

THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES OVER THE MODERN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT¹

Jasmina Risteska, PhD

Key Macedonia 95, Ohrid University of Tourism and Hospitality–Ohrid
jasminaristeska@rocketmail.com

ABSTRACT

The fast and dynamic development of information and communication assets has contributed to significant changes in the functioning of the tourist sector, and also on the tourists themselves. Modern technologies have created a new way of working for tourism entities that will enable easier and closer access to end consumers and will offer a unique and new tourist product. Today, tourists have the opportunity to get information and get acquainted with distant and exotic tourist destinations that are of great interest. Internet technology that is an integral part of information and communication technology has contributed drastically in terms of spatial distance, and thus created a totally different way of communication that is very different and superior to all previous and it is unthinkable that all the activities to be done without application of new information and communication assets. Such entities that do not apply the new technologies face market failure.

Key words: information systems, modern tourism, internet.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism as an economic and social phenomenon is one of the most massive phenomena, which captures even greater and more important role in the modern society. With the development of social life itself, the need for tourism grows more and also the involvement of people in tourist trips. The

¹ professional paper

tourist need is related to the needs of temporarily changing the place of residence for rest and recreation. Tourism receives its role and importance when the number of people involved in tourist trips increases enormously and gets such dimensions that influence the creation of other certain phenomena and processes, which contribute tourism to become an important factor in social and economic sense. The progress of technical and technological development and the transfer of technology to underdeveloped countries and developing countries will contribute to the tourism movements to include part of the population of these countries. With the more expressive development of contemporary global trends and deregulation, they have led to an increase in tourist request and have contributed to the fact that tourists are increasingly referring and looking for new touristic contents that are not yet sufficiently affirmed as touristic locations. For this purpose it is necessary to enrich the tourist offer with contents that will be acceptable and interesting, which would motivate the potential tourists to realize a certain tourist trip.

INFORMATION FORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND TOURST MARKET

When it comes to the impact of information and communication technologies in tourism, it is first necessary to point out the characteristics of the tourism market. Tourism represents a very important economic, socio-psychological and environmental factor in the society, that is, the modern tourism market has caused great qualitative and quantitative changes. This means that the success in managing the tourism sector is perceived in perceiving the changes that occur in all its segments. All this contributes to changes in consumer behavior, but also in the sector of secondary needs. Today, in conditions of fierce competition, where there is a high number of economic entities on the supply side with numerous offers on the market, on the other hand is the consumer who possesses more customary habits and needs, the segmentation of the tourism market is becoming increasingly evident. Although most tourists travel mainly because of their enjoyment, today with the modern way of life there is a group of tourists who through the trip see an opportunity to discover something new, looking for a new tourist product. This means that the form of a massive trip to the coastal destinations is slowly abandoned, and the selective form of tourism gets a greater significance for the purpose of familiarization with the specific characteristics of certain places. Changes also occur in the part of the travel time, frequent short trips are usually replaced by a long journey. All this has an impact on the development of closer and smaller destinations as well as on the segmentation of the tourism market, that is, towards the specific

forms of tourism that are characterized by true expansion. The tourism market is no longer analyzed as a simple relationship of invariable offers and elastic request. The speed of the tourism market requires a new strategic concept that can withstand the competition on the world tourism market.² The increased touristic need, as well as the growing attractiveness of tourists, are making the consumption exclusively unstable category, whose changes are very difficult to predict. Therefore, it is necessary that the tourist offer is constantly adapted to the tourist request, based on the wishes and preferences of the tourists. In terms of tourism request, two groups of factors impact: external and internal. External factors represent objective factors and are related to the impact of the environment. This group of factors includes: the amount of leisure time, the economic strength of tourists, demographic changes, political changes, etc. Internal factors include the psychological moment that takes up a more significant role in creating and meeting tourism request. These factors are subjective and are personal perception by the participants and depend on the characteristics of the personality.

ICT IN THE FUNCTION OF TOURISM

One of the most significant features of modern society is mass media that are an integral part of modern development and culture. The communication is a complex multi-layer phenomenon. Communicative activities in tourism attract attention because contemporary tourism itself implies massiveness as the main feature of tourist trips, and through mass communications, a direct approach is established to the tourist mass using all these assets of communication. Today's modern communications contribute to overcoming the closeness of the world and opening its borders. By imposing contemporary development and global trends, so-called "new" media have been imposed which lead from mass communication to individual communication, even to "communication at will"³. In such circumstances, the individual self-initiative uses public or private information and is associated with that global communications network. These ways of communication and information suppress the classical way of mass communication, they are characterized by high efficiency and speed, and where the tourist receives a new quality of information and expands his own needs and interests. In the key concepts of communication, the medium

²Stetic, Snezana, Časopis Departmanazageografiju, turizam i hotelijerstvo Turizam 6/2002

³Kunchik, Cipfel, Science and Publicism, Fondation Fridrih Ebert, Skopje, 1998

is defined as an intermediary agency that provides communication⁴. The development of modern technology, ie the Internet, has changed the way of operation of a number of activities, including tourism. A precondition for the operation of tourist entities is the use of information systems, through which the modern tourist has much easier access to information about the desired destination, precisely thanks to the new technology. Online bookings, access to information about the tourist destination, the various forums that are overwhelmed by the impressions that tourists leave themselves are part of the factors influencing the choice of the tourist destination. One of the biggest problems faced by tourism entities is how to reach potential tourists and provide information on tourist request and thus ensure safe survival on the tourism market.

