

INTERNET AS A MARKETING TOOL FOR TOURISM

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Abstract

The information Technology (IT) has prevailed over all functions of strategic and operational management. The internet (a product of information technology) has increasingly become a popular medium for marketing. This paper examines the potentials of Internet for tourism marketing. To achieve this, the paper x-rayed the characteristics of tourism marketing and thus, the application of the Internet in tourism marketing was examined. The paper argued that the use of Internet for tourism marketing will not only reach a broad audience, reduce the cost of transaction (by conventional methods used by travel agents in times past), but will alleviate the problems of identification, authentication and confirmation of travels/package tours by tourists as well as promotion of tourism industry.

Keywords: Internet, marketing tools, tourism. Information technology

Introduction

The revolutionary developments in Information Technology (IT), which have been experienced through the proliferation of the Internet and the World Wide Web (www) since 1990, illustrate the fact that tourists increasingly rely on the Internet for travel information as well as tourism products available in a given destination. Thus, the impacts of its are evident in the tourism promotion, marketing, distribution and both the government and private/public sectors' operational functions. Increasingly, the Internet enables tourists to access reliable and accurate information as well as to undertake reservations in a fraction of time, cost and inconvenience required by conventional methods used by travel agents.

Internet as an information exchange systems is proficient in connectivity the ability to allow everyone to access the network. However, the potential of using the internet for marketing activities is derived from its general use as an information exchange system in the digital age. Thus, the information can be stored, indexed, retrieved, restructured and redistributed automatically by software and without human intervention (Zhenhua, 2000). As rightly argued by Mathur, *et.al.* (1998), the Internet connects companies

