

EXPLORING THE VALUE OF INTERNET IN TOURISM



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IN THE BEGINNING

- In the world today, **information** and **knowledge** are being seen as the key to success, especially in corporate organisations, and there is a great need to manage these resources. The Internet challenges the economic, social, political, physical and technological foundations of the old economy.
- A new generation of entrepreneurs is using the digital economy to find new ways to attracting customers and suppliers, as well as disseminating information to new sources and finding new markets for their goods and services

SO WHAT IS TOURISM?

- Tourism is travel for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes or the provision of services to support this leisure travel.
- The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity.
- Tourism is vital for many countries, due to the income generated by the consumption of goods and services by tourists, the taxes levied on businesses in the tourism industry, and the opportunity for employment in the service industries associated with tourism. These service industries include transportation services such as cruise ships and taxis, accommodation such as hotels, restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues, and other hospitality industry services such as spas and resorts.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourist>

How about Internet?

- Internet is an interconnected system of networks that connects computers around the world via the TCP/IP protocol.
- Today, the internet is a global “people’s network” for communicating and sharing information. It consists of two powerful tools- email and the World Wide Web. The WWW is the part of the internet where a vast global information resource, or library, has emerged in recent years.
- From its origins, the internet has become a vast and growing, global network that people use to converse, debate, meet, teach, learn, buy and sell and share virtually every type of information imaginable.
- The internet is the first medium that allows every user to be a sender, receiver, narrowcaster and broadcaster.
- The most widely used application on the internet is the World Wide Web and electronic mail. (E-mail)

Why internet in tourism?

- The use of the Internet for communicating and transacting with customers has been growing rapidly in the worldwide tourism industry. However, there is a large variation in the intensity of use of e-commerce in the travel and tourism industry. While the Internet usage varies across countries, even within a country there are large variations among enterprises. These variations are mainly due to the impact of several factors associated with the internal and external environment of the enterprise.
- Tourists and travel agents alike turn to the Web as their first source of information on a potential destination for themselves or their clients, and they use e-mail for fast, efficient and inexpensive communication to have their questions answered and their impressions confirmed

Why internet in tourism?

- The World Wide Web (Web) has been utilized as a means for communication widely over the past decade in the travel and tourism industry. It has been instrumental in helping the tourism sector to expand its markets across the Continents and has played a major role in helping the growth of the industry. The Web is a cost effective means for enterprises in the travel and tourism sector to

Why internet in tourism?

- According to O'Connor (1999), the main advantages that the internet provides as a marketing medium for travel and tourism sector are;
- the global market reach
- the customers who access the websites are much more interested rather than in a conventional marketing communication where the message is targeted indiscriminately
- the websites are not affected by capacity constraints
- the possibility of two-way communication offered by the Internet Quicker response to customers' information-based needs.

What about Hotels and Lodge's use of Internet?

- A hotel's actual usage of the Internet therefore varies on the basis of the Internet's ability to help the hotel in connecting to more customers and thereby increasing the sales and profits.
- Due to various reasons, if the Internet cannot contribute significantly in this direction, the hotel would rely more on other sources like travel agents or telephone enquiries for attracting customers.
- For instance, the viability of the Internet as a medium for marketing is severely affected by the extent of use of the Internet by the hotel's target customers. Therefore, if the hotel mainly caters to a population where the Internet penetration is very low, its dependence on e-commerce is also expected to be low

E-BUSINESS

- E-commerce describes the process of buying, selling, transferring, serving, or exchanging products, services, or information via computer networks including the internet.
- E-business refers to the broader definition of electronic commerce not just buying and selling of goods and services, but also servicing customers, collaborating with business partners, conducting e-learning and conducting electronic transactions within an organization

Common type of e-commerce transactions

- **Business to consumers (B2C).** In B2C, the sellers are organizations, and the buyers are individuals.
- **A good example is the Post Newspaper.** Customers can now subscribe on the internet (payment can be done electronic) and also **Zambian Airways.** You can book and pay online (on the internet website for Zambian Airways). **Zambia National Commercial Bank** has internet banking too. You can do the same for Sun and Zambezi hotels.

Benefits of e-commerce

- **Benefits of e-commerce to organizations:**
- **Benefits to customers**
- **Benefits to Society**

Internet challenges in Zambia

- Relevance of Internet content
- Cost of internet usage
- Cost of computers
- Perception that e-commerce is expensive and unsecured
- No impact on on the people of the host country who engage in informal and opportunistic economic activities within the broader tourism supply chain.
- Customer's resistance to changing from a real to a virtual store

Challenges

- foreign exchange earner, a significant percentage of the money spent on tourism remains in the tourist's original country
- Internet only along line of rail and more expensive in remote areas due to law of supply and demand (In Siavonga internet is about K800.00 per minute and in Lusaka K100 per minute)

What then are the Opportunities internet based Tourism in Livingstone

- Tourism credit facility K5.0 billion for local entrepreneurs
- India gives US\$30 million worth of computers and servers, as well as US\$100,000 toward operating ICT Training centres
- 2006 National ICT Policy recognizes tourism as one of the 13 pillars given priority. Furthermore, the fifth national development plan has a ICT component
- Legislation in ICTs has been updated hence the Information and communication technologies Bill which shall provide an enabling environment for economic growth

- Livingstone has about three internet service providers.
- Citizen's economic empowerment act and the Zambia development Agency are some of the legislation and institutions that resident can take advantage.
- 2010 World Cup in Republic of South Africa. Joint marketing on internet with RSA and stop over at seven wonder of the world.
- Zambia National Tourism Board and Visit Zambian websites have matured and improving in attracting tourists.

- There are still few internet Cafes and information technology firms hence the market is still maiden.
- The Zambia National Broadcast Corporation and state house websites are one of the top most visited websites and (professional opinion) is that we have a uniform Zambia website portal and that government website should have uniform format and links to tourism. (At the moment, each Government Ministry or department have different website format and it is time to have one standard and branding of Zambia.
- Tourist reference (testimonies) that Zambians are friendly and hospitable people should be replicated on all hospitality industry websites.
- Our local Zambian website developers have gained experienced and skill in developing dynamic websites.
- The Visit Zambia website <http://www.visitzambia.co.zm> has been nominated for the Black Web Awards 2007 in the Category of Best Destination Travel Website.
- i. Tourists and travel agents alike turn to the Web as their first source of information on a potential destination for themselves or their clients, and they use e-mail for fast, efficient and inexpensive communication to have their questions answered and their impressions confirmed.

Summary

- We live in the information age but the full impact that information and knowledge can have on development is just starting to be seen. A challenge for Livingstone resident is to exploit the power of internet to achieve equitable and sustainable development

QUESTIONS? ANSWERS! CONTRIBUTIONS!