APPLICATION OF CONTEMPORARY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN TOURISM

The positive effects of the application of new modern technologies in tourism are related to the fact that many of the users are able to realize them electronically, from any place, while saving money and time. The choice of a tourist destination has become much easier with the development of modern technologies; tourists are provided mainly through catalogs, pictures, videos, etc., to be largely informed about the place they want to visit. There are two types of information requirements internally and externally. The development goals of the tourist organizations relate to the introduction of new tourist offers that correspond to the dynamic demands of the market and the improvement of the existing ones. The evaluation grade is one of the criteria for success with which the tourist offer fulfilled the expectations and requirements of the managers of the tourist company. In order to present new tourist offers to potential tourists, there are two exits. The first exit explores the new tourist offer, ie the idea within the wider framework of the tourism market. The second exit involves deciding potential tourists whether to accept or reject the offer. A number of factors influence the decision to accept new tourist offers by tourists. These factors refer to: assessment of the benefits of the new tourist offer, the expected risk of buying a new tourist offer, psychological barriers to accepting new tourist offers, the tradition and image of the tourist company, tourist destination,⁵

⁴T.O`Sullivan, J.Hartley, D.Saunders,M.Montgomery, J.Fiske, Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies, Routledge, London and New York, 1995:176

⁵Wells, W., D., Prensky, D., Consumer Behavior, John Wiley and Sons, Inc, New York, 1996

etc. The new offer will be accepted only if it challenge inclination and positive attitudes of potential tourists. Introducing the new tourist offer on the tourism market means recognition in advance and acceptance of the innovations by potential tourists. At this phase, it is necessary to keep an eye on the decision making process, since it is a new tourist offer that is unknown to consumers and that its acceptance or rejection depends on the number of available information. In the next phase, which involves growth, is coming the imitated decision-making process because there is some experience with the new offer, as well as available information and the emergence of competition. The phase of maturity of the life cycle of the tourism product refers to the decision of potential tourists, who are most often distinguished by loyalty to the tourist offer. When it comes about the time of acceptance of the offer, according to E. Rogers, there is one generally accepted classification of consumers in five categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and category of late individuals. The innovators are characterized by being ready to accept new ideas, accepting risk and communicating with the other innovators. So called "early acceptors" accept the news before the average time, although they rarely find themselves in the leading position, they also apply well thinking over the innovation before they adopt it on the tourism market. Late majority are mainly skeptical individuals who accept new ideas with a precautionary measure. At the center of their motivation are the economic needs or the reaction from the environment. The late consumers, the traditionalists, who have the longest local view, are oriented to the past, and with suspicion see the news.⁶In fact, they are finally accepting the innovation of the tourism market. From the aspect of dynamic and fast technological development, a number of opportunities are offered through which the finding of potential buyers is much simpler. The major tourist companies are constantly monitoring the new technological processes through which they are enriching the content of the tourism product, and the same content undergoes upgrading and it is offered on the tourist market. The purpose of the tourist companies is to develop long-term relationships with the existing consumers of the tourist product and to maintain them, because it is much easier to sell tourism products / services to already permanent and loyal tourists than to new and unknown ones. However, the efforts to encourage the development and maintenance of the same-minded consumers, must be evaluated as expected in the long-term profit. The important thing for tour operators is that

⁶Маричић, Б., Понашање потрошача, Савремена администрација, шесто допуњено и измењено издање, Београд, 2002

they must determine the usefulness of tourists, that the costs of finding tourists, providing services and communicating with them will not exceed the potential profit. In the area of tourism services, the development of modern technologies has greatly facilitated the choice of tourist destination for tourists. Especially considering the fact that tourists do not have the opportunity to try or see the service before the trip. They are allowed to be informed mainly through travel guides, catalogs, postcards, presentations and offers at international tourism fairs, while a new means of promoting the tourist offer appear and that is the web site. In order to promote the tourist destination on the tourist market, it is necessary to have access to electronic data in relation to a wide range of information such as: information related to the position of the destination, the distance from the main centers, airports, currency, basic and complementary motives, traditions and culture of the local population. All this information are very important in making the decision, i.e in its acceptance or refusal. Also, information on the political and security situation in the specified tourist destination are of particular importance. When choosing a destination, potential tourists do the most research on the Internet, so it is important that all the information contained on the website are credible. the local population. Through internet forums, visitors share and exchange their opinions on tourist sites, inform each other about the attractions to be visited, catering services, as well as how to communicate with The advantage of using new technologies is also seen in the application of the online booking system, which significantly facilitated the process of buying travel arrangements and contributed to the increase in the level of individual travel. Two most popular web sites, which provide suitable hotel offers are www.tripadvisor.com and www.booking.com. On these websites you can get information about hotels in all regions of the world and they are ranked based on ratings from tourists. Together with the use of TripAdvisor information, there is also a mobile application, which operation is enabled on all platforms. Despite the many positive effects that modern technology brings, there are some negative effects that are slowing down over time. The main problem that still exists is that a certain percentage of people are still “illiterate” in sense of collecting information on the internet. Therefore, a large number of tourists do not want to use an online reservation because they do not believe the online systems, they have a critical attitude to online information and they take every information with reserved attitude.

