

QUEENSLAND
TOURISM
AWARDS

2011

Winner

Tourism Education
and Training

Tourism e-kit

Delivering clear e-knowledge
to the tourism industry



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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Introduction

This e-kit has been produced by The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and has been funded by all of Australian State & Territory Tourism Offices. It incorporates a series of easy to consume tutorials that equips tourism operators with effective knowledge about online marketing.

The tutorials in this kit provide an extensive education of online marketing starting with an initial assessment of your current online marketing status to more complex issues such as online booking systems. Each tutorial includes a helpful header with information about how much time the tutorial will take you to complete and the level of difficulty.

This tourism e-kit resides on the ATDW corporate website www.atdw.com.au. You can download the entire e-kit or one tutorial at a time depending on your bandwidth and time constraints. If you have received this tutorial via another channel such as your State Tourism Office make sure you check the ATDW website for latest updates and other useful information.

Benefits of the tool are summarised as follows:

- Smarter e-marketing knowledge
- Insight into what online marketing strategies will suit your business
- Greater understanding of ATDW and its products and services
- Hundreds of references to resources

We trust this tool will expand your online marketing knowledge and equip you to maximise your e-marketing opportunities.



Topic | The basics

Tutorial 1

Internet – Planning My Success

This tutorial will give you an overview of why you should use the Internet to promote your business. This tutorial also references all the tutorials you might want to read.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. Who is this document designed to assist?

These tutorials have been put together to help small and medium Australian tourism operators successfully market their business online. If you don't have a website for your business or have one that is not performing to your or your customer's expectations, these tutorials are for you.

2. Roadmap to success

What do I need to do and in what order? Each tutorial can be read independently and no technological background is required to understand their content. You are also welcome to print all the tutorials and read them chronologically.

Each tutorial should not take longer than 45 minutes to read.

You will find a list of all the tutorials organised in different sections on the following page.

a) *The basics*

- Tutorial 1: Internet: planning my success
- Tutorial 2: Initial assessment of my website
- Tutorial 3: Web strategy: assessment and components
- Tutorial 4: Web strategy: cost and timings
- Tutorial 5: Finding a good web professional
- Tutorial 6: Planning for a new website
- Tutorial 7: Email best practices
- Tutorial 7b: National broadband network (NBN)

b) *Website*

- Tutorial 8: Registering a domain name 101
- Tutorial 9: Domain name: advanced
- Tutorial 10: Organising hosting for my site
- Tutorial 11: The Internet, web 2.0 and the tourism industry
- Tutorial 12: Target market 101
- Tutorial 13: Website 101: visual design and content
- Tutorial 14: Website 101: usability and technology
- Tutorial 15: What is a content management system?
- Tutorial 16: Images 101
- Tutorial 16a: Videos for my website
- Tutorial 17: Mobile technology for tourism
- Tutorial 17a: Website, mobile website or mobile application
- Tutorial 18: Security and backups

c) *Search engine optimisation*

- Tutorial 19: Search engines 101
- Tutorial 20: Critical components of optimising a website
- Tutorial 21: Keywords



- Tutorial 22: Understanding inbound links to my site
- Tutorial 23: Sourcing inbound links
- Tutorial 23a: Travel and tourism links

d) E-marketing

- Tutorial 24: Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Tutorial 24a: Converting a prospect into a guest
- Tutorial 25: Email marketing
- Tutorial 26: Pay per click 101
- Tutorial 27: Setting up a PPC campaign with Google AdWords
- Tutorial 31: Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
- Tutorial 32: Tourism Exchange Australia
- Tutorial 33: Google tools

e) Online booking

- Tutorial 34: Online booking systems 101
- Tutorial 35: Online booking systems: advanced

f) Analysis and statistics

- Tutorial 36: Tracking and reporting
- Tutorial 37: Google Analytics

g) Online distribution

- Tutorial 38: Online distribution 101
- Tutorial 39: Online distribution: advanced
- Tutorial 39A: Online travel agents – 101
- Tutorial 39B: Online travel agents – Advanced profiles of key players

h) Social media

- Tutorial 40: Social media for tourism
- Tutorial 40A: Managing multiple social media accounts
- Tutorial 41: Group buying & Daily deal sites – Overview
- Tutorial 41A: Group buying & Daily deal sites – Profiles of key players
- Tutorial 42: Online tourism communities
- Tutorial 43: Facebook for tourism
- Tutorial 44: Twitter for tourism
- Tutorial 45: Online reputation management
- Tutorial 46: TripAdvisor for tourism
- Tutorial 47: YouTube and video hosting websites
- Tutorial 48: Flickr and photo hosting websites
- Tutorial 49: Blogging for tourism

i) Working digitally in China

- Tutorial 50: Online in China – Introduction
- Tutorial 51: Online in China – Developing a Chinese website



- Tutorial 52: Online in China – Search engines
- Tutorial 53: Online in China – Social media

3. Why the Internet?

The Internet is a network of computer networks, which anyone can access and participate in using a web-enabled computer. Users turn to the Internet to search for information and interact with other users such as friends, peers and communities. It comes as no surprise that travellers use the “net” extensively to plan and organise their trip. Latest international research shows that more than 80% of travellers do so

This signifies that- as a tourism business - you need to move your Internet strategy to the centre of your business model. Having a website that sits “on the side”, a Facebook page that isn’t managed and no social media strategy will not allow you to compete in the online world.



Topic | The basics

Tutorial 2

Initial Assessment Of My Website

Think about your business' website. How well does it match the requirements your ideal customer might have?

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. Visibility and findability SCORE / 10

What group of keywords would people use to find your product / service (e.g. backpacker accommodation Brisbane, winery Barossa valley). Give two examples (e.g. backpacker accommodation Brisbane, cheap hostel in Brisbane). This question has no points but your answers will be used in the next question.

First example:

Second example:

Can you find your website on the first 3 pages of a search engine for the keyword groups you wrote above? Google the above two examples and see if your website comes up.

YES NO (value= 5 points per each keyword group)

IF YOU CANNOT FIND YOUR WEBSITE IT MEANS THAT IT IS NOT OPTIMISED FOR SEARCH ENGINES. YOU ARE GOING TO MISS OUT ON A LOT OF POTENTIAL BUSINESS.

2. Visual design and content SCORE / 10

Now have a closer look at your website. Tick if it meets the below criteria:

- A professional, elegant design (2 points)
- Varied and up to date quality photos that are relevant to your business (1 point)
- Recent video footage of the property or tour (1 point)
- Audio (e.g. guest interview, sound of native animals) (which can be switched off) (1 point)
- Maps and itineraries in a compressed and user-friendly format (that the customer can download, print and take in the car) (1 point)
- Customer reviews and testimonials (from TripAdvisor or other sites) (2 point)
- Newsletter subscription and newsletter (1 point)
- Fresh, interesting content that is regularly updated and easy to read (1 point)

3. Functionality and accessibility SCORE: / 12

Tick if your website meets the below criteria:

- An evident navigation menu (3 points)
- Every main category can be accessed from the home page (3 points)



Initial Assessment Of My Website

- Images load very quickly and are not missing (2 points)
- The look of your site doesn't change when the site is opened on a different computer or browser (2 points)
- The look of your site is mobile/smartphone/tablet friendly (2 points)

4. Technology SCORE: ... / 10

Tick if your website meets the below criteria:

- You are able to change the content of the site and add new pages using a system called "a content management system" (2 points)
- You check your emails at least 3 times a days and respond promptly (3 points)
- A client can book the product on your site and pay with a credit card (2 points)
- You have a reliable web host and your website has never been the victim of technical problems or viruses (1 point)
- You have access to, and can monitor, the visitation statistics of your website (2 points)

5. Online bookability SCORE: ... / 10

Tick if your website meets the below criteria:

- An online booking system which takes instant secure credit card payments is integrated to your website (2 points)
- Your "book now" button is located on your homepage and key product pages of your website (2 points)
- Your online booking system is integrated to a channel manager therefore distributing your inventory and availability to other popular websites (2 points)
- Your online booking system is integrated to the Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA) (2 points)
- You measure the sales generated by your online booking system? (2 points)

6. Customer engagement SCORE: ... / 10

Tick if your web strategy includes the following:

- You have claimed your TripAdvisor listing, ask the majority of your guests to leave you a review and respond to at least every negative review (3 points)
- Your TripAdvisor reviews are accessible from your website (1 point)
- You have a Facebook business page, ask the majority of your guests to join it and interact with your fans via Facebook (2 points)
- Your Facebook page is accessible from your website (1 point)
- You have a YouTube account, take short video reviews of your guest and post them on YouTube (2 points)
- Your YouTube videos are visible (embedded) on your website (1 point)

7. My total score:

Visibility and findability: / 10

Visual design and content: / 10

Functionality and accessibility: / 12

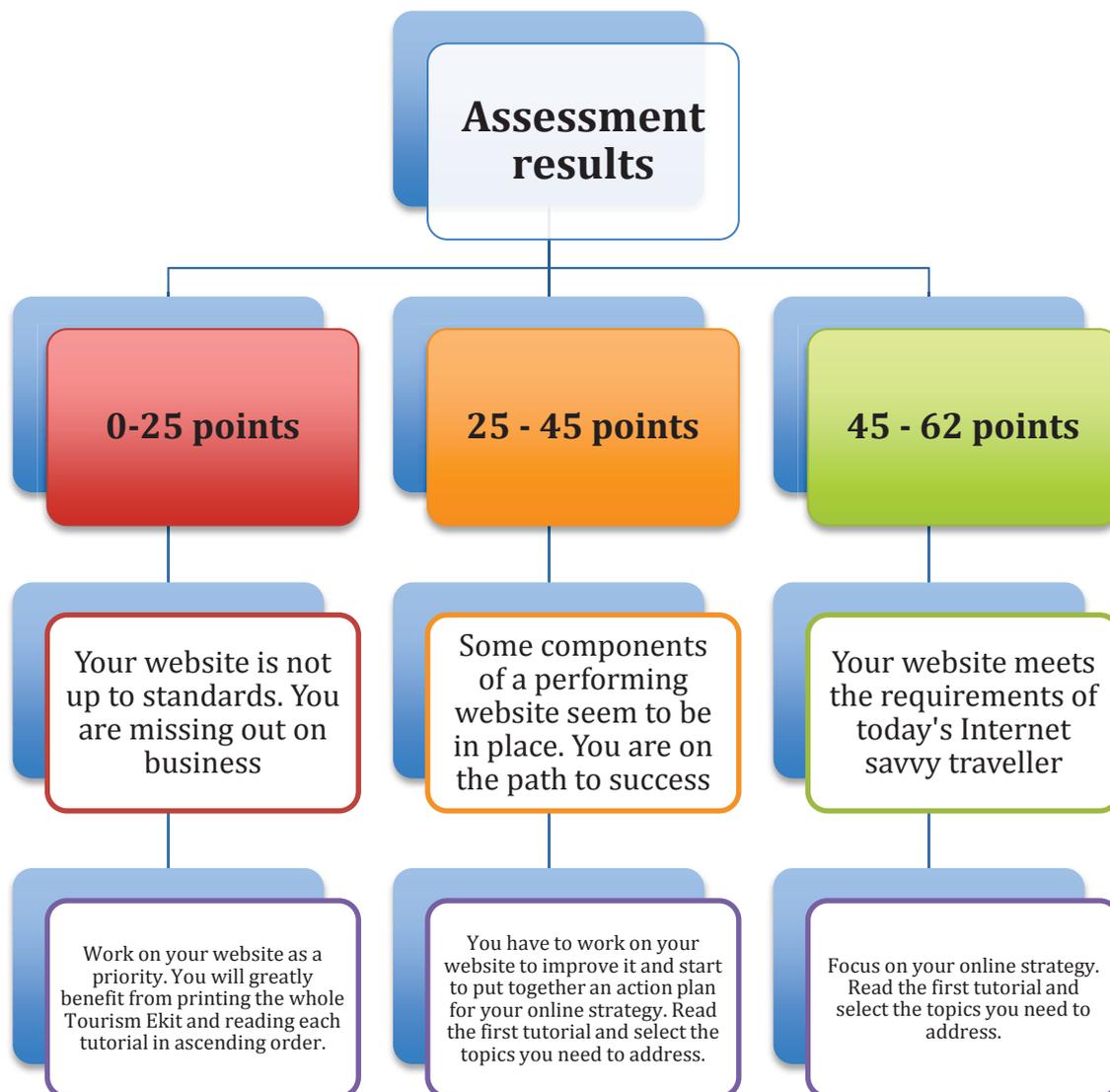
Technology: / 10

Online bookability: / 10

Customer engagement: / 10

Your score: / 62

The chart below will highlight where your next focus should be based on your results.



8. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Web strategy: assessment and components
- Web strategy: cost and timings
- The Internet, web 2.0 and the tourism industry
- Target market 101
- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Understanding inbound links to my site
- Sourcing inbound links

Initial Assessment Of My Website

- Online reputation management
- Google Analytics
- Google tools
- Online booking systems 101
- Online booking systems: advanced

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 3

Web Strategy – Assessment and Components

This tutorial will help you assess your e-readiness level. It will also review the different components of a successful online strategy. It is recommended you first read the previous tutorial which conducts an analysis of your existing website.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Initial Assessment Of My Website



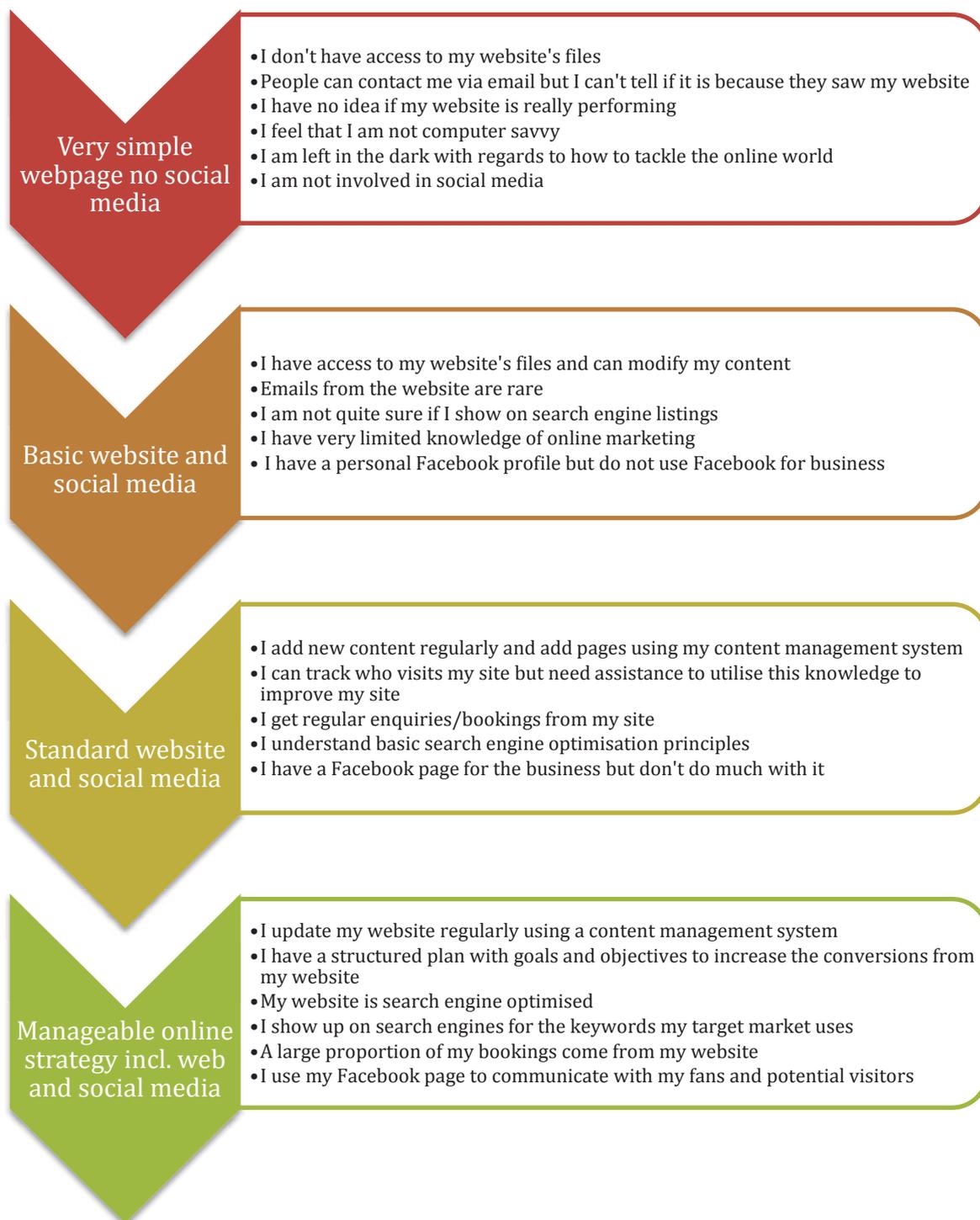
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1. Where am I now?

The below chart will assist you defining the level of your business online-readiness. Four levels, from having a very simple webpage to a manageable online strategy have been identified. Assess which level you best fit in by reviewing the dot points.



2. What is the next stage I can reach?

Tick your current level in the first line of check boxes and aim to increase it by one within the next 12 months. When you read the other tutorials the abundance of information could be a little overwhelming. Come back to this tutorial and re-focus: you are only going to aim for the next level.



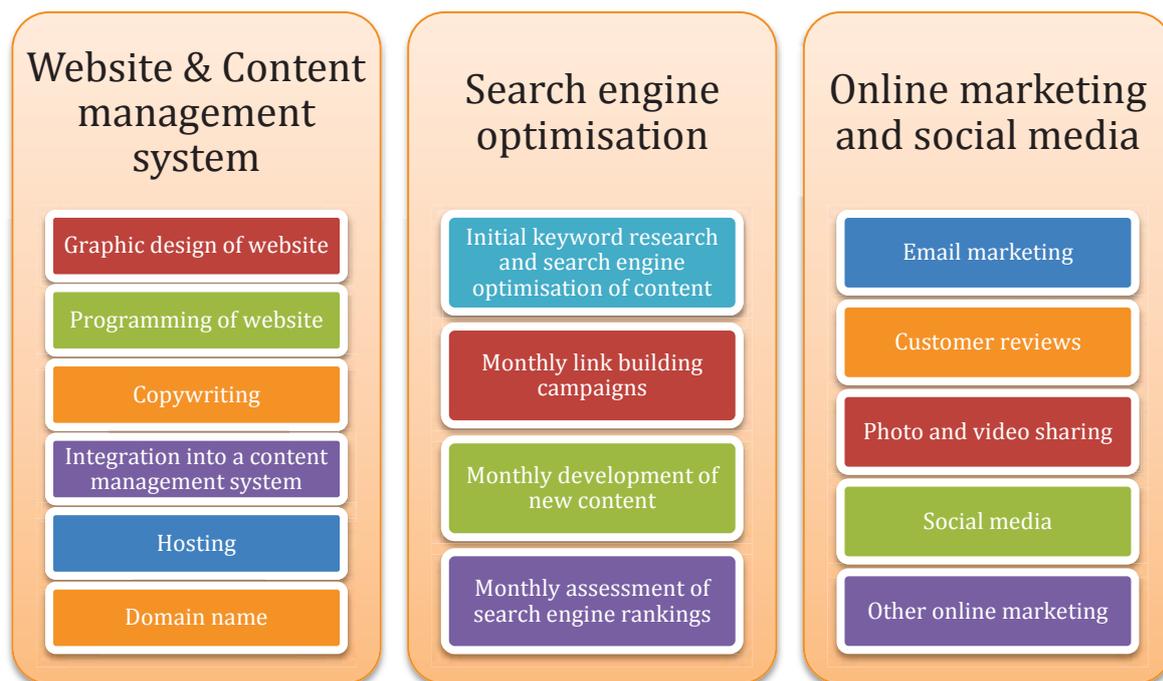
Level my web strategy is currently at:

Level I am planning to reach in the next 12 months:

3. Components of an online strategy

Now that you have assessed your current level, let's look further into the elements of a successful online strategy.

A web or online strategy is achieved by balancing three components, which will be further analysed in the paragraphs below:



4. Component 1: Website and content management system

The cost of fully customised and professionally designed websites for small tourism businesses can vary between \$3,000 to \$20,000+ dollars. This generally includes a custom design, the programming into an open-source user- and search engine friendly content management system and the population plus basic search engine optimisation of your content.

If your website has a lot of pages (for example more than 25-30) you may want to work with your web developer to populate the content yourself to lower the cost of the site.

a) Design options

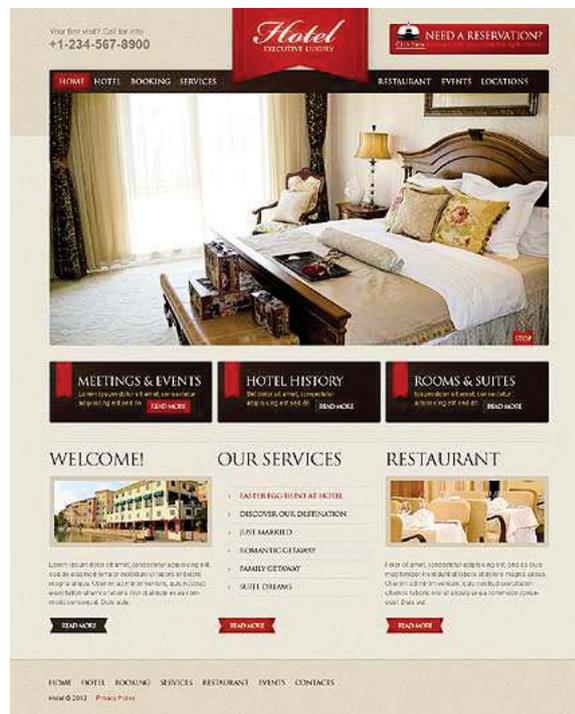
The graphic design component can increase the cost of the website as it involves a long consultation process with a specialised web designer. Depending on your requirements and the number of revisions required, this cost could easily reach up to a third of the cost of your new site.

To minimise the cost of the design process, many web development firms offer the opportunity to modify existing website templates. Some firms might simply get one of their in-house templates and customise it for your site without mentioning to you that it is based on a template. More customer-focused companies might give you broader options and ask you to choose amongst a series of templates they own. They could also refer you to a template-dedicated website such as www.templatemonster.com and let you decide which template you like best. Template Monster offers templates that suit small tourism and hospitality businesses. Below are two screenshots.

Note: many templates exist that are already formatted for the major content management systems (CMS). For instance, if you select the WordPress CMS you can choose amongst many

Web Strategy – Assessment and Components

different templates (called themes in WordPress). Many of the free WordPress themes are available here: <http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/>



Travel template from Template Monster Hotel template from Template Monster

Talk to your web development company to assess the options they offer. They generally offer both. Choosing a template-based design could not only save money but also a lot of your time!

b) Summary: website technology and content management system

Below are the key points to consider in terms of web programming and content management system.

- Your website should be developed in XHTML and **table-less** CSS. You do not need to understand what XHTML and **table-less** CSS are but need to ensure your web developer is programming using these languages. If they don't, seek a new one. **We recommend you stay away from Flash**, as it is not a search engine friendly technology.
- Web developers will sometimes quote you a price for your website based on the number of pages it will hold. If this is the case, you need to ask for clarification. Ask your web company two questions:
 - **Will your site include a content management system?** In our experience developers who quote on a "per page" basis generally do not use a content management system (unless they are referring to copywriting or content population). Content management systems allow your websites to have as many pages as you wish as adding a new page is only a click away.
 - **Does the "per page" cost include copywriting, population and search engine**

optimisation of content or simply the creation of the page itself, without the content population? If your web company offers to do the copywriting, content population and search engine optimisation of each page it justifies an increase in cost based on the number of pages your site holds.

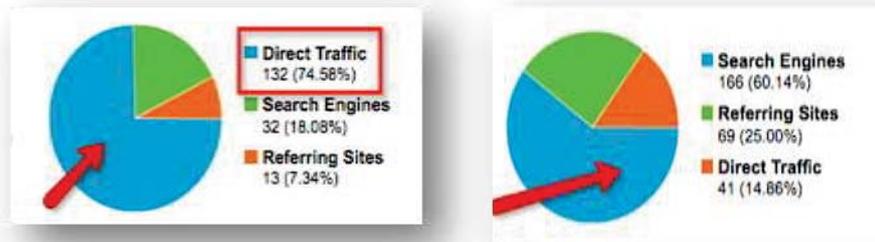
- The content management system installed on your website should be search engine friendly. The tutorial about content management systems will help you assess this.

5. Component 2: Search engine optimisation

Search engine optimisation is to a website what wheels are to a car.

A non-optimised website could provide you with a very low return on investment and therefore with very little business. An easy way to find out if your website is optimised for search engines is to look at your website's data which is captured by analytics programs such as Google Webmaster tools and Google Analytics. If your website is optimised for search engines there should be a lot of traffic referred to it from search engines. Let's look at the pie charts below to see which one of the two examples is an optimised site. This diagnosis is available in the majority of web analytics programs.

The first picture below shows that the bulk of traffic is coming directly to the website (e.g. users enter the address of the website in their browser directly). This website is missing out on a lot of business that could be brought by search engines. It is not search engine optimised.



Screen captures copyright: Google

The second picture reveals that the majority of the traffic to the website is brought by search engines. Search engines are promoting the website for free! This is the sign of a well optimised website.

97% OF SEARCHES START WITH A SEARCH ENGINE, AND GOOGLE IS BY FAR THE MOST WIDELY USED IN AUSTRALIA. WE RECOMMEND YOU WORK WITH SEARCH ENGINES.

When sourcing quotes for a web developer or an online marketing agency it is crucial you ensure they are familiar with coding a website for search engines. Many aren't.

Web developers are not always aware of key search engine optimisation principles. This is why it is important to work with a company that has expertise in both fields or with a



Web Strategy – Assessment and Components

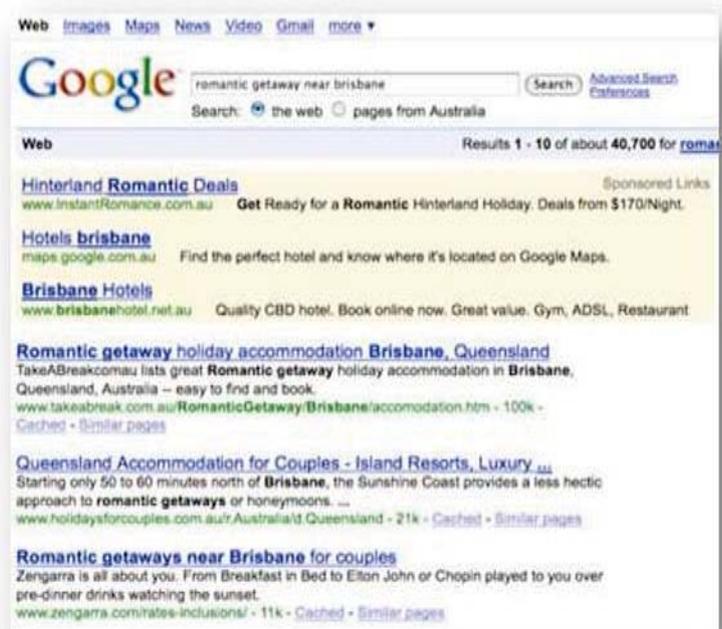
separate Search engine optimisation company.

