



24th DAAAM International Symposium on Intelligent Manufacturing and Automation, 2013

## Marketing and Commercial Activities Offered on Croatian Five-Star Hotel Web Sites

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### Abstract

Tourism is the crucial industry for Croatian economy and this statement is supported by high growth rates of tourism income. One of the important factors for tourism are accommodation facilities, especially hotels. Due to the fact that we live in the information technologies era, the Internet became a new space for doing economic and business activities in all spheres, and especially important in tourism. Hotel Web sites become increasingly important, and this phenomenon will be analyzed in this paper. Using a data base containing data for the 30 five-star hotel Web sites, a survey was conducted on how much these new technologies are used in tourism industry in Croatia. Marketing and commercial activities offered on hotel Web sites have a significant impact on the hotel's commercial success. Characteristics of the five-star hotels hotel Web sites will be examined and compared through the basic groups of Web business activities. Also some recommendations for the successful hotel Web sites will be provided. Hotel Web site in the future will not be only a promotion channel, but also an active generator of the hotel business and development.

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of DAAAM International Vienna

*Keywords:* hotel Web sites; Croatian five-star hotels; Internet; hotel marketing; commercial activities; Web 2.0

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### 1. Introduction

We live in the Internet era, and it represents not only an inexhaustible source of information but also a mean that gives us the opportunity to communicate with people from all around the world, to research information and do business. We can conclude that we live in the era of "Electronic Business" or "e-Business". Electronic Business

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represents a way of doing business for today and for tomorrow. Electronic business (e-business) encompasses the electronic information exchange within the organization, as well as between the organization and all other subjects. New ways for doing business are developed through the innovative usage of information and communication and internet technologies. It helps companies to achieve the competitive advantage on the global market.

## 2. Literature overview

All figures should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1,2,3,...). Law and Hsu (2005) investigated customers' perceptions on the importance of hotel web sites dimensions and attributes [1]. Their paper aims to report an exploratory study that investigated the perceived importance of dimensions and attributes on hotel web sites from the perspective of travelers. Authors have made personal interviews with 304 travelers who had previously visited hotel web sites. Empirical results indicated that respondents viewed reservation information as the most important dimension, and room rates as the most important attribute. In addition, respondents viewed that the included dimensions and attributes were more important on web sites of up-scale hotels than on web sites of economy hotels.

Sahadev and Islam (2005) have made a study that aims to explore the propensity of adoption of ICT-based facilities by hotels in the hospitality sector [2]. The factors that influence a hotel's propensity to adopt ICTs are broadly divided into location-related and firm-related. The relative impact of the factors on the ICT adoption propensity was analyzed through a survey amongst 95 hotels from seven locations in Thailand. The findings give valuable insights for the marketers of ICTs who wish to gain entry into the hotel sector, and help them in better focusing their sales and marketing efforts.

Claver-Cortés et al (2008) have analyzed the performance in the Spanish hotel industry [3]. Several important managerial factors, such as training, information and communication technologies and information systems (ICT/IS), and environmental management, can be related to total quality management (TQM) in the hotel industry. The paper aims to analyze how TQM is associated with these factors and to verify whether more TQM-committed hotels achieve higher performance. The empirical data were collected from a sample of 301 three-to-five-star Spanish hotels. A cluster analysis was carried out to identify the different TQM commitment levels, after which a regression analysis tested the TQM-performance link. Managerial factors are significantly further developed in hotels with a stronger TQM commitment, which also have higher performances. TQM does not seem to influence all the performance variables measured.

Lin and Liao (2010) conducted a study seeking to focus on discovering consumer preferences regarding package tours to China, revealing differences among consumers' cognition related to these package tours, travel advertisements on web sites and search engine results, identifying the similarities among travel agency web sites and establishing a consumer cognitive structure to assist marketers in designing written content for display in search engine results [4]. The study adopted means-end chain theory as a theoretical basis and used the written content of tourism web sites displayed in search engine results as an empirical object. By comparing the contents of tourism web sites and the search engine results, the researchers could analyze and compare similarities and differences among web site content, search results and consumer cognition. Using the utility score of each attribute level to calculate the total utility can uncover the customers' preferred attribute level portfolio. The calculation results identified the most preferred tour package. The study found that the greater the variety of package tours to China provided by the web sites of a particular travel agent, the higher the possibility of that agent providing discount incentives. Furthermore, the text content of each web site provides more attribute information regarding package tours and less information about the consequences of travelling and value satisfaction.

DiPietro and Wang (2010) have discussed key issues for ICT applications in hospitality operations [5]. The purpose of their paper is to understand several key issues regarding technology strategies for the lodging industry, including the use and impact of technology, technology adoption and implementation, the role of organization technology environment in technology use, channel management strategies, as well as future trends of technology development. The authors have conducted qualitative interviews with hotel practitioners to gain knowledge in order to help explore issues and generate hypotheses for future research regarding information and communications technology (ICT) applications in the lodging industry. The research finds that technology will continue to impact guest service and customer relationship management in the lodging industry, and that companies vary in their implementation and use of the technology applications.

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