple sessions. How many times does someone need to return in order to hit your predefined website goals? How does this relate to your campaign activity and the frequency with which you update content across your site and social networks?

8. Events / Visit
   *(The total number of specific events completed / the total number of site visits)*

This helps you to understand the type and extent of a user's experience beyond just pages of content and your conversion goals. That might include specific events such as a customer interacting with an e-brochure, trip planner, video gallery or image gallery. Like other metrics regarding customer behaviour, once someone is on your site these can be segmented based on conversion goals and traffic sources.

C. What are the specific outcomes?

9. Conversion rate (%)
   *(The percentage of total site visits that complete a specific conversion goal)*

This is likely to be one of your most important metrics – but it does depend on you defining an appropriate set of conversion events for your site! The macro conversion rate for an e-commerce site (completing a sale) is typically around 2%. Where a set of softer or micro conversions have been defined, it can be a lot higher. Where do you find those people that are converting and how are they behaving prior to conversion? This will help you to drive better quality traffic to your site and to provide the best user experience when people arrive on your site.

10. Assisted conversions (%)
    *(The percentage of conversions that resulted from multiple visits from multiple sources)*

We already know that it is likely a user of your website will visit multiple times before they convert. However, all too often we associate conversion to the ‘last click’ i.e. the channel they arrived from immediately prior to conversion. This metric helps you to understand the effect other channels have in supporting a specific conversion prior to the final visit and it helps to take the focus away from the last click.

See chapter 19 for a more detailed discussion about attribution analysis.
Further Information


The Digital Analytics Association (DAA) provides a wealth of useful information about web analytics: www.digitalanalyticsassociation.org (31-01-2012).

ClickZ provides a useful analytics column with lots of practical advice and posts on latest trends: www.clickz.com/type/column/category/analytics (31-01-2012).

20.3 Web Analytics is a Journey

Web analytics represents a journey of ongoing learning, experimentation and optimization, against a backdrop of continuously shifting markets, goals and priorities. In such a dynamic environment it is important that you progress one step at a time, accept that the task is never finished and that you will always be able to do more.

It is much better to adopt a ‘test and learn’ approach to developing your web analytics programme rather than to immediately buy the most expensive and complex tools or build a team of people too quickly.

20.3.1 Getting Started

Organizations do not want to spend a lot on a web analytics tool without certainty of benefits. The introduction of Google Analytics as a free service has largely eliminated the need to invest in technology resources at the outset.

However, the DMO still needs to allocate resources and staff time to the use of free tools such as Google Analytics to analyze and interpret web traffic data. When resources are stretched this often gets ignored and undermines the early stages of embarking on a web analytics programme.

20.3.2 Tracking Data and Reporting

Having invested in a web traffic tool, or more likely allocated resources to support the use of Google Analytics, you can start reviewing web traffic data.

At this stage the following web traffic metrics should be included:

- How many visits does the site attract and how many unique users arrive at the site?
- Where do these users come from? Natural search, paid search, referring sites or directly?
- What is the balance between new users and returning users?
- What is the bounce rate (i.e. do they leave immediately without visiting additional pages)?
- How many pages of content do they look at and what are the most popular pages?
- Where natural search is concerned, what key phrases are driving them to the site?
- If you have an internal search function on site, what are they searching for?
- How are you performing in relation to the site conversion goals you have defined?
It is often the case that the member of staff involved in the setting up and initial management of the web analytics programme is an existing member of the marketing and digital team. It is important that they work with the wider marketing team as well as the senior management team to help to foster understanding of web analytics and commitment to ongoing investment in this area. A good starting point is to compile monthly reports covering the key metrics suggested above which are circulated as a basis of discussion and explanation about what the specific metrics mean.

The feedback you gain provides basis for ongoing improvements to the web analytics programme.

20.3.3 Evaluating Your Campaign Activity

At this stage, the organization has decided to analyse the results of its web-related marketing programmes and compare results against initial goals. This might include search engine optimization, paid search, display advertising, e-mail campaigns, or offline promotion of an online landing page. In each case results can be tracked against the specific conversion events you have defined for your site and thus enable the comparison of campaign and channel performance.

You will also begin to add further channel specific metrics to your set of initial web traffic metrics to help gain a fuller understanding of how each channel is working. This might include:

- e-mail campaigns –such as the open rate and click-through rate for outbound e-mails or specific targets for customer lead generation (see chapter 9);
- paid search – such as click-through rate and average cost per click for the specific campaigns and AdGroups you are running (see chapter 12); and
- social media – such as the sign of your networks, the engagement across the content you post on those networks and influence beyond your immediate network (see chapter 7).

At this stage it is likely that you are going to want to understand what is happening in more detail and want to do in addition to just reporting results by drilling down through the data. The sorts of questions you might be trying to find answers to include:

- Which user segments (however defined) are responding to your campaigns and converting?
- What does the user journey look like and what can be done to improve it?
- Are there specific times of the day, week or month where particular channels perform better?

This will also put additional demands on your web analytics toolset. It is likely that server-side log data may be of limited use for campaigns involving display advertising, paid search and e-mail, if there is not a one-to-one allocation of landing page and link. Page tagging may be necessary to obtain campaign information in sufficiently rich detail for optimization analysis (see chapter 8).

You will also be surprised how quickly you start downloading data into secondary spreadsheets and manipulating data outside the web analytics toolset, especially when preparing associated reports. For the first time you are likely to start defining specific requirements for your web analytics toolset.
20.3.4 Support Your Web Analytics with the Right Skills

Recruiting and retaining staff with the necessary skills to develop and manage your web analytics programme is often one of the biggest challenges. If you have at least one full-time equivalent analyst you are more likely to derive benefit from your web analytics data.

In a recent survey by Econsultancy of over 800 organizations, 25% of respondents said they had no dedicated web analysts, whilst 62% stated they had no regular contractors undertaking analysis of web data.3

It is possible to outsource elements of the web analytics function, but maintaining an understanding of your web analytics is critical to the success of e-marketing programmes.

20.3.5 Understanding Where the Opportunities Lie

Now that you have allocated resources to web analytics and have a basic toolset you are in a better position to uncover further opportunities for improvement.

The organization is no longer drowning in data. You have the time to understand business needs for analysis and produce focussed reports that show performance against pre-set goals. Your analysis highlights opportunities for improvement and this is distributed throughout the organization:

- Directors receive reports of three to five KPIs showing how digital actions supports overall goals.
- General managers may receive more marketing-specific metrics.
- Campaign teams see their own specific campaign metrics in addition to the higher-level metrics.

Up to now, analysis has been diagnostic in its nature. Once you bridge the action chasm your web analytics programme drives future action and strategic change. This represents an exciting transition for any organization embarking on data-driven optimization and strategy development.

20.3.6 Closed Loop and Real Time Optimization

You are now using web analytics to drive decision-making. Testing of communications options is common, either through split testing or multivariate testing. You put the necessary resources into preparing multiple sets of content to be simultaneously tested and roll out the winner. For larger organizations this represents the point at which there are multiple teams of analysts, with one central expert group. For the DMO this is likely to represent the point at which web analytics is truly embedded in the organizations and individual marketing teams each have an understanding of, and commitment to, using web analytics to improve their programmes.

Data that are collected from customer surveys, online surveys, competitive activity and backend transactional systems (e-commerce and CRM databases) are integrated to give a complete picture of user activity.

This presents an opportunity to apply intimate and real time understanding of your customers to present relevant content, products and services to the right customer at the right time. For example, someone looking at a hotel website during business hours might be a business traveller. Someone looking for information at the weekend or later in the evening might be planning a holiday.

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Further Information


A more advanced guide, and focussing on the use of Google Analytics, is Clifton, B (2007), *Advanced Web Metrics with Google Analytics*, Wiley.

20.4 The Latest Trends in Web Analytics

It is becoming increasingly important for the DMO to take a more integrated approach to measurement and evaluation as well as understanding what is happening across social media channels. The current state of the global economy is putting more pressure on resources, creating a greater focus on results and driving the following key trends in web analytics:

- **A growing emphasis on investing in people as well as technology.** The tools themselves require a reasonably technical level of understanding to drive actionable insights that will help to inform strategy and planning. The requirement to communicate those insights broadly and to key decision-makers makes the current skills shortage in measurement and analytics more acute.

- **Integrating web data with other online data and wider business intelligence.** The move to a truly multi-channel approach, through integrated campaigns and more complex customer journeys, is putting increasing demand on measurement platforms and evaluation frameworks. Vendors offer tools that will bring offline data into the analytics tool and mobile analytics is starting to become a discipline in its own right.

- **Social business creates a new layer of online analytics.** Social analytics tools are becoming more integrated into the web analytics toolset. Increasingly marketers are requiring their data in real time, they need to be able to manage multiple digital assets and they need all of the associated metrics in one place.

- **Web analytics has become mainstream.** No longer does the web analytics function exist within the IT department. There has been a significant shift and web analytics tools are being regularly used by marketers rather than technical staff.

- **Google Analytics has made a big impact.** Although the availability of a very functional and free web analytics toolset has meant a threat to commercial vendors, it has also introduced a huge number of organizations to what is possible. This has helped to increase organizations’ aspirations about what they want to achieve, which in turn has created further opportunities for commercial vendors.

20.5 Web Traffic Data Collection, Storage and Definitions

Web traffic data can be collected in two ways and they both have advantages and disadvantages. Whilst it is not necessary to understand the technology in detail it is useful to have some basic knowledge of how differences in data collection affect what can be done and the accuracy of the data.

Page tags (often referred to as client-side data collection) collect data via the user’s web browser and use specific code placed on the web site’s pages (usually JavaScript) to enable this. Log files refer to data...

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collected by the web server itself (often referred to as server-side data collection). To attain the best of both worlds it is possible to pursue a hybrid solution.

20.5.1 Client-side Data Collection

Page tag solutions use cookies to track users. These are small text files that a web server transmits to a web browser so that a user’s activity on a specific website can be tracked. Persistent cookies remain on the user’s computer for a period longer than the specific web session. These can be used to recognize the user when they return and personalize content based on their previous user journey. Session cookies only last for the duration of a particular visit.

Where data are collected via page tags, data storage is usually outsourced as part of the web analytics service. Google Analytics uses this method of data collection and storage.

Page tag data are created by JavaScript embedded in the source code on a web page.

Page tag logs are therefore only generated when a browser loads a web page and when the user’s computer does not have JavaScript disabled.

Page tag logs typically measure only human traffic. Search engine or other automated crawler activity typically does not trigger the page tag JavaScript.

20.5.2 Server-side Data Collection

Server log files are created whenever the server that is delivering the website to users presents, or serves, a file to create a web page.

If a web page has images such as pictures or logos, the server builds the page by loading each of these images into the proper location on the page. Each image file generates a log. Therefore, one web page can generate many log file records. These records are called hits. This is where the early obsession with hits comes from. Hits are comforting, big numbers, but absolutely meaningless for marketing analysis purposes because they count all activity and include both human and non-human activity. Server log files are triggered by people wanting to look at a web page, or by a search engine robot or other type of automated crawler.

In addition, log files sit on your web server so bring with them data storage considerations.

20.5.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Server and Client (Page Tag) Data Collection

There are advantages and disadvantages in the two primary types of data collection and this can affect both what can be tracked and the accuracy of the data.

Because the methods of server and page tag data collection are fundamentally different, neither can be overwhelmingly said to be the best. Increasingly the use of page tags for collecting user data has become much more popular than using server log files. The technical and data management requirements are significant although what is best does depend on exactly what you are trying to achieve.
Table 20.2 Advantages and disadvantages of using server and page tag logs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Server logs</th>
<th>Page tag logs</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Robot and search engine spider activity can be tracked</td>
<td>• Client side activity, such as Asynchronous JavaScript and XML (AJAX) applications, Flash and form clicks, can be tracked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completion of downloaded documents, pictures and videos can be accurately tracked. They can also track completed and partial downloads</td>
<td>• Counts activity at proxy servers and caches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Historical data can be re-processed if necessary</td>
<td>• Can process data in near to real time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are generally not restricted by firewalls</td>
<td>• Can track activity across multiple web servers and domains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can track exit links (where a user exits the site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Typically needs less backend technology resources to manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Will not detect activity on proxies or from cached pages. Traffic from these sources will be undercounted</td>
<td>• Does not track search engine spider activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficult to track visits across multiple servers or domains (micro-sites)</td>
<td>• Does not accurately indicate download completion. Code is triggered when the download starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May over-count traffic. Significant effort is needed to maintain robot activity filtering</td>
<td>• Incorrect tagging can result in loss of data. Historical data 'not collected' cannot be recovered or re-analyzed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cannot track client-side events such as AJAX, Flash and JavaScript</td>
<td>• Page tagging resource requirement can be significant on start-up, depending on web analytics objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cannot track exit links (where a user exits the site)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reports are typically not available in near to real time, unless storage and data processing investment is significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Typically, more in-house technology maintenance expertise and resources are required to manage log files and storage, compared to hosted page tagging services</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

20.5.4 Data Storage Options

The increasing popularity of page tag data collection has significantly reduced data storage costs, therefore considering data storage has become less of an issue. The data collected via this approach is hosted elsewhere and therefore reduces the need for additional investment in server hardware and technical resources. However, there may be firewall issues with hosted services. External hosting may raise privacy concerns. The data may only be stored for a limited time period, meaning you will need to either download and store data or accept that the data might be lost after a specific period of time.

Storing data within the DMO maximises control of data privacy. Access is unrestricted and you own your data for as long as you store it. Data storage requirements, however, can grow quickly. Often, the data are collected on a separate server, and then moved to another server that is used to manipulate the data for reports and analysis. The servers that store and process data have to be managed, and this requires technical resources. The analytics software is typically purchased on a server license basis.
20.5.5 Hybrid Data Collection

To attain the best of both server logs and page tags, some organizations opt for hybrid data collection. There are two possible ways to achieve this:

1. Host both log files and page tags in-house, using one vendor that provides hybrid software; or
2. use a combination of in-house and hosted services:
   - use a third-party external service provider for page tag log hosting. Use JavaScript to tag all documents or client-side events; and
   - run a low-cost server log analysis package in-house (such as AW Stats or Google Urchin9) to measure robot and spider activity and track document downloads.

Selecting the appropriate means of data collection depends on the DMO’s goals. The goals determine which metrics are important, and hence which data need to be tracked so that these metrics can be calculated.

20.5.6 The Use of Cookies

Cookies are small text files that are stored by a web server on the site user’s computer. They are used by the web server to recognize a user when they return to the site and store specific information (but not personal information) about a specific user’s preferences or previous on-site behaviour. They enable the server to count the individual computers to which it delivers pages and thus support the provision of information about the balance of new and returning users to a specific website.

Some organizations have privacy policies that prohibit the use of cookies. If cookies are not used, all visits are new and unique. In such a situation, unique users and visits have the same count.

Even when cookies are used, users can set their browser to refuse to accept them. Or they can be manually deleted, or be automatically disabled or deleted, most commonly through anti-spyware programmes. Thus, to handle the potential for inaccuracy, it is sometimes wise to measure trends rather than absolute data and/or make sure those viewing reports are aware of the inaccuracies that exist.

New EU legislation on the use of cookies was due to be introduced in May 2011 but was later delayed until May 2012. The implications for web analytics as well as user experience are significant. Discussions around its interpretation and how exactly to deal with it are still ongoing. Prior to this legislation being introduced it was required that any site provide information about what cookies are being placed on a user’s computer or device, how they are used and what information they hold, as well as how to opt out of cookies by, for example, changing your browser settings. The new legislation now requires that users give prior consent before a cookie is placed on their computer or device. There are exceptions. For example, where the use of cookies is deemed essential for the successful operation of a particular service.

Asking each site user to provide specific consent has both practical and user experience implications. Current advice in this area includes:

- **Audit the use of cookies on your site.** What pages drop which type of cookies on your users’ computer or device and for what purpose?
- **Categorize your cookies into different types.** This might include cookies that are necessary for the provision of a particular service, those which are likely to be considered intrusive (for example a cookie that tracks movement from one site to the next) and those which are non-intrusive.
- **Update your privacy policy** and consider having a specific link on your site footer that links directly to information about the use of different types of cookies and how a user can opt out of cookies.
- **Review the options** and decide how to tell your users and gain their consent. This might include splash pages, pop-ups, text in the footer, a header ‘accordion’ and adding text to specific functionality (for example the ‘Remember me’ tick box on forms to be filled in).

**Further Information**

The European Commission, via their *Information Providers Guide* provides further information:


The United Kingdom Information Commissioners Office has provided some useful guidelines:


### 20.6 Selecting your Core Web Analytics Tool

Selecting a core website analytics tool is complex. There are many different tools, supplied by a huge range of vendors. It is important to understand that different vendors take different approaches and are built on different technologies. When problems arise after installation it is usually not the fault of the tool itself but is rather due to an incomplete analysis of requirements, during the selection process.

So before considering which tool to pick, make sure you are clear about why, where, when and how the tool will be used. Be ready to manage the inevitable trade-offs amongst features, so that you select the tool that allows you to measure and drive insight for what is important to the DMO and works with its business, IT infrastructure and constraints.

