THE DEVELOPMENT OF E-TOURISM A STUDY OF THE E-TOURISM PHENOMENON IN E-BUSINESS

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Abstract - The development of new ICT "Information and Communication Technologies" has allowed the rapid incorporation of these new technologies in the field of Tourism, and thus creating what is now denominated as "e-Tourism". The emergence of "e-Tourism" has meant a new era in the evolution of world tourism. This evolution has caused a dramatic global socio-economic impact on e-Business between both; individual travelers and professional tour operators. As a type of e-Business progress, the e-tourism and its effects from a professional perspective is the subject of this study emphasizing on tour operators to detect their methods during their work searching for information and composing the tourist offerings by using the B2B platforms. Meanwhile, as individual travelers are using the internet to search for online products offered through B2C platforms, the competition against traditional travel agencies is rising every day. Against this risk, the professionals should seek new and innovative ways to save their business, by creating new models of e-Tourism through their B2B platforms, and to anticipate what they can better offer to the tourists as new services, destinations and products.

Keywords - Or Phrases in Alphabetical Order, Separated by Commas.

I. INTRODUCTION

The object of this research is to study the use of new technologies ICT in tourism communication as an industry by itself. It analyzes how these technologies have contributed to the development of e-Tourism as a business phenomenon, and its incorporation as an element of strategic management progress. In the development of this project we shall see how the tourism industry needs to move forward using new methods of communication to develop and construct its own economy. These necessary new methods of communication should contribute to the exchange of information, experiences and ideas that could build a new concept of e-tourism business. The General Objective of this study is the diagnosis of e-Tourism status, and its possibilities of success or failure in the e-Business sector. Several Specific Objectives shall discuss the tourism technological communication development and methods of conducting this type of business. Also, analyzing the use of artificial intelligence and augmented reality linked to the tourist virtual environment. Yet, the main hypothesis remains in discovering how these technological developments can force this progress and how they can contribute for a future e-Tourism industry.

II. METHODOLOGY

The structure of this topic and its guidelines were defined by conducting a survey distributed randomly over 200 Travel Agents operating in different professional entities during the Fair of International Tourism FITUR – Madrid 2018, questioning their habits and methods of communication, contribution of the ICT in the development of their business in the tourism sector. The field data obtained is the primary information in structuring this research by employing qualitative and quantitative analysis. As secondary resources, some documentary techniques were reviewed specially in its literature review and general overlooking. Analyzing this data and interpreting it into useful information can provide us with a meaningful technical sheet about the current situation of e-tourism, its development and impact on e-business industry.

III. THE CONCEPT OF "E-TOURISM"

E-Tourism is the name used in this work to refer to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the tourism sector, defined as "Electronic Tourism". It has drastically influenced the strategic and operational management of companies and tourist destinations. The emergence of the Internet, the World Wide Web in 1995, social networks and the interactive Web 2.0 revolution in 2005, transformed the traditional tourism sector into an interactive one with the progress of E-Commerce, since they allowed the development of a set of Applications (APPs) and its mobile platform that facilitate the elaboration and the exchange of contents generated by the users.
Internet allowed to expand the base of the tourism content in the E-Commerce and facilitated to reach the professionals of profitable and creative form. In B2B, large companies, such as airlines and hotel chains, were able to interact with their retailers and distributors on an instant basis, and with their

international clientele through the B2C platform. They have developed special tools to manage properties and conduct business around the world with a single click.

In addition, smaller companies were able for the first time to expand their "virtual presence" and offer their services in international markets. The different tourist destinations were able to have virtual representations and boost their image and reputation online on a global scale. Web 2.0 allowed companies to benefit more from the content generated by users to collaborate dynamically with all their partners.

Innovative tourism companies and destinations, known as first movers, have taken advantage of these emerging technologies to improve their business processes and encourage communication with consumers and other interested parties. However, several tourism companies failed to meet the challenge of e-business offered by e-tourism and Web 2.0. Many of them did not know how to incorporate information and communication technologies into their strategies, nor did they appreciate the significant changes generated by technology in the structure of the tourism sector, and thus were left behind and stayed in the back stage. As a result, they developed competitive disadvantages and faced increasing difficulties in maintaining their position in the market.

Information and communication technologies can be integrated into the tourism enterprise in the context of a multidimensional and multi-technological framework that contributes to tourism as a business. They allow companies to improve their internal efficiency, develop their ability to communicate with the outside world and establish business with their collaborators, partners, customers and participants.