Lastly, be aware that search engine optimisation is not a one-off but a continuous process. Make sure you put a plan in place to manage what needs to be done for your business to continuously appear on page one of search engine rankings.

PROVIDED YOUR WEBSITE'S CONTENT IS OPTIMISED AND YOU HAVE A CONTINUOUS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION STRATEGY IN PLACE, YOUR WEBSITE SHOULD START TO RANK HIGH ON THE SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS PAGE WHEN PEOPLE TYPE IN YOUR KEYWORDS.

*Imagine you are a bed and breakfast offering a romantic getaway near Brisbane. The keyword research done by your optimiser reveals that **romantic getaway near Brisbane** is a phrase often searched on Google. You should then rank on the first few pages of Google for that keyword.*

The screen shot on the right shows the results of a search for “romantic getaway near brisbane”. The third, non-commercial listing “Romantic getaways near Brisbane for couples” is a small bed and breakfast website that has been optimised for those keywords.



Screen capture copyright: Google

6. Component 3: Online marketing

Online marketing encompasses all the online activities you can undertake to promote your website. They are generally separated in two categories: free or involving payment. The paragraphs below will summarise these activities.

a) Free activities

- **Social media marketing:** in 2012 it is crucial you engage in social marketing. You need to at least monitor what is being said about your destination and business on



mainstream social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and TripAdvisor. Ignoring social media would not be wise as they are the mediums your potential travellers use to research and book travel.

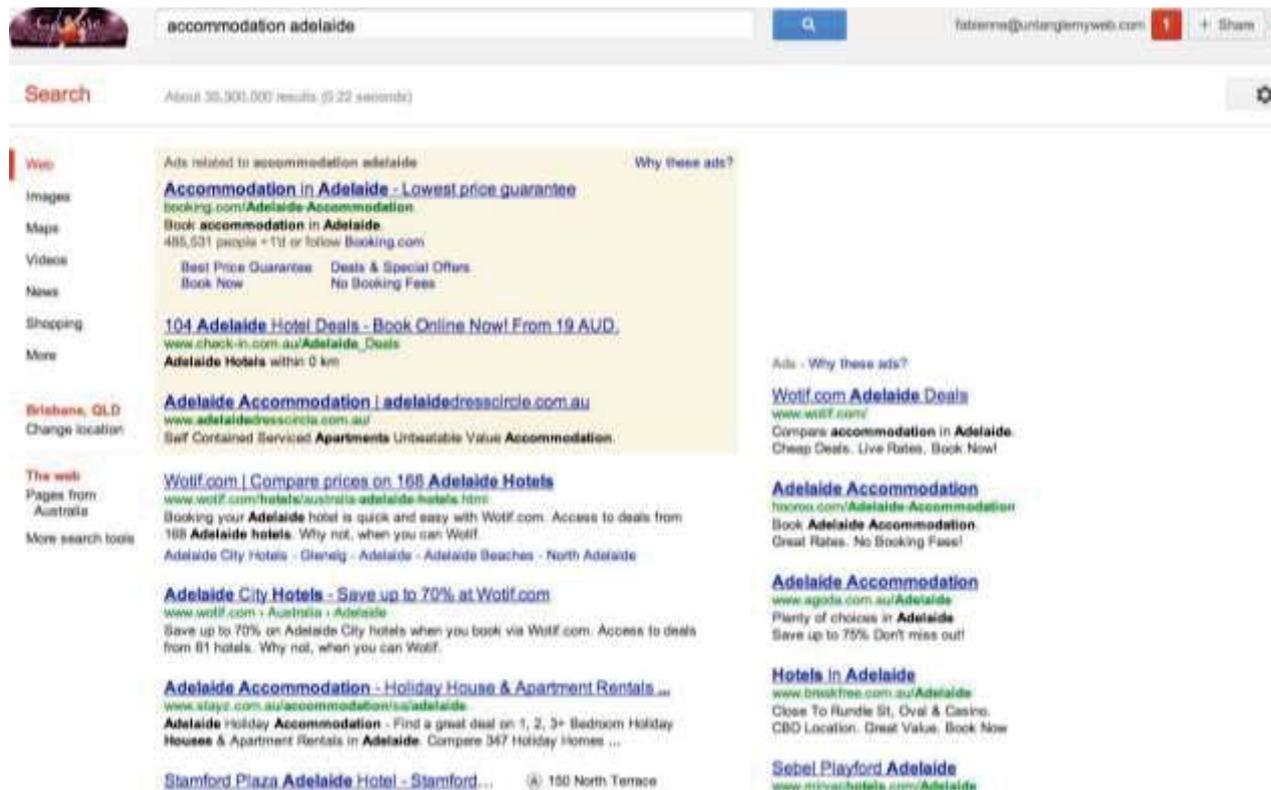
- **Search:** appearing in search engine listings is free. All it requires is a solid search engine optimisation strategy and an investment in terms of your time.
- **Linking strategy:** getting other relevant sites to link to your website does not involve money but relies on the content provided on your website being relevant to the sites linking to you. Having quality and relevant websites linking to you will make a positive difference in your search engine rankings. Sourcing links is part of your search engine optimisation strategy.

b) Paid-for activities

- **Search engine marketing (SEM), also known as pay per click (PPC):** paying search engine to promote a website. The key difference with unpaid (also known as organic) search engine results is how they are positioned on the page. The key players in PPC are:
 - **Google:** Google AdWords
 - **Yahoo:** Yahoo! Search Marketing
 - **Bing:** adCenter (formerly known as Microsoft adCenter)

The search engine results in the below image are a combination of organic search engine rankings (which directly result from a well-executed search engine optimisation strategy) and search engine marketing rankings.

The organic results are on the left, below the yellow “sponsored links” results. The SEM results are above the organic results as well as in the right column.



The screenshot shows a Google search for "accommodation adelaide". The search bar at the top contains the text "accommodation adelaide" and a search button. Below the search bar, it says "Search" and "About 36,901,000 results (0.22 seconds)". On the left side, there are navigation options: Web, Images, Maps, Videos, News, Shopping, and More. The main search results are displayed in a grid. The first result is an advertisement for "Accommodation in Adelaide - Lowest price guarantee" from Booking.com. Other results include "104 Adelaide Hotel Deals - Book Online Now! From 19 AUD.", "Adelaide Accommodation | adelaidecircle.com.au", "Wotif.com | Compare prices on 168 Adelaide Hotels", "Adelaide City Hotels - Save up to 70% at Wotif.com", "Adelaide Accommodation - Holiday House & Apartment Rentals", and "Stamford Plaza Adelaide Hotel". On the right side, there are more advertisements for "Wotif.com Adelaide Deals", "Adelaide Accommodation", "Adelaide Accommodation", "Hotels in Adelaide", and "Sebel Playford Adelaide".

Screen capture copyright: Google

Other online marketing activities that a small tourism business would have to pay for would be for instance:

- Email marketing
- Having a banner advertisement on another site
- Paying for links from travel or other directories which are not free of charge

7. Key learning outcomes

- A website is not a web strategy.
- Your website needs to be designed in a search engine friendly format.
- Many online marketing activities are free. They do however take time.
- You cannot avoid engaging in social media marketing.

8. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Initial assessment of my website
- Web strategy: cost and timings
- Target market 101
- Search engines 101
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 4

Web Strategy – Cost And Timings

This tutorial will review the cost and timings of a successful online strategy.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Web Strategy: Assessment And Components



1. How do I work out how much a web strategy costs?

It is not always straightforward to work out the cost of a web strategy as it depends on the website's requirements, the level of search engine optimisation and marketing.

It will also depend on how much of your time you are ready to invest and how much professional assistance you will require.

The only certainty is that the cost of technology has decreased over the past 10 years. The hardware required is affordable to all businesses and most of the software is free or has free equivalents such as the ones listed below:

Programming languages, application frameworks and databases:

- HTML (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTML>)
- CSS (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cascading_Style_Sheets)
- PHP (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PHP>)
- ASP (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ASP.NET>)
- MySQL databases (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MySQL>)
- Microsoft SQL server (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_SQL)

Open Source content management systems:

- Joomla! (www.joomla.org)
 - Drupal (<http://drupal.org>)
 - DotNetNuke (www.dotnetnuke.com)
 - CMS Made Simple (www.cmsmadesimple.org)
 - WordPress (www.wordpress.org)
 - SilverStripe (www.silverstripe.com)
- For a full list please visit:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_content_management_systems

Photo and video hosting:

- Flickr (www.flickr.com)
- Photobucket (<http://photobucket.com>)
- Picasa Web Albums (<http://picasaweb.google.com>)
- YouTube (www.youtube.com)

Photo editing software for your computer:

- Gimp (www.gimp.org)
- Irfanview (www.irfanview.com)

Word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases:

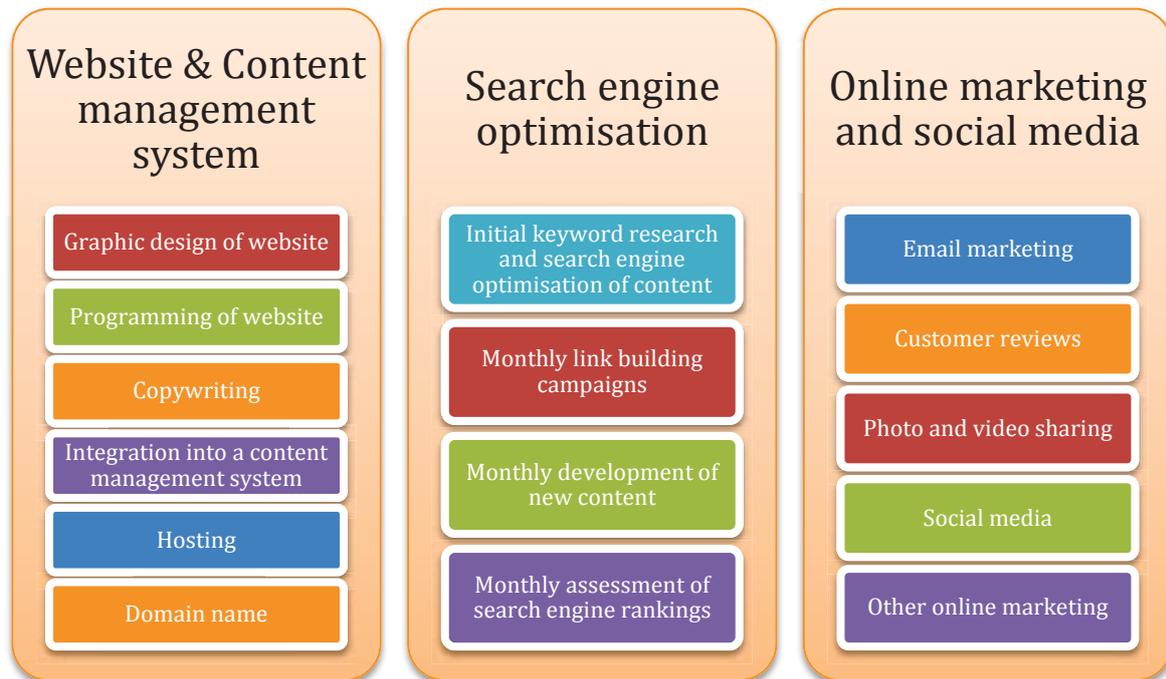
- Open Office (www.openoffice.org)

a) Pricing the 3 key components of my online strategy

The website will be the most important outlay; even though most of the programming software is free, you will still need a professional to put it together for you.

Search engine optimisation and online marketing are components, which can attract a one off fee (such as initial keyword research) and then a monthly or bi-monthly maintenance fee (such as monthly search engine optimisation). You should aim at developing your knowledge of key search engine optimisation principles to minimise the requirement for professional assistance.

The graphic below indicates the cost of each component of a strategy.



\$3,000 - \$20,000+

\$200 – 2,000 a month plus your own time as investment

To keep the cost down you can conduct many of the above activities yourself.

b) *What cannot be outsourced?*

Each component of your marketing strategy can be outsourced to a web professional. However, no one is more suited to draft your online content than yourself. **Content is king. Please note: if writing for the web isn't your thing it is important you use the services of a copywriter.**

Your product or service can be the best on the market but if you cannot translate how great it is using words, pictures, videos and audio there is little chance anyone is going to book you. Your online visitors will only contact you if the content appeals to them.

You need to be aware that web development companies will generally not write your website content. Your online marketer will guide you to best write your content, however the copywriting role usually remains yours. You can decide to outsource the copywriting to a web copywriter but you will still need to spend time letting them know about your business.

2. How much time will I need to dedicate to my strategy?

There are two components to a successful online strategy:

- Setting it up



- Continuously assessing it, managing it and developing it.

This paragraph will give you an overview of the timings.

a) *Setting up an online strategy*

The most difficult part when setting up a strategy is making the decision and putting together a plan addressing:

What to do, **who** is to do it, **when** to do it, and **how** to do it.

The one-month schedule below is aimed to assist small to medium organisations like yours setting up an online strategy. 30 minutes every day over 4 weeks is all you need to set up your strategy.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1: | Assess your current level of online-readiness and aim to reach the next level up within 12 months. |
| Weeks 1 and 2: | Research best practices by familiarising yourself with the Tourism E-kit tutorials and reading the ones you believe most relevant. Make notes of how you will best address each component of the strategy (web, search engine optimisation, online marketing). |
| Week 3: | Now that you know what needs to be done to improve your existing strategy, assess the different components of your existing website and strategy and make a note of how you are currently performing against these. |
| Week 4: | Define a 12-month plan by setting up monthly objectives and tasks that are both manageable and achievable. Start by defining your objectives on a monthly basis and then define the weekly tasks involved. |

If you have chosen to work with an online marketing company it is also important you go through this exercise by yourself as it will help you explain your requirements in the brief to your online marketer.

If you have decided to fly solo, it is recommended you get an online marketing professional to read over the key points to ensure all your efforts are rewarded with more business. A consultant might charge you between AUD80-180 dollars for an hour of their time but you can be certain the knowledge you will gain is well worth the money spent.

b) *Managing my strategy*

Once your plan is set up, you should expect to spend 1-2 hours at least, each week, working on the tasks you have set. You will also need to review your analytics to see if your efforts are paying off.

The key success factor is regularity. Below is an example of what your strategy schedule could look like:

Web Strategy – Costs And Timings

| My strategy: | Daily | Weekly | Fortnightly | Monthly |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emails: | Check and acknowledge emails 3 times a day, respond at least once a day. | | | Newsletter marketing |
| Content: | As required. Use guest feedback to improve your website. Successful tourism businesses update their content once a week and build new pages every time there is a new event in their region from which they could get business. If you have set up a blogging strategy, ensure that you blog regularly and respond to comments. | | | |
| Photos: | Be prepared to take action shot photos (clients, staff, scenery) when required | | Add new photos to website, Flickr account | Change photos if they are not relevant |
| Videos: | Be prepared to take videos (clients, staff, scenery) when required | | | Add new videos |
| Social media: E.g. Facebook | Twitter (monitoring) Facebook Page (monitoring) | Twitter (posting) Facebook Page (posting) | Monitor new groups | |
| Online reputation: E.g. TripAdvisor | Ask or incentivise clients to leave reviews Respond to reviews | Monitor your reviews | | |
| Website analytics: | | Keywords Call to action Source of visitors | Pages most visited | Revamp content according to the results of analytics (e.g. if a page's bounce rate is over 50%) |
| Backups: | Backup computer (Automatic) | | | Backup website on server |
| Inbound links: | | | Check if there are any new incoming links to your site | Source one new link a month Check who links to you |

3. Key learning outcomes

- Ensure you consider Search engine optimisation when you budget for a new website
- An online strategy is not a one off but needs to be conducted throughout the year
- It is therefore very important you have an online plan and follow it.

4. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Web strategy: assessment and components
- Target market 101
- Website 101: visual design and content
- Website 101: usability and technology
- Email best practices
- Images 101
- Understanding inbound links to your website
- Sourcing inbound links
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Social media for tourism
- Customer reviews and TripAdvisor
- Google Analytics
- Security and backups

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 5

Finding A Good Web Professional

This tutorial will give you tips to find a great web professional. It will help put a brief together and will review the different costs associated with an online strategy.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

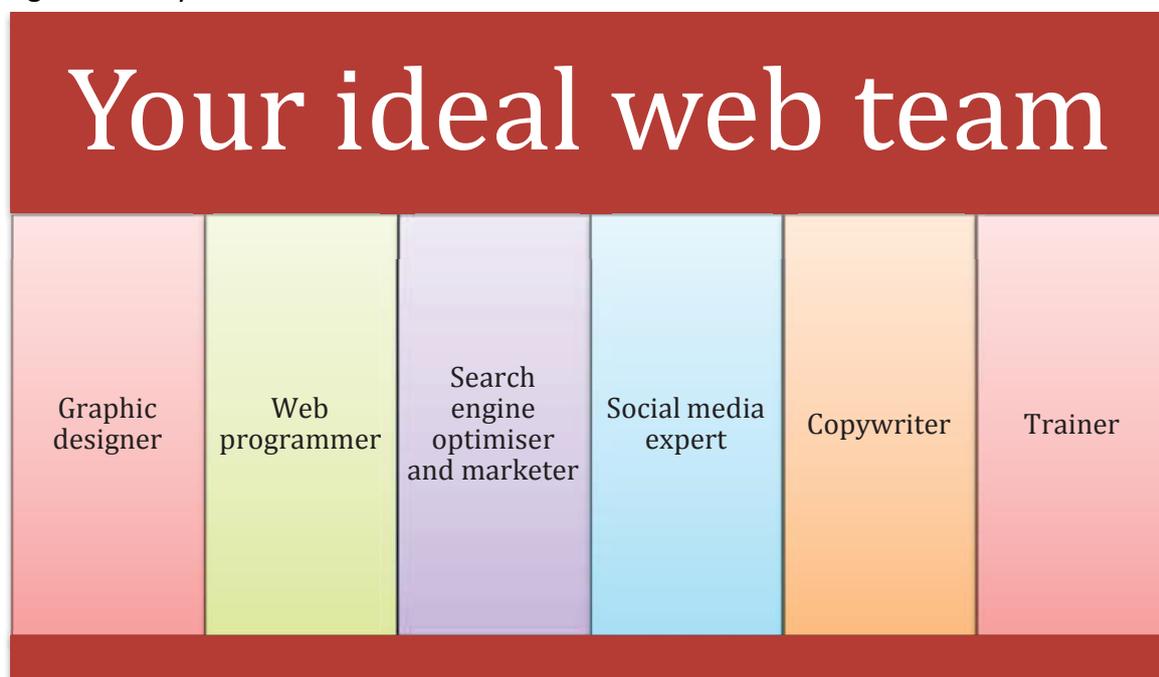
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1. What are the different job roles in the web industry?

The Internet has evolved dramatically over the past decade and forced web professionals to specialise in key web disciplines.

As a small or medium tourism business owner, you cannot solely rely on working with either a graphic designer or a web developer if you want to give your online strategy all the chances to succeed.

You need to partner with a “football team” of web experts. Choose a company that specialises in web design, programming and search engine optimisation and ensure that the project manager you will be dealing with is familiar with all key areas. Alternatively, if you work with just a web designer that isn't familiar with the best search engine optimisation techniques make sure you also consult a search engine optimiser to ensure your web developer's work will be search engine friendly.



a) How will an online marketer work with me?

The online marketing consultant (or company) will be your first point of contact. They will:

1. Assess your existing online strategy and website as a whole
2. Recommend and work with you to outline your future online strategy
3. Work with you to achieve a design that a) meets the expectations and needs of your target market b) will be easily programmable by the web developer c) is aesthetically pleasing d) is search engine friendly e) is within your budget.
4. Work with the web designer and the web developer to smoothly integrate the design into HTML and CSS and ensure your site is designed to integrate any future marketing needs.
5. Provide you with tips that will help you write your website's copy.

Finding A Good Web Professional

6. Work with you to implement the future online strategy so that you website is not only visible but also attracts bookings.

ONLINE MARKETERS SPECIALISED IN TOURISM WILL IMPLEMENT KEY SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION FACTORS BUT ALSO LIVE AND BREATHE THE ONLINE TOURISM WORLD EVERY DAY. THEY WILL KNOW HOW THE ONLINE TRAVELLER THINKS AND UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACE AS A SMALL BUSINESS OPERATOR. THEY WILL HAVE TESTED BEST PRACTICES, BE PROFICIENT AT HELPING YOU GET LINKS FROM RELEVANT TRAVEL WEBSITES, BE ABLE TO SET UP SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS SUCH AS HELPING YOU INTEGRATE YOUR TRIPADVISOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WEBSITE FOR INSTANCE. THEY WILL KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW YOU DON'T KNOW.

b) Why can't I just work with a designer or a programmer?

If you work with a web graphic designer only, your website's design is going to hopefully look spectacular. However, there is a reasonable chance that no new consumer will come across it while searching for your product!

The graphic designer will probably have a basic knowledge of coding (programming) in HTML but they might end up using a technique that is 5 years old and not know how to install a content management on your site.

If you solely work with a web developer, the design might not meet the requirements of your target market. Even if your website's code is up to today's requirements, you will still need to work with a search engine/online marketing specialist to ensure your website's copy is written in a search engine friendly manner. This is crucial for when someone searches for what you offer your web address comes up on the first pages of the search engine rankings.

2. How to select a knowledgeable web professional or company

a) How do I find web professionals?

It is always best to first contact your regional tourism organisation or association and ask to talk to the person in charge of the e-marketing department (also called digital) for advice. They will be able to put you in contact with people who are not only tourism web specialists but who are aware of the latest developments and practices.

You can also get on the Internet and search for "tourism website design", "websites for tourism", "tourism search engine optimisation", "web developer for tourism", "online marketing for tourism" and other similar keywords. Don't be put off if the company is not local, as everything will be done via email or the web!

If you come across websites that you like, look for a link to the company that designed and programmed it. It is usually located at the bottom of the homepage. Then don't be shy to pick up the phone and call the owner of the website for feedback about their experience!

Finding A Good Web Professional

But remember; design is not everything! The below paragraph is going to assist you sort the good from the bad.

b) First step: how to differentiate amateur from professional

Before even writing a brief, there are a few questions you can ask to separate the web amateur from the web professional. You don't even need to understand the meaning of the question!



- **What version of HTML do you use?**
XHTML 1.0 or 1.1 or – even better- HTML 5.
- **Do you use tables or table-less CSS?**
Should be table-less CSS (using tables is an old practice)
- **How will you ensure my website is mobile/smartphone/tablet friendly?**
There are different ways to do so. Ask your web developer to explain to you about the different options. They should be familiar with them and let you know the pros and cons of each. Making a website mobile friendly shouldn't cost you extra.
- **Do you use Flash?**
If they are very positive about Flash technology and don't warn you of its many search engine restrictions, stay away. Flash is not search engine friendly.
- **Do you use HTML "Frames"?**
If YES or even the slightest hesitation, stay away as Frames is not a search engine friendly way of programming a website. Frames is a technique used ten years ago.
- **How do you make a website SEO friendly?** (Use the acronym on purpose instead of Search Engine Optimisation as you are testing to see if they know its meaning)
They should mention keywords, developing inbound links to your website, optimising the content, using a search engine friendly content management system and setting up a monthly strategy. More importantly, they should push that search engine optimisation is an integral part of a successful website and that it should be given great consideration at the very initial stage of the project.
- **How will you redirect my old pages to my new pages?**
This is a very important question as it is very usual for web developers not to redirect your old pages to your new pages. The consequence of this is a sudden drop in visitation which can be critical for many businesses. Your web developer should reassure you that they will redirect **every single page of the website to the new one** using a 301 redirect (not a 302 or other method). They should of course do the same for the domain name.

c) Second step: the brief

A quality brief will provide the web professional with a greater understanding of not only your requirements but also of the outcome you are after. The brief should be done in writing and answer the following questions:

- **What:**
Do you require a website from scratch? Only a search engine strategy? A content management system?



Finding A Good Web Professional

Integration with YouTube? Photo gallery?

Ask the company you are approaching for testimonials or similar past projects that they have done.

- **How:**
How are you planning on working with the web professional, how is your website going to integrate with your traditional marketing strategy, how do you plan on updating your website? How can they help you?
How is the company you are approaching planning on working with you? Are there going to be weekly briefings and updates?
- **Where:**
Where is your website going to be hosted? If you already have a domain name, let them know what it is.
Where does the company recommend your website be hosted and how much is it going to cost you?
- **Who:**
Who is your target market and who is going to be the point of contact at your end?
Ask the company you are approaching for contacts or references that you can call. Ask who you will be your direct point of contact at the company; will it be an account manager or an online marketer?
- **When:**
When is your deadline?
When will the company you are approaching be able to start on your project?
- **How much:**
Specifying a ballpark figure of how much you are prepared to spend on your project will enable your web strategists to provide you with a well-suited and realistic plan.

If you do not feel confident to write a brief, simply ask your web specialist to send you a blank brief to fill out.

d) Third step: sending the brief out

Aim to send at least 3 briefs via email and expect a 2-week minimum turnaround.

e) Final step: deciding

Review the proposals you would have received. Consider them as if they were job applications.

A personalised, creative, proposal addressing the points discussed in your brief demonstrates the interest and expertise of the company. If you receive a templated, dull proposal outlining what the company does and not responding to your questions you should source other proposals.

Why don't you also Google the name of the people who will be involved on your project? If they are well known in their industry they should come up in search engine results which in turn demonstrates they practice what they preach.