#### 20.6.1 Why Not Just Use Free Tools such as Google Analytics?

Google Analytics has undoubtedly had a huge impact on the web analytics market. The platform, formally known as Urchin from Google, was launched as Google Analytics in 2005. The platform has continued to develop ever since. Google Analytics is a very powerful and feature-rich web analytics tool which now includes, for example, user flow visualization, multi-touch attribution and real time data. Unsurprisingly the question why can’t I just use Google Analytics? is a common one. This debate will continue but the arguments for using a commercial vendor to support your web analytics function cover three key areas:

1. **Data security, validation and standards.** This includes compliance with data ownership, privacy policies the organization has in place and changes in relation to the use of persistent cookies.

2. **The provision of ongoing support and consultancy.** This can help to supplement the skills available within the organization to drive real actionable insights from web analytics. Also, whilst Google Analytics does provide the ability to set up custom reports many organizations are going to want to set up bespoke reporting that is orientated towards specific KPIs and is in line with their approach to targeting and segmentation.

3. **Integration and scalability.** Including the export and integration of analytics into other business intelligence systems as well as scalability across other marketing channels and platforms including eCRM and social media.

The reliance on Google Analytics continues to grow. In a recent survey⁵ 44% of organizations surveyed were using Google Analytics exclusively compared to 38% in 2010 and only 23% in 2009. The main

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use of Google Analytics is to provide traffic and on-site conversion KPIs. Reasons cited in the same survey for not using Google Analytics were that the tool was not sophisticated enough for all of their reporting requirements, concerns about data security and long-term data storage as well as support and consultancy they received via a commercial vendor.

The introduction of Google Analytics Premium in September 2010 is designed to cater for the needs of large corporations and, beyond the provision of a powerful analytics tool, they offer strong service level agreements for the management and storage of data, migration and implementation consultancy, training, account management and 24/7 support. Currently the cost of the premium service is fixed at US$ 150,000 per annum which puts it beyond the reach of the DMO. If Google launch a mid-range product in the future, it might be an interesting proposition.

20.6.2 Develop a Requirements Specification

Resist looking at the features offered by the various tools until you have defined the needs. Factors that affect selection are grouped below in five categories. Use these questions as triggers to start developing your own evaluation criteria. Not all the factors apply equally to all projects, and you might think of more that are specific to your situation.

20.6.2.1 Business needs

You should already understand your business objectives, your website goals and have some idea about what KPIs you are trying to measure in relation to a set of defined web conversion events. Your chosen vendor must be able to support these measurement requirements. Further considerations include:

• What are your future needs with respect to your current strategy and vision for the DMO?
• Do you have any longer term plans that need to be supported from a measurement and evaluation perspective?
• Are you going to be able to measure all of the campaigns and channels you are currently involved with? What other platforms does the tool need to integrate with e.g. your eCRM platform, social media or ad-serving platforms you might be using?
• Will the tool be able to extract data in a way that provides information and insight that is relevant to your business and specific objectives?
• What are your reporting requirements? Including the provision of a reporting dashboard or the distribution of regular summarised reports. How important is it that data are reported in real time?
• Are there partners, distribution channels, advertisers or affiliates that need information?

You need to be clear about what your total budget is from the outset. You must also consider how much staff time you can allocate to the analysis of data, driving actionable insight and engaging with key people and departments in the DMO. Key considerations in this area also include:

• How easy is it to extract the data and information you need from the tool?
• Is the user interface intuitive and easy to use? Will your team require additional training?
• Would you consider outsourcing some of your business analysis requirements?

Beyond the resources requirement you need to be sure you have the right level of internal and partner buy-in prior before implementing a web analytics tool:

• Have you got the co-operation of both internal and external stakeholders that will ensure a structured approach from the beginning?
• Will the various marketing departments and the IT department work together on making the implementation and ongoing use of the web analytics tool a success?

• Are you confident that the insights you drive will be actionable and do you have commitment at a sufficiently high level within the organization to support this?

### 20.6.2.2 Technical considerations

One key consideration is whether you opt for a licensed solution which is set up and hosted on your own servers or whether you go for a hosted (ASP) package. You need to consider the following:

• Some vendors cater for both approaches.

• Would you prefer someone else to be responsible for setting up the technology and maintaining the service? Are there data integration implications?

• Do you have the skills in-house to support the approach you are considering and maintain the tool moving forwards?

The technical set-up of your website might also have implications which you need to consider:

• Does the website create dynamic pages or deliver database searches that need to be measured as part of your web analytics programme. Are these services delivered directly via your own server?

• Are there a lot of pages with flash or other rich media on them that create events that need to be tracked?

• What does the DMO privacy policy say about cookie deployment and how are you planning on dealing with changes regarding EU cookie legislation?

• Will the corporate firewall block or allow hosted server scripts?

### 20.6.2.3 Availability of internal IT support

Some tools require more technical set-up and maintenance support than others. Understand the difference in support requirements and capabilities for licensed and hosted applications. Both options require some technical support for installation and troubleshooting. Additional hardware, firewall modifications, web page redesign or CMS changes may be required.

The availability and capability of internal support may influence which tool will deliver the best outcome for the project.

### 20.6.2.4 Level of vendor support required

You will need support from the beginning. That includes evaluating different tools against your defined set of requirements, setting up the tool and ongoing maintenance and development. Training and troubleshooting are likely to be required as part of the initial set up.

The extent to which the vendor can provide additional support and consultancy which might also include regular input to help you to drive actionable insights is likely to be a key consideration in vendor selection.
20.6.3 Assess Web Analytics Tools

Having defined your requirements, you should assess the tools on offer in the following way:

- Does the vendor focus on measurement across all channels – or are they an online specialist and how does this match your requirements? Will the tool require a lot of customisation or will it provide what you need ‘out of the box’?

- What kind of technology does the vendor support – including installed and hosted solutions and the provision of an API to support integration with other platforms and data? Do they provide the associated services you need like training, consultancy and business analysis?

- How does the tool approach data collection and tracking – does it offer both page tagging and log file analysis? How does it deal with cookies?

- What are the reporting capabilities – including the availability of reports, ease of customisation, ability to automate report distribution, ease of data integration and ability to provide reporting in real time?

- Will it cover the full range of channels and campaign activity that you are involved in – what about your future requirements and is it scalable? For example, will it support mobile analytics and advertising or affiliate management?

You will, of course, need to make an assessment of the total cost associated with its implementation and ongoing support. That includes the initial software purchase costs or hosted analytics set-up, installation, training, support, maintenance and hardware.

The vendor’s track record for reliability, support and service is important. If the project has complex or unusual needs, ask to speak to referees who have had similar implementations.

Some trade-offs will be necessary. But having taken the time to think through what will drive success in your web analytics project, you are well positioned to make informed trade-offs and select the best solution for your organization.

20.7 Social Media Analytics

Significant changes in the way the consumer makes travel-related decisions and the rise of the ‘social web’ is creating a new layer of online analytics. The nature of conversations on the web means that marketers increasingly want data in real time and in one place. Velocity is often used to describe the rate at which conversations and content move across the social web but it also relates to the speed at which intelligence about what is happening reaches the decision-maker, and thus the speed at which the organization can respond.

Web analytics vendors have risen to this challenge by providing social media analysis as part of the toolset they provide, as well as offering integration with other social media analysis tools.

20.7.1 Understand How Social Media Delivers Business Objectives

Like web analytics, any analysis of social media needs to be based on a clear understanding of your objectives. Beware of social media metrics that do not necessarily mean anything. The size of your network and the amount of followers you have, whilst looking good on paper, means nothing. What is important is how these followers and the network that exists around them have helped you to achieve your business objectives. Your business and marketing objectives give purpose to your social media programme.
The process for understanding objectives and setting KPIs is the same for social media analytics as it is for web analytics (see section 20.2.4).

Social media measurement should relate to the specific business case for the use of social media which is likely to include one or more of the following\(^6\):

- Brand health – measuring attitudes, conversation and behaviour towards your destination;
- marketing optimization – improving the effectiveness of your marketing programmes;
- revenue generation – where and how your organization generates revenue;
- operational efficiency – where and how your organization reduces costs;
- customer experience – the relationship your customers have with the destination; and
- innovation – collaborating with your customers and marketing partners.

You might also consider adding to the list of specific conversion events for your site (see section 20.2.5). It is likely that some of the actions you are driving on the DMO’s social media platforms are also adding value in terms of your specific marketing objectives. That might include, for example, someone sharing some of the content you are posting on your social media platforms across their own networks.

### 20.7.2 What is Social Media Measurement?

Social media measurement tends to focus on the DMO’s social media brand platforms and its own social networks. Facebook Insights is a good example of a social media measurement tool – getting the most out of it is discussed in more detail in section 20.7.6.

Metrics generally include:

- Audience size (e.g. number of followers) and network size (a calculation based on the number of people your immediate followers are connected to);
- reach – the viral impact of any content being shared by your audience across your network;
- engagement – the number of interactions (e.g. comments and post likes);
- sentiment – the nature of the response (positive or negative); and
- outcomes – resulting traffic and specific conversion events.

It is likely that any social media campaigns you are running have targets for these kinds of metrics. It is important you have the measurement tools in place to track progress against these metrics and the specific targets you set for your own social media platforms and networks.

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20.7.3 What is Social Media Monitoring?

Social media monitoring (sometimes referred to as brand monitoring) is about listening to conversations on the web about your brand and your destination, often referred to as ‘buzz’, and seeks to understand the following questions:

- How many mentions are taking place? This includes the number of mentions across each type of site or social network covering, for example, reviews, photos, videos, posts and blog mentions. It is usually possible to track a range of terms including your brand, your destination and any other terms that might be relevant to what you are trying to achieve.

- Where are the mentions appearing? Most tools track a broad range of social media. The DMO should make an assessment about what types of media are most important to them and ensure that the monitoring tool tracks them accordingly.

- Are the mentions positive or negative? Most tools will allow you to associate specific keywords to positive or negative sentiment and track mentions accordingly. The more complex tools use natural language processing and semantic analysis to understand sentiment.

- What sentiments are being expressed? By adding context to the discussion some tools attempt to draw conclusions about what is being discussed. Some tools use visual analysis to cluster mentions and attach contextual meaning to them.

The case study on Brand Dubai (chapter 3) provides a good case study about the attention Dubai gets in mainstream and social media compared to the competition.

20.7.4 Appropriate Frameworks to Social Analytics

Once you have a clear understanding of the objectives associated with your social media programmes you can start to associate meaningful KPIs to each of your objectives. Applying an appropriate framework to your social media analytics will help you to understand the bigger picture and describe a more meaningful story about your social media.

The world of social analytics and the measurement frameworks that exist around it is an ongoing debate and the field will continue to develop. Most current approaches take a similar approach to the one described above and apply a measurement and evaluation framework to your e-marketing activity that looks at four key areas:

1. Do people know about you and are they aware of your content?
2. What are they doing and are they using your content?
3. What are they saying and what do they think of the destination?
4. How likely are they to share content and spread positive messages?

The IAB (the United Kingdom Internet Advertising Bureau) Framework for Measuring Social Media Activity® is one such framework that aims to provide a meaningful structure for allocating social media KPIs to four key areas:

1. Awareness – overall levels of activity across the social media platform
2. Appreciation – the level and depth of engagement across the social media platform

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8 Internet Advertising Bureau (2010), A New Framework For Measuring Social Media Activity (online), available: http://iabuksocial.co.uk/?p=954 (07-02-2012).
3. **Action** – responses that influence or relate to specific conversion events

4. **Advocacy** – creating online word of mouth and stimulating advocacy

This can be applied to the social networks that you work with (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) as well as your blog, outreach activity and your social media paid for advertising. They define a series of softer metrics (based on outputs) as well as specific financial metrics based on Awareness (e.g. cost per impression), Appreciation (e.g. cost per engagement), Action (e.g. cost per lead) and Advocacy (e.g. cost per referral). Your specific marketing objectives will help to define the extent to which you focus on each of these four areas.

**Figure 20.1 Potential KPIs that can be applied to social networks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media platform</th>
<th>Intent</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Appreciation</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social network (e.g. community forum, fan page)</td>
<td>Search rankings</td>
<td>of fan</td>
<td>Website referrals</td>
<td>of bookmarks</td>
<td>Comparative stats from:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referrals from brand website</td>
<td>of subscribers</td>
<td>Call centre enquiries</td>
<td>of status updates</td>
<td>similar social media platform/similar historical campaigns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unique visitors</td>
<td>of comments</td>
<td>Brochure request</td>
<td>Share this metrics</td>
<td>others social media platforms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reach</td>
<td>of discussions threads</td>
<td>Coupons downloaded</td>
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<td>non social media platforms (e.g. direct mail/banner advertising)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Impressions</td>
<td>Interaction rates</td>
<td>Handraiser registrations</td>
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<td>competitor activity</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>of active users</td>
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<td>non-sector specific/best in class</td>
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<td>Poll votes</td>
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<td>Page views</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Videos viewed</td>
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<td>Return visits</td>
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<td>Dwell time</td>
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<td>of competition entries</td>
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<td>UGC uploads/submissions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost per impression (CPI)</td>
<td>Cost per Engagement (CPE)</td>
<td>Cost per lead (CPL)</td>
<td>Cost per referral (CPR)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost per unique visitor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Incremental sales</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost per incremental sale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source: Internet Advertising Bureau (2010).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Further Information

The IAB (the United Kingdom Interactive Advertising Bureau) Framework for Measuring Social Media Activity provides a list of possible metrics that can be applied to your social media networks, blog, outreach activity and paid social media advertising – http://www.slideshare.net/Ifonlyblog/iab-measurement-framework-for-social-media-final4-3 (07-02-2012).

20.7.5 Social Media Analytics Tools

There are well over 200 tools and platforms that offer social media measurement and monitoring. The market is rapidly developing and there continues to be a lot of activity across agencies and vendors who provide tools and consultancy support.

The process of selecting a social media analytics tool is much the same as that for selecting any analytics tool (see section 20.6). Most importantly, it must be based on a clear understanding of your business needs and take into account the resources that are available to support social media analytics and your social media programme.

Once again taking a ‘test and learn’ approach and progressing one step at a time will help you to become clearer about what you are likely to need in the longer term. There are plenty of free (or low cost) tools that will help you to understand what is happening on your own social media platforms as well as to find mentions of your brand and destination more easily.

Some examples of free (or low cost) tools include the following but there are many more:

- Facebook Insights is discussed in more detail in section 20.7.6. YouTube Insight (accessed via your account settings) is another example of an analytics toolset provided by the social platform itself. As well as providing information on total video views and a demographic breakdown of who is viewing those videos it provides a breakdown by geography, what video is driving the most interest and how long people are watching them. Through keeping an eye on the statistics you will very quickly understand what types of videos are working for your users.

- Tools such as Tweetstats (www.tweetstats.com) provide basic information about your Twitter channel which allows you to chart growth over time but they are also useful when looking at what your competitors are doing. Twitter Analyzer (www.twitalyzer.com) provides more in-depth information and how many people have been exposed to your tweets.

- Klout (www.klout.com) is getting a lot of attention at the moment and is trying to establish itself as the emerging standard for benchmarking online influence. The Klout score is derived through using a formula based on over 25 variables covering, for example, reach, amplification ability and network strength.

- Some tools, like Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com), allow you to monitor multiple social media channels and support a more integrated approach to social media analytics. You can also engage with multiple channels through one platform and track the results in real time.

Once your engagement across social media increases, and you become clearer about how it supports your objectives and integrates with other marketing, it might be time to consider looking at paid for tools and services. In addition to extensive measurement and monitoring functionality, paidfor tools often offer the following kinds of features:

- Tracking of literally millions of social media sources including mainstream news sites, social networks, blogs, forums, photo and video sharing sites and the complex analysis of these data to support the provision of meaningful and actionable insight. Many serve multiple verticals including travel but some tools focus entirely on the travel vertical itself.
• Integration with your web analytics toolset. Many of the commercial vendors are now providing a degree of social analytics as part of their ‘out of the box’ web analytics. Web analytics vendors have also moved into the social analytics market in their own right.

• A toolset that supports social CRM. eCRM is becoming much more than e-mail marketing. E-mail continues to be a valuable channel for developing and building relationships with your customers but social media brings with it many more ways a customer can have a relationship with your brand or destination. Furthermore, e-mail and messaging between your customers and your brand is happening via the social media and platforms you support.

Further Information

The IAB (the United Kingdom Interactive Advertising Bureau) Framework for Measuring Social Media Activity provides a list of possible metrics that can be applied to your social media networks, blog, outreach activity and paid social media advertising – http://www.slideshare.net/Ionlyblog/IAB-measurement-framework-for-social-media-final4-3 (07-02-2012).

For a very complete compendium of free and paid social media measurement and monitoring tools see the wiki provided by Ken Burbary – http://wiki.kenburbary.com/social-media-monitoring-wiki (10-2-2012)

20.7.6 Using Facebook Insights

For most DMOs it is likely that Facebook is the most important social media channel they work with so a good understanding of Facebook Insights is critical to developing the right strategy for the channel.

Facebook provides page analytics to all administrators with more than 30 page likes. An updated version of Facebook Insights, their page analytics tool, was launched in November 2011. Some of the new features clearly demonstrate the direction of travel in social media measurement and the growing focus on influence and advocacy across social networks, including:

• One of the new features is the ‘People Talking About This’ metric: ‘The number of unique people who have created content about your Page on Facebook in the past week via a post like, comment or sharing a post.’

• The more people talk about your page the more distribution you will get. The number of people who have seen your content is displayed as ‘Weekly Total Reach’.