The technological support they provide is a support for managing communication flows. It is based on the use of the Internet and other corporate networks (Intranet and Extranet). Through this technological infrastructure, the tourist company is able to reorganize its management processes, expand its communication network (value supply chain), inbound and outbound logistic operations, marketing strategies, ROI efforts (Return on Investment), product offerings and customer satisfaction to adapt them to work within Internet servers and establish what is now known as E-Tourism.

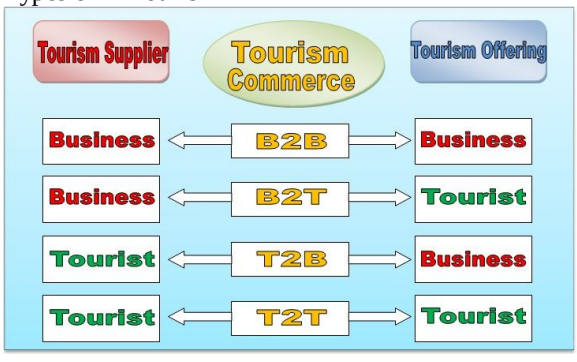
The development of E-Business has favored tourism sector with the emergence of new forms of online organization, such as virtual companies and electronic agencies. In this type of companies, the Internet is an ideal platform for the development of new services such as ubiquity by elimination boundaries between companies almost anywhere anytime. In this way, e-Tourism vitalizes the processes of management of and the value by maximizing its efficiency and effectiveness of these companies.This new concept implies a change in the management of the business and in the strategic relations of the tourist organizations with their participants. At the same time, it promotes the strategies, planning and electronic management of the sectors that make up the tourism industry.

III. IMPLICATIONS IN E-TOURISM

Global e-commerce refers to all transactions in products or services that take place, in whole or in part, by electronic means. Tourism is consolidated as one of the sectors that grow more successfully on the Internet, because of the service activities it offers. In this way, new businesses have begun to proliferate in the network (such as virtual or online travel agencies, tourist directories and portals, destination management systems, etc.), which in addition to providing information on the services offered, they also facilitate operations and beneficial business exchange (such as booking and selling any type of products or services included in the tourist package).

From the perspective of the tourism supplier, e-Tourism favors commercial transactions involving the reservation and sale of products and services quickly and directly, and at a lower cost, than in other traditional means due to several factors that reduce its cost. Many companies in the sector have already incorporated in their system on the Web the function of reservations and online payment for the tourist services of the different modalities of e-Commerce existent until the moment the tourist companies resorted to the B2T (Business-to-Tourist) and to the B2B (Business-to-Business).

Types of E-Tourism



In B2T e-Tourism commerce, the relationship between agency and tourist is established online and the contact is usually limited to the exchange of tourist products or services for money. Basically, it involves the electronic management of all the activities related to this connection. The most important feature in B2T is that tourists can have more information about products or services, their characteristics, feedback

from previous tourists, ratings, etc. before making the purchase decision, unlike traditional travel agencies.
This is achieved by accessing to virtual catalogs of products or services available on the company's website. The company now can promote its products or services better and provide the tourist with an interactive participation in the design and shaping of those products.
On the other hand, the B2B e-Tourism commerce supports the logistics of distribution of products online between companies of different types and specialties, facilitating the operations of supply and demands, customer relationship management, after-sales service, customer support, care Claims, problem solving and electronic payment by credit or debit card.

The main advantage offered by e-Tourism is the ease of communication with the customer, with suppliers and distributors and the positioning and improvement of the company's image through online operations, promotion and marketing.