3. How much should I expect to pay?

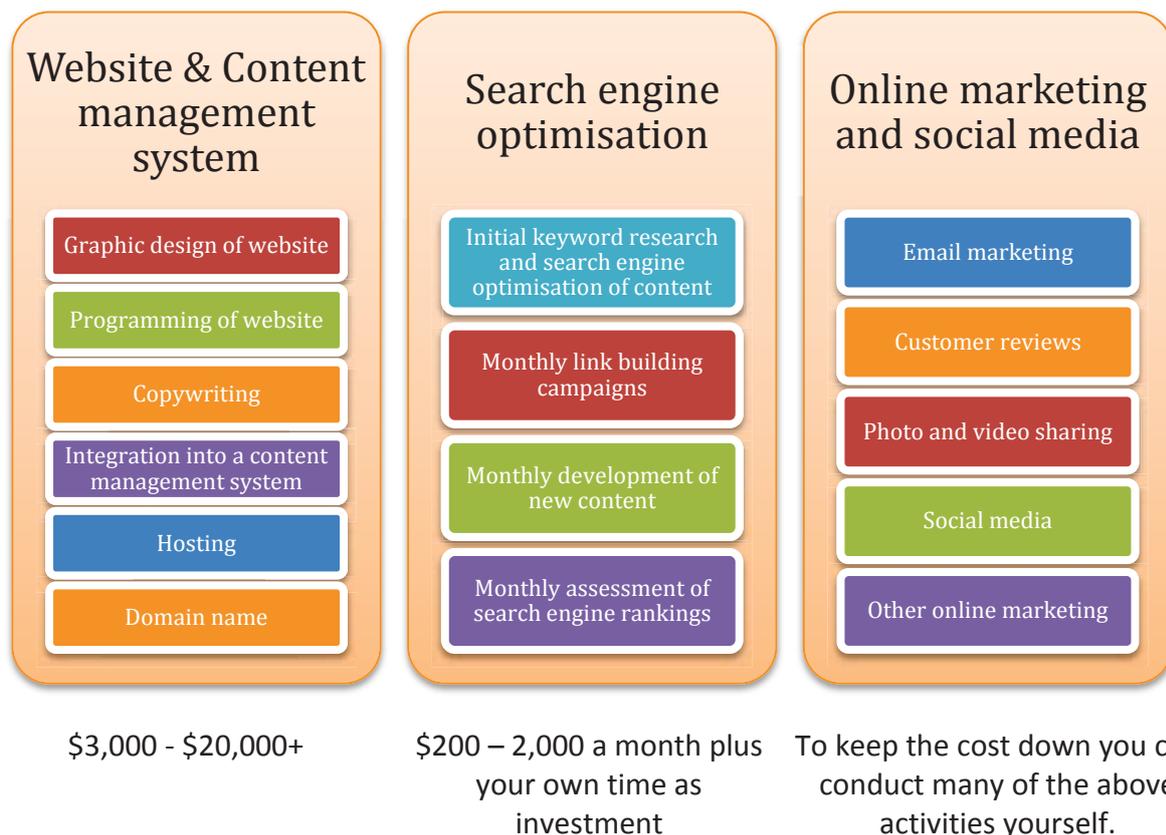
Working with an online marketing strategist is not any dearer than working with a web designer and a web developer separately. It will not only save you time as you will not be the organiser between them both but it will also ensure your site and strategy meet the requirement of today's traveller.

The chart below breaks down the different aspects of an online strategy which includes: website design and content management system, search engine optimisation and online marketing.

You will find an indication of price below:

- Lower bracket: AUD3,000 initial (simple website) + AUD300 per month
This corresponds to an investment of AUD132 per week over 12 months.
- Higher bracket: AUD6,000 initial + AUD500 per month
This corresponds to an investment of AUD240 per week over 12 months.

Carefully review each offer you receive based on the brief you sent before making any decision.



4. Why shouldn't I do my website myself?

Designing a website yourself might seem like a good idea at the time, and perceived as one that will cut down the expenses.

You will certainly know some operators who have tackled it themselves. Ask them how long it took them. Was it a good return on investment or should have they focused on the content and let a professional look after the development? Can they accurately measure the business they are getting from their homemade site?

Professionals know the tricks of the trade. A web strategy is an integral part of a successful business and not something that stands alone on the side.

THE CREATION OF A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE AND STRATEGY DEMANDS GREAT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE. LEAVE THE SURGERY TO THE SURGEONS BUT WORK WITH THEM TO GIVE THEM AN ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS. LASTLY, FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS ON WRITING COMPELLING CONTENT, AS NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO DO IT AS WELL AS YOU DO!

a) *I am still convinced I can do it*

- **Is it as simple as it looks?** “Microsoft Word allows me to save a page as a webpage even!” Creating a website for it to bring the results it is supposed to bring is complex and demanding. MS Word and other programs such as FrontPage let you build basic websites but are not web programming tools.
- **Design:** are you a professional graphic designer specialising in web?
- **Usability:** are you aware of all its implications?
- **Marketing:** are you able to build your website to meet future marketing needs?
- **Technologies:** do you know about all the technological requirements (HTML, CSS, and PHP)?
- **Search engine optimisation:** are you familiar with the best practices?
- **Content management system:** will you be able to add it to your site?

If after reading all the above you are still very keen to develop your website yourself then you may want to try setting up a WordPress site from WordPress.org and apply a free theme to style your WordPress website.

5. My friend/neighbour/friend's friend is good with computers; shall I trust them to do my website?

Being good with computers doesn't necessarily mean that the person has got the skill set required to design a website and web strategy that will result in successfully marketing your business. As a rule of thumb, any good online marketer, graphic designer or web developer has at least 5 years industry experience. Is this something your friend can provide you with?

It is your business you are talking about, not a personal website. Your website should soon



Finding A Good Web Professional

bring you at least one third of your bookings. A well-planned and executed site will pay for itself in the first year.

Moreover, a web professional will be more objective than a friend who might not want to point out flaws or challenge your opinion.

6. Key learning outcomes

- Arm yourself with a “football team” of web professionals to ensure your web strategy is geared for success
- Avoid designing your website yourself but work with qualified professionals.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Organising hosting for my site
- Registering a domain name 101

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 6

Planning For A New Website

This tutorial will present a roadmap of the steps required when planning a new website or site redesign.

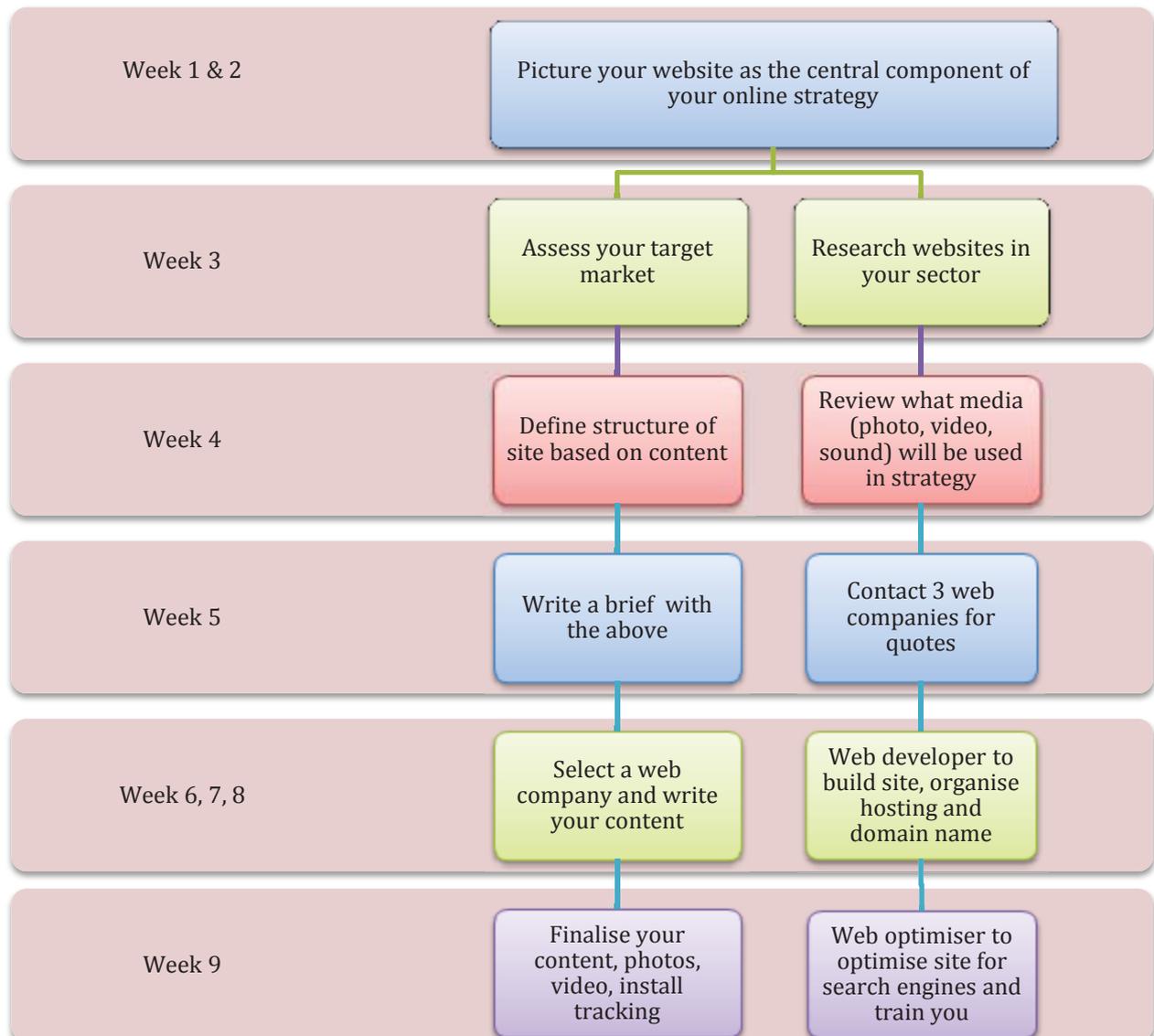
Reading time: 5 minutes

Prerequisite: None



Planning For A New Website

It is important you do not solely rely on a web company to develop your website without being involved yourself. Your site will be your full time, dedicated sales person. It will attract search engines, meet visitors' expectations and convert visits into sales. **It will "talk" to more people than you will on a daily basis (30-100 on average).** It is therefore crucial to view it as an integral part of your sales and marketing team, and not as "something on the side that should bring you business". It will need to be "briefed" and "trained" to really be able to appeal to the visitors and encourage them to buy.



Once your website is up and running, you have to keep developing its content, monitor your online statistics, engage with your audience using social media and manage your SEO and online marketing strategies.

1. Key learning outcomes

- It is important you don't perceive a website as something that can be built without your involvement. Your website will become your tourism business' key marketing asset and it is therefore crucial you are involved in each key phase of its development process
- Ensure you document your requirements in a clear brief that you send out to more than one web development company.

2. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Initial assessment of my website
- Registering a domain name 101
- Organising hosting for my site
- Web strategy: assessment and components
- Web strategy: cost and timings
- Finding a good web professional
- The Internet web 2.0 and the tourism industry
- Target market 101
- Website 101: visual design and content
- Website 101: usability and technology
- What is a content management system
- Search engines 101
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Google Analytics

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 7

Email Best Practices

Responding to enquiries is essential but time consuming when you are running a small business and need to balance all your other daily activities. Following the key points in this tutorial will ensure your responses to emails meet the expectations of today's traveller.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. Background

Research shows that travellers shop around via email: when you receive an email there is a good chance that your direct competitors have also received the same email. Moreover, travellers expect an answer within their working day. Therefore, time is of the essence when dealing with emails. As a rule of thumb you have maximum 24 hours to respond to emails before credibility is questioned or the client will give up.

a) When should I check my emails?

- Check your emails at breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- If you cannot respond there and then, make a point of sending an acknowledgement to confirm you received the email and inform the client when you will get back to them.

Hi John, this is Emma from 4WD adventure tours. I am just in the middle of changing the tyres on the 4WD but I will get back to you with availabilities before 5pm tonight. Cheers for contacting us!



- Book one hour of your time every day (early to mid afternoon is best) to answer all daily emails you haven't yet responded to. If you leave it too late people will look elsewhere. If you can, also try and answer overnight emails first thing in the morning.

b) How shall I respond?

- Include the original message as a reference. If it was a form from your website, use the email your website sent you as reference and include it in the response to the client.
- What type of person are you writing to? Their initial email will give you an idea of what type of person the sender is. Use similar language they used. Did they ask for examples? Then use examples. Do they want facts only? Then be brief.
- Structure your response, aim for a great one instead of a good one. Use headlines, bold important words. Your competitors might not!
- Have a call-to-action that will entice the sender to act and respond to your email

If you book this week I will make sure I give you priority for a room upgrade

- Direct the client to your page on TripAdvisor where they will be able to read past client's recommendations.
- Avoid adding attachments other than PDFs or images as email servers could consider them as spam and block them. Direct the potential client to a document they can download from your website.

Check out our breakfast menu www.4wdadventures.com.au/breakfast on our website

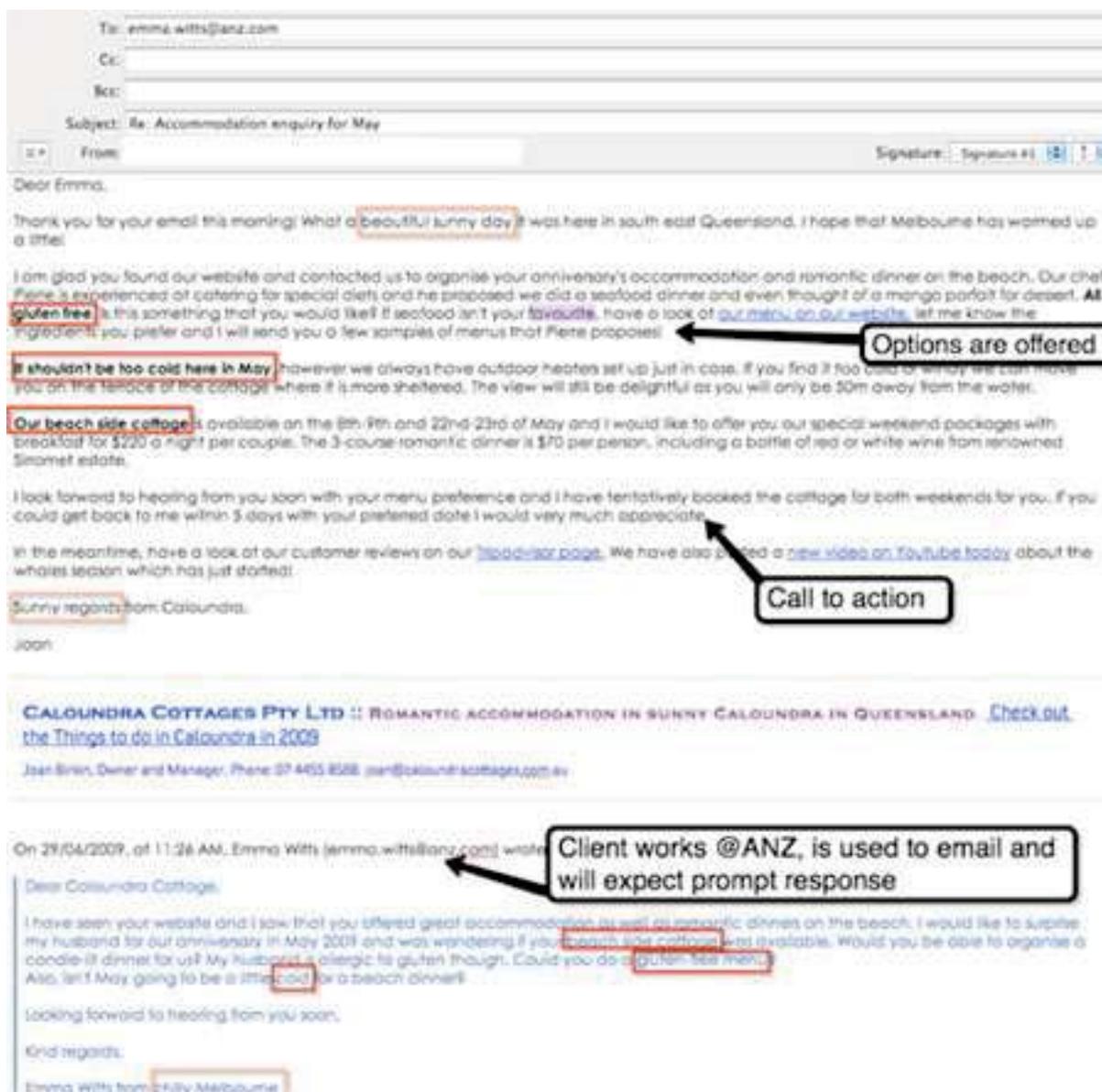
- Ensure you answered **all** questions and offered a solution or options to address all concerns the customer might have.



Email Best Practices

- Ask the sender how they found you. Was it through Google? A link from another website? Word of mouth? Make a list of how everyone found you and use that information to fine-tune your marketing.
- Thank the sender.
- Have an email signature that highlights upcoming local events or special deals.

2. Case study: example of a great email response



To: emma.wills@anz.com
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 Subject: Re: Accommodation enquiry for May

Dear Emma,

Thank you for your email this morning! What a beautiful sunny day it was here in south east Queensland. I hope that Melbourne has warmed up a little!

I am glad you found our website and contacted us to organise your anniversary's accommodation and romantic dinner on the beach. Our chef Pierre is experienced of catering for special diets and he proposed we did a seafood dinner and even thought of a mango parfait for desert. **All gluten free** is this something that you would like? If seafood isn't your favourite, have a look at [our menu on our website](#), let me know the ingredients you prefer and I will send you a few samples of menus that Pierre proposes!

It shouldn't be too cold here in May however we always have outdoor heaters set up just in case. If you find it too cold or hot we can move you on the terrace of the cottage where it is more sheltered. The view will still be delightful as you will only be 50m away from the water.

Our beach side cottage is available on the 6th-9th and 22nd-23rd of May and I would like to offer you our special weekend packages with breakfast for \$220 a night per couple. The 3-course romantic dinner is \$70 per person, including a bottle of red or white wine from renowned Somers estate.

I look forward to hearing from you soon with your menu preference and I have tentatively booked the cottage for both weekends for you. If you could get back to me within 3 days with your preferred date I would very much appreciate it.

In the meantime, have a look at our customer reviews on our [TripAdvisor page](#). We have also posted a [new video on YouTube](#) today about the whales season which has just started!

Sunny regards from Caloundra.

Joan

CALOUNDRA COTTAGES PTY LTD :: ROMANTIC ACCOMMODATION IN SUNNY CALOUNDRA IN QUEENSLAND [Check out the Things to do in Caloundra in 2009](#)

Joan Birin, Owner and Manager, Phone 57 465 8588, joan@caloundracottages.com.au

On 29/04/2009, at 11:26 AM, Emma Wills (emma.wills@anz.com) wrote:

Dear Caloundra Cottages,

I have seen your website and I saw that you offered great accommodation as well as romantic dinners on the beach. I would like to surprise my husband for our anniversary in May 2009 and was wondering if you **beach side cottage** was available. Would you be able to organise a candle-lit dinner for us? My husband is allergic to gluten though. Could you do a **gluten free menu**?

Also isn't May going to be a little cool for a beach dinner?

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Emma Wills from City Melbourne

In the example above, Joan provided a great, enticing response to Emma. She has also:

- Adopted the same language and tone as Emma, the potential customer
- Answered all her questions and gave her options

- Realised, thanks to Emma's email, that Emma works in an office at ANZ. Joan therefore knows that Emma is used to dealing with emails and will expect a quick response
- Given Emma some references to activities she could be doing (whale watching, link to the things to do in Caloundra)
- Made a tentative booking and given a call-to-action to Emma
- Recommended Emma checks Caloundra Cottages TripAdvisor reviews by providing the link

3. Saving time

Even though each email is personalised, they follow a similar format.

You will save time by **creating some draft emails** that you can save in your draft folder (in your Outlook or email program).

To create a draft email, do as if you were going to write a new email but instead of sending it, save it as a draft. Use the subject field to name them so you can quickly pick the appropriate one, copy it and paste it into your response email.

4. Key learning outcomes

- Check your emails regularly as it is one of the preferred form of communication of your target market
- Do not delay your response. People expect a 2-3h turnaround
- Offer alternatives and information about the region to the sender
- Provide a link to book online in your email response

5. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Target market 101
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Email marketing

Topic | The basics

Tutorial 7B

National Broadband Network

This tutorial explains what the National Broadband Network is and how it will benefit your business.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is the National Broadband Network (NBN)?

The NBN will be a very fast nationwide broadband link to business and home premises, which will make Internet use much faster. It is a public infrastructure just like electricity. For 93% of premises the link will be a cable that is laid in the ground. This cable will house a very thin line of optical-grade glass called a fibre-optic cable. However, for some rural and remote areas, a very fast fixed wireless or satellite technology will be used instead.

a) How does my business connect with the NBN?

A fully federal government owned company called the NBNCo will make the connection to businesses and properties in the first instance. Businesses will still need to deal with their Internet Service Provider (ISP) to purchase Internet access.

Examples of ISPs are: Telstra, Optus, iiNet, TPG, Internode, Primus and others.

Once the infrastructure is in place it is up to the ISP to establish connection. Businesses will be exposed to advertising from ISPs when the NBN is almost ready. Businesses who wish to swap service providers will need to refer to their current Internet contract to avoid excess termination fees.

b) What will they install at my premises?

Fibre-optic cables will be laid in the same place as existing phone lines are (underground or overhead). Externally a Premises Connection Device that houses the cables will be installed, internally business will be provided with an NBN box allowing for Internet and phone connection. To see pictures of the entire installation process visit www.nbnco.com.au/blog/gallery-nbn-fibre-installation.html.

Businesses located in rural or regional areas will be connected either using high-speed satellite or wireless. Refer to this map to find out what type of connection will be available in which area: www.nbnco.com.au/our-network/coverage-maps.html.

When the switchover happens businesses will need to unplug their phone and Internet cables and plug them into their NBN box. It will be important to seek further explanation from the ISP suppliers about this process.

Some ISPs may not be involved in the early stages of the NBN rollout in all areas. Therefore it is best for businesses to check with their current ISP on the NBN rollout timings and cutover process.

If something goes wrong with the installation the first point of contact will be the ISP. The next step is to contact the telecommunication Ombudsman, for contact details see here: www.tio.com.au.

c) What will happen to my old infrastructure?

- There is no need to re-cable businesses internally as all existing cables plug into the NBN box



National Broadband Network

- There is no need to rewire premises. If new premises are being built or refurbishing there may be an option to have newer faster cables installed
- If businesses have a security system that relies on phone lines they will need to check with their service provider to assess if it will be affected by the NBN
- Phones, computers, wireless networks and all hardware will still work with the NBN.
- If businesses require to purchase a new ADSL modem before the NBN is rolled out they should check with their ISP for compatibility with the NBN first.

d) What happens if there are multiple businesses within our premises?

There are four data ports on the NBN box so four businesses within the same premises could each sign up with a different provider and be billed separately.

e) When will it be in my area?

Refer to <http://www.nbnco.com.au/rollout/rollout-map.html> to see when it will be rolled out in different areas. The NBN will be completed by 2020.



| National Broadband Network rollout | | | | | New housing developments - NBN Ready estates | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your search | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service available | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work commenced | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work commences within one year* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work commences within three years* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service available | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work commenced |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fibre ■ Fixed wireless | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fibre ■ Fixed wireless | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fibre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fibre ■ Fixed wireless | | |

Image source: NBN.gov.au



f) *Is it compulsory?*

For a period of time businesses will still be able to connect to the Internet as they have done previously. At some stage in the future it will however become harder to use the Internet using ADSL as consumers and competitors expect and use rich content such as high-definition video. Remember how dial-up became so slow and businesses had to move to ADSL to service their market needs?

In the future the current copper-wire telephone network will be disconnected in areas that already have the NBN. Businesses will then have no choice but to connect – however, depending on the NBNCo's workload – premises may have to be on a waiting list. This is similar to when the switch over from analogue to digital television took place – they were given a couple of years to update their technology, however some people needed to rush out and get a set-top-box at the last minute in order to still watch television when the old analogue signal was turned off.

g) *What will it cost?*

There is no cost to connect to the NBN if businesses agree to have it installed when the NBN is being rolled-out in their area. A monthly Internet usage fee will still be payable to a chosen ISP. The amount will depend on the plan required. Businesses are encouraged to use this opportunity to select a plan suited to their requirements. Whirlpool <http://bc.whirlpool.net.au> is a good resource to look at the different plans.

h) *How much faster is the NBN?*

The NBN will provide speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second which would mean an average movie would load in just over a minute. Imagine the difference between driving down a narrow single lane road compared with driving on a 4-lane highway. Old ADSL technology (over the phone lines) slows down within the first kilometre from the exchange and the signal can disappear after about 4 kilometres. However fibre-optic cable strength stays consistent for more than 40 kilometres.

CURRENTLY DOWNLOAD SPEEDS ARE MUCH FASTER THAN OUR UPLOAD SPEEDS, SO FOR EXAMPLE TO SEND SOME PHOTOS TAKES A LOT LONGER THAN IT WOULD HAVE TO DOWNLOAD THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE. WITH HIGH SPEED BROADBAND BOTH DOWNLOADING AND UPLOADING CAN BE EQUALLY FAST WHICH WILL BE REALLY IMPORTANT FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING.

The fibres themselves can handle super fast speeds and are the most durable option available.

Over time better equipment will be available that will make things like videoconferencing much faster.

i) *Will it change the day to day running of my tourism business?*

- Booking transactions will be even faster and technology where customers can peruse options and change their itineraries in real time will become commonplace
- Training staff will be more cost effective as high-speed videoconferencing in education

- will mean less travel to institutions
- Security monitoring will become more sophisticated and online banking will become quicker
 - Ordering supplies will become streamlined. Appliances such as fridges may be connected, detect when supplies are low and automatically generate orders for you when supplies are low
 - Language translating will be done in real time with a real or computer generated translator could help you communicate with your clients, making your business more accessible to new markets
 - You will be able to have different ISPs on the one cable. For example you could use one provider for your accommodation rooms and another for your personal connection. The competition for your Internet dollar will become more competitive and which may reduce your business overheads.

2. How will it affect the marketing of my tourism business?

Consumers will be exposed to new technology that we haven't even imagined as yet. High definition video advertising on the sides of buildings or direct into consumers' lounge room walls, for example, will mean that video becomes a very important marketing activity.

A consumer may be able to put on a special headset and experience a taste of your product in advance, walk around a virtual tour desk and make their bookings after sampling the products. This concept is known as virtual reality.

As technology evolves businesses will have the opportunity to integrate the NBN's high speed broadband into your customers' experiences on their premises by having technology-lead interpretation for example.

IN TRUTH IT IS HARD TO PREDICT ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO TOURISM OPERATORS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS. JUST AS A FEW YEARS AGO WE DIDN'T KNOW THERE WOULD BE NEED FOR A TABLET DEVICE SUCH AS AN IPAD - TECHNOLOGY IS MOVING FAST.

a) How could I communicate with a potential customer in the future?

Consumers will expect to be able to chat to businesses in high-definition real time video calls. The caller may appear on their kitchen wall telling them about what a great time they will be having when they visit next.

With customers having online profiles that represent their demographic and consumer preferences, businesses will be connecting with consumers who are already qualified, sitting in their target markets and ready to receive your message. Businesses may also be able to tailor make experiences that fill their needs and sell them what they need before they even know they need it.



THESE STEPS WILL HAPPEN INCREMENTALLY. JUST AS WE HAVE ADAPTED TO TECHNOLOGY THUS FAR, WE WILL LEARN HOW TO USE THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY, IN A LOT OF CASES IT WILL MAKE BUSINESS MUCH EASIER.

3. Key Learning outcomes

- The NBN will be a very fast nationwide broadband link to business and home premises, which will make Internet use much faster
- A fully federal government owned company called the NBNCo will make the connection to businesses and properties in the first instance. Businesses will still need to deal with their Internet Service Provider (ISP) to purchase Internet access. this website provides comprehensive information on NBN capabilities and benefits: www.nbnco.com.au.
- The NBN will be much faster than the existing Internet network, thus allowing businesses to transact more efficiently and utilise innovative and faster technology to service the customers and business needs.

4. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- The Internet, Web 2.0 And The Tourism Industry

b) Related websites

- National Broadband Network: <http://www.nbn.gov.au/frequently-asked-questions>
- NBNco: www.nbnco.com.au
- Australian Communication Consumer Action Network Guide for consumers: http://accan.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=263&Itemid=319

Topic | Website

Tutorial 8

Registering A Domain Name 101

This tutorial will help you select a good domain name for your website and give you advice on the cost.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is a domain name?

