Web Portals as an Exemplar for Tourist Destinations

Michelle Rowe
Edith Cowan University, Australia
Wayne Pease
University of Southern Queensland, Australia
Pauline McLeod
Queensberry Information Technologies Pty Ltd, Australia

INTRODUCTION

Continuing on from an earlier article in this publication that considers portals and their relevance to destination tourism, this article investigates the case study of the Margaretriver.com Web portal. Margaretriver.com is based on a brokerage model of portals and this structure has been important to its development. Also critical to its success is the collective approach taken by small and medium tourist enterprises (SMTEs) as they have coalesced around shared assets that belong to the region.

The evolution of the Margaret River Tourism Association and its coordination of tourism in the region culminating in the portal as it is today, suggest that the role of a champion, community, social identity, and collaborative behaviour are important to successful destination marketing. These factors have been identified earlier in this publication as being important antecedents to collaborative commerce (c-commerce) of which this portal is an example.

WEB PORTAL: MARGARETRIVER.COM

A discussion of portals, portals and the Internet, information technology (IT) and tourism destination marketing, and the role of collaboration around IT, including collaborative commerce (c-commerce), was the subject of an earlier article in this publication. This article serves as an illustration of that discussion and considers the collaborative aspects of Web portals via Margaretriver.com—a successful exemplar of c-commerce. Some of the reasons for this success are outlined and issues and challenges for the future are discussed.

Margaret River is a small region located around 300 kilometres south of Perth, Western Australia. The region is a thriving one characterised by small businesses associated with rural pursuits—agriculture especially dairy and the wine industry, and tourism.

Margaretriver.com is akin to a cooperative. Around 450 local SMTEs have taken up membership of the local Margaret River Tourist Association, which oversees the portal in conjunction with a local IT enterprise—Queensberry Information Technologies Pty Ltd. It was the coming together of the Association and this IT expert that led to the development of the portal (see Figure 1) and the Bookeasy system that supports it.

According to various categories of business models observable on the Web, portals can take many forms (Rappa, 2006). Margaretriver.com is an example of the brokerage model. Brokers are effectively market makers bringing buyers and sellers together facilitating transactions and unifying, in this case, SMTEs to more effectively represent the region. In this case, 1% of the value of each transaction is apportioned to the visitors centre, which funds its operation and that of the portal.

Leadership, vision, and the motivation from a champion was critical to the development of the portal and its subsequent success. The pioneering champion understood the industry and developments therein, being a boundary spanner and networking within and beyond the industry. This generated exposure to developments in IT, tourism, and the consumer behaviour of the tourist, which are reflected in the portal.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PORTAL

The approach to the portal has been a progressive or iterative one. Early collaboration occurred manually—the establishment of off-line processes was important in that they could be replicated online once the decision to go online was made. This evolution has been important to the success of the system and the development of processes, relationships, and the region itself.

There have been three systems preceding the Bookeasy system that support the present portal. The first was Clippa in 1991, then in 1994 Travel with Windows was adopted.
www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=1

Related Content

Lotus Workforce Management: Streamlining Human Resource Management
www.igi-global.com/chapter/lotus-workforce-management/63942?camid=4v1a

Adaptation and Recommendation in Modern Web 2.0 Portals
www.igi-global.com/chapter/adaptation-recommendation-modern-web-portals/53730?camid=4v1a

Sharing Video Emotional Information in the Web
www.igi-global.com/article/sharing-video-emotional-information-in-the-web/101802?camid=4v1a

Developing Semantic Portals
www.igi-global.com/chapter/developing-semantic-portals/17876?camid=4v1a