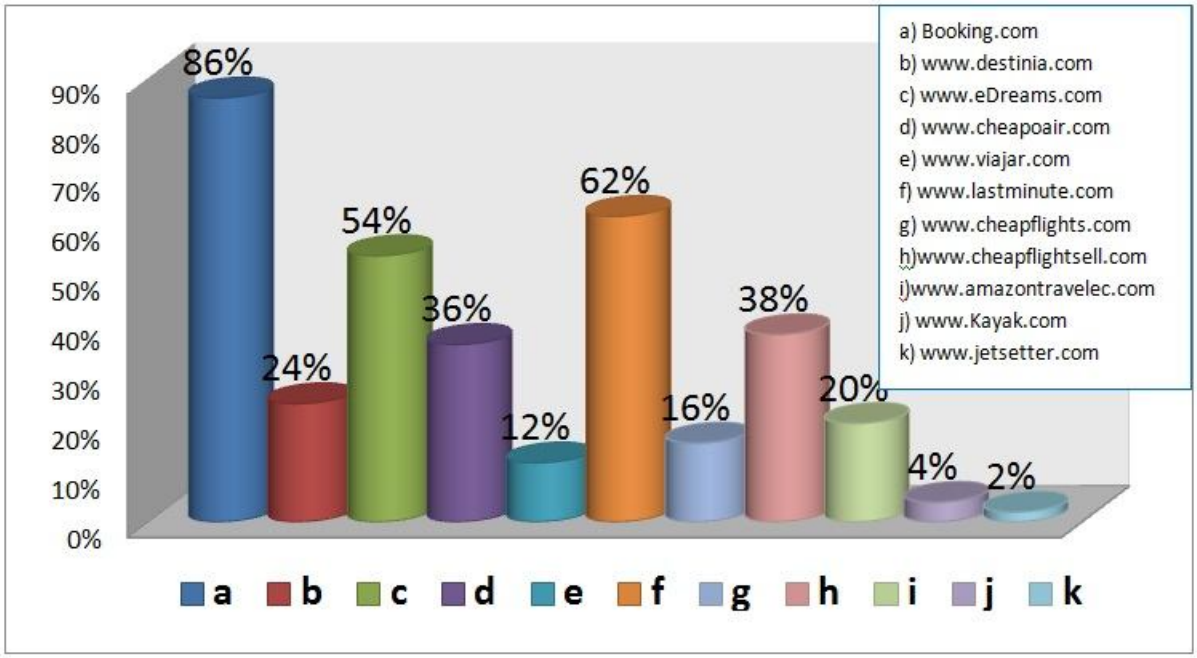
New Theoretical and Technological Models in e-Tourism (Artificial Intelligence Tourism 3.0)

A good number of companies in the sector are directing part of their business activity towards the Internet and its implications. This situation does not only affect the companies and organizations that have traditionally operated in this industry (such as transportation providers, lodging and leisure, tour operators, wholesale agencies, retail agencies) but also new businesses have been created and incorporated in the network that act as intermediaries in the sale and distribution of tourist offerings. The value of information in the tourism business makes the management of these resources a priority and a determining factor in improving the competitiveness of companies in this sector. From this perspective, it is considered that this management should play a vital role in the tourism enterprise to provide a coherent communication services and advanced technological products such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality to be incorporated to this industry. According to a study realized by “Skyscanner” (a search engine that makes comparisons between flights) about the future of travel in 2024, progress toward advanced travel is still in its infancy phase. There are still many improvements to be arranged in order to reach a fully personalized trip by artificial intelligence, but this will come soon and will make "tourism shopping" a simple, intuitive and pleasurable experience. According to the study no longer worry about spending hours and hours comparing flights, hotels and travel packages. With the incorporation of artificial intelligence to the tourism industry, an electronic agent (E-Agent) will be able to predict the preferences and desires of each tourist to satisfy its needs to advise, recommends and accompany him to all the parts where he travels with his mobile (or other smart devices such as watches, eyeglasses, Bracelets, etc.). The potential of this agent of the future, who can simultaneously translate what a foreigner taxi driver or ethnical restaurant menu says in seconds. Also, can allocate the most suitable and compatible monuments and sites to visit according to preferences of the tourists due to saving previous information about searching and browsing among hundreds or thousands of options were offered. This saved data can be filtered and be suggested as priority and highly recommended for this tourist, saving time and efforts to reach the target in seconds instead of dealing with options related to the main topic. These technologies are already being developed and there are projects like "Desti" (an application for travel conversations that nurtures and learns from interactions with the user). Or "Sami" (which observes the user's lifestyle in different aspects and saves the behavior and attitude on personal wise). And more other personal assistances or such called E-Agents yet to come. With artificial intelligence you can live and experiment the travel experience before really buying it. It will be possible to virtualize the chosen destination before even visiting it by using technology of augmented reality, a situation that will make the tourist undergo an experiment that will transfer him to virtual places out of reality to live and trial the situation without moving from his original site. This will help to reduce the factor of surprises or unpleasant situation that the traveler may face, and that can result in dissatisfaction of the tourist. For instant, it may illustrate with its factual reconstruction the charm of taking a walk on a famous beach, or enjoy an archaeological excursion or even a historical tour among dinosaurs, and even observe hotel´s outlets or restaurant’s food and services. The system shall be prepared and trained to analyze actual responses and reactions to anticipate wants and needs of the tourist properly. Virtual reality will then be one of the traveler's main allies, such as haptic technology, based on tactile feedback that allows you to turn sound into texture, feel the warmth of the sun or enjoy the comfort of a seat on a train or a plane. The potential of this advanced technology is enormous (from Smartphone, Tablet, smartwatch, to "Glass" smart glasses, which provide real-time translation, breaking "al the barriers of language") and has even more roles to play in communicational tourism development. It basically works to have intuitive semantic search programs that will analyze the reactions to predict needs, thanks to the data that are shared. The planning of trips will be more fun and practical in a much shorter time and in less than an hour tourists will be able to intuitively explore different options and book services through semantic networks able to learn about their tastes and preferences based on their previous actions and reactions on the Internet. It sounds like science fiction, but it's reality now. Technology is constantly