A domain name (like mytrendyhotel.com.au) is the address used to find you on the Internet. It can be used on both your website address (also called a URL: www.mytrendyhotel.com.au) and your email address (john@mytrendyhotel.com.au)

It is better for your business email address to use your domain name:

URL: <http://www.airporttransfers.com.au> <http://www.airporttransfers.com.au>

Email: info@airporttransfers.com.au airporttransfers@bigpond.com



The final portion of a domain name www.mytrendyhotel.com.au is called a top level domain (TLD). In this instance it is a country code TLD as it carries the nationality of the domain name (.com.au = Australia).

2. How do I select a good domain name?

Just like your business name, your domain name should:



Nicely balance what your business is all about

Be meaningful to your target market so they can remember it

Encompass all or part of your business name

Not be easily misspelt and not be too long (3 words or less is best)

Don't forget that your domain name automatically becomes your brand name, whether you like it or not.

If you need some inspiration, www.nameboy.com or www.domainfellow.com will propose domain name based on your keywords.

Finally, only letters, numbers or dash ("-") are allowed in a domain name. Avoid using dashes when possible: www.mytrendyhotel.com.au is less confusing than www.my-trendy-hotel.com.au.

3. Do I register a .com or a .com.au? What is best?

Getting a .com.au informs your clients that you are a legitimate Australia business. If you cannot decide you can always purchase both a .com and a .com.au domain name. Domain names are so affordable nowadays and you won't miss out on business by people forgetting to append or remove the .au.

Having both will also make sure that people emailing you at john@tourguide.com.au will still

arrive, even though your primary domain name is tourguide.com.

| Sample of international top level domains (TLD) | Australian top level domains (TLD) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .com: originally intended for commercial sites, anybody can register • .net: originally intended for companies involved in Internet infrastructure, anybody can register • .org: originally intended for not-for-profit organisations, anybody can register • .info: anybody can register • .biz: anybody can register • .travel: exclusively for the travel industry. This .travel TLD is suffering from a lack of update from the industry. It could be due to its higher than average cost. For more information visit www.encirca.com/HTML/travel.shtml. • .co: anybody can register (new) • .mobi: must be used for mobile-compatible sites in accordance with standards. | <p>For more information: www.auda.org.au/pdf/yau.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .com.au: for commercial entities, such as companies (with ACN as registered through ASIC), and businesses (registered with state governments). • asn.au: for incorporated associations, political parties, trade unions, sporting and special interest clubs. • .net.au: for commercial entities, such as companies (with ACN as registered through ASIC), and businesses (registered with state governments). • .id.au: for individuals who are Australian citizens or residents. • .org.au: for charities and non-profit organisations. • .gov.au for federal, state and local government bodies. • .edu.au for educational institutes registered at federal or state level. |

4. Do I need to have a registered business name?

If you would like to register a .com.au domain you will need either an ACN or a registered business name. You will be asked to provide this when you register your domain name.

auDA, the Australian Domain Name Administrator is the policy authority and industry self-regulatory body for the .au domain space. Their website is www.auda.org.au.

5. How to register a domain name?

If you wish to register an Australian domain name, start by browsing www.auda.org.au/registrars/accredited-registrars to find a list of all accredited domain name registrars. It is very straightforward and you can pay with your credit card online.

For .com domain names, you will get a best price if you buy directly from the provider – in this instance the USA. For instance, a reputable US registrar, GoDaddy.com offers domain names at USD5 a year. Do your research though; the cheapest is not always the most reliable

6. How much does a domain name cost?

The below table will give you an idea of how much you could expect to pay for each type of domain name.

| <u>International</u> | <u>Australian</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .com .org .net .info: from USD10.00-15.00 per year • .biz: from USD15.00 per year • .travel: from USD85.00 per year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .com.au: from AUD25.00 for 2 years • .asn.au: from AUD38.50 for 2 years • .net.au: from AUD25.00 for 2 years • .org.au: from AUD13.75 for 2 years • .id.au: from AUD29.95 for 2 years |

7. What if the domain name I want is already taken?

A possible scenario could be that the domain name you wish to buy is already taken. Generally domain name registrars will provide you with other options. For instance, they could offer you:

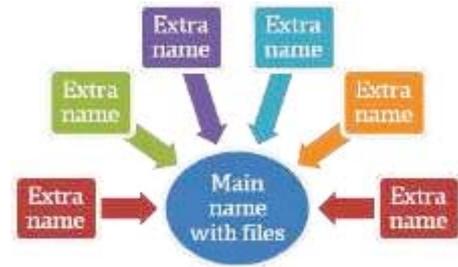
- .com if the .com.au is already taken. This option isn't a good idea as it would signify that two different businesses in Australia would share very close domain names: www.mytour.com and www.mytour.com.au. It would be too confusing for your target market.
- .com.au if the .com is already taken. This option makes sense if the .com is not an Australian business.
- a .biz or a .net if either or both .com and .au are already taken. This could be confusing for your target market, especially if the holder of the .com or .com.au is a competitor in your space.

If your preferred domain name is already taken, it is best to say away from simply changing the top level domain (the .com or .com.au) as it might confuse your target market. Brainstorming and finding a unique domain name is recommended. You can use tools such as try www.nameboy.com or www.domainfellow.com to assist you.

Imagine www.accommodationbyron.com.au was already taken. Stay away from purchasing www.accommodationbyron.com and www.accommodation-byron.com, especially if your target market is Australians used to domain names ending in .com.au. You could try www.romanticaccommodatinbyron.com.au, www.stayinbyron.com.au or similar names and you might even find a more catchy one than would have initially thought of.

8. Is it true that it's best to have a lot of different domain names?

No, this is false, unless you do so because your domain name is commonly misspelt or you want to buy other good domain names that you do not want your competitors to have.



Large companies might have different domain names for each product but for small and medium tourism businesses there is no real benefit. It will make absolutely no difference to your search engine rankings to have many domain names all pointing to the same website.

Search engines index websites based on their content. Since a domain name is not associated with any content (unless it is linked to a host with your websites' files), it will not be indexed.

If you have a few domain names, such as country-hostel.com and country-hostel.com.au you will want to redirect the "extra" one to the main one (which hosts the files).

From a search engine perspective, 301 redirects are the only acceptable ways of redirecting domain names.

9. Key learning outcomes

- If you are an Australian business ensure you own the .com.au and the .com domain name (if possible). Then redirect one to the other. This will avoid someone else buying it
- Having multiple domain names without content directly attached to each one of them is not going to help your business achieve better positions on search engines
- If you have more than 1 domain name ensure you or your web developer uses the "301 redirect" technique to redirect the domains to the main domain
- It is best practice to ensure our email address reflects your domain name e.g: info@yourdomain.com.au and not country-hostel@bigpond.com or any other Internet Service Provider

10. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Domain name: advanced
- Organising hosting for my site
- Security and backups

b) Related websites

- The Australian domain name administrator: www.auda.org.au
- The Australian domain name administrator need to know: www.auda.org.au/pdf/needtoknow.pdf

Topic | Website

Tutorial 9

Domain Name - Advanced

This tutorial complements the previous tutorial about registering a domain name.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: Registering A Domain Name



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

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1. How do I link my new domain name and my new site?

In order to match your site's files to your site's address, you will need to let your domain name know where to find the files (your website) to be displayed at www.mytrendyhotel.com.au.

This process may not be required if your host and domain name registrar are the same company as it is done automatically. However, if you are not working with a web developer and need to learn how to do it yourself, it is very simple even though the technical term "delegating domain names" makes it sound complicated. It will take you 5 minutes.

When you organise hosting for your website, your host will send you confirmation emails which include your email addresses, the login details to access your hosting account as well as their domain name servers. These domain name servers (DNS) have a format similar to this and come in twos (primary and secondary) or in threes (primary, secondary, tertiary)

- **Primary DNS server: ns1.qnetau.com**
IP Address: 202.146.202.1
- **Secondary DNS server: ns2.qnetau.com**
IP Address: 202.146.202.2
- **Tertiary DNS server: ns3.qnetau.com**
IP Address: 202.146.214.3

What you need to do with these is:

- First log into the control panel (the place where you can manage your settings) of your domain name registrar (not your host's).
- Find menu which allows you to manage (sometimes called delegate) your domain names
- Replace the existing DNS or blank fields with the DNS provided to you by your host. Make sure you enter the DNS server names and the IP address if required by your domain name registrar. Note: they might not always ask you for both the names and the IP address.

Once this is done, it might take up to 72 hours for you and the rest of the world to see your new site. This is purely because it takes time for all Internet providers (such as Bigpond, IINET or other in Australia) to be updated with the new location of your website's files. This phenomenon is called domain name propagation. If nothing has changed after 72 hours there may be a problem. Contact your host to ensure you have done things properly.

2. How do I link my existing domain name and my new site?

Unless you start a new business, you will probably already have an existing domain name. Remember, domain names are independent from web hosting. Unless you have purchased your hosting and your domain name with the same provider, you will need to link your domain name to your website's files that reside with your host (your web developer may of course do this on your behalf).



- **If you are going to host your new site on the same server as your old site, there is no need to redelegate your domain names.** All that is required is that you replace your old site files with your new ones, using (secure) File Transfer Protocol (FTP). Your web developer will normally do this for you.
- If your new site is going to be hosted on a different web host (for instance, your old hosting package didn't meet the requirements of your new website) you will need to delegate your domain name to the new host. This process is done at your domain name registrar, by changing the DNS (domain name servers) settings to the ones provided by your new web host (Read paragraph 1 for step by step guide on how to delegate a domain name).

If you are hosting your new site on a new host, you will also need to re-create all your email addresses using the control panel (using the login and passwords you were provided) of your new host. This is because the email addresses are set up at the website host and not the domain name registrar. You may also want to consider Google Apps to become your email host. Their standard service is free (<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/group/index.html>) and allows you to have more than 7GB of email storage per user. Furthermore, if you change hosts again you won't have to recreate your email addresses again.

3. Redirecting a domain name

If you have more than one domain name, such as www.mytouristbus.com and www.mytouristbus.com.au, you need to decide which one is the main one (the one holding the website's content) and which one is simply going to redirect the user to the main one.

If you would like your web developer to do it, inform them that you need to redirect one or more domain names using a 301 redirect. If you are willing to do it yourself, you will need access to your site's control panel (the area where you manage your hosting options).

Redirecting a domain name is done using what is called a 301 redirect. **If you do it any other way (for instance using a 302 redirect) you will have issues of duplicate content which risks to negatively affect your search engine ranking.**

301

The following webpages, www.theinternetdigest.net/archive/301-redirects-seo.HTML and www.theinternetdigest.net/articles/add-on-domains.HTML will explain to you in depth how to do so by creating an "add-on domain" on your host server.

Another advantage of using an add-on domain will allow you to have both email@mytouristbus.com and email@mytouristbus.com.au email addresses, which comes in very handy when people can't remember if your website is a .com or .com.au .

4. How do I check if my redirects are correct?

To check if your redirects are 301 redirects, all you need to do is visit this website www.seoconsultants.com/tools/headers.asp. The process is called "checking server heads". Simply enter the URL of your website that is being redirected to your main one (e.g. www.mytouristbus.com) and if the result is a 301 the redirect has been done properly.



If you ask your web developer to redirect a domain name, it is always wise to check for yourself if they have done it properly using a 301 redirect. Unfortunately many web developers are unaware of the search engine implications of domain name redirection and could use a 302 redirection instead that is unfortunately unsuitable. Simply point them to the links in the above paragraph and they will be able to easily set up a 301 redirect for your site.

5. Key learning outcomes

- If you are getting a new website built and that website is hosted on a different server (host) than your existing website you or your web developer will need redirect the domain name to display the content that is now hosted on the new server. Your web developer will require your login and password to your domain name registrar to do so.
- Your web developer will also require to redirect every page of your own website to the respective page on your new website. If this is not done you risk losing search engine rankings. Do not expect your web developer to do this for you as many don't do it by default. Ensure you request it is done.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Registering a domain name
- Organising hosting for my site
- Security and backups

b) *Related websites*

- 301 redirects: www.theinternetdigest.net/archive/301-redirects-seo.html
- Add-on domains: www.theinternetdigest.net/articles/add-on-domains.html
- Google Apps: www.google.com/apps

Topic | Website

Tutorial 10

Organising Hosting For My Site

This tutorial will explain web hosting for your website.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None

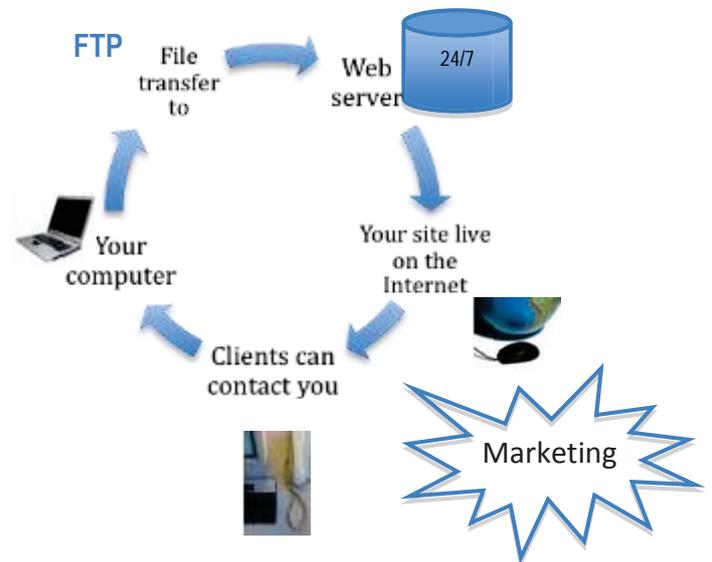


1. What is web hosting?

In order for your website to be visible to the world, it needs to be hosted on a web server.

Just like a hotel gives a client access to a room for a certain period of time, a web host offers your website's files disk space and accessibility so your website can be seen by anyone 24/7.

YOUR HOSTING ACCOUNT WILL NOT ONLY ALLOW YOU TO STORE YOUR WEBSITE BUT WILL ALSO STORE INCOMING AND OUTGOING MAILS. YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES ARE MANAGEABLE THROUGH YOUR HOSTING INTERFACE (AND NOT VIA THE ONE OF YOUR DOMAIN NAME).



2. Hosting Types

- Free web hosting is generally available through your Internet Service Provider (ISP). This is suitable for a very simple personal website but not for a business
- **Shared hosting is the most cost-effective and common type of hosting.** Shared simply means that your host will have more than one websites sitting on the same server. This is generally suited to small tourism businesses.
- Dedicated hosting signifies that the server is solely used by one organisation/website. This is not necessary for small and medium businesses.

a) Australian servers?

If your website is hosted in Australia, your site is going to load faster (within Australia) than if it was hosted in the USA. If your clients are located domestically it is generally a good idea to host your site in Australia. If the majority of your clients are not within Australia, you might want to opt to host your site on USA servers.

b) Windows or Unix hosting

The first choice you will generally have to make is if you require Windows or Unix servers.

THE GENERAL MISCONCEPTION IS THAT IF YOU USE A WINDOWS PC (IN OPPOSITION TO AN APPLE OR LINUX OPERATING SYSTEM) YOU WILL REQUIRE A WINDOWS SERVER.

For most websites a Unix server is going to be sufficient. However, if your website or content management system is built using ASP.NET technology for instance (Microsoft) you will generally

require your site to be hosted on Windows servers.

3. Is hosting different from a domain name?

Yes, hosting is different from a domain name. Nonetheless, both services can generally be purchased through the same company (the majority of domain name registrars offer hosting packages and vice-versa).

Domain name: The Internet address where your site can be viewed

A domain name (www.mygreattourismproduct.com.au) is registered through a registrar.

Host: The server that hosts your files

A web host offers you hosting packages

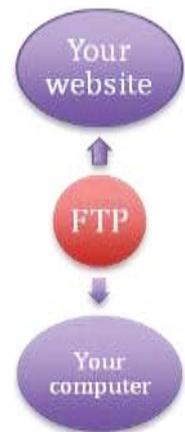
4. What Package do I need? and what is the cost?

Your web host will generally outline different packages. A summary is provided below:

| Features | Description |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Disk space: | <p>Can vary from 500MB to 5,000MB or more. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your website files Each of your email mailboxes The databases running on your server. <p>On average, 500MB to 2,000MB of disk space is sufficient.</p> |
| Monthly traffic to your site: | <p>Different hosts offer different traffic allowances. It can vary between 3GB and 35GB or more (if server located in Australia) and between 109GB and 500GB or more (if server located in the USA).</p> <p>The total traffic is the sum of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet visitors browsing your website Upload/download of your files via FTP Email messages sent or received <p>On average, a 3 to 6GB of monthly traffic allowance is sufficient for a small and medium tourism business. Simply make sure that you are able to upgrade if your traffic increases dramatically.</p> |
| Number of domains: | <p>A very basic package will allow you to have only one domain name (e.g. www.mytourismproduct.com) hosted on the site. More generous hosting packages might allow you to have between 5-10 domain names.</p> <p>Will you require more than one domain name? Think about it carefully. If you are planning to have a .com and a .com.au you will need your hosting package to allow for at least 2 domain names.</p> |

Organising Hosting For My Site

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Shared or Dedicated IP:</p> | <p>The IP (Internet Protocol) address is the real address of a website or server. Every domain name is associated to an IP address. Domain names were actually developed because it is difficult to remember long IP numbers like 234.127.56.7.</p> <p>In shared hosting, there are generally many websites sharing the same IP address. The disadvantage to shared IPs is that if someone sharing your IP gets in trouble for spamming, your IP can get banned or blacklisted and your website then disappears from the search engines.</p> <p>If you are taking payments on your site directly you may need a dedicated IP as an SSL certificate (to secure online payments) requires a dedicated IP.</p> <p>If you are using an external booking engine (like most tourism operators do), the payments are actually being taken on the third party site and not on your site. A shared IP will be sufficient.</p> |
| <p>Databases:</p> | <p>If your website uses a content management system you will require access to a database. Databases offer mechanism for storing, managing and retrieving information. A few of the most popular databases/programming language combinations are MySQL/PHP and Microsoft SQL Server (ASP.NET) .</p> <p>Other applications requiring a database are shopping carts, forum and blogs.</p> <p>A good hosting package will offer you at least one database.</p> |
| <p>Email features:</p> | <p>Your emails reside on your hosting server. Some packages offer you unlimited email addresses, others don't. Keep in mind that if you change your host you will need to recreate all your email address (unless you are using Google Apps. You can easily create/delete email addresses in your host's control panel and do not need a web developer to do this for you. When you have first registered with your host you would have been provided (in the confirmation email) with login details for to access your control panel. The control panel is the area where you can modify your hosting settings.</p> <p>It is now common for hosts to offer unlimited email addresses.</p> |
| <p>Site access and publishing:</p> | <p>FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is the protocol used to transfer your files from your computer to your host.</p> <p>Note that FTP is not a secure way of transferring your files as none of them are being encrypted. You only need a login/password to access your FTP files.</p> <p>Most servers now offer a secure, encrypted way of transferring files using the FTO protocol. Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTP over SSH (called Secure FTP or SFTP) or • FTP over SSL (called FTPS) <p>Free FTP clients such as FileZilla: www.filezilla-project.org, SmartFTP: www.smartftp.com or Cyberduck: www.cyberduck.ch for Mac offer secure FTP.</p> |
| <p>Advanced features:</p> | <p>Features such as PHP, Apache mod_rewrite, frequency of server backup (daily, weekly) are a must.</p> <p>Your web developer will assist you with these requirements.</p> |



Organising Hosting For My Site

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Support: | Will you be offered support via telephone or email or both? What are the support hours? 24/7 or less? Telephone support is rather rare these days but this shouldn't put you off. Email support is the norm and your email should be answered within half a working day. |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

5. What is a reasonable price?

Before choosing a host, keep in mind that you will be running a business from your website so you are after reliability and not the cheapest service. Best and cheapest are usually mutually exclusive.

In order to host a small or medium business website, expect to pay between:

| | Price | What you should get (at least) |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hosting: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AUD200-450 annually (hosting in Australia) USD100-200 annually (hosting in USA) There are generally no setup costs if you do the setup yourself. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,000MB-5,000MB disk space 6GB-30GB traffic (if hosted on Australian server) 20GB-300GB traffic (if hosted on USA server) Secure FTP 1-5 databases Unlimited email boxes Email support 24/7 |

6. How to choose a reputable host?

In terms of hosting, you have two options;

| | Organise the hosting of your website yourself | Use the web hosting provided by your web developer |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advantages: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not tied to a web developer for hosting No mark-up to pay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web developer knows the features required by your website Saves time |
| Disadvantages: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to do some research Liaise with your web developer to know exactly the features required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost can easily double Tied to a specific company Check the conditions |

REMEMBER THAT IF YOUR SITE IS HOSTED IN AUSTRALIA, IT WILL BE QUICKER TO LOAD IN ON YOUR WEB VISITOR'S COMPUTER IN AUSTRALIA THAN IF IT WAS HOSTED ON SERVERS LOCATED IN THE USA. THIS COULD BE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IF YOUR MAIN TARGET MARKET IS LOCATED IN AUSTRALIA.

Below is a list of hosts with servers in Australia deemed reputable by the Internet community:

- www.ausweb.com.au
- www.quadrahosting.com.au

It is critical check the reputation of hosts before you buy. There are certainly a few to stay away from. Whirlpool.net.au has a specific forum dedicated to hosts:

<http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/forum-threads.cfm?f=116>.

7. I already have a host but I am getting a new website, shall I change?

If your website was dated and you are getting a new one professionally developed, your new site will most certainly come with a content management system (CMS). CMS run on databases which have specific requirements that your existing host or package might not support.

If your host is reputable you should be able to upgrade to a suitable package. Make sure you inform your web developer in the planning stages of your new website so you avoid paying twice!

8. If I change my host will I lose all my email addresses and emails?

Yes, if you decide to change your host, you will have to manually re-create all your email addresses by logging in your host's control panel. This is easily done and shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to do (Refer to paragraph 3 under email features for more information on how to access your control panel).

The emails (messages) downloaded to your email client (such as Outlook) should not be deleted.

To prevent this from happening again should you change your host again in the future, you should ask your web developer to move your emails to Google Apps (www.google.com/apps).

9. Will my host conduct backups of my website?

Ideally they should but you need to make sure they do. Your backups should include your files and your content (which are 2 different things if you are using a content management system). It is important you check about the backups with your web host and/or web developer.

Offsite backups are recommended however not always included in the standard hosting plans. Offsite backups would allow you to save your files and website in the event that your host server is targeted by hackers which causes all the online assets of your web hosting company to fail. This happened to the Australian hosting company in June 2011 and thousands of businesses lost all data: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/australian-it/netregistry-group-bails-out-distributeit-after-4800-website-accounts-were-hacked/story-e6frgax-1226080699559> .

10. Key learning outcomes

- Your web host and your domain name registrar are not always the same company
- Email is a service provided by your host (unless you use Google Apps for instance). When you move to a new host your email addresses will need to be recreated
- With hosting you generally get what you pay for. If having reliable email is important to you do not go with a cheap host
- Assess your host's support system. Can you reach them 24/7 via email or phone if anything goes wrong? What is their "turn around" time to provide you with a solution?

11. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Registering a domain name 101
- Domain name: advanced
- Security and backups

b) *Related websites*

- Web hosting forum: <http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/forum-threads.cfm?f=116>
- Google Apps: www.google.com/apps

Topic | Website

Tutorial 11

The Internet, Web 2.0 And The Tourism Industry

This tutorial summarises the state of the Internet, web 2.0 and the tourism industry and its implications for small and medium tourism businesses.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. About online tourists

a) How do tourists search online?

People are looking for information with the intention to buy. 80% of users start their search on a search engine: if they can't find you they won't book you!

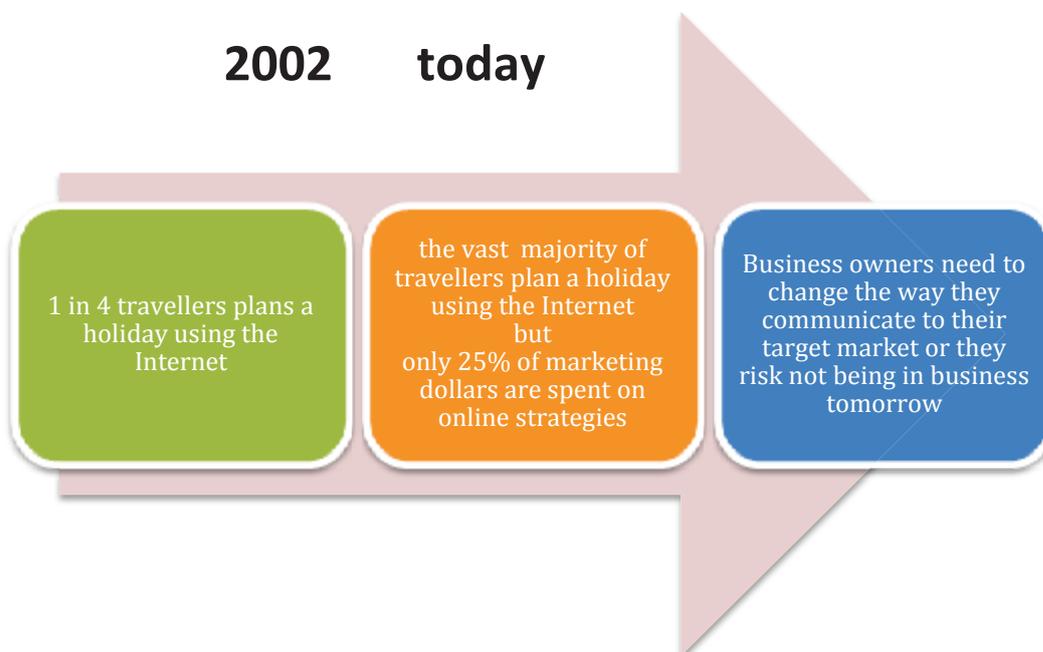
They want to be engaged in an online experience, and are after websites that allow them to feel they are experiencing what they are reading about. They want to access information that answers their questions; otherwise they will leave the site. Finally, they want to be able to book easily. If they can't book online or establish contact via email or telephone, they will leave.



Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/hjl/>

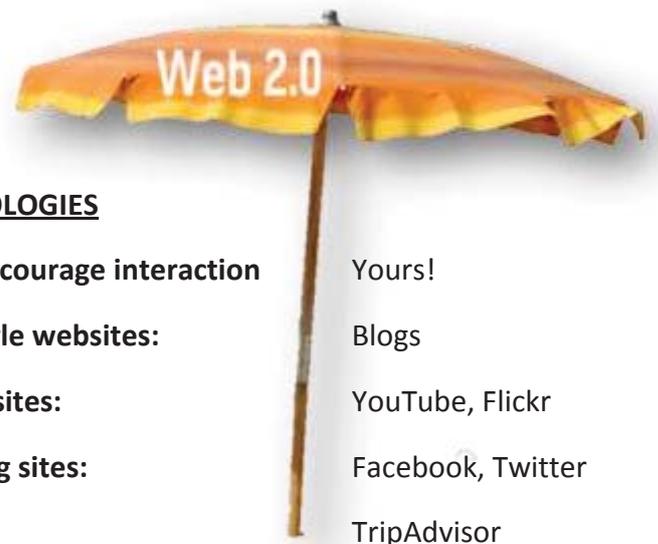
b) Evolution of online holiday planning

The statistics below reveal an important change in holiday planning patterns. However, operators are not fully capitalising on these travellers who are using the net to plan their trip.