• The ‘Virality’ of posts is another new metric and once again focuses on influence: ‘Virality measures how likely a person is to share something about your posts with their friends.’

20.7.6.1 Are ‘Likes’ enough?

You should avoid focussing on purely the number of page ‘likes’ you have received. Whilst this does contribute to your total reach, through your content appearing on your followers’ news feeds, passive followers are much less valuable than active followers.

The metric ‘People Talking About This’ and ‘Weekly Total Reach’ provide you with a measure of how your followers are engaging with your content and how effectively your content is being shared across your follower’s networks. This helps to grow your immediate audience and in the longer term the number of followers you have for your page.
20.7.6.2 Produce content your followers want

Facebook Insights provides metrics for ‘Reach’, ‘Engaged Users’ (the number of people who have clicked on the post), ‘People Talking About This’ and ‘Virality’ for each post you make for the 28 days following that specific post. The success or otherwise of your posts can be measured based on these metrics and over time you will understand which types of content have been most successful.

Posts are categorized according to type (Photo, Link, Video, Platform Post and Question) and they can be analyzed based on these categories.

Success in e-marketing often comes back to your ability to produce useful and engaging content that your customers will share. This is especially true where social media channels are concerned.

20.7.6.3 Reach the right people

The demographics of your followers, the people that are talking about you and the people you are reaching might not necessarily be the same. For a destination and the DMO your followers are likely to include those people that live and work in the destination too. In fact they are likely to be some of your biggest advocates, talking about the content you are posting and helping to share it more broadly.

Facebook Insights provides a demographic breakdown of those people that are following you, talking about you and the people you are reaching through this activity. Through carefully targeted activity and content it is possible to use your advocates to help you reach your target markets. The demographic data provided by Facebook Insights will help you assess how successfully you are doing this.

20.7.6.4 Understand Facebook in context

You can understand which sites are referring traffic to your page via ‘External Referrers’ provided as part of the ‘Who You Are Reaching’ section. Facebook Insights also provides a breakdown of how people came across your content within Facebook, including:

- organic – the number of unique people that saw your content in their news feed, ticker (the real time feed on the right of a user’s Facebook page) or on your page itself;
- paid – the number of people that saw an ad or sponsored story (comments from your followers that you have paid to highlight so there is a better chance of them being seen) and visited your page; and
- viral – the number of people that saw a piece of content because one of your followers had liked, commented on or shared that content.

Not only will you be able to understand what is happening to the content you post but you will be able to understand how effectively people are finding that content via the Facebook channel and external channels.

20.8 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

A fit-for-purpose web and social analytics is a fundamental requirement for the successful measurement and evaluation of any e-marketing programme. It must be defined within the context of your business objectives, key goals and an appropriate set of metrics or KPIs for which you have established associated targets (see section 20.2.4).
The ultimate goal for any e-marketing programme is closed loop optimization in real time (see section 20.3.6); where measurement and management run side by side. The journey to achieving that is the same for both web analytics and social media measurement or monitoring. The key steps, against which you can measure progress, include:

1. ensuring you have the right measurement tools in place;
2. producing and circulating reports based on web traffic or network data;
3. evaluating the success of your traffic driving campaigns or your networking efforts;
4. ensuring you have the right people in place to support your measurement and evaluation programmes – across your in-house or agency team;
5. creating actionable insight that helps you to understand where the opportunities lie and how to realise them; and
6. undertaking optimization in real time such that the measurement and evaluation of what you do runs in parallel to the campaigns you are running so that it can drive decision-making almost immediately.
Chapter 21

Crisis Management and Communications

21.1 About this Chapter

This chapter aims to assist those within a DMO who are responsible for preparing for a crisis and for crisis contingency and management. This chapter informs you about available resources and how to optimize online channels and tools as part of your overall crisis management and communications.

Key Messages

- A tourism crisis can be environmental, societal or political, technological, health-related or economic, and can severely compromise or damage the reputation of a destination.
- It is common practice for organizations to develop risk and security audits and risk and security management procedures.
- There are a number of resources and tools available to help destinations to prepare for crises.
- Effective communication and addressing information needs are essential to managing a crisis.
- Social media have a key role to play in keeping people up-to-date with current and accurate information during a crisis, and for rebuilding confidence and reputation after a crisis.
- Monitor, measure and analyze the results of all your crisis contingency and management efforts

21.2 What is a crisis?

“A crisis is an undesired, extraordinary, often unexpected and timely limited process with ambivalent development possibilities. It demands immediate decisions and countermeasures in order to influence the further development for the organization (destination) again positively and to limit the negative consequences as much as possible.”

Crises can be environmental, societal or political, technological, health-related or economic.

“A tourism crisis is an event or set of circumstances which can severely compromise or damage the marketability and reputation of a tourism business or an entire destination region.”

The knowledge and skills required to manage risks, deal with crises and energise crisis recovery have become a necessary part of tourism management. DMOs are expected to be prepared and show leadership in times of crisis.

“Crisis management is understood as the strategies, processes and measures which are planned and put into force to prevent and cope with crisis. Crisis communications is the process, once a crisis has started,

of minimizing its negative consequences for the organization and the stakeholder the organization is responsible for. It requires immediate decisions and countermeasures using all the communication tools at its disposal in order to influence and steer its development in as positive a direction as possible.\(^3\)

Publications and programmes assisting DMO management and staff and organizations in the public and private sector involved in travel and tourism are, for example:

- **RCM – Risk and Crisis Management Programme**, a UNWTO programme and website with URL http://rcm.unwto.org/en aiming to assist members to assess and mitigate risks related to tourism, including to develop, plan and implement crisis systems that will reduce the impact of, and assist in the recovery from, crises.\(^4\)

- **TERN – Tourism Emergency Response Network** is a close-knit grouping of the leading tourism associations of the world hosted and managed by UNWTO. The role of TERN has seen a gradual evolution from the initial purpose for which it was set up, as an advisory and participatory body dealing with an AHI (Influenza) pandemic, to one that encompasses all threats to the tourism industry and aims to make travel and destinations safe for tourists. For more information and an overview of organizations co-operating in TERN see http://rcm.unwto.org/en/content/about-tourism-emergency-response-network-tern-0.\(^5\)

- **Toolbox for Crisis Communication in Tourism. Checklists and Best Practices** (2011), a handbook published by UNWTO. This Toolbox serves as a practical guide for travel and tourism stakeholders, to effectively address the challenges generated by crises. It includes step-by-step protocols, checklists, sample templates configured by type of crisis and media categories, guidelines for measuring effectiveness, best practices and a special chapter dedicated to the use of social media in times of crisis.

A new approach was chosen by UNWTO to make this work widely available. UNWTO Member States are allowed to customise this Toolbox for Crisis Communications in Tourism and disseminate it to public sector stakeholders in their respective countries free of charge.

- **Bounce Back. Tourism Risk, Crisis and Recovery Management Guide** (2011), prepared by Dr David Beirman and Bert van Walbeek on behalf of the PATA Tourism Crisis and Recovery Task Force and published by PATA (Pacific Asia Travel Association). This booklet and the accompanying series of webinars address topics such as: risk management and security, crisis and recovery model marketing, and checklists based on the ‘Four Rs Concept of Crisis Management’: Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery.\(^6\)
21.3 Being Prepared

It is increasingly common practice for organizations to develop risk and security audits and risk and security management procedures. Tourism destinations and organizations face a wide variety of risks and should anticipate the potential issues that can impact the guest experience, compromise safety and endanger reputation.

The next steps relate to readiness for worst-case scenarios and preparing and training for crisis communication. Preparation includes:

- establishing a Crisis Communications Policy;
- Crisis Management Teams and Crisis Communications Team: identifying responsibilities and procedures;
- identifying staffing procedures;
- identifying key audiences, developing and maintaining media and stakeholder lists;
- establishing a policy and procedures for media access;
- identifying a spokesperson and conducting media training;
- establishing Victim Notification Policy and Procedures for Handling Families;
- measuring results of crisis communications efforts; and
- creating a full range of crisis communications tools.

Many destinations have a permanent tourism industry crisis response committee. This may have agreed on a single communications clearinghouse for offline and online channels – a media centre, with an appointed administrator and an appointed spokesperson. There may also be an emergency call centre.

Effective communication and addressing the information needs of all involved and affected by a crisis in a timely and responsible manner are essential to crisis contingency. Therefore management and recovery staff responsible for online media will find themselves at the centre of such activities.

The DMO’s online role will need to ensure that, during a crisis, the focus can be on high priority tasks, not on preparatory work, and will include (in collaboration with ICT staff):

- the online part of the overall crisis management plan and business continuity plan that has been worked out in advance and is reviewed at set intervals;
- the allocation of budgets for crisis events;
- the ability to identify early signals of (media) crisis;
- nominating, in advance, key e-marketing staff available 24/7 if need be, with their contact details kept up-to-date;


• a framework of possible online partners and procedures for co-operation, before any crisis, to visualize how the potential scenarios will affect online communication, through its duration and during the period of recovery;

• preparing channels of communication and tools in advance and to have the maximum service and capacity:
  – to provide an inward flow of information about the crisis to key DMO executives, as the crisis first develops, and through its duration;
  – to send out the DMO’s own information to industry and consumer audiences; and
  – to transmit urgent messages online during the crisis in all the languages that (potential) visitors use.

E-marketers should have a service level agreement with their ICT suppliers, internal and/or external. This will govern the amount of back-up and the cost of systems and personnel to cover the servers, networks, and bandwidth on which your communication systems depend. It should take a worst-case scenario into account;

• to be able to show precisely which geographical areas are affected and which are not:
  – consider in advance how the maps on your website, and your geocoded product data, can support this; and
  – give the distances between affected areas and other major areas; and

• to create awareness of crisis communication helplines and train staff in crisis communication and monitoring, especially in the use of social media.

21.4 Essential Tools

Your crisis communications toolbox should consist of at least:

• existing websites, with information updated promptly and featuring a timeline so that it is clear that it is up-to-date, and the capacity to create and launch new websites, possibly with extensive and complex content, at short notice;

• blog(s);

• Twitter – Twitter is a breaking news source. Use a hashtag so that your tweets can be found. Hashtags are keywords prefixed with the symbol # that allow users to filter updates of interest. Choose a hashtag that is related to the crisis (but does not create a permanent association). Program a ‘Twitter feed’ on your website and blog, which displays automatically all tweets that use the hashtag you have designated and thus shows practically real-time updates on what Twitter users are saying and sharing about the crisis. You may decide to set up a Twitter account especially for the crisis;

• Facebook and your own Facebook page;

• YouTube and your own YouTube channel;

• Flickr and Picasa as sharing photos has become an important activity during crises;

• up-to-date mailing lists for stakeholders, employees, and journalists and consumers and templates for newsletters, news alerts and press releases ready for use;
• analytics and news alerts such as Google Alerts, Google Trends, Yahoo Analytics or the more expensive Radian6;\(^9\)
• laptops with Wi-Fi as alternatives for desktops in case your office has to be evacuated or is not accessible;
• smartphones;
• Gmail or other web-based e-mail accounts (but one that allows you to import your address book!) as back-up e-mail accounts in case you cannot work from your office computers and use organization accounts or DNS servers are not working properly.

For more instructions see the UNWTO publication *Toolbox for Crisis Communication in Tourism*.

### 21.5 Social Media and Crisis Management

The advent of new media and social media in particular has radically changed the game as to crisis management. Social media in combination with mobile use especially present challenges and opportunities.\(^10\) Terms such as urgency, frequency, speed, reach, transparency, duration, measurability, have all gained new dimensions as:

• information – accurate or not – is now disseminated across the globe in seconds;
• crises may develop but also escalate quicker;
• there is less possibility to hide or spin, but there is more opportunity for dialogue;
• social media facilitates informing, interacting and assisting large numbers of travellers;
• information gathered via social media can be put to good use, for example in crisis mapping;
• information on crises is permanently searchable on the internet and may affect one’s reputation for a longer period;
• the effect of a crisis, as well as of your crisis management and crisis communication efforts, can be measured closely;
• social media is a changing environment. Channels and tools change as to features and services and importance. This requires regular review of the content management plan.

\[^9\] For more information see: Google Alerts (online), available: http://www.google.com/alerts(20-01-2013);
Google Trends (online), available: http://www.google.com/trends (20-01-2013);

\[^10\] One of the quickest ways to reach out to clients and communicate ‘one- to-many’ messages is text messaging or texting. See about texting in UNWTO (2011), *Toolbox for Crisis Communication – Checklist and Best Practices*, p. 31 ff.

21.6 Useful Tools

Many find it a daunting task to update multiple social websites in normal times. While it is often best to customize content for each channel separately, in times of crisis you may want to adapt the administrative and account settings in such a way to link your accounts to each other for redundant content posting. Many social applications allow you to ‘push’ content from one site to the other, that is, accounts are automatically updated with news posted on other accounts. And although it is normally recommended to optimize content for each channel, in times of crisis you may want to link Blogware, Twitter and Facebook accounts together, for example. A new article on your blog can result automatically in a tweet and Facebook post. All this will save you a lot of time.

There are many tools available that make working with social media easier at any time. In times of crisis they are vital. Below are a few suggestions.

21.6.1 Storify

Storify allows you to build a story layer above social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr or Instagram, bringing together material scattered across the Web into a coherent narrative, amplify the voices that matter and create a new media format that is interactive, dynamic and social.

In the Storify editor, you can search social media networks to find media elements about a topic, drag and drop and reorder status updates, photos or videos to bring together the social media elements that will best illustrate your story.

You can write headlines, introductions and insert text and links anywhere inside your story. You can add headers, hyperlinks and styled text. Build a narrative and give context to your readers.

Embed the story anywhere by simply pasting an embed code in a website or blog or send an e-mail newsletter through Mailchimp.12

21.6.2 TweetDeck, Nearby Tweets, Twellow

Use TweetDeck for Twitter communications. The Twitter.com interface does not facilitate what you need in times of crisis: the possibility to create overviews for people in particular groups and columns for keywords related to the crisis or set of events.

Find people to follow using great tools such as Twellow, that allows you to follow people in your field or industry, or Nearby Tweets will help you to find people in a certain city or area.13

21.6.3 Tweet Archivist

Twitter is an ephemeral medium. In the midst of a crisis, or evaluating communication after a crisis, Tweet Archivist can assist in finding out what is or was being said about a certain topic. It is a service that uses the Twitter Search API to find and archive tweets.

Tweet Archivist is not guaranteed to represent a complete historical record of a given term or search, but provides a great deal of information and visualizations in dashboards of aspects such as tweet volume over time, top users and top words, top sources and top URLs.14

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12 For more information on these and other services offered by Storify see http://storitv.com/tour (17-08-2012).
14 For more information see Tweet Archivist (online), available: http://www.tweetarchivist.com/about (17-08-2012).
21.6.4 HootSuite

HootSuite allows you to listen, engage, manage and measure within one (mobile) interface. You can use HootSuite to send and schedule Tweets, listen using search, list and keyword tracking streams, as well as monitor Mentions, Direct Messages, Sent Tweets, Favourite Tweets, and more in dedicated streams.

In relation to Facebook, HootSuite allows you to post updates, add images and monitor feeds. Teams can manage complex campaigns and features such as including Profiles, Pages, Events and Groups.

These are just examples, as HootSuite allows you to interact with Mixi, YouTube, Flickr, MySpace, Foursquare, Google+, and many other social media.

In addition, the services include integration with and management of WordPress websites and main E-mail Service Providers such as Constant Contact and MailChimp.

You can create multiple teams, add team members, and set levels of permissions, controlling access to social networks and profiles.15

21.6.5 GroupTweet

In times of crisis you may want to have multiple contributors to a Twitter account to share the burden of content management, but still want full control over what gets Tweeted. You might want to communicate with a specific group of users or share information with co-workers only using Twitter. If so, look into services like GroupTweet.

GroupTweet allows 2 to 100,000+ contributors to tweet from the same account. Contributors’ names can be hidden or displayed at the beginning or end of each Tweet. Message moderation allows you to make sure the message coming from your Twitter account is consistent and as intended.16

21.6.6 Twitcident

As Twitter has become a breaking news source – especially when disaster strikes – Delft University of Technology in The Netherlands has created a system called Twitcident.

Twitcident sifts through local tweets and other social media updates about an emergency, and then funnels helpful logistical information directly to first responders. The system focuses on the most relevant aspects of an incident.

Filters can be used to reveal, for example, a disaster’s location. First responders can then use Twitcident’s filters to pass information that is of interest to them. Twitcident is just one example of systems being developed to assist first responders, other organizations and individual citizens to make informed decisions on how to proceed during an emergency.

Try to keep up-to-date with this and similar services being developed, maybe in your own destination.