changing. The qualitative leap is the responsibility of those who, for example, progress in creating a facial coding algorithm that will allow search engines to read human expressions and judge accordingly whether the achievements have satisfied the user or not.Samples of some questions surveyed on random travel agents. The B2T Web Pages that are most commonly used in fixed computers (Business-to-Tourist)

Some of the common websites of tourist booking companies online are presented below in Graphic 1. Within these companies that offer online B2T Business-to-Tourist services, the famous one is Booking.com. It offers accommodation reservations online and mentioned in official sources that it has more than 630,000 properties contracted worldwide and that makes more than 750,000 room reservations per day. Booking.com is available in more than 41 languages in which it offers to find and hire the best offer updated day by day. Booking.com has great prestige among the internet users and among professionals. Their level of trust between them reaches 86%. Other public websites also have great credibility and are often visited by travel agents. These sites offer local agents with airline bookings, hotel reservations, transfers, tours & excursions, train tickets, car rental, etc. Those are presented in the following chart, along with the percentage of use by different agencies.

Graphic 1: Websites percentage of use in B2T (Business-to-Tourists)

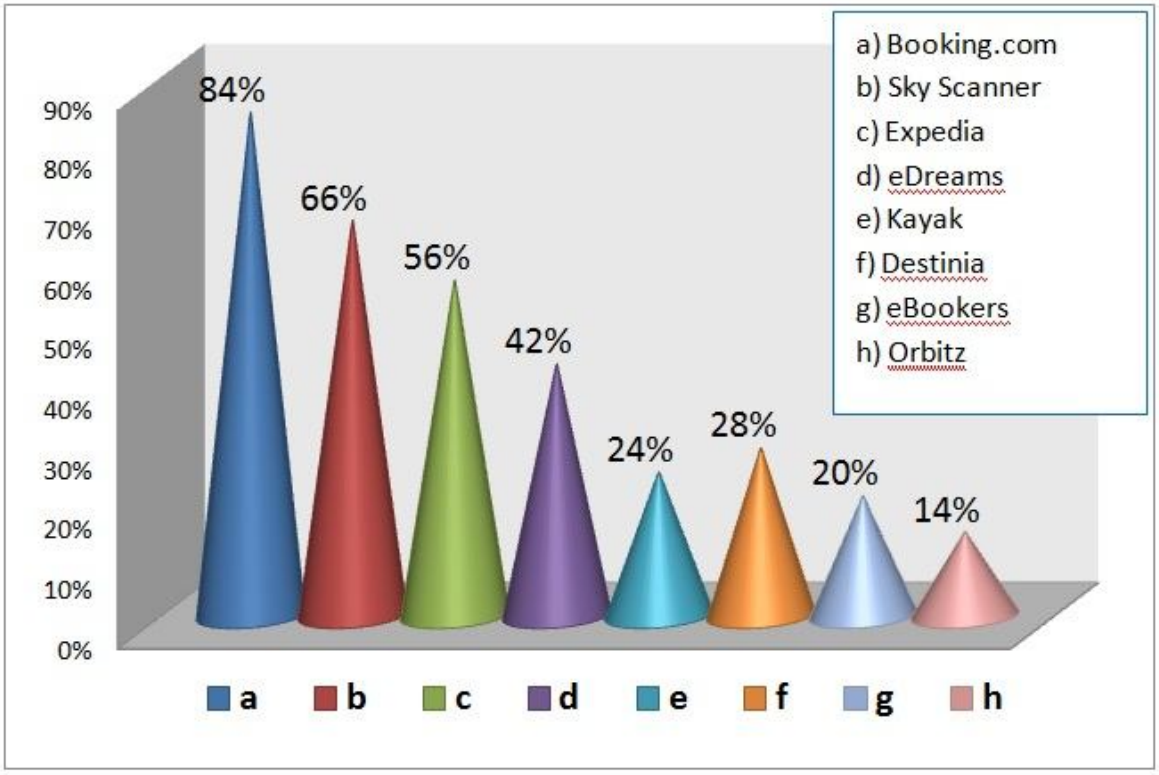


2. The B2T APPs most commonly used in mobile devices (Business-to-Tourist)

It turns out that Booking.com in its version for APPs continues to occupy the position number one with 84% in terms of B2T business – Graph 2. The ease of use and speed of this tool, the APPs, is better compared to the Web: results appear in seconds with many types of search categories, filters by price, offers, promotions or geographical location. This App differs from the Web especially in the service of GPS that is provided in the mobile devices, that offers the possibility Geo-Search for hotels or offers around the personal location of the user. Sky Scanner is the most searched in respect to flights with 66% and forms a great competition with the general systems of GDS (Global Distribution System) used in B2B. It offers a good range of flight offers that can be very suitable to tourist´s desires.

Expedia with 56% has good deals on both combined; hotel bookings and airline tickets together, along with many other tourist services. Expedia is well known worldwide and has a lot of credibility. Applications like eDreams and Destinia are less downloaded on mobile by the users and have a frequency of use between 42% and 28%.

Graphic 2: APPS percentage of use in B2T (Business-to-Tourists)



Conclusion

The appearance of "e-Tourism" has generated significant changes in the way traditional tourism works, as well as in the communication sector. It has become an essential factor in the development of the tourism industry; increasing productivity, improving and accelerating communication processes. Implementing e-Tourism in the tourism business brings great benefits to tourist companies and improves their positioning through different communicative structures such as websites, Apps, blogs and social networks. It helps to accelerate communication and facilitates access to information that grows day by day. From the managerial level it allows the control of the value chain with suppliers and retailers, with stakeholders and sponsorships, the management of resources, the management of logistic operations, orders of production, which leads to changes in the