2. Implications of web 2.0 for the travel industry

“Web 2.0” describes a growing trend towards online content made by web users, rather than traditional publishers. It is an umbrella term used to describe online technologies and medias that facilitate interaction and exchange of information online.



WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Websites that encourage interaction | Yours! |
| Topical, diary-style websites: | Blogs |
| Content sharing sites: | YouTube, Flickr |
| Social networking sites: | Facebook, Twitter |
| Trip review sites: | TripAdvisor |

Marketing your website using web 2.0 technologies is crucial in order to respond to the need of the web 2.0-savvy traveller. However, you will first need to assess how your target market uses each technology to decide on how to integrate it into your online strategy as each technology necessitates a different approach.

Below is an example of how aspirant divers could search for a dive course using web 2.0 avenues.

They browse the video-sharing site YouTube for diving footage so they can picture what their future scuba diving experience in North Queensland could be like. They then ask for more advice on Twitter and online discussion groups such as the Lonely Planet Thorn Tree, TripAdvisor forum on scuba diving blogs or discussion forums. They book online on the website that gives them the most information without having to pick up the phone. Once the holiday is over, they post their photos on the photo-sharing site Flickr, write a review about their accommodation on TripAdvisor, report on their experience on the forums where they initially asked for advice, and recommend or advise against your tour business to other members of their online community.

The above example illustrates that a basic brochure-like website is not sufficient to attract the web savvy traveller. As a business owner you need to rethink your online strategy and ensure it incorporates the required web 2.0 technologies.

3. Key considerations to succeed in the web 2.0 era

To succeed online, you need to:

- Have a website that meets the needs of the demanding target market.
- Work with the web 2.0 tools to increase your online presence, manage your online



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reputation and integrate these tools within your website whenever possible.

- Be present on third-party distributor sites such as Wotif, Stayz, and Last Minute as they have a bigger reach and will rank high in search engines for mainstream keywords.
- Remember that first impressions are often made online via search results that point to third party reviews of your product or to an external video or blog post. Pay attention to and closely monitor every page on which your product is listed. Set up Google alerts to do so.

a) Website requirements

Consider your website as your most dependable and untiring salesperson. **Just like your voice on the phone when talking to a customer**, it needs to be fresh, easy to understand, provide timely information and encourage your customers to make contact with you (what is called a conversion).

On any given day, a well planned and search engine optimised website will attract anywhere between 30 to 100 new and unique visitors. In comparison, your phone might only ring 3 to 20 times a day.

A QUICK CALCULATION REVEALS THAT FOR 1 PHONE CALL YOU RECEIVE ON ANY GIVEN DAY THERE ARE FROM 5 TO 10 OTHER PEOPLE WHO SHOULD VISIT YOUR WEBSITE.

Fill out the table below to calculate your phone call to website viewing ratio. How do you compare to the average? If the ratio is low (less than 5), your website is not performing at its optimum level. If you are below average, read paragraphs b) and c) which will outline the possible causes.

| | Average | Your business |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| A Average number of phone enquiries received during a day: | 3 to 20 | |
| B Average number of daily unique new visitors to your website*: | 30 to 100 | |
| * If you cannot tell how many people visit your website per day, refer to the Google Analytics tutorial to install tracking on your website. | | |
| B/A: For every phone call I get , people visit my website | 5 to 10 | |

b) *Small and medium tourism businesses' websites are not visible to the searcher*

It is regrettably very common that tourism businesses' websites are not visible to the online searcher. It means that they do not appear on search engine listings when "ready to buy" travellers are looking for a product that they offer. This is partly due to the fact that these websites are not written in a format which search engines are capable of understanding. In other words, they are not "search engine optimised". Search engine optimisation is a manual process that has to be performed on every site.

Imagine Gemma Davies searching on Google for a "romantic escape near brisbane". You are the owner of a luxurious country bed and breakfast one hour from Brisbane and it seems to be the perfect match. However, when Gemma uses Google, she doesn't find your website! This is because your website is not optimised for the keywords that Gemma is using.

IF YOUR WEBSITE IS NOT OPTIMISED FOR SEARCH ENGINES, IT IS JUST AS IF YOU HAD A PHONE NUMBER BUT WEREN'T LISTED IN THE PHONE BOOK.

c) *My website is not converting visitors into sales*

If your website is attracting many visitors who unfortunately leave without contacting you or making a purchase, you are then confronted with what is called low conversion rates. People visit your site but they do not make a purchase (or convert).

Most of the time, this is due to the content and structure of the website not meeting the needs of the web user. For instance, your visitors cannot find their way around the site or they cannot find answers to the questions they might have.

The web is the first point of contact between the customers and your organisation. **If an Internet user visits your website, you need to ensure they are positively surprised by your online presence.** You should review every page and ensure it meets all the requirements and answers all the questions a customer might have.

In order for the client to convert, your website's copy needs to replicate the sales pitch you would deliver to a client on the phone or in person. See the following paragraph to learn how to do so.

4. Do I need to be Internet savvy to be successful?

No. Today's online marketer is a dynamic **people person**, and being a tourism operator you are very well suited to this role.

However, you will need to dedicate time and effort to **adapt your website as often as you adapt your product**, and respond to emails as quickly as you would respond to a phone enquiry. Time is of the essence as web surfers are impatient. Your online presence needs to reflect your offline presence.

There are no programming skills required to be self-sufficient in online marketing. You are still



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going to market your product to a human. The only difference is that you will do it through digital mediums such as website, photos, videos etc.

Below is a chart illustrating how to successfully transition from a non web-environment to a web environment. You can print it and keep it by your computer as a reminder for when you work on your website and web strategy.

| | Non Web environment | Web environment |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| |  |  |
| Sales Pitch How to transfer enthusiasm and knowledge | Your tone of voice and the language you use is adaptable to each client | Use words, images, videos, sound: cater for all your target markets |
| How customers picture themselves experiencing your offer | Customers use your words and the sounds they hear to imagine what your product is like | Customers can only rely on what they see on your website and read about you on the Internet (TripAdvisor) |
| How customers can book | They can book directly with you. You let them know the availability and they pay by credit card over the phone | They want to be able to book direct or expect a very quick email response (less than 24h) |
| Customers' gut feeling & decision making | Their feeling is strongly based on how they are being treated on the phone | Their feeling is strongly based on what they can find about you online (your website or what others wrote about you) |

5. Key learning outcomes

- Having a website is not enough. You need to ensure your website is the main hub of your web strategy
- Remember, your website gets many more visitors a day than the number of times your phone may ring during that exact same day
- Do not underestimate the importance of managing your online reviews
- Setup a Facebook Page for your business as the majority of your target market use Facebook.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Initial assessment of my website
- Web strategy: assessment and components
- Target market 101
- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Understanding inbound links to my site
- Sourcing inbound links
- Online reputation management
- Google tools
- Google Analytics

Topic | Website

Tutorial 12

Target Market 101

This tutorial will review how to establish a website that is suited to your target market.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. Time to take a holiday

Imagine you have the opportunity to go on holiday next month and you are going to research a possible location using only the Internet. **For this exercise it is very important you forget about your own business and think that you are the lucky traveller who gets to go away.**

Where on the Internet would you start your search?

.....

If you start your search on a search engine, which one would you use?

.....

Why would you want to go on holiday? Interests, motivations for travel? What locations, places and activities provide the benefits you are looking for?

.....

.....

.....

What keyword phrases do you type in your search engine hoping to find the ideal trip (e.g. Romantic weekend getaway near Melbourne)? Provide 2 examples.

First example:

Second example:

Imagine you typed your keywords above (first **or** second example) in Google and amongst the list of results, a listing really appealed to you. What would the title and description be?

For instance in the search engine results example on the right, the user searched for “barossa valley walking tours”. The headline of the last search engine listing “Bush Walking Tours in Barossa Valley” responds to the exact query of the user and is enticing.

Screen capture copyright: Google



Target Market 101

Title:

Description:

You are now on the website that really appealed to you (you have clicked on the link on the search engine results page). Is there an enticing picture on the website? **YES NO**

What does it show?

.....

If there was a video on the website, what would you like it to show?

.....

What content would make you leave the website, or lose your interest?

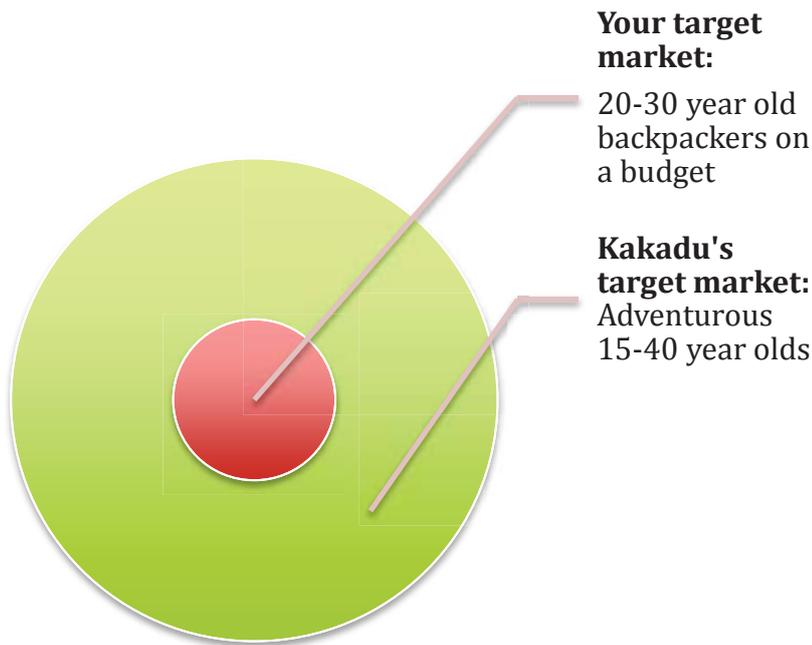
.....

2. Back to business: defining my target market

As a tourism operator, you understand that the dynamics that bring tourists to your area are, in most cases, impossible to change: people are first attracted to your destination and then they will decide on the activities and accommodation.

For instance, if you are located in Kakadu your market is going to be adventurous 15-40 year olds. There isn't anything you can do about it, this is how it is.

The people who come to your destination however might not all be attracted to your own product or offering by default. Your target market(s) will be a subset of the destination's visitors.



To successfully complete the exercise below, you are required to focus on your own target market (subset). Avoid the overarching categories and really delve into the audience you want to attract. In doing so, you will be able to improve your website's content and create a stronger bond with your online visitors. This will in turn increase your chances to convert a simple visitor into a customer.

Who are your two main target markets?

Which audience are you seeking to reach with your website? You might have more than two but please focus on the two main ones for the purpose of this exercise. Be specific like in the Kakadu example above (e.g. 20-30 year olds on budget).

- Main target market A:
- Main target market B:

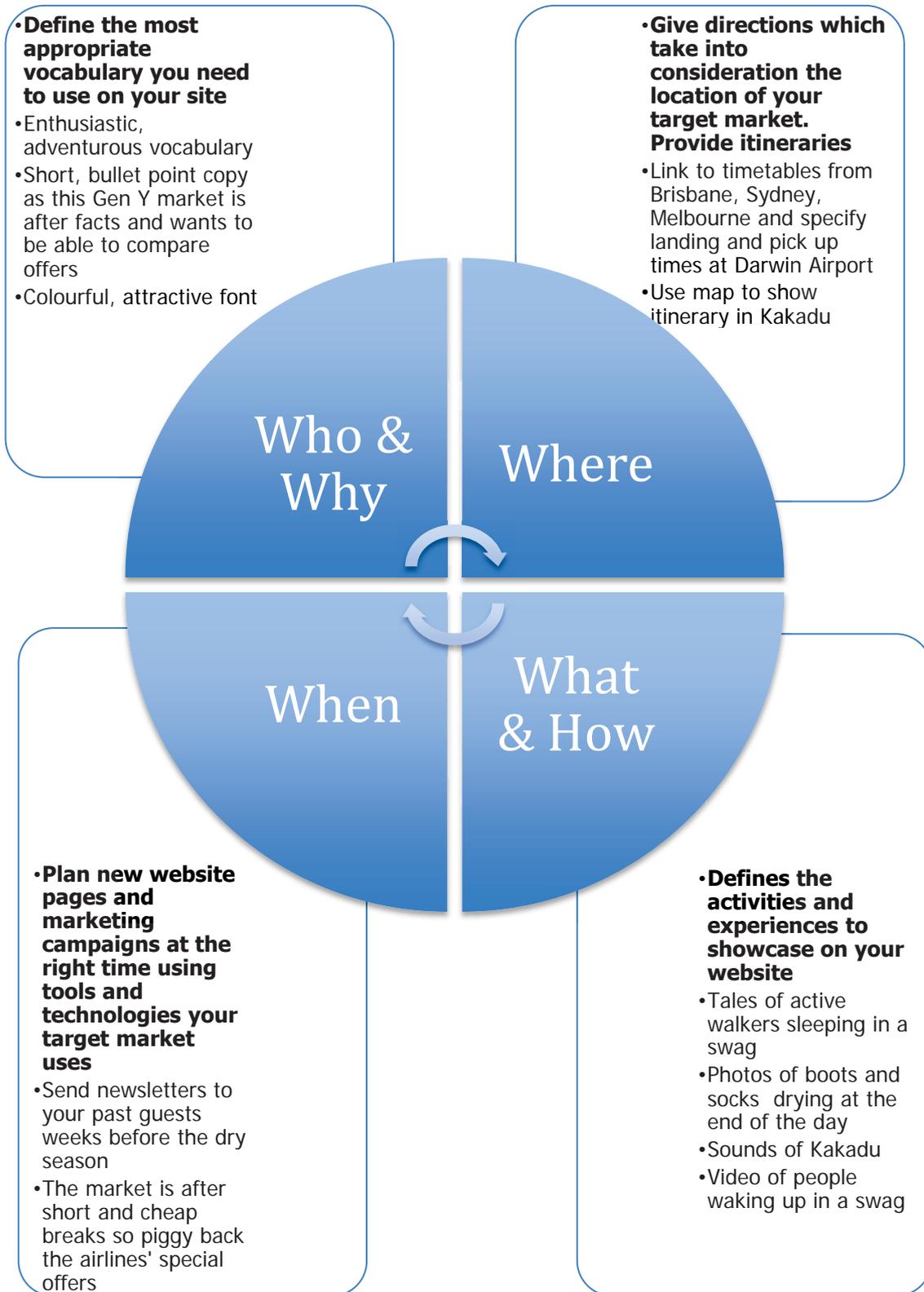
Now focus on these specific target markets A and B and look for their descriptive attributes. The attributes in the boxes are examples only. Please define your own.



| | Target Market A | Target Market B |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Who are they? Single couple, retirees, family? Repeat or new? Women? Groups?</p> | | |
| <p>What experience are they after? What moves them? Relaxation, sports, weekend getaway, shopping, festival?</p> | | |
| <p>When do they travel? Seasonal, week vs weekends? Summer only?</p> | | |
| <p>Where are they from? International or domestic? Locals? State capital?</p> | | |
| <p>Why do they travel ? Well-deserved holiday, time away from kids, reunion, social event?</p> | | |
| <p>How do they travel? On the cheap, 1st class, with frlends, alone?</p> | | |

3. Writing content for my target market

Now that you know exactly who you are trying to attract, it's easier to decide how to organise your website's content and structure. In the centre of the circle are the 6 categories from the previous page. The boxes explain how to integrate your target market attributes into your content. The examples are based on Kakadu.



4. Key learning outcomes

- Listen to the keywords your target market uses when they are experiencing your product. This will help you better develop your website's content to suit their needs. Use the same vocabulary on your website.
- Develop products, services and offers that complement the activities your target market enjoys doing. For instance, if the honeymooners are one of your key market why not also promote a related "babymoon" package?

5. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Website 101: visual design and content
- Website 101: usability and technology
- Search engines 101

Topic | Website

Tutorial 13

Website 101: Visual Design And Content

This tutorial is the first of two that will look at the essential elements required for your website. The focus will be on visual design and content.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. Visual design

The design of your website, its look and feel, should connect with your target audience and strive to create a bond between your product and the consumer. **A user will automatically associate the quality of your website with the quality of your offer.** If your site appears low budget or only marginally professional, it will negatively affect the chances of engendering trust in your visitors.

The site design will convey the importance and authority of your business through its design. Below are two examples of design:



Screen capture copyright:
<http://thebiguglywebsite.com/reviews>



Screen capture copyright:
<http://www.smartaccommodationwebsite.com>

Neglected, untargeted design

Professional, targeted design

The design of your website should be either left to a graphic designer specialising in web design (this profession is also known as web designer) or based on a template. **The web designer will then hand over the design to a web developer whose role is to translate the look and feel into HTML and CSS (and integrate it to a content management system).** HTML and CSS are the programming languages used to create documents for display on the Internet.



In the early days of the World Wide Web, style settings used to be integrated to the HTML (which holds the content) of your website. The World Wide Web consortium, who is the Internet

regulatory body, now recommends stripping the style from the content of a website and putting it in a separate file. This separate file is called a Cascading Style Sheet (CSS).

If your website does not follow the World Wide Web consortium's recommendations your webpages will most certainly not display properly on different browsers and machines. More importantly, the website's content risks not being picked up (indexed) by search engines. If your website is not accurately indexed in search engines, it may not attract much new business.

If you are planning on developing a website yourself rather than hiring a professional, please ensure you adhere to the World Wide Web consortium's HTML (www.w3schools.com/html) and CSS (www.w3schools.com/css) guidelines. If you are not 100% familiar with these, it is strongly recommended that you outsource the design and development of your website to a trained and competent web designer and developer.

a) Font type

Unless you use standard fonts on your site, you cannot guarantee that they will be available on the web surfer's computer. If their computer does not have the font installed, your user's browser will display a default font and your website might look different.

As a rule of thumb it is nicer to use Sans-Serif fonts (a font category that has no serifs, also known as extensions on letters) and avoid Serif fonts on the Internet.

Below is a list of fonts that are installed on both Windows and Mac computers or that have counterparts on each machine. If you choose any of these fonts you will be safe:

- Arial (Helvetica) (sans serif)
- **Comic Sans MS**
- Courier New
- Tahoma (Geneva) (sans serif)
- Trebuchet MS (sans serif)
- Verdana (sans serif)



A good web developer will always set a series of preferred fonts so your website renders nicely on different browsers (such as Internet Explorer, Firefox etc.) and operating systems (Microsoft Windows, Mac OS, and Linux).

Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/inconsistency/>

b) Font size

An em is a unit of measurement in the field of typography, which equals the point (pt) size of the current font. In web terms, this signifies that setting the base font to 1em will ensure the font size is set to the user's preference.

ALWAYS SET THE BASE FONT SIZE FOR A WEB DOCUMENT TO 1EM (OR 100%).

Use 1em (or 100%) as the smallest font size on your website and increase it for your titles, headings etc. For instance, your main heading (also known as Heading 1 in HTML) could be 1.8 em (180%). That signifies that it will be 1.8 times the size of your user's standard font size.

c) Can my site's colour, fonts and look be altered very easily?

Yes, a trained web developer will be able to do so by changing a few lines of code in the cascading style sheets (CSS). If a website is not written using cascading style sheets this may not be possible.

2. Content

a) Changing website content with a content management system

A competent web developer will provide you with a content management system (CMS) that will allow you to edit the content of your website, while at the same time, preventing you from altering the style (which is held separately in CSS). Unless you are a programmer, you won't be able to install a content management system on your site.

Having a content management system professionally installed might cost an extra AUD500-1,500 but it is real value for money as it is the only way you will be able to edit your content directly. Using a content management system can save you hours every month.

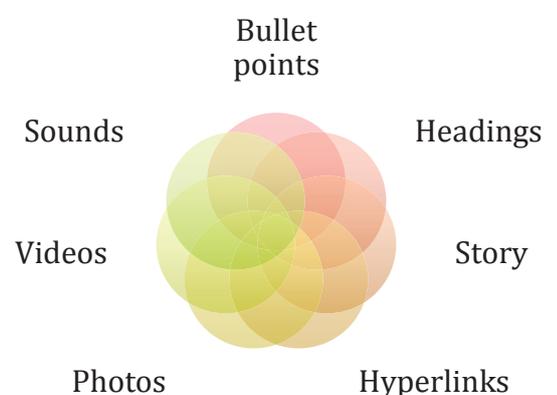
There are many CMS on the market and the majority of them are free (thanks to an open source licence). All you will require to pay is for a professional to install it on your site. Below is a list of open source CMS that have come highly recommended by the web developers and users community:

- CMS Made Simple
- Drupal
- Joomla!
- DotNetNuke
- PHP-Fusion
- WordPress

b) Depth and volume of words on a page

It takes less than a few seconds for a first impression to be made. **You need to engage your visitor and showcase how your product can make a positive difference to their holiday experience.**

Remember, your website is your only chance to convince your visitor to book. You will not be able to talk to them unless they contact you first. You need to be able to express what you would easily convey in a phone or face-to-face conversation.



Be imaginative. Use sound, videos, and photos but also organise your content to ensure it is attractive and eye-catching.

Research has shown that **users scan-read online text**. They move their eyes quickly down a page seeking specific keyword or phrases. To assist the user experience, use headings, bold text and hyperlinks throughout your text. Write small paragraphs using bullet points when you can and illustrate your text with images.

Focus on giving the customer what they want, on a gold platter.

c) *What is a call-to-action?*

A call-to-action is a set of words that entice the reader to take a specific action. Call to actions can be expressed in different ways:

- A call-to-action can be added to a print ad to visit a website (or a specific webpage). The main advantage of this will allow the visitor numbers and origin to be tracked with an analytics program such as Google Analytics to let you know if the campaign was successful.

Imagine you are placing an ad in a travel brochure targeting Melbournians. Add a call-to-action such as “See the special package offer on our website www.mysite.com/special-package-for-melbourne”. You will be able to track the success of your ad by viewing the number of unique visitors to the “special-package-for-melbourne” page on your web analytics program. A web analytics program will provide you vital statistics about the performance of your website.

- At least one call-to-action needs to be located on each webpage to direct the user to the next page you would like them to visit. Call-to-actions are done using hyperlink, which is text that can be clicked on. Search engines give high importance to hyperlinks as it helps them understand what a website is about. It is therefore best to avoid “click here” and have keywords used as hyperlinks instead.

Imagine you are selling adventure tours. On both the tour description page and your home page you need to have a call-to-action to take the person to the booking page. This call-to-action needs to be eye-catching.

The 2-day Katherine Gorge kayaking tour will take your muscles on an adventure that will be hard to forget. Check out the [availability of the Katherine Gorge tour](#) (instead of having [click here](#) for the prices).

It is **crucial** to use call-to-actions. Make them as subtle as possible to avoid “hard selling”.

d) *What about images and brand?*

Pictures speak a thousand words! Use them as often as possible when relevant. **Be creative**, you don’t only have to use your own



images.

There are many images that you can use to reinforce the message you are trying to convey with text. You can use your own photos, photos taken by guests (seek approval from each party before using the photo), stock photos, photos under licence (called a Creative Commons licence). There are many avenues to explore.

Photo credit: UntangleMyWeb.com

e) *Should I have a lot of images?*

The key issue with images is that they can take a long time to load. If you images are of a good size (around 400x300 pixels) and resolution (max 72 dpi), you can use a reasonable number of them per page (2-6).

f) *Branding my content*

On your website, your brand identity will not only be portrayed by your logo but also by:

- The tone of your website's copy
- The colour-scheme and font of your website
- The images and videos you use

Having the style of your website separate from the content will also allow you to easily rebrand yourself by asking your web developer to make simple changes to your website's CSS.

For instance, if your brand colours change from blue and red to green and gold your web developer will be able to, in a couple of clicks and lines of code, change the colours of all headings and text!

Your content will automatically be protected by copyright; however, neither your brand nor your logo will be automatically trademarked, unless you have previously registered them with www.IPAustralia.gov.au. Please note that registering a trademark is not free and can take over a year.

3. Key learning outcomes

- First impressions count: the design of your website is what your visitors see first. If it doesn't meet their expectations they won't go any further
- Ensure that you work with a graphic designer specialised in web and not a print designer as the skill set required to designed user and search friendly websites is very different from print
- Content is not only text: it includes images, videos and other content assets.

4. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Target market 101
- What is a content management system



Website 101 – Visual Design and Content

- Images 101
- Flickr and photo hosting websites

Topic | Website

Tutorial 14

Website 101: Usability And Technology

The focus of this second tutorial reviewing the essential elements for your website will be on usability and technology.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: Website 101: Visual Design And Content



1. Usability

According to Wikipedia.com (the free web-based encyclopaedia), usability refers to the “elegance and clarity with which the interaction with a website is designed”. In other words, usability is the practice of designing websites to be more effective, efficient and satisfying.

On the web, usability is **a necessary condition for survival**. If a website is difficult to use, your target market will leave.

Usability can be further classified into two concepts: readability and accessibility that are discussed below.

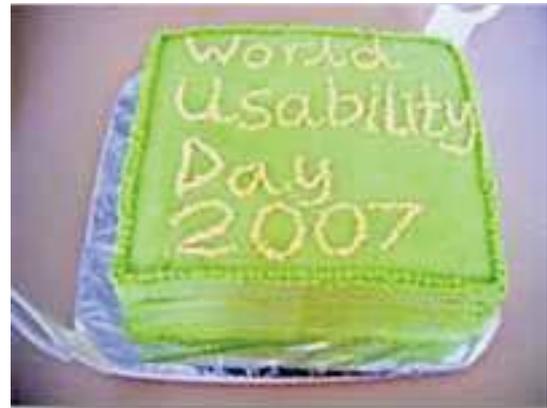


Photo credit: www.flickr.com/photos/laruth

a) Readability

Readability refers to the ease of reading your webpage. You can easily improve the readability of your website by following a few key principles:

- **Use contrasting colours:** A low contrast between font and background will not only irritate the user and create eye fatigue but will prevent vision-impaired users from reading your site.
- **Bite-size your text:** Users scan-read online text so it is essential to break up your text in shorter, clear, bite-sized paragraphs.
- **Clean font style and size:** Use Sans-Serif fonts instead of Serif fonts (Sans-Serif fonts do not have the characteristic small horizontal lines at the tops and bases of characters that Serif fonts have), avoid fancy fonts and fonts smaller than 1 em.