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15 For more information on these services see HootSuite (online), available: http://www.hootsuite.com (17-08-2012).
16 For more information see GroupTweet (online), available: http://www.grouptweet.com/ (22-08-2012).
21.7 Crisis Mapping

Keep up-to-date on another quickly developing field called Crisis Mapping. This is live mapping comprising of:

- crisis map sourcing using multiple methodologies and technologies from traditional paper surveys to crowdsourcing;
- crisis map visualization; and
- crisis map analysis.17

It is a field to which a DMO can contribute but also use in time of crisis. Crisis Mapping is facilitated by often free and open source crisis mapping software, such as Ushahidi’s Crowdmap used by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), for the flood mapping in Queensland, Australia, December 2010 – January 2011.18

The International Network of Crisis Mappers is the largest and most active international community of experts, practitioners, policymakers, technologists, researchers, journalists and skilled volunteers engaged at the intersection between humanitarian crises, technology, crowd-sourcing, and crisis mapping. You can find them on http://crisismappers.net.19

21.8 Google Crisis Response

The Google Crisis Response team assesses the severity of a natural disaster and humanitarian crisis and can decide to assist by making critical information better accessible. Google’s contributions can include (besides standard tools such as Google Maps, Google Earth and Google Apps) Google Person Finder, a multiple language tool that allows people to check the status of loved ones while also providing relief organizations with common back-end to store data, updated satellite images of the area affected, and Landing Pages.

21.9 Contingency of and Communicating during the Crisis

The UNWTO publication Toolbox for Crisis Communication in Tourism offers guidelines for tasks such as choosing talking points, media briefing and interviews, customer communications, supplier and travel trade communications. Therefore, only a few pointers are provided below:

- The key element of response to a crisis event is timing. Many events can be prevented from assuming crisis proportions if you act promptly with correct information, and if you ensure that it is fully distributed through all the channels you have identified and set up in advance. Respond quickly by issuing a standby/holding statement within the shortest time possible. Always respond quickly to questions and requests for information.
- Appoint one primary spokesperson. There should be no other employee interaction with media without approval.
- Establish an agreed and consistent line of communication throughout the organization and repeat established messages in all media.

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18 Some background information is still available at: https://queenslandfloods.crowdmap.com/page/index/1 (22-08-2012).  
19 Crisis Mappers (online), available: http://crisismappers.net (20-1-2013).
• Respond in the same medium. Respond to visuals with visuals, blogs to blogs, tweets to tweets etc. Meet your audience where they are. Different media have different requirements. Customize your approach to maximize effectiveness.

• Give primary concern to victims and their welfare.

• Maintain contact with relevant rescue, medical and police authorities and monitor their information channels.

• Brief key stakeholders and staff accurately and regularly.

• Call the emergency what other people are calling it.

• Ensure the organization’s website is fully updated and publicise this fact.

• Publish telephone hotline contact numbers and other contact information.

• Transparency, clarity, honesty and accuracy are vital. Choose talking points that are clear, concise and straightforward and leave little room for doubt and discussion. Be open about your sources. Make sure you have the correct facts before you communicate. Inaccurate statements will damage your credibility.

• Avoid judgements, blame and recriminations.

• Contextualise the crisis in terms of impact and time to recover. Give industry assessments, with quotes from leading businesses, and background statistics if available and of interest.

• Identify and communicate precisely the areas affected by the crisis. Mention geographical areas not affected.

• Suspend marketing to areas directly affected by the natural disaster, but market and promote areas unaffected by the crisis.

• Use social media in particular to immediately correct false information.

21.10 After a Crisis

A post-crisis tourism recovery programme aims at rebuilding trust, confidence and the rehabilitation of a destination, business or event. Ideally a recovery alliance is put in place involving the government and all relevant sectors of the tourism industry.²⁰

At this stage it is important to advise customers that the destination is operational and is accepting visitors. After a natural disaster prospective travellers may avoid a destination because they believe that they may not be welcomed by the locals.

Stratify and prioritize your target markets and perform a soft re-launch of the destination in those segments that have the highest affiliation or commitment to the destination.

In your communication you may focus on:

• a proposed timeline for recovery;

• positive reports on reconstruction, repair and rehabilitation;

• announcements of business resuming; and

• plans that may avert or minimise the impact or a repetition of the crisis event.

²⁰ For a wealth on advice as to tourism recovery strategies and recovery marketing see PATA (2011).
It is important to:

• avoid actions which would be deemed to be insensitive to victims;
• engage stakeholders and the local community in the process of recovery marketing;
• identify negative and false perceptions and target them;
• collect and publish testimonials and reports from visitors from your source markets, especially hosted visitors; and
• treat the media as a prospective ally and ensure that they are witness to the recovery process and to the fact that the enterprise or destination is open (again) for tourism. Host journalists and give them all the freedom they want. Do not broadcast material such as promotional videos which may be interpreted as propaganda.

21.11 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

Monitor, measure and analyze the results of all your crisis contingency and management efforts. For overviews of what and how to measure before, during and after a crisis, as well as resources and research methods, see UNWTO's publication *Toolbox for Crisis Communication for Tourism*.21

They include:

• tourism performance indicators, such as hotel occupancy and arrivals;
• consumer attitudes towards the destination;
• stakeholder attitudes towards the destination:
  – press coverage: volume and tendency;
  – number of media mentions of the destination;
  – number of media mentions of the crisis;
  – number of media mentions of the crisis response; and
  – the tendency of each story: positive, negative, or neutral.

Media tracking services are available through companies such as:

• Burrelles Luce: www.burrellesluce.com;
• PR Newswire: www.prnewswire.com;
• ComScore: www.comscore.com; and
• Buzzlogic: www.buzzlogic.com.22

Coverage in online media in general: volume and tendency. Free resources for tracking online coverage include:

• Google Analytics: www.google.com/analytics; and

22 All accessed on 20-01-2013.
See chapter 19 on Measurement and Evaluation and chapter 20 on Web and Social Analytics in this handbook for detailed advice on evaluation methods and key metrics. During the crisis, use these to evaluate the effectiveness of your crisis communications and channel management. Monitor:

- the ranking of your website and other channels for keywords and keyphrases related to the crisis;
- number and profile of other organizations linking to your content about the crisis i.e. inbound links;
- traffic to your content on the crisis; and
- conversations on social media platforms using the tools described in section 21.6.

After the crisis use them to evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts to rebuild trust, confidence and the reputation of the destination. Web and content analysis tools can assist you in monitoring your brand. Set the results against the pre-crisis e-marketing objectives to measure the effect of the crisis.

Debrief and establish what changes are required to do even better if necessary and how to optimize preparation and procedures, training and skills, channel and media management, capacity and availability of systems, collaboration with stakeholders and others affected by or involved in the crisis.

**Further Information**

Useful resources are also covered in this chapter in section 21.2.


Chapter 22

Legal Framework for E-marketing Activities

22.1 About this Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the general legal requirements that need to be considered when undertaking online marketing activities, operating a website, and conducting e-commerce. The aim is to make website managers aware of the legal framework in which they operate and to provide them with guidance. For complex issues, and in case of doubt, it is recommended to seek professional legal advice from lawyers.

Key Messages

• It is essential for DMOs to comply with ethical and legal regulations.
• A variety of laws regulates different aspects of e-business and e-commerce activities and differences from country to country can be significant.
• There are four essential aspects to be considered: property of information; accuracy of information; privacy and accessibility.
• In case of doubt, seek professional legal advice.

22.2 Overview

Like any other enterprise conducting business online, it is essential for DMOs to comply with ethical and legal regulations so that they gain the trust of their website users and potential visitors to the destination. Factors that impact on trust are the quality and authenticity of information provided and the integrity and authenticity of both the DMO as well as the users (e.g. to ensure that a user using a login name is really the individual s/he claims to be and is legally entitled to conduct business online).

Currently there is not one single law that regulates all online activities in a single country. More often, there is a ‘patchwork’ of laws, and both tourism organizations as well as consumers may be unaware of the legal framework that applies in a certain situation. In addition to this, there may be significant differences between countries regarding the jurisdiction, which can cause additional challenges for DMOs that conduct international e-business activities and/or have physical representations abroad.

There are four essential aspects which need to be considered for the creation, publication, processing, distribution and storage of information:

1. Property of information: The ownership of information is laid down by regulations about intellectual property (i.e. copyright) of information (e.g. text, photos, videos, audio, website layout etc.) and the monetary or non-monetary value of this information.

2. Accuracy of information addresses the authenticity, fidelity and accuracy of the information collected and processed. This includes the correctness of the information provided by the DMO but also the accuracy of information supplied by others.
3. **Privacy** regulates the conditions for the collection, storage and dissemination of information about individuals (e.g. online booking, e-marketing communications).

4. **Accessibility** stipulates the user’s right to access and modify personal information collected and/or stored by an organization.

These four aspects, illustrated in figure 22.1, apply to all online marketing and e-commerce activities and are regulated by various legal frameworks. These are explained in more detail in the following sections.

**Figure 22.1 Legal issues in e-tourism**

![Figure 22.1](image)

### 22.3 Relevant Laws for E-business and E-commerce

There are a number of laws that regulate various aspects of e-business and e-commerce activities and there can be significant differences from country to country. The list below gives an overview of relevant legal frameworks which are common in many countries, although the legislative text may vary:

- **E-commerce Law / Directive**: Includes guidelines for complying with the e-commerce regulations. There are country-specific differences, e.g. in Austria E-commerce Law\(^1\), on a European level E-commerce Directive 2000/31/EC\(^2\), in the United States of America the CAN-SPAM Act (2003)\(^3\), in China there are three Measures related to E-commerce\(^4\), in India the Information Technology

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Legal Framework for E-marketing Activities

Act (ITA) was enacted in 2000⁵, and Brazil has enacted a comprehensive body of Laws regulating E-Commerce.⁶

- **Media Law**: Regulates legal issues related to periodical electronic mass media, such as websites (including social media) and newsletters.

- **Copyright Law**: Provides exclusive rights to the creators for the protection of their literary or artistic productions. Furthermore, it gives the copyright holder the right to be credited for the work, to determine who may modify the work to other forms (e.g. adding text or a logo to a photo), and who may perform the work (e.g. a song). Copyright applies automatically to original work in tangible form (e.g. written text, pictures, music, and video). The copyright for original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works expires 70 years after the death of the creator. For sound recordings, films, broadcasts, cable programmes, typographical arrangements or layout of a published edition the copyright expires 50 years after publication. The European Information Society Directive 2001/29/EC⁷ attempts to harmonise certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society.

In the United States of America the Digital Millennium Copyright Act⁸ (DMCA) of 1998 is a copyright law that implements two treaties of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)⁹. In the same year, the Copyright Term Extension Act (CETA) was released that extended the period of copyright protection for an additional 20 years, for a total of 95 years for corporate-owned works, and life plus 70 years of protection for works created by individuals.¹⁰

In China, copyright issues are regulated by the Copyright Law of the People’s Republic of China (as last amended in February 2010).¹¹

The legal frameworks for copyright in other countries can be found on the website of the World Intellectual Property Organization www.wipo.int.

- **Trademark Law/Act**: A trademark is a distinctive sign or an indicator used by an individual, business organization, or other legal entity to make it clear to users that the products or services on or with which the trademark appears originate from a unique source, designated for a specific market, and to distinguish its products or services from those of competitors. A trademark is typically a name, word, phrase, logo, symbol, design, image, or a combination of these elements.¹² For details about the trademark regulations in various countries see the website of the World Intellectual Property Organization www.wipo.int.

- **Data Protection Law/Act**: Determines the conditions and purposes under which personal data can be gathered and processed. Under EU law, organizations that collect and manage personal information must protect it from misuse and must respect certain rights of the data owners, which are specified by the European Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC.¹³

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⁶ For example Law Nos, 672/99 and 1589/99 contain rules relating to e-commerce and legal recognition of digital signatures and e-documents.


In the United States of America, the Federal Trade Commission published a framework for businesses and policymakers for the Protection of Consumer Data Privacy in 2010.\textsuperscript{14}

In Brazil, data protection rules and principles are contained in the legislation devoted to consumers’ protection, i.e. the Consumers Code (Código de Defesa do Consumidor, law no. 8.078 of 1990). The Code differs considerably from the data protection legislation applicable in the European Union (the European Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC), mainly concerning the consent of the individual to the processing of personal data. This consent, as a basic rule, is required in the European Union while it is not necessary under Brazilian legislation.\textsuperscript{15}

- **Contract Law**: The buying and selling of goods in the EU is governed by national contract laws.\textsuperscript{16} The differences between these laws make cross-border trade more complex and costly than domestic trade.

- **Consumer Protection Act**: Regulates private law relationships between individual consumers and the businesses that sell goods and services.

- **Distance Selling Act**: Regulates the purchase of goods or services through distance communication means. “Distance communication means” cover traditional means of communication, such as press adverts accompanied by order forms, catalogue sales and telephone selling but it includes also teleshopping, the use of the internet (e-commerce) in general and mobile commerce (m-commerce). In the EU, Directive 97/7/EC on the protection of consumers with respect to distance contracts\textsuperscript{17} provides a number of fundamental legal rights for consumers in order to ensure a high level of consumer protection throughout the EU.

- **Digital Signature**: Regulates the use of electronic signature for the verification of data.

- **Fair Trade Law/Unfair Competition Act**: Primarily comprises torts that cause economic damage to a business through a deceptive or wrongful business practice. Unfair competition can be broken down into two broad categories. First, the term “unfair competition” is sometimes used to refer only to those torts that are meant to confuse consumers as to the source of the product. The other category, “unfair trade practices”, comprises all other forms of unfair competition.\textsuperscript{18}

- **Equal Opportunities for Disabled People Act**: Prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and the purchase of goods and services. This includes making tourism offers in general, and web content in particular, accessible to people with disabilities.


\textsuperscript{15} Data Protection Law in Brazil – An Overview (online), available: http://www.decontilaw.com/Artigos/Data%20Protection%20Law%20in%20Brazil_DMP_100312_RDC_110312_forDCLO.pdf (20-08-2012).


22.4 Legal Issues Concerning Websites

A website comprises the layout design and content such as text, multimedia, hyperlinks, and e-marketing communications. The following items should be considered for any website:

- **Domain Name** (URL): When registering a domain name make sure that no trademark rights are violated. Cybersquatting refers to the malpractice of registering a domain name that is the registered trademark of another person or company with the intention to request a significant amount of money to acquire the URL from the trademark owner. Similarly, typosquatting is the registration of purposely misspelled variations of well-known brand names with the goal to mislead potential customers. Disputes arising from domain name trademark violations are settled by the World Intellectual Property Organization [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int).  

- **Content** such as text, photos and videos are protected by copyright laws. Ensure that you hold the right to use the content on all versions of the website and on other channels you maintain. Include a copyright statement that makes it clear that the DMO owns the content and no-one else has the right to use it without the DMO’s explicit permission in the impressum or terms and conditions section. At the same time, if the DMO publishes content from other sources (e.g. comments in a blog or from another website) the copyright should be acknowledged and the source mentioned. Special attention should be paid to the use of photos showing individuals because privacy rights apply regarding the persons depicted in the picture.

- The website provider has the **duty to inform** the users of the website about the organization as well as the purpose of the website. In accordance with the law in most countries, the following information must be included on a website and be accessible for users easily, directly and permanently:
  - Complete name of the organization;
  - address;
  - contact details including postal address, e-mail address, telephone number, fax;
  - commercial register number;
  - supervisory authority; and
  - Value Added Tax (VAT) registration number.

- This information is usually provided in the “about us”, “imprint”, “terms and conditions” or “disclaimer” section of a website. The more information the website provider offers, the more trust the users will have with respect to the reliability and quality of the products and services offered. Where **hyperlinks** are provided to third-party websites, the DMO is not normally liable for the content on the web page to which the link is set, as long as it has no prior knowledge of illegal activities on the third-party website. It is recommended to check outgoing links to other websites occasionally as the content of web pages may change.

- The **terms and conditions** should further include a disclaimer against any legal responsibility for how any content on the DMO website is used or interpreted by website users.

- **A privacy statement** which complies with the data protection law of the DMO’s home country (e.g. in the United Kingdom the Data Protection Act, 1998).

Figure 22.2 provides a good example of complying with legal requirements and providing comprehensive information on the website of the Vienna Tourist Board.

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Figure 22.2 Disclaimer for hyperlinks and further information about the Vienna Tourist Board in compliance with the Austrian E-commerce Law

Explanation of accessibility

Disclaimer Hyperlinks

We carefully and continuously check the websites of our partners to which we link. Nevertheless, we would like to emphasize that we have no influence over the creation and content of the linked pages. If these pages, after having been checked by us, are changed without our knowledge in such a way that they present “illegal activities” according to Section 17 of the E-Commerce Law (Austrian Federal Law Supplement of December 21, 2001), we hereby explicitly distance ourselves from such changed content. This declaration is valid for all links on our website and all content of these sites with links or banners from our own website.

Note: Section 17 of the Austrian E-Commerce Law of December 21, 2001 exempts the offering website from responsibility for outside links, as long as it has no prior knowledge of the “illegal activity” on the part of the destination website. With several hundred links on our website pointing to other websites, we cannot monitor them all the time; we therefore ask you to inform us about any “illegal activities” on pages linked from our website.

Additional information according to the E-Commerce Law

(Austrian Federal Law Supplement of December 21, 2001, section 5, parts 1 and 2)

1. Name of the service provider: Vienna Tourist Board
2. Address: Obere Augartenstrasse 40, A-1020 Vienna
3. Electronic address: wtv@wien.info
4. Corporate identity number and court of jurisdiction: not applicable for an entity of public law
5. Board of Control: City and State of Vienna
6. Chamber membership: not applicable
7. Identification number for Value Added Tax: ATU38158907.

We emphasize that the prices quoted on this websites (e.g., admission fees for museums etc.) – unless otherwise stated – are end user prices and contain value added tax and all other duties and surcharges.