THE INTERNET'S INFLUENCE IN THE OPERATION OF TOURIST ENTITIES

The application of the Internet and information systems gave completely new and different character to the work of the tourist entities. The use of modern technologies reduces operating costs, expands the tourism market, it facilitates the communication among the holders of tourist offers, as well as communication with the potential tourist demand and improvement of the promotion through the Internet. There are four basic Global Distribution Systems (GDS): Amadeus, Galileo International, Sabre and Worldspan. All of these systems significantly facilitate the work of tourism entities and they are integral information systems that unite different segments of operation. The constant use of the Internet has become necessary in order to achieve the best possible business effects. Creating web pages is the basis for the operation of each tourist entity. Since it is impossible for the tourist service to be seen or tried before it is used, what is a major problem in the operation of tourism, with the use of the Internet this negative characteristic of tourism production has been decreased. Through internet presentations, tourists are able to obtain information about tourist destinations as well as the quality of the products and services offered to them. The constant updating and upgrading of the software makes the communication easier as well as with customers of the tourist services and positively influences the rating of the tourist entities. Web sites explore tourist demand while travel agencies upgrade their products by placing promotions on websites in form of audio or video animation that attract a large number of visitors to the site where they are placed. In the last few years, popular websites have been used to advertise travel agencies, hotels and restaurants with offers of various tourist services at much lower prices ("last minute"). What can be predicted in terms of modern technological development where it allows direct communication of tourists with the final providers of tourist services for tourist resorts, where the same services are enabled at lower prices, the physical existence of travel agencies in the future will be unnecessary. The incompatibility of different reservation systems is also a problem that travel agencies face. An online reservation is possible, but there is no way that these systems would connect directly. The wide range of information to which tourists come up, makes the operation of travel agencies more difficult, decisions made by tourists are mainly influenced by the experience of other people. If tourists find bad ratings for a particular resort, there is no way they can change their opinion. This causes scaling down the interest of tourists for a particular tourist destination, therefore tourist entities must constantly change the tourist offer.

CONCLUSION

With technical and technological progress, modern tourism experienced changes both in quantitative and qualitative terms. A central place is taken by the consumer to whom the tourist offer is adapted. The tourist movements contributed to discover places that were unknown and untrained until recently, giving tourists the opportunity to visit and get to know the distant and exotic destinations. Predicting the behavior of the consumer of tourism products and services is an important segment in the operation of tourism entities, if there is a need on the market then the tourist company will be the first to provide it on the market. Information systems eased the traditional way of working of travel agencies. The Internet contributed to easier communication of tourism initiatives, reduced marketing costs and facilitated the expansion of the tourism market. Regarding the promotion of tourism products and services, using the Internet has abandoned the old traditional ways of promotion that replaced new, cheaper promotional types that can be quickly updated. The interest of potential tourists is increasing with the addition of multimedia content in the tourist offer. The Internet knows no boundaries and therefore has a large share when it comes to obtaining information about tourism, because apart from the big players in the tourism industry, the number of small and medium-sized tourism firms that prepare their own internet sites is advertised and operated through them so they become part of e-business, becoming part of e-tourism. The best promoter for the good work of travel agencies is still the satisfied tourist. Consideration should be given to the wishes and needs of tourists and the information that are placed on the tourist market, because if one's trust is lost, it is very difficult to get it.

LITERATURE

1. Кунчик, Ципфел, Вовед во науката и публицистиката, Фондација Фридрих Еберт, Скопје, 1998
2. Маричиќ, Б., Понашање потрошача, Савремена администрација, шесто допуњено и измењено издање, Београд, 2002
3. Проф.д-р Мариноски Науме “Основи на туристичка теорија и практика”, Факултет за туризам и угостителство, Охрид, 2008
4. Проф. д-р Симонческа Л. “Промотивни активности во туризмот”- трето изменето и дополнето издание, Универзитет “Св. Климент Охридски”- Битола, Факултет за туризам и угостителство- Охрид, 2015

5. Stetic, Snezana, Časopis Departmana za geografiju, turizam i hotelijerstvo Turizam 6/2002
6. T.O'Sullivan, J.Hartley, D.Saunders,M.Montgomery, J.Fiske, Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies, Routledge, London and New York, 1995:176
7. Wells, W., D., Prensky, D., Consumer Behavior, John Wiley and Sons, Inc, New York, 1996