This is a fancy font that you should avoid

This is a plain Sans-Serif font that is safe to use

- **Avoid clutter:** Offer the user a clear, simple picture of what your product and service is about, without sending your user on a wild goose chase across your website.

b) Accessibility

Accessibility encompasses the recommendations and best practices to ensure the web is accessible to all, including people with disabilities. Latest research reveals that 20% of Internet users have accessibility issues. The World Wide Web consortium set up the web accessibility initiative. Accessibility guidelines are located on www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/quickref/ and summarised below:

- **Text alternatives:** Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people may need, such as large print, braille, speech,



symbols or simpler language.

- **Time-based media:** Provide alternatives for audio and video content (for example text).
- **Adaptable:** Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure.
- **Distinguishable:** Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.
- **Keyboard accessible:** Make all functionality available from a keyboard
- **Enough time:** Give users enough time to read and use the content.
- **Seizures:** Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures (e.g. webpages should not contain anything that flashes more than 3 times per second).
- **Navigable:** Provide ways to help users navigate, find content and determine where they are.
- **Readable:** Make text content readable and understandable.
- **Predictable:** Make webpages appear and operate in predictable ways.
- **Input assistance:** Help users avoid and correct mistakes. Never assume that a user will know their way around your website.
- **Compatible:** Maximize compatibility with current and future technologies



2. Technology

a) What should my website be made of?

A website is a related collection of web files that includes an **initial file called a home page**.

You can get to a website by typing the home page address (called a URL) in your browser. From this home page you can navigate to all the other pages of the site.

The programming language used to create documents for display on the World Wide Web is called **HTML** (Hyper Text Markup Language). The style (font, colours, look and feel) used to be part of the HTML file but it has now been taken out and centralised into a **CSS** (Cascading Style Sheet) file. This practice eases the layout modifications you may require on your website in the future and makes your content more accessible to search engines.



If your website is recent, you should have been provided with a content management system (CMS) that allows you to edit the content of each of your pages. Having a CMS will reduce the ongoing cost for maintenance of your website as you will be able to make most of the changes yourself without requiring the services of a web developer.

b) What is HTML, CSS, PHP, Flash?

HTML is the programming language of your website. As any language, it evolves constantly. The latest versions are HTML 5 (newest), XHTML 1.0 and XHTML 1.1, released in June 2008. The previous version was HTML 4.01.

There is a large chance that your website was developed in XHTML 1.0 or HTML 4.01.

Check what version your website is programmed in:

- In Internet Explorer, navigate to your website's home page (www.mysite.com for instance) and go to the VIEW menu and select SOURCE.
- If you are using Firefox, navigate to your website's home page (www.mysite.com for instance) and go to the VIEW menu and select PAGE SOURCE.
- In Chrome, navigate to your website's home page (www.mysite.com for instance) and go to the VIEW menu, select DEVELOPER then VIEW SOURCE.