22.5 **Legal Issues Concerning E-commerce and E-business**

If a DMO enables the online booking of tourism products (e.g. accommodation) on its own website or through cyber-mediaries, or if the DMO operates an online shop, the regulations of the Distance Selling Act should be considered.

According to Article 4.1 of the EU Distance Selling Act\(^22\), the “consumer shall be provided with the following information in good time prior to the conclusion of any distance contract:

- The identity of the supplier and, in the case of contracts requiring payment in advance, his address;
- the main characteristics of the goods or services;
- the price of the goods or services including all taxes;
- delivery costs, where appropriate;
- the arrangements for payment, delivery or performance;
- the existence of a right of withdrawal;
- the cost of using the means of distance communication, where it is calculated other than at the basic rate;
- the period for which the offer or the price remains valid; and
- if applicable, the minimum duration of the contract in the case of contracts for the supply of products or services to be performed permanently or recurrently.”

In accordance with Article 5.1 of the aforementioned act, a written confirmation is required:

“The consumer must receive written confirmation or confirmation in another durable medium available and accessible to him […] in good time during the performance of the contract, and at the latest at the time of delivery where goods not for delivery to third parties are concerned, unless the information has already been given to the consumer prior to conclusion of the contract in writing or on another durable medium available and accessible to him. In any event the following must be provided:

- Written information on the conditions and procedures for exercising the right of withdrawal\(^23\),
- the geographical address of the place of business of the supplier to which the consumer may address any complaints;
- information on after-sales services and guarantees which exist; and
- the conclusion for cancelling the contract, where it is of unspecified duration or a duration exceeding one year.”

Consumers must be made aware of the terms and conditions and must actively accept them, usually by clicking “I accept the terms and conditions”.

**Data processing** of personal data is generally unlawful, unless a person has given his/her explicit consent, if the data are already published elsewhere, or if the data are used anonymously.

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\(^{23}\) Cancellation is usually possible within seven working days. This period can be extended to three months in case of information or confirmation infringements.
Article 6.1 of the EU Directive 95/46/EC\textsuperscript{24} regarding the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data determines that personal data:

- must be fairly and lawfully processed;
- must be processed for specified, explicit and limited purposes;
- must be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which they are collected and/or further processed;
- must be accurate and up-to-date;
- must not be kept longer than necessary;
- must be processed in accordance with the data subject’s right; and
- must not be transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

### 22.6 Legal Issues Concerning E-marketing Communications

E-marketing communications include all forms of online advertising, such as display ads, e-mail newsletters, search engine optimization, search engine advertising, online games, meta tags, social media, TV advertising, and in-stream video advertising. All the legal aspects mentioned above also apply to e-marketing communications. In addition, e-marketers should consider the following guidelines:

- All promotional communications must be clearly labelled as such (e.g. advertisement, paid ad, advertorial, sponsored by …).
- Keywords used in the website source code and for search engine marketing must not infringe trademark rights.
- Promotional e-mails and e-mail newsletters:
  - Lawfully sent e-mails must be labelled as advertisements if the e-mail is sent to the receiver without prior approval.
  - Consent for promotional e-mails or mass e-mails is not required if the sender has gained the e-mail address in connection with the purchase of a good or service, the receiver has the option to opt out, and the receiver’s e-mail address is not registered in opt-out lists (so-called Robinson lists).
  - If an e-mail newsletter is sent at least four times per year it is considered as a periodic medium and therefore an imprint (company name and contact details) must be included in every newsletter.
  - Subscribers must have the option to unsubscribe any time.
- Social media:
  - All legal frameworks mentioned above also apply for social media communications.
  - Consider the terms and conditions on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest etc.).
  - Commercials on social media platforms must be marked as such.

Liability for postings and dissemination of postings containing defamation and discreditation, if postings are not deleted despite awareness of illegal content or if postings are added to a DMO’s social media presence (e.g. Facebook page).

A DMO’s Facebook page must include an “impressum” or “about (us)” section with company information and contact details. An example from the Swiss Tourist Board can be seen in figure 22.3.

- Liking a company page or the acceptance of a friend request (e.g. brand) is no consent for receiving commercials (this is also stated in Facebook’s terms and conditions).

- Customer reviews and ratings are generally considered as freedom of expression according to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, legal action can be taken in case of damage to a company’s reputation, image or credibility. In practice it is often difficult to distinguish between a factual statement and a subjective value judgement.

Figure 22.3 Corporate Facebook pages must include information about the purpose of the business and contact details

Source: https://www.facebook.com/MySwitzerland#!/MySwitzerland/info.

In the unlikely event that your DMO is threatened with a law suit related to your e-marketing and e-commerce activities it is recommended that you seek advice from a lawyer.

22.7 Evaluation Methods and Key Metrics

In practice it is useful to analyze the clickstreams of the “about us”, “terms and conditions”, “impressum”, “disclaimer” pages occasionally to understand the extent to which your users are informed and/or care about legal issues. The clickstreams can be analyzed with, for example, Google Analytics, to see which pages the users looked at before they navigated to the legal issues information and what content they looked at after they visited those pages. Clickstream analysis can shed light on user concerns regarding

data privacy, security, and credibility and provide insights on how to improve the transparency on important legal issues.

**Further Information**


EUR-lex. EUR-Lex provides free access to European Union law and other documents considered to be public. The website is available in 23 official languages of the European Union. http://eur-lex.europa.eu

Global Legal Resources: www.hg.org/busecommerce.html.


Annex

Sources for Market Research and Intelligence

This annex aims to provide an overview of useful sources (in alphabetical order) to keep abreast of the latest developments, market research, intelligence, statistics, and case studies related to e-marketing and the digital trends affecting tourism. It has been divided into two lists: the first list concentrating on organisations and companies compiling and offering original market stats/trends/intelligence (list A), and a second list providing sources distributing relevant market research and intelligence, but not performing research of their own (list B).

It should be noted that on many destination management organisations’ (DMOs) business-to-business websites there is often information available related to the respective market.

List A – List of sources compiling and offering original data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of material provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accenture&lt;br&gt;www.accenture.com/</td>
<td>Technology and outsourcing research and practical insights (including travel industry).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altimeter Blog Group&lt;br&gt;www.altimetergroup.com/blog</td>
<td>Blog by Altimer that provides research and advisory for companies challenged by business disruptions, enabling them to pursue new opportunities and business models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amadeus Blog&lt;br&gt;www.amadeus.com/blog/</td>
<td>Blog/news from Amadeus including reports, infographics, and presentations on their findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bcg.perspectives by The Boston Consulting Group&lt;br&gt;www.bcgperspectives.com/</td>
<td>Latest cutting-edge thinking on business and management issues by The Boston Consulting Group (expertise including the technology and transportation, travel and tourism industries).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlogNotions’ Social Media Blog&lt;br&gt;social-media.blognotions.com/</td>
<td>Social media blog bringing latest information from industry experts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brands That Travel by MMGY&lt;br&gt;www.brandsthattravel.com/</td>
<td>Podcast/blog discussing the latest trends, forecasts, and opportunities in the travel and hospitality industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Regional and Tourism Research (CRT)&lt;br&gt;www.crt.dk/site/publications/</td>
<td>Academic papers, research publications, books, and presentations by the CRT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competepulse&lt;br&gt;blog.compete.com/</td>
<td>Blog by Compete.com focusing on the following topics: brand, search, social, affiliate, display, e-mail and various industries including travel, online media and search, and technology and entertainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Industry Almanac Inc.&lt;br&gt;www.c-i-a.com/</td>
<td>Market research reports for the PC and internet industry (including tablets).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Type of material provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comScore Data Mine</td>
<td>Insights from comScore on topics such as travel, social networking, e-Commerce, engagement, mobile, advertising, online video, search, tablet, web traffic etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ConstantContact BLOGS</td>
<td>Insights and marketing inspiration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datamonitor</td>
<td>Research, quality data, and expert analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Analytics Association (DAA) Blog</td>
<td>Blog discussing analytics and practice, certification, and various DAA matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitrios Journeys</td>
<td>Blog of strategic tourism and technology management expert Professor Dimitrios Buhalis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distilled</td>
<td>Blog by distilled experts dedicating in particular on CRO, marketing, mobile, PPC, SEO, social media, video, Web analytics, and Web design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econsultancy Blog</td>
<td>Digital marketing blog. Econsultancy offers free market research on digital marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eMarketer</td>
<td>Research, articles, newsletter focusing on digital marketing, media and commerce and covering the travel industry (among others).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Proprietary research, white papers, and insights direct from their marketing experts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eTForecasts</td>
<td>Market research, statistics on the computer and internet industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission Eurostats</td>
<td>Detailed statistics (including on tourism, as well as information society) on the EU and candidate countries, and various statistical publications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) Library</td>
<td>Their library gives access to reports, articles, and presentations. ENAT supports the development and spread of good policies and practices, and works to develop knowledge and expertise on accessibility issues in the European tourism field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Travel Commission (ETC)</td>
<td>Research into various markets for tourism to Europe on behalf of its members and, in some cases, for the industry at large. It includes their European Tourism Trends and prospects quarterly reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experian Hitwise</td>
<td>Digital marketing and consumer insights and data management with expertise including the travel and hospitality, media and entertainment, and retail and e-Commerce industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyefortravel</td>
<td>Blog, tourism and travel news particularly focusing on mobile and technology, social media and marketing, revenue and data management, and distribution strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrester Blogs</td>
<td>Roll-up of all Forrester blogs, focusing on information technology, marketing and strategy, and technology industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gartner Research</td>
<td>Information technology research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GfK</td>
<td>Insights into the way people live, think, and shop in over 100 markets. It covers the technology, and travel and tourism industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Type of material provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gerd Leonhard  
www.mediafuturist.com/ | Presentations by futurist in the Media, Telecom, Technology, Marketing and Communications, Culture and Creative Industries, Energy and Environmental Sectors. Travel and tourism is one of the subject Gerd Leonhard covers. |
| Groundwire Blog  
groundwire.org/blog | Articles, whitepapers, tips, tools, news etc. specialising in particular in e-mail and social media, and engagement. |
| Harris Interactive  
www.harrisinteractive.com/ | Public opinion data on various industries including travel, technology, media and entertainment. |
| hotelblogs  
| HubSpot’s Inbound Marketing Blog  
blog.hubspot.com | Blog by HubSpot covering all of inbound marketing, including SEO, blogging, social media, lead generation e-mail marketing, lead nurturing and management, and analytics. |
| iCrossing connect  
connect.icrossing.co.uk/ | iCrossing blog where they share their digital marketing expertise. They focus on digital marketing, paid media, social media, and natural search. iCrossing also provide some free eBook. |
| IDC  
www.idc.com/ | Market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications and consumer technology markets. |
| Ideahatching.com  
www.ideahatching.com/ | Marketing blog Alicia Whalen, co-founder of A Couple of Chicks Marketing, discussing search, marketing and measurement in the new Internet Marketing environment. |
| InSites Consulting Blog  
www.insites-consulting.com/get-inspired/our-blog/ | Blog focusing on their findings that includes among other topics technology and services, and media and entertainment. |
| International Federation for IT and Travel and Tourism (IFITT)  
www.ifitt.org/home/resources | Various resources on eTourism (news, newsletter, material from IFITT Conferences etc.). |
| Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Insights and Research  
www.iab.net/insights_research | Insights and research specialised in the interactive advertising industry. |
| Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) UK Blog  
www.iabuk.net/news-and-blogs/ | Blog by the IAB team focusing on digital marketing/advertising. |
| Internet Society  
www.internetsociety.org/ | Reports, journals, and newsletters from global experts in internet technology and policy. |
| International Telecommunication Union (ITU)  
www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/ | World telecommunications and ICT adoption statistics with the emphasis on broadband and mobile. |
| IPK International  
www.ipkinternational.com/ | Publishes the World Travel Monitor® / European Travel Monitor®, providing comparable travel data on the European, American, Arabian and Asian outbound travel volume and travel behaviour. |
| Ipsos  
www.ipsos.com/ | News and polls on the media, content and technology via Ipsos MediaCT. |
| MarketingSherpa Newsletter and Blog  
www.marketingsherpa.com/ | Practical case studies, research, and training for marketers on e-mail, demand gen, SEO, social media and more. |
| MECLABS  
www.meclabs.com/ | Independent research focusing exclusively on marketing and sales. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of material provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nielsen <a href="http://www.nielsen-online.com/">www.nielsen-online.com/</a></td>
<td>Online audience and consumer-generated media measurement and analysis including the media and entertainment, consumer packaged goods and retail, and telecoms industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nielsen Norman Group <a href="http://www.nngroup.com/reports/">www.nngroup.com/reports/</a></td>
<td>Reports containing guidelines, best practices, case studies, and methodologies including on categories such as e-commerce, e-mail, mobile and tablet etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optify <a href="http://www.optify.net/">www.optify.net/</a></td>
<td>Digital marketing resources and lead generation blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OurMobilePlanet.com <a href="http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/mobileplanet/en/">www.thinkwithgoogle.com/mobileplanet/en/</a></td>
<td>Data from the Our Mobile Planet Research commissioned by Google and conducted by Ipsos MediaCT, in partnership with the Mobile Marketing Association and the Interactive Advertising Bureau. Access is gained through a powerful chart creation tool or the direct download of data files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) mPOWER <a href="http://mpower.pata.org/">mpower.pata.org/</a></td>
<td>One stop business decision making tool providing Asia Pacific travel data for travel professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Engine Watch <a href="http://searchenginewatch.com/">searchenginewatch.com/</a></td>
<td>Tips and information about searching the web, analysis of the search engine industry and help to site owners trying to improve their ability to be found in search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEOmoz <a href="http://www.seomoz.org/">www.seomoz.org/</a></td>
<td>Resources and blog on SEO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverpop Blog and Digital Marketer Newsletter <a href="http://www.silverpop.com/marketing-resources/">www.silverpop.com/marketing-resources/</a></td>
<td>Blog and newsletter by Silverpop on digital marketing, focusing on e-mail marketing, marketing automation, B2B marketing, social, trends, mobile, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SocialTimes <a href="http://socialtimes.com/">socialtimes.com/</a></td>
<td>Blog by mediabistro on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCI Research <a href="http://tci-research.com/">tci-research.com/</a></td>
<td>Travel and tourism research, statistics. TCI leads the TRAVELSAT Competitive Index®, a global and independent survey benchmarking destinations’ quality competitiveness based on brand experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think with Google <a href="http://www.thinkwithgoogle.co.uk/">www.thinkwithgoogle.co.uk/</a></td>
<td>Insight and outlook on what’s to come provided by leaders, experts and Google’s homegrown visionaries. It includes custom studies and data-rich content, covering topics from consumer behaviour to digital media trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Type of material provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Information Architecture Institute &lt;br&gt;www.ianstitute.org</td>
<td>Resources about information organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The RKGBLOG &lt;br&gt;www.rimmkaufman.com/blog/</td>
<td>Blog written by the employees of RKG (Rimm-Kaufman Group) discussing online marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) &lt;br&gt;www.w3.org/</td>
<td>Protocols and guidelines that ensure the long-term growth of the Web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TopRank Blog &lt;br&gt;www.toprankblog.com/</td>
<td>Online marketing blog focusing particularly in optimization, SEO, social media, and content marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TourMis &lt;br&gt;www.tourmis.info</td>
<td>Information and decision support for tourism managers and scholars, providing on-line tourism survey data, as well as various tools to transform data into management information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel 2.0 blog &lt;br&gt;travel2dot0.com/thinking</td>
<td>Blog by the Travel 2.0 Consulting Group, a strategic-planning consulting firm with an exclusive focus on tourism / travel destinations and tourism-centric advertising agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations (UN) &lt;br&gt;www.un.org</td>
<td>Resources and services including publications, databases, library, and bookshop. Their publications catalogue alone counts over 5,300 titles produced by the Organization and its key agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Census Bureau &lt;br&gt;www.census.gov</td>
<td>Quality data about the nation's people and economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Travel Association &lt;br&gt;www.ustravel.org/</td>
<td>Research in the following areas domestic, international, and economic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO) &lt;br&gt;www.who.int</td>
<td>Access to data and analyses for monitoring the global health situation, as well as access to a selection of evidence-based guidelines, publications, and reports via their Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Elibrary: <a href="http://www.e-unwto.org">www.e-unwto.org</a></td>
<td>Fully cross-searchable interactive database offering a vast number of high-quality UNWTO publications including books, journals, and statistics in their respective languages. It includes access to their World Tourism Barometer and research/studies including subjects such as ecotourism, education/training, market research, marketing, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xyologic &lt;br&gt;xyo.net/app-downloads-reports/</td>
<td>Global app download reports, showing overall level of app usage across the four major mobile app platforms, showing the popularity of individual apps for different sectors including travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050 – Tomorrow’s Tourism Blog &lt;br&gt;www.tomorrowstourist.com/</td>
<td>Blog, presentations, news, book/chapters downloads from Ian Yeoman, a professional futurologist dedicated to specializing in travel and tourism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List B – List of sources distributing relevant market research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of material provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aboutTourism blog abouttourism.wordpress.com/</td>
<td>Blog focusing on destination marketing and digital tourism with categories such as market snapshots, presentations, research and studies, and tourism in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking Travel News <a href="http://www.breakingtravelnews.com/">www.breakingtravelnews.com/</a></td>
<td>Tourism and travel news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ClickZ <a href="http://www.clickz.com/">www.clickz.com/</a></td>
<td>Marketing News and expert advice, including topics such as analytics, media, social, search etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Travel Commission’s Digital Portal <a href="http://www.etc-digital.org">www.etc-digital.org</a></td>
<td>High-quality intelligence from over 70 sources on trends in internet usage by tourists all over the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HotelMarketing.com <a href="http://www.hotelmarketing.com/">www.hotelmarketing.com/</a></td>
<td>Tourism and travel news focusing on online travel, online marketing, and hotel marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet World Stats <a href="http://www.internetworldstats.com/">www.internetworldstats.com/</a></td>
<td>Up to date world internet usage, population statistics, and internet market research data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MarketingCharts <a href="http://www.marketingcharts.com/">www.marketingcharts.com/</a></td>
<td>Charts and articles focusing on online, television, interactive, print, radio, out-of-home, and direct media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashable mashable.com/</td>
<td>Independent online news site dedicated to covering digital culture, social media and technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statista <a href="http://www.statista.com/">www.statista.com/</a></td>
<td>Statistical data on over 600 international industries from more than 18,000 sources, including market researchers, trade organizations, scientific journals, and government databases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tnooz <a href="http://www.tnooz.com/">www.tnooz.com/</a></td>
<td>Tourism and travel technology news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism-review.com <a href="http://www.tourism-review.com">www.tourism-review.com</a></td>
<td>Global tourism industry news and online communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Industry Wire <a href="http://www.travelindustrywire.com/">www.travelindustrywire.com/</a></td>
<td>Tourism and travel news focusing on development, environment, financial, internet, marketing, technology, and trends news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travellll travellll.com</td>
<td>Travel news focusing on international travel news and trends in digital travel journalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travelmole <a href="http://www.travelmole.com/">www.travelmole.com/</a></td>
<td>Tourism and travel news focusing on the following topics: technology, destination, travel agent, tour operator, airline, cruise, business travel, hotels and resorts, and sports travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TravelThink gonzalezSORia.com/travelthink/</td>
<td>Newsletter by Dr. Javier González-Soria y Moreno de la Santa, focusing on destinations, e-Marketing, e-Commerce, social media, and mobile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travolution <a href="http://www.travolution.co.uk/">www.travolution.co.uk/</a></td>
<td>Tourism and travel technology news.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When possible the definitions of the terms included in this glossary are taken from the report itself, otherwise definitions are sourced from Wikipedia or PCMag.com's encyclopedia of IT terms as indicated.

