Chapter 21
E–Relationship for Web–Based Tourism Promotion:
A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT
Tourism has been featured as a rapidly growing industry with excellent opportunities for business development. There are several success factors which determine the growth of the tourism promotional endeavors of the hotels. This chapter evaluates four of the key success factors related to web based tourism promotion: trust, electronic service quality, usability and accessibility. The theoretical models available for measuring the aforementioned success factors are evaluated along with the survey on the development of research activities in these four fronts. The theoretical frameworks within each concept categories are compared and contrasted to infer the competitive advantage of each model in modeling web based tourism promotion activities. Finally, the conclusions are made on the basis of the analysis undertaken on the conceptual models in each of these categories.

INTRODUCTION
The unprecedented growth in Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) has revolutionized the business world. Advances in relation to managerial functions have resulted in an epochal impact on the relevant businesses. For the survival and success of any industrial cluster, proper acquisition of technology and effective usage of its innovations have become vital elements. The tourism industry is one particular area that has made a strategic utilization of ICT. In fact, ICTs have made significant changes to the global tourism industry, the growth in multimedia platforms, has resulted in changes within the industry (Buhalis, 2004). Although the Information Systems/Information Technology (IS/IT) has evolved as a strategic player and even the principle enabler in tourism promotion during the last few decades, most of the hoteliers in developing countries are still using it...
as a limited support tool for promotion. This lack
of utilization will inevitably have some negative
impact upon potential business, particularly given
the huge growth in tourism within developing
countries. Especially, the use of internet is critical
in marketing of a cultural product like tourism due
to that fact that the internet provides wider scope
in marketing, which is paramount in marketing a
cultural product to people coming from differ-
ing cultural and geographic backgrounds. There
are also other essential factors that contributing
towards the success of web based tourism which
needs to be considered when marketing cultural
product. The purpose of this chapter is to shed some
insight into these success factors and understand
how they could potentially contribute towards
the success of web based tourism promotion in
developing countries.

The global leading position of the tourism indus-
try has opened up a strategic window for many
developing countries to boost their economy, by
positioning themselves to a record global market
share in tourism. In fact, the WTO predicted that
in 2010, America would lose its favorable position
behind Europe, to Asia and the Pacific in receiv-
ing international tourists and that by 2020, Asia
and the Pacific could expect around 397 million
arrivals (Harris & Vogel, 2007). The growth of
tourism in developing countries is expanding at a
faster rate than their developed counterparts. One
of the primary success indicators for this is the
promotion of their tourism attractions to developed
countries. 30% of the American adult population
used the internet to browse for travel information
in 2003, while European online travels sales for
the same period increased by 44% (Werthner
clearly shows the increasing trend of internet based
tourism reservation from year 2003. Furthermore,
the evolution of web platform technologies from
traditional web 1.0 to interactive Web 2.0 has re-
sulted in a paradigm shift in online promotion. Web
3.0 platforms could enable even greater potential.

However, one could argue as to whether it is pru-
dent for hotels located in the developing countries,
to invest a huge amount in web 3.0 technologies
in the era of global financial instability? Also,
being at the cutting edge of a technological shift,
is it advisable for hotels to invest in technologies
which could become quickly obsolete? However,
an interactive platform is an essential component
for most of these hotels, to facilitate excellence in
tourism promotion. Consequently, web 2.0 with
high level interactivity could be the most viable
platform technology for the hotel websites.

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It is commonplace for IS/IT to be used as a strategic
player, even as the principle enabler, in business
success. There is also a counter argument by
researchers which asks whether investments on
technology are sustainable. Bocij et al. (2003, p.
514) discussed this argument and concluded that
there is no significant correlation between spend-
ing on IT and profitability. However it could also
be argued that the underutilization of IS/IT may
create a strategic vulnerability to the organization.
The European e-business market watch reports,
that the overall ICT utilization remains important
for competitive advantage within the tourism sec-
tor (E-Business Watch, 2005, p 7). In contrast the
success greatly depends on the approach being
adopted, not only on the technology itself (Gretzel
et al., 2000, p. 146). Therefore developing new
strategies is more productive than solely investing
on emerging technologies. Apart from the above
discussion, another study suggest alignment of
business and IS/IT strategies as a better means to
improve organizational performance (Shin, 2001,
p. 227). However, a thorough analysis of business
needs and the existing IS/IT mix is essential to
make a case for each IS/IT investment in the cur-
rent climate of a global recession.
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