The very first line of the page should be similar to the below. Look for the word after the first DTD (in red in the example below) to see which HTML version your website is built in.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/XHTML1/DTD/XHTML1-strict.dtd">
```

Apart from HTML and CSS, there are other programming languages that can be present in a website.

- **PHP:** an open-source (free) programming language that allows web developers to create dynamic content that interacts with databases.
- **ASP.net:** a Microsoft-owned programming language that allows web developers to create dynamic content that interacts with databases.
- **Flash:** a way of adding animation to webpages. **Flash poses a lot of accessibility problems**, as it is graphic/image based and search engines cannot read images. However, Google announced in July 2008 that it is now starting to read and index Flash files, which couldn't previously be done. Until now, Flash files created enormous search engine optimisation issues simply because search engines were not able to read the content of the files. They were therefore not able to index the files, as they wouldn't know what the page was about.

THIS SAID, FLASH FILES DO NOT OFFER FULL OPTIMISATION CAPACITIES AND HAVE MANY DRAWBACKS. THEY MAKE YOUR WEBSITE LOOK GREAT BUT THEY ALSO MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH SEARCH ENGINES TO LET PEOPLE KNOW YOUR WEBSITE EXISTS. WE RECOMMEND YOU CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE USAGE OF FLASH.

c) *Where can I access some guidelines?*

Your web developer is usually a good place to start. We suggest you ask them what version of HTML they use (it should be HTML 5, XHTML 1.0 or 1.1) and what other programming languages they are proficient in.

- If you are being offered a website using a lot of Flash technology, we suggest you stay away as Flash technology is not search engine friendly.
- If you are being offered a website built using HTML Frames technology, we suggest you stay away. This old practice is not search engine friendly.

You can also access documentation from the World Wide Web consortium, **the** HTML and CSS authority. www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide is an introduction about HTML.

d) *What are blogs, forums, and newsletter subscriptions?*

In the early days of the Internet, users were only able to surf the web by browsing brochure-like websites. Web 2.0 has now brought interaction to the Internet and users have much more at their disposal than simple websites:

- **Blog:** a blog is like a diary online (a web-log). The blog owner can post daily entries and users can interact with the author by posting comments. Blogs generally complement a website very well. A renowned blog is Seth Godin's blog: <http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>. His website is www.sethgodin.com.
- **Forums:** online forums are online discussion spaces where anyone can ask questions and other users can respond. A very well known Australian forum about online technology is Whirlpool: <http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/>. Asking questions and seeking answers in forums is free.
- **Newsletters:** the purpose of a newsletter is to regularly communicate with your audience. If your website is highly visible on search engines, users might opt-in and register for your newsletter. This will give you access to their email address for future marketing purposes. Newsletters are widely used in the travel industry to send out promotions, special offers in low season and as follow up emails to keep contact. You can also use newsletters to keep your tourism partners (such as concierges in hotels) updated.

e) *What is web 2.0?*

Web 2.0 describes a growing trend online towards content made by web users, rather than traditional publishers. People also talk about the term "social media". It is an umbrella term used to describe online technologies that facilitate interaction and exchange of information online.

The tutorial titled "The Internet, web 2.0 and the tourism industry" reviews web 2.0.

3. Key learning outcomes

- Usability is closely related to conversions. If a website isn't user friendly it won't easily convert visitors into buyers.
- There are different types of technologies and programming languages used to build a website. Ensure you question your web developer in your brief about which technology they use and what are its advantages?

4. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Website 101: visual design and content
- The Internet, web 2.0 and the tourism industry
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Blogging

b) *Related websites*

- Getting started with HTML: www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/

Topic | Website

Tutorial 15

What Is A Content Management System?

This tutorial will provide you with extensive information on content management systems.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. What is a content management system?

A content management system (CMS) is a program that lets you edit your website's content and add pages without needing to know any programming language. It is a must-have for all businesses.

If you have built your website yourself, you might be familiar with Adobe Dreamweaver, Microsoft FrontPage or Microsoft Publisher. These programs are not content management systems but are used by (often novice) web developers to build the code of your website. In order for you to edit your content, your web developer will need to add a content management system.

Some small business owners may want to use programs like Dreamweaver to try and build or edit their own websites. However, they will require a solid knowledge of technical expertise in order for the result to meet the expectations of both their audience and search engines. Most times the results are disappointing and small business owners get very frustrated after having spent many hours trying to build their site. It is better to work with a professional to design and program your website and for you to **focus on the content**. The programmer will build a content management system into your site, which you will be able to access from any computer.

CMS are much easier to use than the likes of Dreamweaver because they are tailored to non-tech savvy users.

2. Do I need a CMS?

Yes. If you want to be competitive in today's online space, you cannot do without a robust platform that will allow you to update your content and access hundreds of plugins to enhance your web presence.

Having a content management system will save you money as you won't need to pay a web developer every time you want to modify the content of your website. It will also add agility to your online business by letting you add plugins (often called modules) such as photo galleries, blogging, shopping cart etc very easily to your website.

You will not be able to configure a CMS on your own and will need to ask your web developer to do so when they program your site.

3. Which CMS are the most popular and reliable?

There are many CMS on the market. **Free open-source CMS are very popular because they allow programmer to adapt the code to suit your website requirements and benefit from the improvements other programmers have made to the system.**

Open source CMS, even though they can be downloaded at no cost, will require to be installed on your website by your programmer. You will generally pay a set fee for them to install it. In many instances, it is also possible to install a CMS on an existing website.



What Is A Content Management System?

Open source CMS that are highly recommended by the web developers and users community are:

- Drupal (<http://drupal.org>)
- DotNetNuke (www.dotnetnuke.com) *
- CMS Made Simple (www.cmsmadesimple.org)
- Joomla! (www.joomla.org)
- SilverStripe (www.silverstripe.com)
- WordPress (www.wordpress.org)

*DotNetNuke is a CMS that requires to be hosted on Microsoft servers

Your web company will have a favourite CMS that they recommend to their clients. The section below will assist you with making sure it meets today's requirements. Remember however to take your CMS for a test drive and see if you can and enjoy driving it.

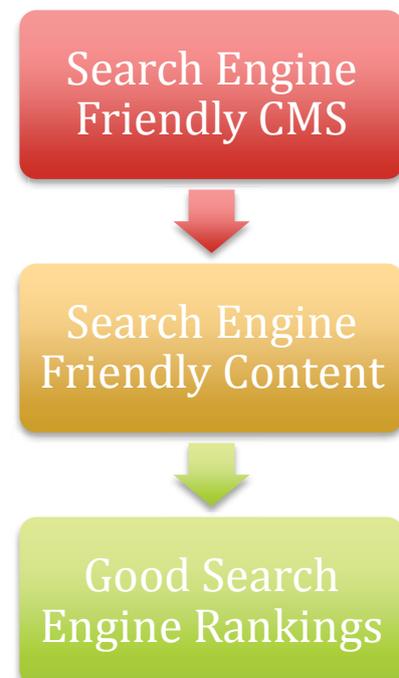
4. Content management system requirements

a) Key components a CMS should have

GOOGLE SAYS: IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT HIRING A SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO) CONSULTANT, THE EARLIER THE BETTER. A GREAT TIME TO HIRE IS WHEN YOU'RE CONSIDERING A SITE REDESIGN, OR PLANNING TO LAUNCH A NEW SITE. THAT WAY, YOU AND YOUR SEO CONSULTANT CAN ENSURE THAT YOUR SITE IS DESIGNED TO BE SEARCH ENGINE FRIENDLY FROM THE BOTTOM UP.

Since a content management system allows you to edit the content of your site, it is crucial for it to respect key search engine optimisation principles. Below are a few points to help you assess if the content management system your web developer uses meets today's requirements:

- Needs to be web-based and doesn't require to be installed on each computer
- Allows you to not only change but add/remove text, images, videos
- Allows you to edit the page titles, descriptions (meta tags) and URLs (address of the page)
- Allows you to create/delete new sections and pages on your website
- Allows you to edit the "Alt" tags of the images. Since search engines cannot read the content of the images, it is crucial they have access to the image's description (the "Alt" tag). You need to be able to edit this description every time you upload or change an image



What Is A Content Management System?

- Allows you to create redirects to pages using the 301 standard
- Change the text of your navigation bar

Building a website without keeping the above requirements in mind will negatively impact your ability to increase traffic and conversions.

b) Hosting requirements

Your CMS will have specific requirements that will need to be met by your website's hosting package. One of these requirements is a database (e.g MySQL).

As your existing hosting package might not be suitable (if you already have a site), your web developer should ensure that your host meets the minimum requirements of the CMS. If this isn't the case, you might be able to upgrade to another package. If not, you might need to change hosts.

5. Can't I just use Dreamweaver, FrontPage or MsWord to change my site?

We suggest it is best to use a content management system instead of a program such as Dreamweaver to make changes to your site. CMS will not only prevent you from damaging the look and feel of the site but they will also save you a lot of time and headaches. For instance, a new webpage can be created in one click. They are purpose-built for non-techies.

If a web developer or company recommends you to purchase a WYSIWYG editor instead of a CMS, look for another web company.

6. Can a CMS be added to a site that is already live?

Definitely! Your programmer should be able to do this for you easily. If your site is dated, they might recommend re-programming the site using standards-compliant code and integrate the CMS at the same time.

7. Key learning outcomes

- Buying a website that doesn't have a content management system is comparable to buying a car without having a license
- Shop around for a user-friendly and search engine friendly content management system and take it for a test drive before signing on the dotted line
- Dreamweaver, Contribute and FrontPage shouldn't be referred to as content management systems.

8. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Organising hosting for my site



What Is A Content Management System?

- Domain name: advanced

b) Related websites

- SEO considerations for your content management system: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4221/Website-Redesign-Important-SEO-Considerations-for-Your-Content-Management-System.aspx>
- Choosing the right content management system: www.seomoz.org/blog/choosing-the-right-cms-platform-for-your-website-from-an-seo-perspective

Topic | Website

Tutorial 16

Images 101

This tutorial will cover the basic concepts to respect when preparing images to use on your website or on the Internet.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. Which images will help me sell my product?

Use images on your website to help your customers imagine a holiday on your premises. Good images enhance your website and are extremely important.

a) *First impression*

Images are the first thing visitors see when they come to a website. They make or break a first impression. Which one of the 3 homepages below makes a better, more professional first impression?



Screen capture www.renoirs.ca

Homepage doesn't convey a professional message



Screen capture www.whistlermountainhouse.com

Homepage seems dry, as it lacks images



Screen capture www.latitudefivzero.com

Homepage conveys a professional first impression

b) *Images tell a story*

AN IMAGE IS NOT A TWO-DIMENSIONAL, STATIC PLACEHOLDER - IT SENDS A MESSAGE TO THE VISITOR. IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, THIS MESSAGE SHOULD NOT ONLY SHOWCASE A PRODUCT BUT SHOULD ALSO CONVEY AN ENJOYABLE, POSITIVE EXPERIENCE.

Images 101

It is therefore important for photos to paint a timely and realistic picture of all the aspects of the experience the visitor can expect. Use your images to tell a story.

On your website, images should:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Set the scene: | Show your property in its current surroundings. |
| Show the action: | Put a face to the picture and show people experiencing your product. These people must fit the look of your target market. For example, do not show kids on your images if you don't cater for them. |
| Evoke emotion: | Allow the clients to visualise themselves in the middle of the picture and feel as if they are experiencing your offerings. |

Too often websites only set the scene. Consumers need to be able to picture themselves at your property, in the centre of the action. Do your photos send a message to your visitors?



Add message



Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/paraflyer/>

Static, hard to relate to

"Nice view, but what can I do there?"

Photo credit: Fabienne Rabbiosi

Evokes action and emotion

"It could be me and my mates on top of that glacier"



Add message



Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/freewine/>

Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/annamatic3000/>

Images 101

Static, hard to relate to

“I see, they have kayaks, but can I use them?”

Evokes action and emotion

“How much fun would my kids and I be having?”

2. Technical components of images

It is crucial to understand the importance of having images that speak to your target market. However, there are technical rules that images need to abide by to convey a professional message.

Images need to:

- Have an appropriate size
- Have a web-friendly resolution
- Have a file type of either .jpg,
- Load fast (file size)

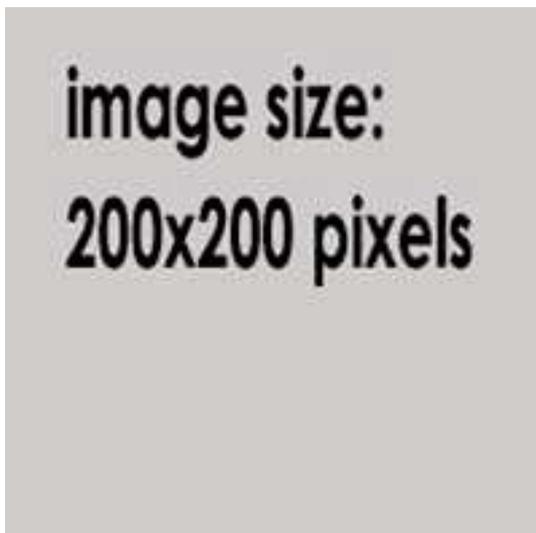


Size, resolution and file type go hand in hand

.gif or .png

a) Size

By image size, one refers to the width and height of an image. This is calculated using a unit called a pixel (instead of using centimetres or inches). The grey image below is 200 pixels wide by 200 pixels long.



The amount of space the image file will take when saved on a computer is proportional to its size and resolution (see section c below).

To better understand image sizes, let's first review the size of a computer monitor. The size of a monitor is also called its resolution.

The majority of monitors nowadays support a size of 1024 pixels wide by 768 pixels long. Older monitors only support an 800x600 resolution.

The image on the right is a screen capture of a computer monitor displaying the www.torontotourism.com website. The resolution of the monitor is standard: 1024x768 pixels.

The website itself (not counting the blue border on the right) is 760 pixels wide, an industry standard as well.



Images 101

If one wanted to show one image that covered the whole surface of the monitor, one would have needed to make that picture 1024 x 768 pixels wide. This is obviously not recommended, but it provides a starting point to understand size.

How do I determine an optimal size for my images?

Below are some guidelines for sizing images. If you are working with a web designer they should help you understand image size requirements.

| | Width (left to right) | Length (top to bottom) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Standard website width: 760 – 910 pixels | No standard length as one can scroll down with the mouse |
| Hero image (Main banner or header image) | No wider than the website itself (No wider than 760 or 910 pixels) | Maximum a third of the website's length (256 pixels) |
| Images within content | Maximum half of the width of the website (380 or 455 pixels) | Depends of the overall design of the site |
| Thumbnail (Small representation of an image that can be clicked on to view the larger image) | Maximum 100 to 200 pixels wide (Otherwise it wouldn't be a thumbnail anymore) | Maximum 100 to 200 pixels long (Otherwise it wouldn't be a thumbnail anymore) |

The above table is a guideline and your website designer might suggest something different. What is essential is to size and arrange your images in a manner that aesthetically complements the text:

- Choose a maximum of 2 to 3 sizes and stick to them as a variety of sizes does not portray professionalism
- Spread your images and your text in a logical manner
- Respect a similar layout on all pages

b) Resolution

Resolution refers to the **amount of details in an image**. The higher the resolution, the more you can enlarge the image and still see a sharp and clear picture. If the resolution is low, the image will look blurry and distorted when enlarged.

Example of an image with an inappropriate resolution for its size. Copyright: UntangleMyWeb.com



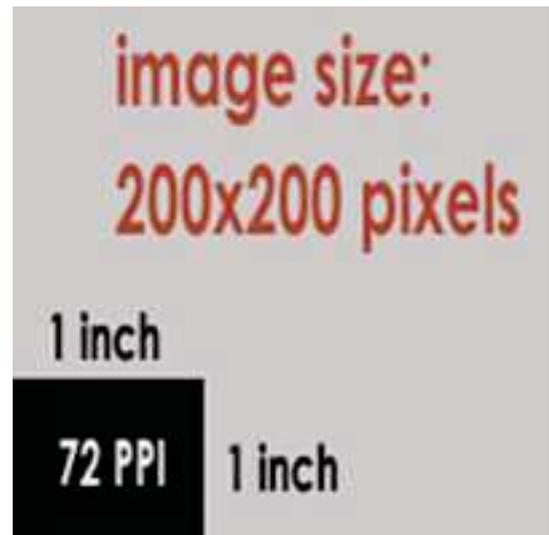
Images 101

Like the size of an image, its resolution is also measured using pixels, but it **specifically counts the number of pixels (a pixel is the smallest element of an image) per inch square (PPI)**.

The optimal resolution for an image is:

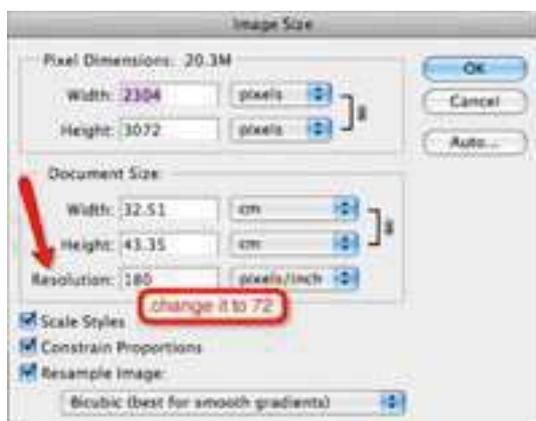
- 72 PPI for images that will be displayed on the Internet
- 300 PPI for images that are intended to be printed (e.g. glossy brochure)

Because digital cameras provide very high resolution images measured in mega (thousand of) pixels, you will need to reduce the resolution of the image before you upload it to your website.



To do so, you will require an image-editing program. If you do not already have one (such as Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, Fireworks), you can download one for free:

- Gimp for Windows (www.gimp.org) and Gimp for Mac (www.gimp.org/macintosh)
- Irfanview for Windows (www.irfanview.com) which offers a very handy batch resizing feature
- FastStone Image Viewer for Windows (www.faststone.org)
- ChocoFlop for Mac (www.chocoflop.com)
- iPhoto for Mac (comes standard with the operation system)



Once you have opened your image in an image-editing program, you will be able to change the resolution. Remember that you will also need to change the size of your image if its current size is too large. The example below shows how to change the size and resolution of an image using Photoshop.

Reduce the pixel dimension to the size you desire and ensure the resolution is 72 pixels per inch (square).

c) File size

The size of a file is the result of image size (width and length), resolution and image type. Remember, the larger the file size, the longer the user will have to wait to view the image.

You will be able to view the size of your files while navigating to their file location and hovering your mouse over them.

Optimal file size for images

An image should not exceed 50-60 KB in size otherwise it will take too long to load.

d) *File types*

There are three main file types or format for images that will be displayed on the web:

JPEG (.jpg, .jpeg)

Format you should use for photographic images.

More info: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JPEG>

GIF (.gif)

Format you should use for graphics and illustrations. It allows transparent backgrounds.

More info: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GIF>

PNG (.png)

This is a new file type and it can be used for photos, graphics and illustrations.

More info: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portable_Network_Graphics



Other file types you may have come across are bitmap (bmp), eps, psd and tiff. They are not recommended to use to display images on your website.

3. How to take good photos

You do not need to be a professional photographer to take good photos, but there are some key principles to respect to put the WOW factor in your snaps. Don't forget that your photos, just like your content, should be aimed at your target market.

Digital Photography School (<http://digital-photography-school.com/blog/10-questions>) is a great place to start, as it will review topics such as:

- What story am I telling?
- What is the visual focal point of this shot?
- What competing focal points are there?
- What is in the background and foreground?
- Am I close enough?
- What is the main source of light?
- Is my framing straight?
- What other perspectives could I capture this subject from?
- How would holding the camera in the other format change this shot?
- How will the eye travel through this image?

There are many other websites you can learn from:



- <http://digital-photography-school.com/blog/digital-photography-tips-for-beginners/>
- <http://digitalphotography.tipcentral.net/>
- www.digital-photography-tips.net/
- [http://malektips.com/digital cameras help and tips.html](http://malektips.com/digital_cameras_help_and_tips.html)

4. Key learning outcomes

- Ensure you understand image resolution and size before you upload any image on the Internet
- Images with people enjoying your property, tour or experience are best. E.g. Avoid images of empty swimming pool. They don't add as much value as those with happy people splashing around in the pool!

5. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Flickr and photo hosting websites

b) *Related websites*

- Digital tips for photographers: <http://digital-photography-school.com/blog/digital-photography-tips-for-beginners/>
- Digital photography tips: <http://digitalphotography.tipcentral.net/>
- Demystifying digital photography: www.digital-photography-tips.net/
- Digital cameras tips: [http://malektips.com/digital cameras help and tips.html](http://malektips.com/digital_cameras_help_and_tips.html)

Topic | Website

Tutorial 16A

Video For Your Website

In this tutorial you will learn to make short videos, upload them on video sharing sites (such as YouTube) and display them on your website.

Reading time: 40 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. Why video?

Your website should entice online visitors to come and experience your tourism product. It is therefore important for you to maximise the interaction by showing them what they could be experiencing.

VIDEO WILL MAKE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE ENTERTAINING FOR VISITORS AND WILL LET YOU SHOWCASE YOUR TOURISM PRODUCT IN A MORE IMMERSIVE WAY.

You will also be able to use the videos on other sites (online distributors, booking websites, Facebook, TripAdvisor).

There are two main types of videos that could benefit your websites:

- High quality commercial videos (made by a production company)
- User-generated content videos (videos made by users – such as yourself, your staff or your guests – who contribute content)

The aim of this tutorial is to teach you about the second type, the user-generated videos.

2. What shall I film?

There are many different aspects of your tourism product that you capture on video. For instance a short video testimonial from happy guests is an excellent way for your website visitors to picture themselves having the same great experience. This will take them one step closer to making a booking.

Let's imagine you are a learn-to-dive operation. You could:

- *Capture the visitors practicing in the swimming pool*
- *Capture the guests underwater doing an exercise required for the dive certification*
- *Capture guests coming back to surface and capture their first impressions on video*
- *Capture guests back in the dive shop telling you how amazing their dive experience was and ask them what their favourite moment was.*

You would then use these videos on different pages of your website. You could use the testimonial one on your testimonial page, or next to one of your “book now” buttons!

3. What makes a successful video?

A successful video should aim to convert your online visitors from prospects into guests.

Just like photos, videos are there to tell a story to the person who watches them. They evoke emotion and should allow the viewer to identify themselves with what they are watching. This is best done by ensuring there are people in the videos, instead of just scenery.

JUST LIKE PHOTOS, THE MESSAGE YOU ARE TRYING TO EXPRESS USING VIDEOS SHOULD CONVEY AN ENJOYABLE AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCE. SHOWING GUESTS HAVING A FABULOUS TIME IS A GREAT WAY TO ACHIEVE THIS.

Your message in your videos needs to support the information available on the web page you are going to display it on. Your videos should be short (maximum one and a half minutes), be real and teach your prospects something new or unexpected about your tourism product.

4. How to make and upload video

a) Filming your video

In order to make a short video which will be available online all you need is:



The arrow points to the video mode allowing you to take short videos.

Screen capture copyright: UntanglemyWeb.com

- An iPhone 4 (or any other mobile device with a video camera), a video camera or digital camera that has a video mode. If you have misplaced your camera's manual you can download it online (just google for "manual *insert brand and model of your camera*")
- A tripod to stabilise the camera
- One or more happy guests who have given you permission (in writing) to be filmed and displayed on the web
- Simply ask your guests if they would be happy to share their experience on a short video that you will display on YouTube and on your website. They don't have to mention their name. You don't need to practice in advance: just ask them as you film what they like about your place, tour or other tourism attraction and how they spent their day.

Video For Your Website

- Ensure the filming environment is free from background noise and if you are using a digital camera make sure the camera is close to the subject as the microphone may not be very powerful.
- An understanding of what makes a good video (search for tourism or travel on YouTube and take note of what you like and don't like)
- A 1GB (gigabyte) memory card (or more) for your camera as videos use a lot of memory space.

IF YOU ARE NOT VERY FAMILIAR WITH VIDEO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL VIDEO PROFESSIONAL. YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TERTIARY EDUCATION PROVIDER TO RECRUIT STUDENTS SPECIALISING IN FILM AND VIDEO WHO MAY BE ABLE TO HELP FOR A SMALL FEE OR A GOOD BUSINESS REFERENCE.

b) Transferring videos to my computer

Once you have a few videos of different people experiencing different aspects of your tourism product, you are ready to transfer them onto your computer. This is done in the same way that you transfer photos from your camera to your computer. You can either:

- connect your camera to your computer using the cable provided with the camera
- remove the memory card and insert it into a card reader or directly in your laptop if it has an incorporated memory card reader.

The format of the video file that you will download to your computer will depend on the brand of your camera. It will most likely be either:

- AVI (.avi extension – Windows Media)
- or MOV (.mov extension – Apple Quicktime).

In video jargon, this is known as the container format.

If you are using your iPhone 4 or other mobile device you can upload it directly to YouTube. For the iPhone for instance simply view your video and click on the Send to YouTube option.

c) Editing and converting

Editing

The aim of this tutorial is to show you how to make user-generated videos to capture guests' impressions and experiences whilst holidaying at your tourism operation. It is not to make a commercial video of your product.

ONE OF THE PROPERTIES OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT IS THAT IT IS GENERALLY RAW AND UNEDITED.

The objective of such videos is to paint a realistic picture of the situation. This also applies to the tourism industry where your online prospects do not necessarily want to see a commercial video. They want to see people just like them having a good time.

Video For Your Website

If you are making short videos such as guest testimonials and feel confident about the quality of your video, editing them is not crucial. However, if the video you captured is of really poor quality, too long or clearly needs editing it is important you do so or seek assistance to do so.

If you wish to edit your videos or put together slide shows with your photos, you can use the following programs:

- *Windows Movie Maker (for Windows)*
- *iMovie (for Mac)*

These programs generally come pre-installed on your operating system. If not, you can download them, which may involve a fee.

It is also recommended not to add captions or subtitle on your videos as this may not be allowed by all video hosting providers or distributors' websites. YouTube however allows you to overlay captions and sub-titles once your video has been uploaded.

Converting

You need to ensure your video meets the requirements of your video-hosting platform. For instance YouTube allows files up to 1GB in size to be uploaded and accepts the following video file formats:

- 3GP (cell phones)
- AVI (windows)
- MOV (mac)
- MP4 (ipod/psp)
- MPEG
- FLV (adobe flash)
- SWF (shockwave flash)
- MKV (h.264)

If your video meets one of the above formats and is less than 1GB you should be able to directly upload your file to YouTube without resizing it.

However, it is recommended to resize any video larger than 20MB (megabytes) to ensure the upload is fast. To reduce the size of your video you will need to convert it into a different format before uploading it to YouTube.

MOST USERS HAVE FOUND THAT H.264, MPEG-2, FLV, AND .MPEG-4 ARE THE FORMATS THAT WILL PROVIDE THE SMALLEST FILE SIZE WITH THE HIGHEST QUALITY.

The below video converter programs are free and will allow you to convert your .AVI or .MOV file to the above-mentioned formats. (iMovie and Windows Movie Maker can only export in certain formats).



Video For Your Website

| For Windows | For Mac |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super: http://www.erightsoft.com/SUPER.html • Squared 5 http://www.squared5.com/ • WinFF http://winff.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squared 5 http://www.squared5.com • Quick time pro (pay) http://www.quicktime.com/pro |

If you find editing or converting too challenging, consider contacting a professional or a tertiary education provider specialising in film and video. You will be able to send them the video file via <http://www.yousendit.com> and they will be able to do the conversion for you.

d) **Uploading options**

Once your video is ready, it will need to be uploaded to a video host. Your video host can either be:

- the same web host that contains your website files; or
- a specialised video hosting and sharing service, such as YouTube.

If you upload your video to your host instead of uploading them to a video-sharing site such as YouTube you will need to:

- configure your website to be able to display videos
- purchase extra storage space on your hosting server.

VIDEO HOSTING AND UPLOADING CAN BE A TRICKY AND TECHNICAL PROCESS. THEREFORE, IT IS OFTEN RECOMMENDED AND EASIER TO USE A SPECIALISED VIDEO HOSTING AND SHARING SITE TO WHICH YOU CAN UPLOAD YOUR VIDEOS.

These sites are often free and let you upload, view and share video clips. Once your video is hosted on such a site, you will be able to display it (embed it) on your own website as well.

Other benefits of video sharing sites include:

- your video being more visible on search engines like Google
- your video not using up your web host's storage space
- easy embedding (display) of your video on your website.

Some of the most popular video-hosting websites are: YouTube, Vimeo, Blip.tv, Yahoo Video and many more. See related websites at the end of this tutorial.

Step by step example: Uploading video to YouTube

If you have a Google account you will be able to use it to log in. If you don't you can also simply create a YouTube account.

Using your Google account, go to www.youtube.com and select "Sign in with your Google



Video For Your Website

account” in the right column. You will be asked to create a login for your YouTube account even though you already have a Google account. This is normal.

- Click on Upload (top menu) and select Upload Video from the next page
- Use the browse button to search for the video on your computer and click the Upload Video button
- While the video uploads, you will be asked to give your video different attributes. This step is important as it will help your video get indexed better with YouTube and Google and could therefore bring more visitors to your video:

Internet marketing help for tourism in Agnes Water



UntangleMyWeb 41 videos ▾ Subscribe

Title

1:39 / 1:46 360p

Like Add to ▾ Share

Description

12 views

0 likes, 0 dislikes

Uploaded by UntangleMyWeb on May 16, 2011

Feedback from Agnes Water Beach Club and Discovery Coast Tourism &

Show more ▾

Screen capture copyright: YouTube Tourism website design

Video For Your Website

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title: | The title is very important and should be short and clear (4-8 words). Make sure you use relevant keywords and adjectives to spice it up. |
| Description: | <p>To best promote your video, you will want its description to be both accurate and interesting.</p> <p>Make your description clear and specific</p> <p>Your video should stand out from the crowd. Try to determine what content it contains that will help users find it and distinguish it from other videos. Using descriptive language in complete sentences is a good idea.</p> <hr/> <p>IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO WRITE YOUR WEBSITE'S URL IN FULL HERE.</p> <hr/> <p>Give credit when appropriate</p> <p>If people don't know the exact title or other keywords associated with your video, they might search the name of a participant or another website where it is featured. Be sure to include as much information as you feel comfortable, but be careful not to include anything that shouldn't be publicly displayed.</p> <p>www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=57927&topic=16637</p> |
| Tags: | <p>Tags are keywords that describe videos.</p> <p><i>For example, a surfing video might be tagged with "surfing," "beach," and "waves" or a location like "cactus beach".</i></p> <p>Users who enjoy watching surfing videos can then search for any of those terms and that video will show up in their search results. Tags help you label videos you upload so that other people can find them more easily.</p> <p>You can also add tags to your videos later by clicking the "Video manager" link in your account, and selecting "Edit" Next to the video. Enter as many tags as you'd like into the Tags field and click the "Save" button.</p> |
| Category: | The category you will generally select is "Travel & Events". |

If you later want to change your video information:

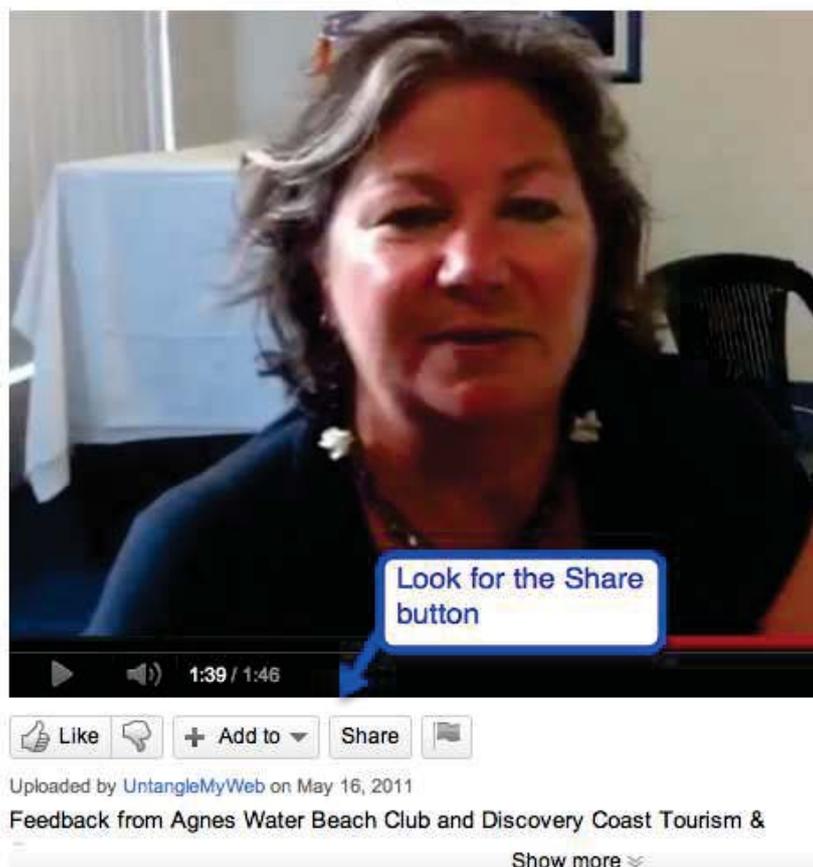
1. Click the "Video manager" link in the upper right corner in the menu that drops down from your account name.
 2. Click the "Edit" button under the video you want to edit.
- From the next screen, you can change, add to, or delete whatever information you'd like about your video, including permissions settings (allowing comments, responses, ratings, etc.).

Video For Your Website

ACCOUNT AND VIDEO INFORMATION CAN TAKE A LITTLE WHILE TO UPDATE. PLEASE BE PATIENT AND CHECK BACK LATER TO SEE THAT YOUR CHANGES DISPLAY ON THE SITE. IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN ERROR, ENSURE YOUR VIDEO SIZE IS SMALL (LESS THAN 20MB) AND TRY AGAIN. IF IT PERSISTS, COPY THE ERROR MESSAGE IN GOOGLE AND LOOK FOR A SOLUTION AMONGST THE LISTINGS. ALTERNATIVELY, POST A MESSAGE IN THE YOUTUBE HELP FORUM ([HTTP://HELP.YOUTUBE.COM/GROUP/YOUTUBE-HELP](http://help.youtube.com/group/youtube-help)).

e) *Step by step example: Displaying your video on your website*

1. Locate your video (or any other video that may be relevant to your target market) on YouTube by using the search functionality. You may be surprised to find existing user-generated videos about your product.
2. Look for the Share button and click on it. Look for the Embed button and select your options



Screen capture copyright: YouTube Tourism website design

3. Avoid including related videos as you will have no control of what Google defines as related videos.
4. Change the display size of the video if you wish.
5. When you have finished customising, copy the code located in the Embed box.
6. Go to your website (login to your content management system), locate which page you want to display the video in, go in HTML editing mode and paste the code. If you don't

Video For Your Website

have a content management system and don't have access to your files you may need to talk to your web developer.

7. Save and you are done. Your YouTube video should now be displaying on your site.

You will be able to use YouTube Insight to know who is watching your video, when and where from. You can access YouTube Insight from your "Videos" page of your YouTube account. Here is more information about YouTube Insight: www.youtube.com/t/advertising_insight.

To watch a demo video of how to embed a video, follow this link:
www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=57788.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER AN ERROR, COPY THE ERROR MESSAGE IN GOOGLE AND LOOK FOR A SOLUTION AMONGST THE LISTINGS. ALTERNATIVELY, CONTACT YOUR WEB DEVELOPER OR POST A MESSAGE IN THE YOUTUBE HELP FORUM ([HTTP://PRODUCTFORUMS.GOOGLE.COM/FORUM/#!FORUM/YOUTUBE](http://productforums.google.com/forum/#!forum/youtube)).

5. Key learning outcomes

- Using video on your website and social media sites will improve the user experience and encourage increased conversions
- It is very easy to create video for your website. All you require is a standard camera or a small digital video camera. For instance, you could film happy customers leaving you a great testimonial.
- YouTube is a fantastic way to give more exposure to your videos. You can embed them in your website for free.

6. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Google tools
- Images 101
- Flickr and photo hosting websites
- YouTube and video hosting websites

b) Related websites

- Wikipedia video comparison:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_video_services
- YouTube file formats:
<http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=55744&topic=16612>
- YouTube changing video categories:
www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=74654&topic=16637
- YouTube help: <http://support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en>



Topic | Website

Tutorial 17

Mobile Technology for Tourism

Mobile technology is fast becoming vital for tourism businesses. This tutorial explains how travellers are using mobile devices and how you can meet their needs.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

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1. Mobile technology for tourism businesses and why it is important

Holidaymakers are increasingly looking to take advantage of mobile device's Internet capabilities to help them gather holiday information, find reviews and even book tickets while travelling.

According to the Cisco CTO Padmasree Warrior over half of the world's population will be accessing the Internet via a mobile device within the next 24mths.



2. How did mobile Internet devices come about?

What is a mobile Internet device? The term is generally used to describe any mobile phone, smartphone (i.e. iPhone) or tablet device (i.e. iPad) that combines **communication with sophisticated personal use technology such as access to the Internet and the ability to download and run applications.**

The latest generation of mobile Internet devices was inspired by Apple, in the form of its popular iPhone, in June 2007, with the first generation iPad in 2010. Apple Sales records shown that as at 31 March 2012, 84.1 million iPads had been sold.

Following in the footsteps of Apple's innovation has been the development of a whole range of smartphones and tablets from competing brands. At the end of 2010 Android smartphones became the world's most popular smartphone platform.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE IPHONE (AND THE LATER SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS) WAS EXTREMELY BENEFICIAL TO TRAVELLERS AND THE TOURISM AND TRAVEL INDUSTRY.

Desktop computers were well suited to the research, planning and booking of people's holidays before their trips **but did not offer portability and flexibility.**

Laptop computers were more portable but were cumbersome to take on long trips. While so-called "palm" computers were in existence, they were limited in their functionality and it wasn't until the iPhone was introduced, with its capability and user friendly nature, that travellers could take phones with them on holiday and use them too easily and quickly organise aspects of their trip while travelling.

One of the main benefits of smart technology mobile devices for travellers is the ability to connect to the Internet. In many ways a smartphone or tablet using a Wi-Fi (wireless) or 3G/4G (mobile) connection can replace the use of a PC. Therefore it is important to make sure your website is optimised for mobile Internet devices.

Screen capture copyright: apple.com

3. Benefits of mobile technology to my business

The increase in usage of smartphones and tablets by travellers means there can be many benefits for the small tourism operator.

AMONG THESE IS THE IMPROVED ABILITY TO CONTACT TRAVELLERS, BOTH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA BEFORE THEY BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY AND ALSO WITH UPDATES AS THEY ARRIVE.

While traditional information desks, leaflets and directories will always be important marketing tools of the small tourism businesses, more travellers are also using their smartphones and tablets to locate events, read reviews, book accommodation and discover places to visit.

Travellers combine mobile technology with social media and send photos, share reviews, take and upload videos and update their favourite sites as they travel. This aspect of mobile technology has great relevance to the small tourism operator. An active and well-compiled social media presence such as a Twitter account or Facebook Page may increase your chances of being seen by travellers using smartphones or tablets.

Downloadable communication applications such as mobile apps also make it easy to monitor and communicate with potential customers.

Thanks to smartphones and tablets your business' exposure can dramatically increase:

- Your website is available to be viewed from any mobile Internet device
- Your guests can leave comments on your Facebook Page via their Facebook smartphone, tablet or mobile app
- Anyone can read your TripAdvisor listing and post a review
- Smartphones and tablets can even work as a GPS and let travellers find your location.

a) *Benefits of having mobile technology in the business*

Using a smartphone or tablet is not just restricted to travellers and can have many benefits in your own business. Among these is the fact that you can remain in touch with your business from remote locations where a connection is available and monitor your business name on social media while you're on the move.

Many Australian tourism operators don't realise that iPhones and smartphones now are very affordable. A quick search on:

www.whistleout.com.au/MobilePhones/Phones/Apple/Apple-iPhone-4-16GB reveals that iPhones start at \$43 per month including calls, data (Internet) and the iPhone phone (August 2012).

Having a smartphone or tablet will save you copious amounts of time by allowing you to:

- Check your emails from anywhere, respond and/or forward, archive or delete



- Access your calendar (synchronises between your desktop, laptop and phone)
- Check your occupancy using your online booking system app (provided your online booking system has a mobile application or a mobile-friendly layout)
- Take photos and post them on Flickr, Facebook and other sites
- Take videos and post them on YouTube, Facebook and other sites
- Manage your online reputation
- Check and post on your Facebook Page
- Do your online banking
- Answer your live chat system present on your website using an mobile application
- Utilising a customer relationship management system
- Do your accounting online with programs such as Saasu or Xero.

Screencapture credit GuestPoint software

When asked, the majority of small business owners say that mobile access to the Internet saves them many hours of administration. Portable, versatile and capable smartphones and tablets are not just the future for travellers but also for small tourism operators who can tap into the changing face of tourist travel technology.

4. Optimising websites for smartphones

Optimising your website for mobile Internet devices will:

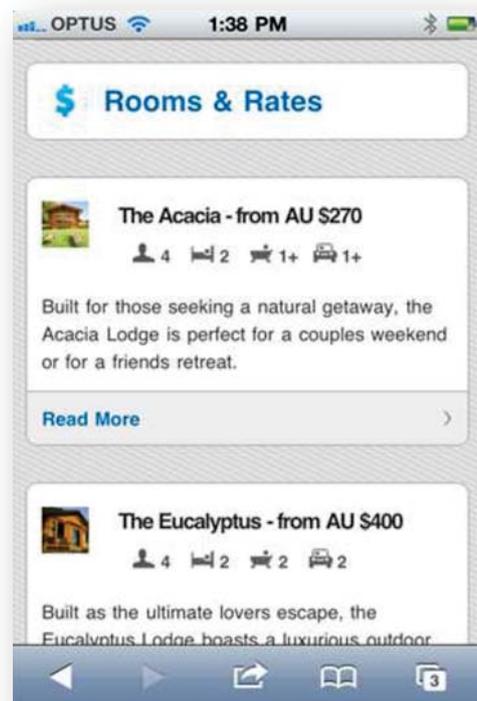
- Ensure it loads quickly on smartphones and tablets
- Ensure the layout is clean and easy to use on a small screen. The layout doesn't have to replicate the layout of your existing website.

a) What could my website look like on an iPhone or smartphone?

Smartphones and iPhones do not display all websites in a reader-friendly fashion because of their small screen and programming requirements. It is therefore important to ensure and check your website and your online booking system render well on a smartphone. For instance, the example of a motel website below doesn't render well on an iPhone/smartphone. Let's compare it with a mobile-optimised site and load the both on an iPhone.



This website is difficult to read. The menu on the left is difficult to read and would require a lot of finger zooming. This layout seems to be the exact same one as the main website layout.



This website is very simple to read on an iPhone. It seems that the layout has been designed for a smartphone/iPhone and is different from the main website layout.