Notes: *) Definition from Wikipedia.
**) Definition from PCMag.com's encyclopedia of IT terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>301 redirect</td>
<td>Permanent redirect from one URL to another that helps transfer the link equity to the new URL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3G*</td>
<td>Short for third generation, it is a term used to represent the 3rd generation of mobile telecommunications technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 error message</td>
<td>Message in your webmaster tools highlighting broken links to your sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>404 not found message</td>
<td>Page set up to tell a website user that what was requested from the website server could not be found. It can include a clickable site map to assist the user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4G</td>
<td>Short for fourth generation, it is the 4th generation of mobile communications standards that provides mobile ultra-broadband internet access and enables applications such as IP telephony, gaming services, high-definition mobile TV, video conferencing and 3D television.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5Ss</td>
<td>Refer to the e-marketing goals you should set for yourself: sell (grow sales), speak (get closer to customers through dialogue and participation), serve (add value), save (save costs), sizzle (extending your brand online).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8Ps</td>
<td>Refer to product, place and time, price, promotion, process, physical environment, people, productivity and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB testing</td>
<td>Research method to decide which is the better of two alternatives. Also known as split path or champion-challenger testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerometer</td>
<td>Measures acceleration (i.e. movement) of a mobile device on three axes. A simple practical application of an accelerometer in a smartphone is the change from panel to landscape view when the device is rotated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>It is about serving everyone, irrespective of any physical, sensory or mental conditions they may have. This includes people with disabilities, but goes much further than that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility content</td>
<td>All tourism businesses should seek to be as accessible as possible, but purely by providing accurate and up-to-date information, it allows potential visitors to make an informed decision as to whether it will be suitable for their needs. Accessibility content falls into one of two types: assessed content and non-assessed content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active icons</td>
<td>Icons you can click on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive recommender system</td>
<td>System that may take the user profile, search history, evaluations of other users, product popularity and other variables into account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad serving</td>
<td>Important activity of third-party advertising agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced search</td>
<td>Enables users to specify a range of detailed requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergaming</td>
<td>Using video games to promote organisations, products and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising networks</td>
<td>Help website publishers to sell more advertising inventory and thus generate more revenue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertorial</td>
<td>Form of advert that looks like an editorial, however it is paid-for content informing about the product or service of the advertiser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliate marketing</td>
<td>Commission-based arrangement between your organisation and an e-commerce website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregators</td>
<td>Sites that gather data from a number of other sites and allow comparisons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algorithm</td>
<td>The formula or set of rules by which a search engine calculates the ranking of the results of a search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt (alternative) text</td>
<td>Also known as alt attribute or alt tag; text applied to images for use by assistive technology, such as braille displays or screen readers, and by search engines to interpret the meaning of objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical CRM</td>
<td>Comprises all activities dealing with data collection, storage and analysis and the support of decision making processes regarding client relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor text</td>
<td>Actual text contained within the clickable link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomaly detection</td>
<td>Analysis consisting of identification of unusual data sets (e.g. special occasions or errors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apps</td>
<td>Applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application programmable interface (API)</td>
<td>Constitutes a set of protocols and an interface to allow software applications to communicate with each other. That includes your web content management system and the eCommerce platform you are using.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application service provider (ASP)</td>
<td>Web-based service that sits on the supplier's server.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed content</td>
<td>Normally takes the form of schemes that tourism businesses can opt to be part of, generally run either by a national or regional tourism organisation or a disability organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted conversions</td>
<td>Percentage of conversions that resulted from multiple visits from multiple sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive technologies (AT)</td>
<td>Often used by people with disabilities, it could be either a hardware device and/or a piece of software that provides the functionality to meet the user's requirements and acts in combination with the web browser as a user agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL)</td>
<td>Type of DSL where the upstream and downstream bandwidth are assigned different amounts of bandwidth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio blog</td>
<td>Podcast blog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmented Reality (AR)</td>
<td>Enhancement or augmentation of the real world with virtual objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGIMO</td>
<td>Australian Government Information Management Organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTO</td>
<td>Austrian National Tourist Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backlinks</td>
<td>Also known as ‘incoming links’, ‘inbound links’, ‘inlinks’, or ‘inward links’; incoming links to a website or web page.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>New online display ad format (so-called ‘rising stars’ format) that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher view impact – 970 x 250 pixels (developed by Google/YouTube).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black hat techniques</td>
<td>Techniques that you might use to trick the search engines in the short term that are unlikely to work for long and that can harm your rankings permanently or even mean your pages get removed from a search engine’s index (include hidden text, key word ‘stuffing’, ‘gateway’ or cloaking pages, and ‘link farms’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Short for ‘web log’; cannot be defined precisely. The characteristics of this type of website originally included: discrete entries called blog ‘posts’; a diary format, that is, the most recent post appears first; unfiltered content; interaction, that is, the possibility to leave comments and discuss, making blogging a form of social networking; an informal tone; and themed on a single subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogosphere</td>
<td>Collective community of all blogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogrolls</td>
<td>Affiliation with and recommendation of other blogs, usually by providing links to them in a sidebar list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogware</td>
<td>Specialised form of a content management system specifically designed for creating and maintaining blogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueprinting</td>
<td>Use of a master page or website to form the basis of a number of subsidiary sites that can be maintained in line with the master.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>Standard for short-range data transmission, usually up to ten metres. A device can be connected to multiple other devices simultaneously with Bluetooth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blurbs</td>
<td>Main message or short summary used as introduction to articles and sections on the web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounce rate</td>
<td>Percentage of people that left your site after only viewing one page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand equity</td>
<td>Brand assets or liabilities linked to a brand’s name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand identity</td>
<td>Refers to logos, slogans and communications campaigns that are among the instruments of brand managers and that can be used in commercial branding to build brand image and equity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand health</td>
<td>Measuring attitudes, conversation and behaviour towards your destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image</td>
<td>Refers to the perceptions in the minds of consumers, which are difficult to influence directly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand monitoring</td>
<td>Across social media and mainstream media, assessing the number of mentions, where they are occurring and the nature of image associations and the sentiment of those mentions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand purpose</td>
<td>Refers to a common strategic vision that unites groups of people in order to produce change and thereby build reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breadcrumb navigation*</td>
<td>Also known as ‘breadcrumb’ or ‘breadcrumb trail’; navigation technique used in user interfaces. It allows users to keep track of their locations within programmes or documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIC</td>
<td>Brazil, Russia, India, China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business to business (B2B)</td>
<td>Online businesses selling to other businesses (e.g. DMO sells market research surveys to tourism businesses or organisations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business to consumer (B2C)</td>
<td>Business selling directly to individual consumers (e.g. online accommodation bookings or ticket sales).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttons</td>
<td>Online display ad format which size has been standardized by the IAB – 120 x 60 pixels and 125 x 125 pixels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#</td>
<td>Programming language (used by Windows Mobile and Windows Phone).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C++</td>
<td>Programming language (used by Symbian).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calls to action</td>
<td>Links to click on, phone numbers to call, information to print out, sharing and follow buttons. Calls-to-action are a key driver of lead generation and acquisition and convert users into leads and leads into visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canonical tag</td>
<td>Tells the search engines which page is the ‘main’ page and the one that should be indexed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card sorting</td>
<td>Quick, easy and inexpensive way to find out how people think your content should be organised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascading style sheets (CSS)</td>
<td>A definition language, the part of the markup that instructs a browser how to display a web document. CSS defines style, such as fonts, colours, and spacing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief executive officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CETA</td>
<td>Copyright Term Extension Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel focused measurement</td>
<td>Covers natural search, paid search, display search, PR and media relations, social media and interactive TV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Analysis consisting of applying known structure to new data records (e.g. classifying a new record as part of a specific customer segment due to special markers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clickstream data</td>
<td>Records every click made on your website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click-through rate (CTR)</td>
<td>Total number of impressions / number of people that clicked on a specific call to action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clustering</td>
<td>Analysis consisting of discovering data sets which fall into the same structure or segment because they show the same or similar features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative blog</td>
<td>Or multi-author blog: blog with posts written by small groups, or large numbers, of authors and professionally edited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Short Codes (CSC)</td>
<td>Strings of five or six digits which can be placed on print or billboards and to which a mobile user can send a text message and receive information on return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive identity</td>
<td>Focuses on purpose, strategy, policy, partnerships and symbolic actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>In this handbook, we use ‘consumers’ to refer to the population as a whole when discussing marketing theory/techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer protection act</td>
<td>Regulates private law relationships between individual consumers and the businesses that sell goods and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer to business (C2B)</td>
<td>Consumers initiate online interactions and transactions to a business through reversed auctions in which consumers can bid a price for a product or service and businesses react to this bid (e.g. Priceline.com).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer to consumer (C2C)</td>
<td>Consumers selling online to other consumers via a market maker such as the auction website eBay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>For tourism destinations content is everything it has to offer. It is much more than just information about the destination. At its most basic level it comprises the written word, images, audio and video. Content is distributed through an ever-increasing range of media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content (web) syndication*</td>
<td>Form of syndication in which website material is made available to multiple other sites. Most commonly, web syndication refers to making web feeds available from a site in order to provide other people with a summary or update of the website’s recently added content (for example, the latest news or forum posts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content audit</td>
<td>Qualitative audit carried out as part of a content inventory. Assesses to what extent content and marketing messages support brand purpose and are in line with destination or place brand strategy, substance and symbolic actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content grid</td>
<td>Also known as ‘content marketing matrix’; it is used to map out stages in the customer journey or goals you wish to achieve with your content, topics/types and format of content, and the channels you will use to distribute the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content inventory</td>
<td>Looks at what content you have on your existing site but it also needs to look beyond that – across the networks your customers are present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content management system (CMS)</td>
<td>Enables a publisher to create, import, store and organise content, and to publish it to digital platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context-aware recommender system</td>
<td>System exploiting, in order to create relevant recommendations, not only the user’s preferences, but also information about specific contextual factors and situations in which the recommended item will be consumed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual navigation</td>
<td>Links on individual pages that go to related pages. These are often embedded within text, or are lists of ‘See also’ pages, within the site or on an external site (‘referral links’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converged media</td>
<td>Term used for media using two or more channels of owned, earned and paid media, enabling brands to reach customers exactly where, how and when they want, regardless of channel, medium, or device online or offline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence</td>
<td>When multiple media products and services come together to form one product and service with the advantages of all of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion abandonment rate</td>
<td>For a specific conversion path the amount of people who did not complete / the number that started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion rate</td>
<td>Percentage of total site visits that complete a specific conversion goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie</td>
<td>File stored by the website's server on the website visitor's computer, enabling the server to count the number of individual computers to which it delivers pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright law</td>
<td>Provides exclusive rights to the creators for the protection of their literary or artistic productions. Furthermore, it gives the copyright holder the right to be credited for the work, to determine who may modify the work to other forms, and who may perform the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per action (CPA)</td>
<td>Also know as ‘cost per acquisition’ or ‘significant action’; cost of a specific piece of campaign activity / the number of customers acquired or significant actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per click (CPC)</td>
<td>Fee paid by the advertiser each time a user clicks on their advertisement, for example text, a banner, or button.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per thousand (CPM)</td>
<td>A basis for advertisement tariffs based on the cost per thousand impressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country code top-level domains (ccTLD)</td>
<td>Top-level domains (TLD) that exist at the country code level. ccTLD include for example: “.uk”, “.us”, “.ca”, “fr”, “.de”, “.nl”, “.sa”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-selling</td>
<td>Offering additional items that are related or can be integrated with the item being sold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowdsourcing*</td>
<td>Practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers. Often used to fundraise for startup companies and charities, this process can occur both online and offline. Crowdsourcing is different from an ordinary outsourcing since it is a task or problem that is outsourced to an undefined public rather than a specific body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer decision journey</td>
<td>Also known as ‘customer experience cycle,’ ‘customer engagement cycle’ or ‘customer interaction cycle’; compared to the term ‘customer journey,’ it stresses the fact that it is all about the experience the customer has with the organisation and the brand, and about exploiting the internet optimally to engage with them in each stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer engagement</td>
<td>Long-term interaction between a prospect and a brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer experience</td>
<td>Relationship your customers have with the destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer journey</td>
<td>A cycle of thoughts, decisions, and actions by the visitor before, during and after their visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer loyalty</td>
<td>Acceptance, trust, positive attitude towards the brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer relationship management (CRM)</td>
<td>The total of all the continuous business processes that allow marketers to record, understand and meet the needs of customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer retention</td>
<td>Returning customer, cross-buying, recommends brand to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cybersquatting</td>
<td>Used to refer to the malpractice of registering a domain name which is the registered trademark of another person or company with the intention that the owner will pay a huge amount of money to acquire the URL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data protection law/act</td>
<td>Determines the conditions and purposes under which personal data can be gathered and processed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop computer</td>
<td>Usually regarded as a stationary device, although it may also be transportable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Use in this handbook when we refer to a place as a whole – a country, region, city or locality, and all its tourism organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination management organization (DMO)</td>
<td>Body responsible for the management, including marketing, of a tourism destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination management system (DMS)</td>
<td>A suite of business systems tailored for DMOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital dashboard</td>
<td>Visual at-a-glance display of data pulled from disparate business systems to provide warnings, action notices, next steps, and summaries of business conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital signature</td>
<td>Regulates the use of electronic signature for the verification of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital video broadcasting DVB</td>
<td>A suite of internationally accepted open standards for digital television. DVB systems distribute data by a variety of approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directories</td>
<td>Categorised lists of websites maintained by human editors, and used by search engines and search directories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion forum*</td>
<td>Also known as ‘internet forum’; online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display ads</td>
<td>Form of paid media that can be targeted to internet users in many different ways in order to reach the advertiser’s most relevant audience. It appears on web pages in many forms, including web banners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distant selling act</td>
<td>Regulates the purchase of goods or services through distance communication means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIY</td>
<td>Do it yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMCA</td>
<td>Digital Millennium Copyright Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMCs</td>
<td>Destination management companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMO</td>
<td>Destination Management Organization. A DMO may be a national, regional, city or local body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain name</td>
<td>Text corresponding to the unique numeric internet protocol (IP) address of a computer on the Internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVR</td>
<td>Digital video recorder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination Web Watch (DWW)</td>
<td>The DWW website audit has been designed to provide DMOs with a quick and reliable tool to evaluate the quality of their websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic html (DHTML)*</td>
<td>Umbrella term for a collection of technologies used together to create interactive and animated web sites by using a combination of a static markup language (such as HTML), a client-side scripting language (such as JavaScript), a presentation definition language (such as CSS), and the Document Object Model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned media</td>
<td>Term used in PR for free media mentioning the organisation's brand. It has evolved and now includes the word-of-mouth and user-generated content so typical of the social web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-business</td>
<td>Any activity carried out through the internet which does not include commercial transactions involving an exchange of value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-commerce</td>
<td>Part of transaction services that allow governments, companies, organisations and consumers to conduct business online and to make agreements. Electronic payments may be a part of these transactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-commerce analytics</td>
<td>Pre-transaction and transaction measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-commerce law</td>
<td>Also known as 'e-commerce directive'; includes guidelines for complying with the e-commerce regulations. There are country-specific differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCRM</td>
<td>Also known as 'electronic CRM'; process of creating relationships between an organisation and its customers through service-automated processes, information gathering and processing, and self-service applications in order to create value for customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial content</td>
<td>This can be created in, or imported into, a content management system (CMS) but increasingly it exists on third party platforms and social networks. This content is usually classified using an appropriate taxonomy or meta data which often includes a place reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail analytics</td>
<td>Evaluation of e-mail marketing performance, the relevance of the messages being sent, the level of engagement and overall impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail marketing*</td>
<td>Directly marketing a commercial message to a group of people using e-mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail service provider (ESP)</td>
<td>Web-based service that sits on the supplier's server that allows for professional one-to-many e-mailing, enforcing the automation of best practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-marketer</td>
<td>Content marketers that should be busy with storytelling and dialog and concerned with: “Getting the right content, in front of the right customer, at the right time, on the right device, at the right point in their decision making process, to drive the right action.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-marketing</td>
<td>Short for electronic marketing, is used in this handbook to cover all types of marketing using electronic communication. It encompasses the internet, e-mail, mobile forms of communication and television.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-marketing communications</td>