processes. It accelerates productivity and improves agility in the provision of tourism services. From a professional point of view, e-Tourism promotes access to information and provides greater efficiency by reducing the number of telephone calls and visits to suppliers and customers, although increasing the number of contacts. This allows reducing operating and management costs, generate and distribute more and better information about the services offered, and thereby increase the number of potential customers. E-Tourism helps make external communication faster, more robust and better managed. It promotes interactivity that replaces the face-to-face relationship in the present time. It allows a synchronous and asynchronous communication, without time limits and allows access to information when required. At the same time, it provides access to customers and suppliers from anywhere in the world, providing a virtual interaction among each other. Innovations in technology are keys to competing in a complex environment such as tourism, where changes in the demand for products and services are frequent and in continuous basis. In these circumstances, it allows companies to have complete and accurate information for analysis and to make the necessary decisions more quickly. For this reason, many companies in the sector have incorporated intensive systems in order to improve management and decision making, while supporting business strategies. This practice requires tourism companies to identify the technological resources they need. At the same time, they should know how these tools use competing companies, their customers and suppliers, as well as to know the value they give to the technological innovations that have been incorporated into tourism products and services and the processes that shape them. It is not enough to apply and use well the resources of e-Tourism. It is necessary that companies develop the capacity to use them better than the competition. Consequently, they should consider resource management as a key strategic factor to be a real help in achieving better results and being more competitive.

Companies that adopt new technologies will be able to compete in the future. While the use of information and communication technologies can mean great benefits in terms of efficiency, coordination, differentiation and reduction of costs, they are not a universal solution. Therefore, it is necessary the general restructuring of the commercial processes, as well as the formulas and commitments of strategic management, in order to achieve the objectives pursued. It seems that traditional travel agencies are a sector that may disappear, or at least lose its dominant role as exclusive in travel industry. After analyzing our study, we conclude that the Internet is an ideal medium for the commercialization of services related to tourism, which means new challenges for traditional agencies and a promising future for electronic agencies. The question about the survival of travel agencies is not new. Will the Internet make travel agencies disappear? The answer to that question is NO. The Internet presents itself as an opportunity for the sector, but what it will do is changing the customs of tourists, perceptions and vision. For the tourist it may be easier to enter a producer directly or ask a search engine. What does the user need when replacing agencies for the direct purchase? The answer is: information. If you do not get information from the agency, the tourist should look for it on his own. Reliable sources of information online can be a response.

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