<td>Include all forms of online advertising, such as display ads, e-mail newsletters, search engine optimization, search engine advertising, online games, meta tags, social media, TV advertising, in-stream video advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Can be understood as the degree and depth of visitor interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERTC</td>
<td>English Riviera Tourism Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution (EDGE)</td>
<td>Enhancement of the GSM network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced TV</td>
<td>Type of iTV, where two devices run 'in synch'. More appropriate terms are increasingly used such as 'synchronizes TV', '2-screen' or 'second screen' (also referred to as 'companion devices' or 'companion app').</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced TV Binary Interchange Format (EBIF)</td>
<td>Industry standard which facilitates cross-generational set-top box-compatibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPG</td>
<td>Electronic programme guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunities for disabled people act</td>
<td>Prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and the purchase of goods and goods and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-tourism*</td>
<td>Application of information technology (IT) or information and communications technology (ICT) in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENAT</td>
<td>European Network for Accessible tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>European Travel Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Any logged or recorded action that has a specific date and time assigned to it by either the browser or server.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensible hypertext markup language (XHTML)</td>
<td>Form of computer language that conforms to XML.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensible markup language (XML)</td>
<td>Computer language that allows structured data to be shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extranet**</td>
<td>Website for customers rather than the general public. It can provide access to research, current inventories and internal databases, virtually any information that is private and not published for everyone. An extranet uses the public internet as its transmission system, but requires passwords to gain entrance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-zines</td>
<td>Websites or e-mail newsletters that aim to be online magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair trade law / unfair competition act</td>
<td>Primarily comprised of torts that cause an economic injury to a business through a deceptive or wrongful business practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmstrip</td>
<td>New online display ad format (so-called 'rising stars' format) that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher view impact – 300 x 600 pixels (developed by Microsoft).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash</td>
<td>Programme with which animations can be created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flogging</td>
<td>Fake blogging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frames construction</td>
<td>HTML frames divide content in independent windows or subwindows. These multiple views offer designers a way to keep certain information visible, while other views are scrolled or replaced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently asked questions (FAQs)</td>
<td>A list of questions and answers available on a website, compiled in the light of the site owner's experience of the most frequent key questions asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full banner</td>
<td>Online display ad format which size has been standardized by the IAB – 468 x 60 pixels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification</td>
<td>Refers to the use of game design techniques, game thinking and game mechanics to enhance non-game contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway pages</td>
<td>Also referred as ‘cloaking pages’; pages created only for search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Packet Radio Service (GPRS)</td>
<td>Enhancement of the GSM network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic top-level domains (gTLD)</td>
<td>Top-level domain (TLD) that exist at the generic level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geocodes</td>
<td>Latitude-longitude coordinates of all the tourism products in your database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic information system (GIS)</td>
<td>Software that enables the user to input, manage and output geographically referenced data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo-tagging</td>
<td>Process of adding geographical identification metadata to various media such as a geotagged photograph or video, websites, SMS messages, QR or RSS feeds and is a form of geospatial metadata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global distribution system (GDS)</td>
<td>The linked computer systems that, before the internet arrived, allowed airlines, car rental companies and hotels to be booked by travel agents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global positioning system (GPS)</td>
<td>Space-based satellite navigation system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global system for mobile communication (GSM)</td>
<td>Oldest, and also slowest, network for mobile communication, which is also referred to as 2nd generation (2G).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyroscope</td>
<td>Used for measuring and maintaining orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half banner</td>
<td>Online display ad format which size has been standardized by the IAB – 234 x 60 pixels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtag</td>
<td>Word prefixed with the symbol #, providing a means of grouping messages. One can search for the hashtag and find the messages that contain it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARO</td>
<td>Help A Reporter Out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HbbTV</td>
<td>Hybrid broadcast broadband TV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden text</td>
<td>For example text in the same colour as the background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High definition (HD)</td>
<td>Digital television broadcasting system with a significantly higher resolution than traditional formats (NTSC, SECAM, PAL).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeycomb of Social Media</td>
<td>Useful framework helping to understand the requirements of social media platforms and engagement. It consists of the following seven blocks: conversations, identity, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSPA+</td>
<td>Evolved High-Speed Packet Access, which was established end of 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hub-and-spoke</td>
<td>Paradigm used in many industries and stands for ‘a system of connections arranged like a chariot wheel, in which all traffic moves along spokes connected to the hub at the center’. It is also referred to as a ‘content wheel’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperlink*</td>
<td>Reference to data that the reader can directly follow, or that is followed automatically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertext markup language (HTML)</td>
<td>Programming language for the web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAB</td>
<td>Interactive Advertising Bureau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTs</td>
<td>Information and communications technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDJ</td>
<td>Information Design Journal of the International Institute for Information Design (IIID).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDS</td>
<td>Internet distribution system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFITT</td>
<td>International Federation for IT, Travel and Tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIID</td>
<td>International Institute for Information Design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iMessage*</td>
<td>Instant messenger service developed by Apple Inc. for iOS and OS X Mountain Lion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMSI</td>
<td>International mobile subscriber identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inbound marketing</td>
<td>In essence it is all about optimising and synchronizing marketing tactics (at least) across search, social and content to achieve the optimal results when driving brand equity and obtaining leads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Architecture</td>
<td>How content is organised on a website to support both usability and search engine optimisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IrDA</td>
<td>Infrared Data Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-game advertising</td>
<td>Includes static in-game, dynamic in-game, inter-level ads, game skinning, product placement, sponsorship, post-game, pre-game, and advergames.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive marketing unit (IMU) ad formats</td>
<td>Standard display ad sizes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive TV advertising</td>
<td>Gives TV audiences the chance to interact with broadcast commercials and offers great opportunities for advertisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive TV (iTV)</td>
<td>Can be described as ‘lean back’ interaction, because users are typically relaxing together at home in the living room with a remote control or another connected device in their hand. This is in contrast with the “lean forward” experience of using a PC with a keyboard, mouse and monitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet protocol (IP)</td>
<td>Method by which data is sent from one uniquely-identified computer to another on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet protocol television (IPTV)</td>
<td>Transmission of digital television signals via the internet using broadband ADSL/fibre optic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet service provider (ISP)</td>
<td>The provider of internet access to a user or group of users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP (network) data</td>
<td>Based on server data from Internet Service Providers (ISP) this can provide a huge sample size which makes it a very reliable source of competitor intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstitials</td>
<td>Advertisements that load when the user has clicked to move to a new page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intranet**</td>
<td>An in-house website on the company’s local area network (LAN) that serves employees only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>Space sold on websites, expressed by the format of the space and the number of page impressions that are expected to be available for delivery to advertisers in a given period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverted pyramid style</td>
<td>Refers to the style of writing used when writing for the web. When writing for the web, the traditional way of writing is turned on its head, hence the inverted pyramid style: start with the conclusion (your main message); then give the ideas, reasons and additional information; and finally provide any background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet protocol (IP) address</td>
<td>The address of an internet service provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO 9241</td>
<td>A standard that describes the ergonomic requirements for office work with visual display terminals and which includes usability elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITA</td>
<td>Information Technology Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>International Telecommunication Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JavaScript</td>
<td>Programming language commonly used to provide dropdown or rollover subsidiary navigation menus (used by Blackberry and Android).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JITT</td>
<td>Journal of Information Technology and Tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key performance indicator (KPI)</td>
<td>A target or measure chosen to monitor success in working towards objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyphrase research</td>
<td>Extent to which people are searching for your destination and the type of keyphrases they are using to do that compared to your competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyword stuffing</td>
<td>Such as small text on the page footer repeating keywords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klout score</td>
<td>Indicates if you're creating a dialog that is spread all over the world and it indicates if you're creating new relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory testing</td>
<td>Users undertaking specific tasks in laboratory conditions can help an organisation to understand user experience in terms of both usability and functional effectiveness. Participants can be selected in terms of demographic and lifestyle profiles and thus more accurately than with online experiments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landing page</td>
<td>Where users arrive after they click on a call-to-action in a blog post, Tweet, Facebook or other social media item, or in once of your ads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop</td>
<td>Transportable device and normally not classified as a mobile device, but recent developments towards netbooks, ultrabooks and tablets qualify as mobile devices, similar to mobile feature phones and smartphones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaderboard</td>
<td>Online display ad format which size has been standardized by the IAB – 728 x 90 pixels, placed across the top or bottom of the page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead nurturing</td>
<td>Process of developing a relationship with a potential visitor by sending targeted, relevant and valuable messages in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifecasting*</td>
<td>Continual broadcast of events in a person's life through digital media. Typically, lifecasting is transmitted through the medium of the Internet and can involve wearable technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear video ads</td>
<td>In-stream video ad presented before, in the middle of, or after the video content consumed by the user, in very much the same way a TV commercial can play before, during or after the chosen programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link farm</td>
<td>Site that exists only for the purpose of developing link popularity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkback*</td>
<td>Method for web authors to obtain notifications when other authors link to one of their documents. Any of the terms – linkback, reback, pingback or trackback – also refer colloquially to items within a section upon the linked page that display the received notifications, usually along with a reciprocal link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid web design</td>
<td>Often referred to as responsive and adaptive web design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location-based advertising</td>
<td>Uses GPS technology or geo-location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Evolution (LTE)</td>
<td>4G network technologies are LTE, which was first launched end of 2009 in Oslo and Stockholm. LTE promises download rates up to 100 Mbit/s and is therefore much faster than UMTS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Percentage of people who returned X number of times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>Local tourism organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetometer</td>
<td>Together with the gyroscope both tools are needed for navigation but also for gaming applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management information system</td>
<td>Well established concept consisting of collecting, collating, and presenting key performance information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing optimisation</td>
<td>Improving the effectiveness of your marketing programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark-up</td>
<td>Source code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mash-up</td>
<td>Sharing and combination of different types of content creating new content and information products that are valuable in their own right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media law</td>
<td>Regulates legal issues related to periodical electronic mass media, such as websites (including social media) and newsletters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium and large rectangles</td>
<td>Online display ad format which size has been standardized by the IAB – 300 x 250 pixels and 336 x 280 pixels, can be used within a paragraph of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metadata</td>
<td>Information about information. It is the content attributes that allow search engines to find your content and index it. It can also help you manage content and the publishing of that content on your website, social sites and other third party platforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-mediaries</td>
<td>Aggregate offers from suppliers and other intermediaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metatag*</td>
<td>Also known as 'meta elements'; element used to provide structured metadata about a webpage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICE</td>
<td>Meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-blogging</td>
<td>Practice of posting small pieces of content on the internet, for reasons of keeping in touch with friends and fans and updating customers or the wider public, facilitated by platforms and tools such as Tumblr, Twitter and Sina Weibo. Also, social networking sites have their own micro-blogging features, usually referred to as 'status updates'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile activation</td>
<td>Typically, bar codes or quick response (QR) codes are used to interact with traditional media such as print, TV, outdoor. A new form of mobile activation is audio activation to unlock and promote online content by using e.g. the Shazam app on a smartphone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile analytics</td>
<td>Covers the following areas: mobile website analytics, applications and podcasts, mobile social media, and advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile applications*</td>
<td>Software application designed to run on smartphones, tablet computers, and other mobile devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile commerce (m-commerce)</td>
<td>Defined as a transaction that takes place via wireless internet-enabled technology (e.g. smartphones, tablets) while allowing for freedom of movement for the end user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile devices**</td>
<td>Generally refers to a cellphone, smartphone or tablet. However, depending on context, the term may encompass laptops and netbooks or any other portable, electronic product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile display ads</td>
<td>Typically banners, interstitials and in-app ads etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile tourism (m-tourism)</td>
<td>Can be defined as the use of mobile information and communication technologies (ICTs) and devices linked to tourism activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile web browser</td>
<td>Allows viewing webpages on the smartphone by taking into account the technical possibilities and the smaller display of smart phones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile website</td>
<td>Website optimised for mobile browsers to be viewed on mobile devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moblog</td>
<td>Short for mobile blog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP3 blog</td>
<td>Music blog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP3 files</td>
<td>Audio files encoded using MPEG1 layer 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTSE</td>
<td>Meta travel search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia messaging service (MMS)</td>
<td>A standard in mobile messaging that enables text, images, video and audio to be embedded in the message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivariate or multi variable testing</td>
<td>Isolates the elements on a page and helps to find out what elements matter, and which combination is the strongest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native app</td>
<td>An app for a certain operating system (iOS, Android) and a certain mobile device (smartphone, tablet, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDK</td>
<td>Native development kit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Field Communication (NFC)</td>
<td>Technology that allows two-way communication between enabled devices and the sharing of information at a distance of up to four centimetres using RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) and micro-chips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBTC</td>
<td>Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network analysis</td>
<td>Or ‘network research’; helps you understand the networks and the specific communities of interest that exist around your destination and the things to do there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New visits</td>
<td>Traffic to your site that has not previously visited your site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-follow tag</td>
<td>Instructs a search engine that particular link should not influence the target website's ranking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-assessed content</td>
<td>Or ‘self-assessed content’; generally takes the form of an access statement or structured data fields as part of a product database. Both of these types are generally the responsibility of the product owner to complete, rather than a trained assessor, and care needs to be taken by the business to provide accurate and up-to-date information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-linear video ad</td>
<td>In-stream video ad running parallel to the video content so the users see the ad while viewing the content. Non-linear video ads can be delivered as text, graphical ads, or as video overlays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTO</td>
<td>National tourism organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery e-mail marketing programme</td>
<td>E-mail marketing programme targeting new sign-ups with communications that aim to convert them from leads to prospects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective-C</td>
<td>Programming language (used by Apple iOS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLAP</td>
<td>Online analytical processing tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online experiments</td>
<td>Includes both A/B testing and multivariate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On_Mouse_Over text</td>
<td>Text that becomes visible when the user moves the curser over an icon or other image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational CRM</td>
<td>Means that all possible communication channels that customers may use should be integrated and all data collected from customer interactions are stored in a relation database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational efficiency</td>
<td>Where and how your organisation reduces costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opt-in</td>
<td>Also called ‘single opt-in’; this is when new contacts opt-in to your list by entering their e-mail address into a sign-up box or web form that you provide. An automated welcome letter is then generated from the ESP, informing them that they have been added to your list. It differs to confirmed opt-in (also called double opt-in) that required your new contact to respond to an e-mail confirmation request before they can be added to your e-mail list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic search</td>
<td>Natural relevance. Non-organic search results are a form of pay per click advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Operating system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTA</td>
<td>Online travel agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTT</td>
<td>Over the top video delivery platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Resulting traffic and specific conversion events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned media</td>
<td>Channel you fully control, like your website, creating brand portability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page depth</td>
<td>Percentage of people that looked at X number of pages on your site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page description</td>
<td>Content of the HTML meta tag Description (meta name = “description” content=”your text”). It is displayed in SERPs (search engine results pages).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page view</td>
<td>Or ‘page impression’; number of times a page (typically the page seen in a browser) was viewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid media</td>
<td>Media you pay for to leverage a channel or function as a catalyst, such as display ads, paid search and sponsorships, necessary at key stages to drive engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panda</td>
<td>Also referred to as ‘penguin’ or ‘farmer’; update rolled out by Google fundamentally changing the way the algorithm deals with poor quality content and poor quality links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel data</td>
<td>Based on a panel of recruited participants, each of which have monitoring software installed on their browsers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent domain</td>
<td>Domain name you need to buy or register with a top-level domain (TLD) extension e.g. destination.com.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parse</td>
<td>Or ‘spider’ or ‘crawl’; search engine process that breaks down website strings (code and text) into component parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay per click (PPC)</td>
<td>Payment made by an advertiser to a website owner when a user clicks on the advertiser’s link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission marketing</td>
<td>Means permission is asked from and given by customers – often by submitting their e-mail address – to keep them informed, for example by e-mail newsletters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persona</td>
<td>Fictional character created to represent an actual group of customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal digital assistant (PDA)</td>
<td>Hand-held computing device such as a Palm Pilot or Blackberry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photoblog</td>
<td>Or ‘sketchblog’; other media type blogs than mostly textual blogs, in this case mainly focussing on the use of photos/sketches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMPC</td>
<td>Product market partner combinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast</td>
<td>Audio, video or multimedia file that can be downloaded from a website or an app store for playback on a PC or a mobile device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POI</td>
<td>Point of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poll</td>
<td>Process in which a computer, typically an e-commerce search facility, requests data from a number of partner e-commerce systems to meet information or booking request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop ups</td>
<td>Also ‘pop-under’ and ‘interstitials’; include expanding or floating ads and microsites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable document format (PDF)**</td>
<td>The de facto standard for electronic document publishing from Adobe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait</td>
<td>New online display ad format (so-called ‘rising stars’ format) that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher view impact – 300 x 1050 pixels (developed by AOL).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Public relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince 2</td>
<td>Acronym for PRojects IN Controlled Environments, a globally recognised standard method for project management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product data</td>
<td>Stored in structured databases, with a team originating or procuring the data, and monitoring the quality of it. This data is usually geo-referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prototyping</td>
<td>Creating paper or digital prototypes to identify usability issues. ‘Low-fidelity prototyping’ uses simple drawings and mock-ups. ‘High-fidelity prototyping’ uses tools that show the prototype as close to the actual design as possible in terms of look and feel, interaction, and timing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public private partnership (PPP)</td>
<td>Venture that is funded and operated jointly by public and private bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushdown</td>
<td>New online display ad format (so-called ‘rising stars’ format) that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher view impact – 970 x 90 pixels (developed by Pictela).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVR</td>
<td>Personal video recorder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Response Codes (QR Codes)</td>
<td>Similar to the well-known one-dimensional bar codes, QR codes are two-dimensional graphical code which can be used to encode various types of content such as text, pictures, videos, or website URL. An encoding software is required for generating the code and a user needs a device with a camera and a QR code reader (sometimes also called a QR scanner) installed on the device in order to decipher the encoded information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE framework and templates</td>
<td>Created by Chaffey and Bosomworth to assist marketers with creating and refining e-marketing plans. In this model: Reach; Act; Convert; Engage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
<td>Viral impact of any content being shared by your audience across your network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommender system</td>
<td>System using sophisticated algorithm matching the users’ preferences and constraints with options. It may be based on practical and product-based user preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redirect</td>
<td>In the case of a redirect, the server transfers the Internet user to a web address that is different to the one they specified or clicked on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation analysis</td>
<td>Concerned with measuring site authority in relation to your competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention e-mail marketing programme</td>
<td>E-mail marketing programme that aims to build stronger relationships, increase lifetime value and loyalty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
<td>Request for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk and Management Programme (RCM)</td>
<td>A UNWTO programme and website aiming to assist members to assess and mitigate risks related to tourism, including to develop, plan and implement crisis systems that will reduce the impact of, and assist in the recovery from, crises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Return on communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research led evaluation</td>
<td>Covers keyphrase research, network analysis, competitor intelligence, expert audit, laboratory testing and branding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on investment (ROI)</td>
<td>Gain on original investment, usually measured over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue generation</td>
<td>Where and how your organisation generates revenue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review site*</td>
<td>Website on which reviews can be posted about people, businesses, products, or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFID</td>
<td>Radio frequency identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich media ads</td>
<td>Ads that permit users to interact with them, as opposed to simply being animated. Rich media ad formats include transitional and various over-the-page units such as floating ads, page take-overs and tear-backs using technologies such as audio, video, Flash, Shockwave, and programming languages such as Java, Javascript and DHTML.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>robots.txt file</td>
<td>Allows search engines to index your site and prevents search engine site crawlers indexing content you might not want them to index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root domain</td>
<td>Top level of your domain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Site Summary (RSS)</td>
<td>Originally RDF Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication; it is a convenient and fully automated service – combining (customisable) information and relationship services – for individuals to choose to receive selected, customized items from your website whenever there are updates, without having to visit the site to collect them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>Regional tourism organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite navigation system (satnav)</td>
<td>Hand-held or in-car device that uses a global positioning satellite (GPS) receiver to calculate its position and to overlay this on to a map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario</td>
<td>Short story about a specific user with a specific goal who is using your site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrum framework</td>
<td>Agile project management framework, providing a way to prioritize large to-do items into manageable chunks of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDK</td>
<td>Software development kit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure electronic transaction (SET)</td>
<td>Standard that facilitates secure credit card transactions through the internet. It is used by all major e-commerce players, e.g. Visa, American Express, Mastercard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine advertising (SEA)</td>
<td>Paid, sponsored or content network listings offered by search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine marketing (SEM)</td>
<td>Comprises search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine optimisation (SEO)</td>
<td>Process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a website from search engines via ‘natural’ ('organic' or ‘algorithmic’) search results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure hypertext transfer protocol (shttp)</td>
<td>Security system used to transmit messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure sockets layer (SSL)</td>
<td>Protocol for transmission of information in encrypted form over the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment</td>
<td>Nature of the response (positive or negative).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERPs</td>
<td>Search engine results ranking pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STB</td>
<td>Set top box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short message service (SMS)</td>
<td>Text message of up to 160 characters sent to and from mobile (cell) phones. It is the basic function of ‘normal’ cell phones.</td>
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<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sidekick</td>
<td>New online display ad format (so-called ‘rising stars’ format) that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher view impact – 300 x 250 pixels, 300 x 600 pixel, 970 x 250 pixels (developed by Unicast).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple search</td>
<td>Search with limited criteria to choose from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyscrapers</td>
<td>Online display ad format which size has been standardized by the IAB – 120 x 600 pixels and 160 x 600 pixels, placed on the left or right side of a web page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slider</td>
<td>New online display ad format (so-called ‘rising stars’ format) that are able to offer more creative options and provide a higher view impact – 970 x 90 pixels (developed by Genex, built by MediaMind and Unicast).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART objectives</td>
<td>Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time bound objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMARTER objectives</td>
<td>SMART objectives but also including Evaluation and Reassessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smartphone</td>
<td>Can be defined as the result of an evolution of the mobile phone overlapping with typical PDA (i.e. personal digital assistant) features. However, unlike ‘normal’ cell phones, smartphones have a specific operating system (OS) and a standardised application programming interface (API) which facilitates third party applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart television (TV)</td>
<td>Sometimes also called connected TV or hybrid TV; it integrates television, internet technologies and social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and medium size enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMTEs</td>
<td>Small and medium-sized tourism enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social analytics</td>
<td>Can help you understand how social media contributes to things like brand health, marketing optimisation, revenue generation, operational efficiency, customer experience and innovation. It covers both social media measurement and social media monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social bookmarking*</td>
<td>Centralized online service which enables users to add, annotate, edit, and share bookmarks of web documents. Tagging is a significant feature of social bookmarking systems, enabling users to organize their bookmarks in flexible ways and develop shared vocabularies known as folksonomies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social commerce (s-commerce)*</td>
<td>Subset of electronic commerce that involves using social media, online media that supports social interaction, and user contributions to assist in the online buying and selling of products and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media**</td>
<td>Online forms of communicating that any individual can employ, which include blogs, microblogs such as Twitter and social networking sites such as Facebook. Contrast with “industrial media,” which refer to professionally produced radio, TV and film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media monitoring</td>
<td>Sometimes referred to as ‘brand monitoring’; it is about listening to conversations on the web around your brand and your organisation, often referred to as ‘buzz.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network**</td>
<td>Association of people drawn together by family, work or hobby. The term was first coined by professor J. A. Barnes in the 1950s, who defined the size of a social network as a group of about 100 to 150 people. On the Web, social sites such as Facebook and Twitter have expanded the concept to include a company’s customers, a celebrity’s fans and a politician’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social signals</td>
<td>What people are saying about your content, how they are interacting with it and sharing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Web</td>
<td>Characterised by a blending of web-based and mobile technologies and social interaction for the co-creation of value. Users create, modify and share (user-generated) content. They connect, communicate and collaborate. The Social Web allows them to turn to each other to find answers to questions, to find and filter information, to form their opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialisation</td>
<td>It is about leveraging and taking advantage of social interaction and earned media as part of your communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDK</td>
<td>Software development kits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOSTAC*</td>
<td>The acronym SOSTAC* stands for: Situation; Objectives; Strategy; Tactics; Action; Control. SOSTAC*, originally developed in the 1990s as a generic marketing planning model, was adapted by its creator Paul Smith and by Dave Chaffey for e-marketing and has become widely used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spider</td>
<td>Or ‘crawler’, ability of search engines to navigate and parse, and index content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS*</td>
<td>Software package used for statistical analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Images (including graphic and text) with no movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stickiness</td>
<td>Characteristics of a website that encourage a visitor to stay longer and to return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storify</td>
<td>Allows you to build a story layer above social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr or Instagram, bringing together material scattered across the Web into a coherent narrative, amplify the voices that matter and create a new media format that is interactive, dynamic and social.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streaming video**</td>
<td>One-way video transmission over a data network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style guide</td>
<td>Sets editorial standards to help achieve consistency and support overreaching marketing objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriber identity module (SIM) card</td>
<td>Or subscriber identification module; it is an integrated circuit that securely stores the international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI) and the related key used to identify and authenticate subscribers on mobile telephony devices (such as mobile phones and computers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdomain</td>
<td>‘Third’ level domain name that you create under any domain you control e.g. <a href="http://www.walking.destination.com">www.walking.destination.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subfolders</td>
<td>Folders behind a domain address e.g. <a href="http://www.destination.com/walking/">www.destination.com/walking/</a>, <a href="http://www.destination.com/blog/">www.destination.com/blog/</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card</td>
<td>Small removable card in a GSM phone that stores information such as the user’s phone number, phone book and other information related to the subscriber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superpromotors</td>
<td>Also known as ‘advocates’, ‘ambassadors’, or ‘influencers’; by sharing their enthusiasm about products, brands and companies they are influencing other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic actions</td>
<td>Particular species of substance that have an intrinsic communicative power. They might be innovations, structures, legislation, reforms, investments, institutions or policies that are especially suggestive, remarkable, memorable, picturesque, newsworthy, topical, poetic, touching, surprising or dramatic. Most importantly, they are symbolic of the strategy. They are, at the same time, a component of the destination’s story and the means of telling it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td>Computer that is intermediate in size between a laptop and a smart phone. Tablets usually lack a built-in keyboard but have a touch screen which can be used as a writing and drawing pad.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tag cloud</td>
<td>Visual display of content tags, usually as single words, in sizes reflecting the number of users of the tag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagging</td>
<td>The attachment of searchable keywords by individuals or website owners to online content – pages, copy, or images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy</td>
<td>System for organising and categorising content. It is usually based on a hierarchical relationship but can include other relationships, including related topics, synonyms, regional variations, translations and misspellings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOF system</td>
<td>Time of flight system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toolbar data</td>
<td>Derived from toolbar ‘add ons’ that provide additional functionality for web browsers and collect data about which sites are visited, the search terms used, behaviour on-site and a user’s next destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top level domain name (TLD)</td>
<td>Part of a domain name that follows the final dot. It is at the highest level of the hierarchical domain name system of the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touchpoint*</td>
<td>Business term for any encounter where customers and business engage to exchange information, provide service, or handle transactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Emergency Response Network (TERN)</td>
<td>Close knit grouping of the leading tourism associations of the world hosted and managed by UNWTO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trademark law/act</td>
<td>A trademark is a distinctive sign or an indicator used by an individual, business organization, or other legal entity to make it clear to users that the products or services on or with which the trademark appears originate from a unique source, designated for a specific market, and to distinguish its products or services from those of competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel planner</td>
<td>Tools enabling users to unite diverse information for trip preparation, ideally with the site taking into account their personal needs and preferences. It is also known as ‘trip’ and itinerary’ planners or ‘personalised’ and dynamic’ tour guides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelog</td>
<td>Travel blog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweet**</td>
<td>Term originally referring to a posting on Twitter, but it has evolved into a verb, as do many buzzwords. Thus, both usages are common; for example, ‘I like to write tweets’ and ‘I like to tweet.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Whether it is a micro-blogging site or a conversation tool, a social networking site or a collaboration tool is a matter of discussion, but it depends on how a person or organisation uses Twitter. Twitter is made up of 140-character messages called Tweets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typosquatting</td>
<td>Means the registration of purposely misspelled variations of well-known brand names with the goal to mislead potential customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrabook*</td>
<td>Higher-end type of subnotebook defined by Intel. Intel has registered the name as a trademark. Ultrabooks are designed to feature reduced bulk without compromising performance and battery life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair competition</td>
<td>Sometimes used to refer only to those torts that are meant to confuse consumers as to the source of the product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair trade practices</td>
<td>Comprises all other forms of unfair competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform resource locator (URL)*</td>
<td>Also known as web address, it is a specific character string that constitutes a reference to a resource.</td>
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<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique visitor</td>
<td>Or ‘unique user’; number of inferred individual people (filtered for spiders and robots), within a designated reporting timeframe, with activity consisting of one or more visits to a site. Each individual is counted only once for the reporting period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS)</td>
<td>3rd generation (3G) network technology which is still the standard network for most mobile devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO Destination Web Watch (DWW)</td>
<td>Offers expert audit and evaluation service, evaluating the website against quality criteria and critical success factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upselling</td>
<td>Offering a product to a customer in addition to the product they are currently purchasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urchin Tracking Module (UTM)*</td>
<td>Web analytics package that served as the base for Google Analytics. Google UTM tags allow you to add extra information to the link you create.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability</td>
<td>Usability in general is essential for accessible web design. The well-known usability expert Jakob Nielsen has five quality components for usability: Learnability, Efficiency, Memorability; Errors; and Satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User</td>
<td>In this handbook, we use ‘user’ to refer to someone using e-marketing applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User-generated content (UGC)</td>
<td>Online content created by end-users rather than by destinations or media owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT</td>
<td>Value added tax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video on demand (VOD)</td>
<td>Systems that allow users to select and watch video content over a network as part of an interactive television system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video on demand dynamic ad insertion (VOD DAI)</td>
<td>Technology that allows ads to be inserted and refreshed in pre-, mid- and post-roll-positions, so that ads are always fresh and relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIPs</td>
<td>Very important persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virality</td>
<td>Measures how likely a person is to share something about your posts with their friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual brochure</td>
<td>Or ‘page-turner’; software that gives web users the illusion of turning the pages of a brochure, on-screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>In this handbook, we use ‘visitor’ to refer to someone travelling to a destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit or session</td>
<td>Interaction, by an individual, with a website consisting of one or more requests for a unit of content (for example a page view).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual tracking</td>
<td>Captures images and extracts information in order to track the location based on this image. On the other hand, non-visual tracking involves a single or a combination of various existing measurement systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlog</td>
<td>Video blog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Vice president.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTB</td>
<td>Vienna Tourist Board.</td>
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</table>
## Glossary and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td><strong>Web 2.0</strong></td>
<td>Term already coined in 1999 to describe websites that used technology beyond static pages and facilitating interactivity, initially met with criticism but gained popularity after the 2004 O’Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference. Tim O’Reilly described Web 2.0 as “a set of economic, social and technology trends that collectively form the basis of the next generation of the internet – a more mature, distinctive medium characterised by user participation, openness, and network effects.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAI</strong></td>
<td>Web Accessibility Initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web analytics</strong></td>
<td>Measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimising web usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webcare</strong></td>
<td>Refers to the need for organisations to allocate and train staff to undertake ongoing tasks such as listening to, monitoring and energizing conversation, interacting with blog comments, reviews and tweets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website localization</strong></td>
<td>Refers to how the content of a website meets the needs of the different countries you are targeting. This needs to take account of issues associated with language translation as well as cultural differences that exist across different countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White label</strong></td>
<td>Product produced by one company that is then rebranded by other companies to make the product appear as if they created it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whois</strong></td>
<td>Refers to the information that is required whenever anyone registers a domain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Widget</strong></td>
<td>Small software applications that provide functionality and content online, distributed typically by being uploaded by users to websites and blogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WiFi</strong></td>
<td>Wireless technology that enables devices such as PCs and mobile phones to connect to the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wiki</strong></td>
<td>Web site that can be quickly edited by its visitors with simple formatting rules. Developed by Ward Cunningham in the mid-1990s to provide collaborative discussions, there are several “wiki” tools on the market for creating such sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WIPO</strong></td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wireless Local Area Networks (WLAN)</strong></td>
<td>Also known as ‘Wireless-Fidelity’ (Wi-Fi); it uses radio technology called IEEE 802.11a and IEEE 802.11b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wireless mark-up language (WML)</strong></td>
<td>Computer language designed for wireless applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wireless Personal Area Networks (WPAN)</strong></td>
<td>It includes Bluetooth and IrDA (Infrared Data Association).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word</strong></td>
<td>Microsoft Word is a full-featured word processing programme for Windows and Mac from Microsoft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)</strong></td>
<td>The main international standards organisation for the web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WWAN</strong></td>
<td>Wireless Wide Area Networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>XML</strong></td>
<td>See extensible markup language.</td>
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