A website built for desktops and laptops may not be suitable for a smartphone, although it will probably be suitable for display through a tablet device. For smartphones an adjustment to make it a “light” version may need to be carried out. It may even be necessary to build a “no frills” separate mobile phone version of the website (see example on the right above and example below), but the preferred approach is to have a website that respond to the size of the user’s mobile device.

If your website is using a reputable content management system there will be plug-ins that your web developer can use to achieve the smartphone-friendly and tablet-friendly versions of your site.

The below illustrations compare an iPhone/smartphone layout with a standard layout. Note how the content is the same but the layout is appropriate to the medium.



Screen capture copyright smartaccommodationwebsite.com

b) How can I check how many people view my website on a smartphone or tablet?

Go to your Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) and locate the Mobile report under the visitors menu. You will see a list of the different devices and the visits per device.

Viewing: **Mobile Device Info** Mobile Device Branding Service Provider Mobile Input Selector Operating S

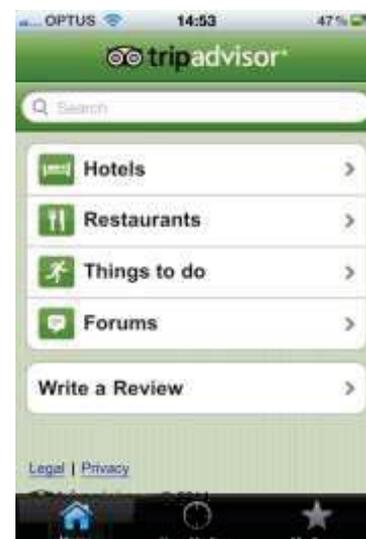
Secondary dimension: **Select...** Sort Type: **Default**

| | Mobile Device Info | Visits |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Apple iPhone | 205 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Apple iPad | 89 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. (not set) | 22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. HTC Desire HD | 7 |

5. Applications for iPhones and smartphones

Mobile applications (apps) are the driving force behind increasing the capability of traveller's iPhones and other smartphones. These apps are small programs available free or for a few dollars. Skype, Facebook, TripAdvisor and the major banks are just a few of the hundreds of apps available. There are even apps that will turn your smartphone into a torch.

Mobile apps will also run on tablets.



There are many applications pertaining to the travel industry. For instance, there are apps which help tourists book airline tickets on the move, deliver restaurant reviews or check local films in the area they are staying. They are usually either free of charge or made available at a minimal cost.

Many travellers find it more convenient, less time consuming and more efficient to organise their holidays using such applications. There is also the convenience of being able to shop around using apps online and potentially snap up that last minute deal.

Popular apps such as that provided by the site TripAdvisor also help smartphone users with reviews of restaurants, hotels and attractions for travellers.

Screen captures copyright: Apple.com and [TripAdvisor iPhone App](#)

6. Key learning outcomes

- Smartphones and tablets are becoming more and more vital for tourism businesses with people on the move and the pure nature of “away from home” customers
- Your website needs to be optimised for smartphones as this isn’t done automatically
- There are a large number of tools and applications available for businesses who are looking to go mobile and cater for smartphone customers.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Social media for tourism
- Online reputation management
- TripAdvisor for tourism
- Website, Mobile Website, or Mobile Application

Topic | Website

Tutorial 17A

Website, Mobile Website or Mobile Application

Mobile is enabling the connected traveller. Technology innovations reduce stress, uncertainty and chaos. This tutorial explains how you can best represent your business in the growing mobile environment.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Mobile Technology for Tourism



1. Why do I need to have a website, mobile app or mobile website?



Mobile devices are predicted to overtake desktop access to the Internet by middle of 2013.

Mobile technology is enhancing destination experience.

Technology innovations reduce stress, uncertainty and chaos.

Allow travellers to harness experiences of friends, family and fellow travellers more intelligently.

Screencapture credit: <http://blog.nielsen.com>

The Internet is embedded into our everyday lives:

- 75% of Australians are active online every month;
- 93% of online Australians use the internet every day;
- 70% of online Australians access the internet multiple times a day;
- Australians spend as much time online as watching television;
- Close to half of all Australians have accessed the Internet away from home.

During the second quarter of 2012 smartphone penetration continued to grow, with 54.9 percent of mobile subscribers owning smartphones as of June 2012. This growth is driven by increasing smartphone purchases: two out of three people who acquired a new mobile phone in early 2012 chose a smartphone instead of a feature phone.

- Over 700,000 Australians access mobile content each day, doubling in the last six months;
- 18% of all Australian Google searches are now conducted on a mobile;
- Half of the world's population will be accessing the internet via mobile device within 12-24 months;
- 1 in 5 Australians have accessed the internet via a tablet device;
- Tablet penetration is set to double by the end 2012;
- Australia is a world leader in smartphone adoption.

Google interviewed over 30,000 people to survey the impact of smartphones on consumers in 30 countries. Here is some of what google discovered about Australia.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCiP5YoIzFw>

Sources: Morgan Stanley mobile & Google internet data; Nielsen Australian Online Landscape Review January 2012 & April 2012, Nielsen Australian Online Consumer Landscape, March 2012 Nielsen blog; Cisco CTO Padmasree Warrior



Screencapture credit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCiP5YoIzFw>

2. What is the difference between a website, mobile website and mobile application?

Before comparing the benefits of each of the various options it is important to understand the fundamental differences between websites, mobile websites and mobile applications.

Website

A website consists of browser-based pages that are linked together and accessed over the Internet. It needs to be fresh, easy to understand, provide timely information and encourage your customers to make contact, book or buying a ticket with you (what is called a conversion).

Your website is often the first interaction your customers will have with you.

Most websites, but not all, are accessible on mobile devices. It is worthwhile checking your own website as fly-out menus and image sliders can prevent access to important information on your website. Make sure you also use text for your phone numbers. Phone numbers as images cannot be clicked-to-call on a mobile device.

Mobile Website

A mobile website is similar to any other website in that it consists of pages that are linked together and accessed over the Internet. The obvious characteristic that distinguishes a mobile website from a standard website is the fact that it is designed for the smaller handheld display and touch-screen interface.

Like any website, mobile websites can display text content, data, images and video. They can also access mobile-specific features such as click-to-call (to dial a phone number) or location-based mapping.

Mobile websites can be developed for specific devices, or they can be developed to respond to the size of the device's screen which is known as mobile responsive design. The development of responsive websites is preferred over mobile specific websites, mainly because there are so many different mobile devices in the market, yet they have similar screen dimensions.

Mobile Applications

Mobile applications (apps) are actually programs that are downloaded and installed on your mobile device, smartphones and tablets being the most popular. Users visit specific portals such as Apple's App Store, Android Market (Google Play), or Blackberry App World to find and download mobile applications for their device.



Screenscapture credit: <http://www.samange.com>

Like websites and mobile websites, the mobile application may pull content and data from the Internet, or it may download the content so that it can be accessed without an Internet connection. This is possible the most important point of difference for the tourism industry whose businesses are often in regional areas with limited mobile connectivity.

3. Mobile Website or Mobile Application?

If your goal is to offer mobile-friendly content to the widest possible audience in the most economical way then a mobile responsive website is the way to go. All desktop designed websites can be made to be responsive.

If you are developing an interactive game or experience, then a mobile application may be your best option, however a mobile responsive website should certainly be your first step in developing a mobile web presence. We would highly recommend readers to speak to their website developer.

Importantly, a mobile application should only be used for a specific purpose that cannot be effectively accomplished via a web browser. Apple has recently refused to publish new applications that simply replicate information and functionality available via a web browser.

If you are primarily focussed on marketing or public communications, a mobile responsive website is almost always going to make sense as a practical first step in your mobile outreach strategy. This is because a mobile responsive website has a number of critical advantages over a mobile application, including broader accessibility, compatibility and cost-effectiveness, as outlined below:

Mobile responsive websites offer greater compatibility

A single mobile responsive website can be accessed by users across many different types of mobile devices, whereas mobile applications require a separate version to be developed for each type of device (iPhone, Android, Blackberry etc.). Mobile website URLs are also easily integrated within other mobile technologies such as SMS, QR Codes and near field communication (NFC).

Mobile responsive websites are more easily accessible

In addition to a mobile responsive website being accessible to users across a range of devices, visitors to your regular website can be automatically sent to your mobile site when they are on a handheld device.

Mobile applications require the user to first download and install the application before the content or application can be viewed. Mobile applications are also largely restricted to manufacturer application stores. This can be a significant barrier between initial engagement and conversion.

Website, Mobile Website or Mobile Application

Below is an excellent example of re-positioning content on different devices.

<http://www.montville-cabins.com.au/>



Screencapture credit: <http://www.montville-cabins.com.au/>

Mobile responsive websites can be updated easily

A mobile responsive website is much more dynamic than a mobile application in terms of pure flexibility to update content. If you want to change the design or content of a mobile responsive website you simply change the content, through your content management system or via your web developer, and the changes are immediately visible.

Updating a mobile application is in the control of the user as apps stored devices do not automatically get updated – the user must download the app again in order to update the mobile application on each type of device.

Additionally a mobile responsive website can re-use the content from your existing website, simplifying content maintenance and lowering the whole of life cost of your website content maintenance.

Mobile responsive websites can be found by search engines

Mobile responsive websites are much easier for users to find because their pages can be indexed and displayed in search results and tourism specific directories, making it easy for customers to find you.

Mobile applications cannot be indexed by search engines and will not feature in search results.

Mobile responsive websites can be shared

The URL of a mobile responsive website can be easily shared between users via a simple link within an email or text message, or on social media via a Facebook or Twitter post. Publishers can easily direct users to a mobile responsive website from a blog or website, or even in print.

A mobile application cannot be easily shared in this way.

Mobile responsive websites have greater customer reach

Because a mobile responsive website is accessible across platforms and can be easily shared among users, as well as indexed by search engines, it has far greater capability to reach your customers than a mobile application.

Mobile responsive websites have greater retention

The average life of a mobile application can be short, less than 30 days according to some research and unless your application is useful, it is questionable how long a user will keep it on their device. Mobile websites are easily stored as a bookmark that can be shared across devices (think Apple iCloud or Google account) and can be readily available for your customers.

Mobile responsive websites are more cost effective

Mobile responsive website development is considerably more time and cost-effective than development of a mobile application. This is especially the case if you need to have a presence on different platforms which would require the development of multiple versions of your mobile application.

The whole of life cost comparison between mobile applications and mobile responsive websites must include ongoing maintenance requirements of mobile applications such as upgrades, testing, compatibility issues and ongoing development. This will be much more expensive and involved than supporting a mobile responsive website.

4. When should I have a mobile application then?

Despite the many inherent benefits of the mobile web, apps are still very popular and there are a number of specific use scenarios where an app will be your best choice. Generally speaking, if you need one of the following, an app makes sense:

- No connection required – If you need to provide offline access to content or perform functions without a network/wireless connection then a mobile application makes sense. For example, if you want to provide content to travellers who are in a location with no mobile coverage (e.g. Outback) then they can download the application before they arrive and still use it without a connection.
- Interactivity – For interactive games or activities a mobile application is almost always going to be your best choice.



Screenshure credit: <http://www.tourism.australia.com>

- Regular Usage/Personalization – If your target users are going to be interacting with you in a personalized fashion on a regular basis then a mobile application provides a great way to do

that, as the configuration and data storage options are not limited by website coding standards. Complex Calculations or Reporting – If you need something that will take data and allow you to manipulate it with complex calculations.

- A mobile application is well suited to support booking system functionality.
- If native device functionality or processing is required - if you need to access a device's features such as the camera or processing power in an interactive way, a mobile application will do that much more effectively. An example might be a treasure hunt at a family attraction where you are required to take a photograph of a certain features, or a drive tour application that can run in the background and prompt the user about the interesting features along the journey.

5. Mobile Website Design

Traditional fixed width design is no longer the contemporary approach. Screen resolution ranges from 320px (iPhone) to 2560px (large monitor) or even higher. Users no longer just browse the web with desktop computers. Users now use mobile phones, small notebooks, tablet devices such as iPad or Playbook to access the web.

Web design must be responsive to cater for these changes in consumer behaviour and devices. Website layouts need to automatically adjust to fit all display resolution and devices.



Screencapture credit: <http://www.tourism.australia.com>

Fluid and Responsive Design

Mobile website design can either be Fluid or Responsive or both.

Fluid designs scale dynamically as the viewport (screen) changes in size and are more difficult to implement than responsive designs, mainly because each element on the webpage must be scalable. Creating fluid designs from existing websites can be more difficult than creating a new responsive design.

Responsive designs also scale but they do this by shifting and/or changing screen elements to suit the viewport. They don't necessarily scale existing content in the same way that a fluid design would, but often responsive designs will include some fluid elements. Try accessing one of the sites below and then adjust the size of your browser window. You will see the design changing as the browser window reduces or increases in size.

Most responsive sites hide certain content as the viewport gets smaller, but some keep it all, simply re-arranged.

Mobile Bookings are now the fastest growing way to book hotel rooms online.

Website, Mobile Website or Mobile Application

Below are some examples of clever responsive websites:

<http://foodsense.is/>



Screencapture credit: <http://foodsense.is>

<http://www.londonandpartners.com/>



Screencapture credit: www.londonandpartners.com

<http://www.tamborineaccommodation.com.au/>



Screencapture credit: <http://www.tamborineaccommodation.com.au>



6. How do I develop a mobile responsive website?

If you don't mind having a go yourself there are plenty of contemporary website templates available for all the major content management systems. Most of the recent templates will have mobile responsiveness as a standard inclusion.

Some development companies will also offer services to implement and host website templates if you want to take advantages of the cost savings, but know you have a safety net.

Detailed below are three of the many options you have for developing a mobile responsive website.



Screenscapture credit: <http://www.templatemonster.com>

Theme Forest (Wordpress)

Website Templates and WordPress Themes from ThemeForest - the largest marketplace of its kind for Site Templates and CMS Themes.

This marketplace allow anyone to buy or sell WordPress themes. Theme Forest specializes in WordPress themes of which it currently has over a 6000 available, including many mobile optimised selections.

<http://www.themeforest.net>

Monster Templates (Wordpress, Joomla, Drupal,...)

The biggest collection of website templates online. Template Monster offers web templates designed and developed by field experts.

<http://www.templatemonster.com>

Web Developers

Many web development companies offer development services for mobile responsive designs. If you currently have a web developer they may be able to change your existing design for very little effort, or you might choose to develop a new full mobile solution.

7. What does my website look like on an iPhone or smartphone?

The mobile revolution has inspired big and small business alike to have mobile responsive websites. As outlined earlier, mobile responsive websites can be created using themes, extensions, and other modifications.

A website built for desktops and laptops may not be suitable for a smartphone or tablet device.

While developing a mobile version of your website you and your developer may want to test it on some different mobile handsets to see how it looks. You should check your website analytics to determine the most common mobile devices for your site.

You will never know whether it will appear perfectly on every single device but there are some great tools to test your website:

W3C mobileOK Checker

This checker performs various tests on a Web Page to determine its level of mobile-friendliness. The tests are defined in the mobileOK Basic Tests 1.0 specification. A Web Page is mobileOK when it passes all the tests.

<http://validator.w3.org/mobile/>

MobiReady

The mobiReady testing tool evaluates mobile-readiness using industry best practices and standards.

http://ready.mobi/launch.jsp?locale=en_EN

Google Mobile Checker

This google developed tool will show the website in mobile format and you can check whether it is displaying correctly or not.

<http://www.google.com/gwt/n>

User Testing.com

A paid service, UserTesting.com provides on-demand usability testing so you can watch people use their iPhone, iPad, Android phone, Android tablet, or BlackBerry to test your app or website.

<http://www.usertesting.com/mobile>

Opera Mini

Opera is one of the most widely used mobile Web browsers. Opera is available for iPhone and Android platforms. You can test your website on this mobile browser by visiting the Opera website:

<http://www.opera.com/developer/tools/mini/>

Perfecto Mobile

The MobileCloud-Interactive service enables users to test mobile applications, websites or services on a multitude of real handsets and tablets via the web and control them as if holding them in their own hands. Using MobileCloud-Interactive, you'll be able to streamline development, testing and support processes, perform more tests and ensure optimal compatibility of your product or service, on more handsets, networks and locations.

<http://www.perfectomobile.com/>

iPad Peek

Currently, Apple iPad is the highest selling tablet. If you are optimizing your website for mobile, then you should also check its compatibility for iPad (be sure to check your regular site here, not just the mobile version). Visit the iPad Peek website, enter the URL and press enter to show how your website looks on iPad.

<http://ipadpeek.com/>

iPhone Tester

This is a web browser based simulator for quickly testing your iPhone web applications. It is not a true emulator, but simulates the screen dimensions of an iPhone.

<http://iphonetester.com/>

8. Key learning outcomes

As long as mobile remains a relatively new frontier, the “app vs web” question will remain a very real consideration for tourism businesses seeking to establish a mobile presence. If your mobile goals are primarily marketing-driven, or if your aim is to deliver content and establish a broad mobile presence that can be easily shared between users and found on search engines, then a mobile website is the logical choice.

If your goal is interactive engagement with users, or to provide an application that works more like a computer program, then a mobile application is going to be required.

Critically, don't miss out on mobile bookings!

According to Google, 61% of users are unlikely to return to a website that they had trouble accessing from their phone.

Mobile responsive websites provide:

- Improved user experience
- Faster download speed
- Better engagement and context
- Improved search/SEO performance
- Better brand identity
- Portability and connectivity
- A competitive advantage

9. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Mobile Technology for Tourism

Topic | Website

Tutorial 18

Security And Backups

Since your online strategy is a core component of your business plan, you need to ensure that you are able to recover all your files should your website crash or your computer be attacked by a virus. This tutorial will take you through the steps to maximise your online and offline security.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. How can I tell a (my) website is secure?

If you are about to enter sensitive information on a page (such as your credit card details or login details to a bank account), you have to ensure that the page you are entering those details on is secure.

To do so, look for the signs:

- HTTPS instead of HTTP
- Locked lock



Screen capture copyright: ANZ

If you click on the lock, you will access information about the “SSL Certificate”. The system that ensures a secure connection between your browser and the server it communicates with (in the first secure example the server is the ANZ bank) is called SSL. The HTTPS and the locked lock confirm the active SSL session.

You will find more information on this website: <http://info.ssl.com/article.aspx?id=10068>

NEVER ENTER SENSITIVE DETAILS ON A WEBPAGE THAT IS NOT SECURE. IF YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT, ASK SOMEONE WHO KNOWS (THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF E-MARKETING AT YOUR LOCAL TOURISM ORGANISATION SHOULD BE ABLE TO ASSIST YOU).

2. If I am taking payments online

If you are taking payments online you will be collecting credit card details. These details are actually being collected by the third-party online booking system you are using (you will notice the web address change from your website to the one of your online booking provider’s

website). For peace of mind, pretend that you are a client and check that both the HTTPS and the lock are present on the pages where sensitive information is required.

3. Hoax emails and phishing

A hoax is an attempt to trick an audience into believing something false is real. The process of sending fraudulent emails seeking personal information and claiming to be legitimate is called “phishing”.

Emails claiming to be from PayPal, Google, eBay, YouTube or online banks are commonly used to lure you to a falsified website. For instance, phishers can ask you to enter your login details and then credit card information. They will copy these details and use them to log into the real website or empty your bank account.

A good example of a recent phishing scam was the Google AdWords phishing scam email:

Dear Advertiser,

We were unable to process your payment.

Your ads will be suspended soon unless we can process your payment. To prevent your ads from being suspended, please update your payment information.

Please sign in to your account at <http://adwords.google.com/select/login> and update your payment information.

We look forward to providing you with the most effective advertising available.

Thank you for advertising with Google AdWords.

The Google AdWords Team

The link in the above email takes the user to <http://adwords.google.com.ses001.cn/select/Login>. The real address of the website (once you click on the link in the email) is not <http://adwords.google.com> but another site, **ses001.cn** which is pretending to be AdWords by adding the Google address before its name.

The AdWords phishing scam is explained in greater details on this Hoax-Slayer.com page: www.hoax-slayer.com/adwords-phishing-scam.shtml. Visit www.hoax-slayer.com to find out about the latest email hoaxes and scams.



a) *What to do if you got caught*

If you believe you might have been the target of a scam, follow these steps:

- Contact your bank immediately and cancel your credit card
- Change the password of the account that was phished **and** of every other account in which you were using the same password.

b) *What can I do to avoid getting caught?*

- Update to Internet Explorer 8 or install Firefox 5 from www.firefox.com as your default browser. Both browsers have built-in phishing protection that warns you when a site has been reported as fraudulent.
- Never respond to emails asking you for your credit card details or asking you to log in and update your credit card details.
- Never open a suspicious attachment
- Be wary and check www.hoax-slayer.com or copy and paste a few sentences from the content of the email into Google and see if any other Internet user has flagged this emails as spam.

4. How do I backup my website?

Your web host will normally automatically backup your website (including files, database and email accounts) once a day and provide you with the backup to restore your site upon request. However, it is advised not to only rely on your host but either conduct your own backups or ask your web developer to regularly do so on your behalf. If you intend to do it yourself, read below.

a) *Downloading my files via FTP*

Your website is made of folders and files which are located on your host. You can access these via a very simple program called an FTP client. FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol.



Free FTP programs can be downloaded and installed within seconds:

- FileZilla: www.filezilla-project.org or SmartFTP: www.smartftp.com are for Windows
- Cyberduck: www.cyberduck.ch is for Mac

Once you are logged in (your host would have provided you with your FTP login and password) you can simply download a copy of your files to your hard drive.

If you do not have a content management system installed, you do not need to read below. All your content is located within your files and the backup via FTP is sufficient.

b) *If I have a content management system*

If you have a content management system, your content resides in a database (MySQL or Microsoft SQL Server) that is hosted on the server. **Your content isn't within your website's files.** Even though your host will backup your database automatically, it is a good idea to download a copy to your computer as well. Please also back up your files via FTP (see above) as

Security And Backups

the files form the mould in which your content will be displayed.

To backup your database, you will need your login and password to access your host's control panel.

If your database is MySQL you can follow the detailed steps listed here:

<http://fragments.turtlemeat.com/MySQL-database-backup-restore-PHPmyadmin.PHP>

It is recommended to backup your database once a month and store the files on your computer.

5. How can I backup my computer automatically?

It is much more likely that a crash will occur at your end than on your web server. In order to avoid losing all the documents and files stored on your hard disk it is **essential that you regularly back up your own computer**. Backing up a computer is something that is usually done automatically. All you need to do is spend a couple of hundred of dollars on an external hard drive, connect it to your computer and install the software.



You can also back up your files online, using systems such as www.jungledisk.com. It is very reliable and cheap.

Photo credit UntangleMyWeb.com

a) What to look for when buying an external hard drive

You can purchase your external drive from your local computer store or from electronics shop. However, prices may vary a lot so do your research. Also ensure your future hard drive meets the below requirements:

- Capacity: choose 500GB minimum (especially if you have lots of photos!)
- Connection between the drive and your computer: at least USB 2.0. Most of external hard drives now offer a faster connection than USB that is called FireWire. FireWire 400 is the standard but some drives offer FireWire 800 (faster). Before buying the drive, check if your computer has a FireWire 400 or 800 port or both. Then buy a drive that has the same port.
- Brand: ensure you buy a reputable brand. High quality hard drives are made by companies such as LaCie, Maxtor, Seagate, and Western Digital. Ask your computer professional for advice.

Photo credit UntangleMyWeb.com

6. Key learning outcomes

- Beware of scams on the Internet. If you receive an email from what appears to be a trusted source (such a bank) to follow a link and login to enter your email and password be wary. Always Google a portion of the email and never click on a link as it



Security And Backups

could take you to a site that is made to look like an organisation you trust but isn't really

- Backup your computer regularly
- Ensure that your website is backed up regularly and can be easily restored if a problem was to occur.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Organising hosting for my site

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 19

Search Engines 101

This tutorial will explain how search engines work and why a website needs to follow a search-engine-friendly format.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. What is SEO and why do I absolutely need it?

Search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and Bing are the Internet stakeholders. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process of designing and improving a website so it ranks high in search engine results when someone who doesn't know your business searches for the services or products you offer.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION IS NOT AN ELECTIVE BUT A BUSINESS PREREQUISITE.

If your website is not optimised for search engines there is little chance that it will appear high in the search engine results list. Since more than 95% of people start their search on search engines your website needs to meet key search engine requirements.

a) How do search engines operate?

One of the objectives of search engines is to rank the most trusted, usable, functional and informative sites first. They want to provide the user with the **most relevant information**.

It comes as no surprise that SEO has become an integral part of web development and **needs to be first considered at the planning stages of your online strategy or website project**.

Let's first review how search engines operate.

They send their robots to crawl your site to:

- **Understand** what your website and business is about
- **Index** all your pages in their database
- **List your website's pages on the first pages of results** when a potential visitor enters keywords that describe your offer
- **Increase targeted visitation** to your website and eventually grow your bottom line



Photo credit <http://flickr.com/photos/brucewang/>

If your business is a luxury bed and breakfast along the Great Ocean Road, you will need to optimise your website so it appears in search engine results for words such as “luxury bed and breakfast”, “romantic getaway” and/or “great ocean road” instead of just appearing for its business name.

b) What can I expect if I have an optimised online strategy?

Having an optimised website means that you are **growing its online visibility**. Accompanied with quality content, the online visitor will be enticed to contact you and book your product.

With an optimised website, relevant inbound links and a sustainable strategy you can expect to:

- Rank on the first pages of search engines for the keywords your target market uses to search for you.

*If you are a transport company providing airport transfers to a coastal destination such as Byron Bay, you want to also list on search engines when people search: “**how do I get to Byron Bay from Brisbane**” and not only when people search for “transfer to Byron Bay”. **It often pays to optimise for the “symptoms” instead of the “solution”.***

- Be visible on other sites that are often used by your target market to research and share holiday experiences.

Do you have a YouTube account (video sharing site) where you have personalised videos about your product and area? If set up properly, people will stumble upon your video whilst searching travel related videos on YouTube.

Are you a member of your local or regional tourism organisation? You will be able to get a listing on their website.

2. Before I start – what do I need to know?

- Search engine optimisation takes time. Allow up to 3 months for search engines to pick up your new content.
- Search engine optimisation and web design are two different professions but they need to work hand in hand for your project to be visible on the Internet.

The following questions will allow you to assess the level of expertise of the SEO company you hire:

- Assess if they are small-business specialists
- Ask them for case studies of projects (if the clients do not want to be named, ask for tactics, results, site type)
- Ask for detailed outlines of how projects are priced
- Ask for a clear list of services (keyword research, how many keywords optimised on how many pages, how many hours will they spend on sourcing quality inbound links)
- Ask them how you will be able to measure the effectiveness of the optimisation they will perform on your site(s). Will they send you clear reports with your keyword rankings on a monthly basis?
- Work hand in hand with your search engine consultant; provide them with as much input as required, just like you would with an architect that would design your new house.
- Be cautious if the company tells you they will “submit” your site to numerous search engines. Sites do not get submitted nowadays but search engines crawl and index the



site if the content is accessible and relevant.

Also:

- Keep in mind that Google, Yahoo! and Bing are still the main key players in Australia. Refer to this post from SmartInsights which discusses search engine popularity in different countries: <http://www.smartinsights.com/search-engine-optimisation-seo/multilingual-seo/search-engine-popularity-statistics/>
- Ensure your website's content management system (CMS) is search engine friendly.
- Setup your own tracking in Google Analytics to monitor your visits and your conversions.

a) *Is my site in its current state traffic-worthy?*

Before you start optimising your site, you need to ensure that optimising it in its current state is not going to be a waste of money. Your content might be dated, the format of your website might not be search engine friendly and you may be using a content management system that may limit your future search engine efforts.

When shall I really consider a site-reconstruction?

This question can be difficult to answer. However, if you do not have access to your files, if your site is dated, if integrating a content management system to your existing website is not worth it or if search engines cannot see the content of your website, you should definitely seek assistance from web professionals.

START BY ASKING FOR THE OPINION OF YOUR LOCAL TOURISM E-MARKETING EXPERT (YOUR REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION SHOULD HAVE A SPECIALIST STAFF ON BOARD) OR ATTEND ONLINE MARKETING WORKSHOPS.

Then write a brief and ask for proposals from at least 3 web specialists.

Keep in mind that a site reconstruction could take approximately 3 months from brief to Go Live. If you are promised a turnaround of 2 weeks or less, there is little chance that the content of your site will be improved. Since content is key for search engine optimisation warning bells should start ringing.

It is a good project to do during the low season, as you will need to be fully involved and (re)write (or work with a web copywriter) your new content! A website is not something you have on the side but it is one the most important components of your marketing strategy.

3. How do search engines display results?

Most search engines offer to display search results in different formats. For instance, Google's default result layout is called "web" (refer to red arrow in the screenshot below) but offers different options such as images, video etc (refer to green square in the screenshot below):





The screenshot shows a Google search for "brisbane". The search bar contains "brisbane" and the search button is visible. Below the search bar, it says "Search About 204,000,000 results (0.23 seconds)". On the left, there is a sidebar with navigation options: Web (highlighted with a red arrow), Images, Maps, Videos, News, Shopping, and More. The main search results include:

- Visit Brisbane | Your guide to things to see and do in Brisbane** (www.visitbrisbane.com.au/)
- Home - Brisbane City Council** (www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/)
- Brisbane - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia** (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brisbane)

On the right, there is a map of Brisbane and a sidebar titled "Brisbane" with text: "Brisbane is the c Queensland and" and "Founded: 1824".

One new development in the world of online searching is Google+ personalised search functionality which personalises search results: www.google.com/insidesearch/features/plus. When someone is signed in to Google+ (Google's social media network service, similar to Facebook) and they perform a search using the Google search engine, they can elect to receive personalised results as well as the standard results. These personalised results include things like photos and updates from anyone they are connected with in Google+, as well as profiles and other information pages of interest on Google+.

This service is already live in the US and UK and expected to be in Australia soon. Improving rankings this way will depend on having engaging content and a good following on Google+.

4. Key learning outcomes

- There is no point having a website that is not optimised for search
- Search engine optimisation starts with keyword research
- You need to track your keyword rankings and conversions on a monthly basis to see if your investment was worthwhile
- Search engine optimisation takes times and is an activity that needs to be done regularly
- Search engines offer different ways to display search results such as images and videos.

5. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Target market 101
- What is a content management system
- Critical components of optimising a website



- Google tools

b) *Related websites*

- Google basics: www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=70897
- Search engine optimisation:
www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35291

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 20

Critical Components of Optimising a Website

The previous tutorial reviewed the role of search engines. This document will take you through the steps to successfully optimise your website for search engines.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Search Engines 101



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1. The two sides of optimisation

There are 2 sides to search engine optimisation.

- **On-site optimisation:** activities that need to be performed **on your site's** content and structure
- **Off-site optimisation:** refers to search engine techniques that are not performed on your own website.

This section will focus on on-site optimisation.

2. Content that search engines can access

You can have the nicest looking website but if search engines can't see it your return on investment may be insignificant.

This highlights the importance of programming your website in a search engine friendly manner, respecting the "grammar" of the web.

- Sites that use a lot of Flash technology will not be as successful as well-coded HTML sites. Even though Google is making significant progress in reading Flash content, it is still far from being optimal.
- Sites that use HTML "Frames" technology are not search engine friendly.

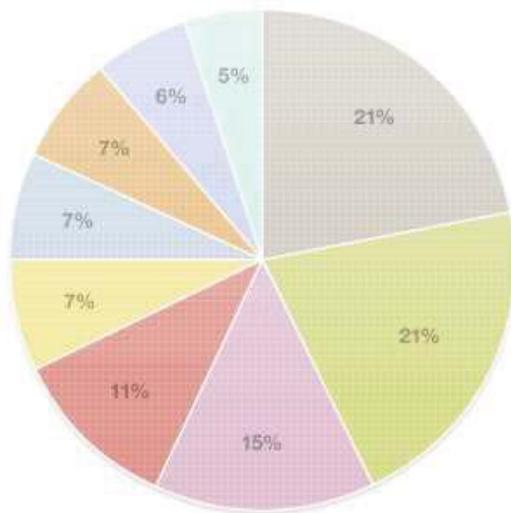
Run your site through www.seo-browser.com and assess if all your text content is visible to search engines. Can you see all your text in a structured manner and the Alt tags of your images? If not, contact a web professional who is proficient at search engine optimisation.

3. Search engine ranking factors

Before you start trying to optimise your website or hiring an expert to do so it is a good idea to look at the search engine ranking factors and how they have evolved. SEOMoz, an expert in search engine optimisation has a 2011 search engine ranking factor guide:

<http://www.seomoz.org/blog/new-edition-ranking-factors-for-2011-live>.

2011 Broad Algorithm



| | |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| Page Level Link Metrics | 21.45 |
| Domain Level Link Authority Features | 21.13 |
| Page Level Keyword Usage | 14.93 |
| Domain Level Keyword Usage | 10.73 |
| Page Level Social Metrics | 7.22 |
| Domain Level Brand Metrics | 6.78 |
| Page Level Keyword Agnostic Features | 6.74 |
| Page Level Traffic/Query Data | 6.26 |
| Domain Level Keyword Agnostic Features | 4.92 |

Screen capture copyright: <http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors>

a) *What does this mean for my business's search engine optimisation?*

The value of links has diminished: one of the key differences between now and just a few years ago is that in 2009, link-based factors comprised 65% of voters' assessment. This means that links had a huge (65%) influence to your site's rankings. In 2011, the importance of these link-based factors had diminished to 43%, a lower influence but still one of most important SEO factor.

The keyword usage (domain level and on page level) only makes up 25% of what experts believe influence search engine rankings. So keyword usage is still important, but less than links.

In conclusion, the SEO game keeps changing but the importance of the basics explained in this tutorial remain. If you intend to optimise your web presence yourself we recommend you read the SEOMoz blog post (link above). If you intend to hire a professional it would be a good idea to find out if they are familiar with the changes. If their technique hasn't evolved there is little chance that your rankings will.

4. Good link structure

The Internet is made of millions of pages that are linked to one another. These links are the essence of the web. They are referred to as **hyperlinks**.

Imagine many fishing nets joined together. The knots within each net are internal hyperlinks. The knots joining two nets together are external hyperlinks.



Critical Components Of Optimising A Website

Search engines navigate knots in each net. If they can't find the knots linking your webpages together, they won't be able to move to the next page, and the next one, and so on. They won't be able to index each page and therefore make it available to users searching for what you are offering.

Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/solaara/194320189/>

a) Anatomy of a standard HTML hyperlink



The above image shows how a hyperlink is formed using HTML. On a webpage it will look like this:

[Tours for the 18 to 35 year olds](http://www.contiki.com)

If you have programmed your website yourself you will be familiar with the above HTML. If you edit your website with a content management system, you shouldn't need to learn HTML.

b) Correct structure of hyperlinks on my website

- The navigation bar of a website is its main suite of hyperlinks. Users and search engines should be able to access every single page of your website using your navigation and sub navigation menus. Is this the case on your site? If not, search engines will not be able to crawl all your pages and index them.
- What is also important, especially on the homepage, is to **have a reasonable number of hyperlinks within the content of your site**. This will inform your readers and search engines that particular pages are more relevant than others.
- The text of the hyperlink should indicate what the page you are linking to is about. In the blue Contiki example above, you can see the text is "Tours for the 18 to 35 year olds". This summarises the subject matter of the page. Having the page's keywords within the hyperlink text is crucial. Avoid the "click here" as they would only inform search engines that the topic of the page is "click here"!

5. Titles, Headings, Description, keywords, Hyperlinks, ALT

a) Title tag

The page title is a one-line description of each page of your website. It is displayed at the very top of the Internet browser window or on the tab if you hover with your mouse.

Critical Components Of Optimising A Website

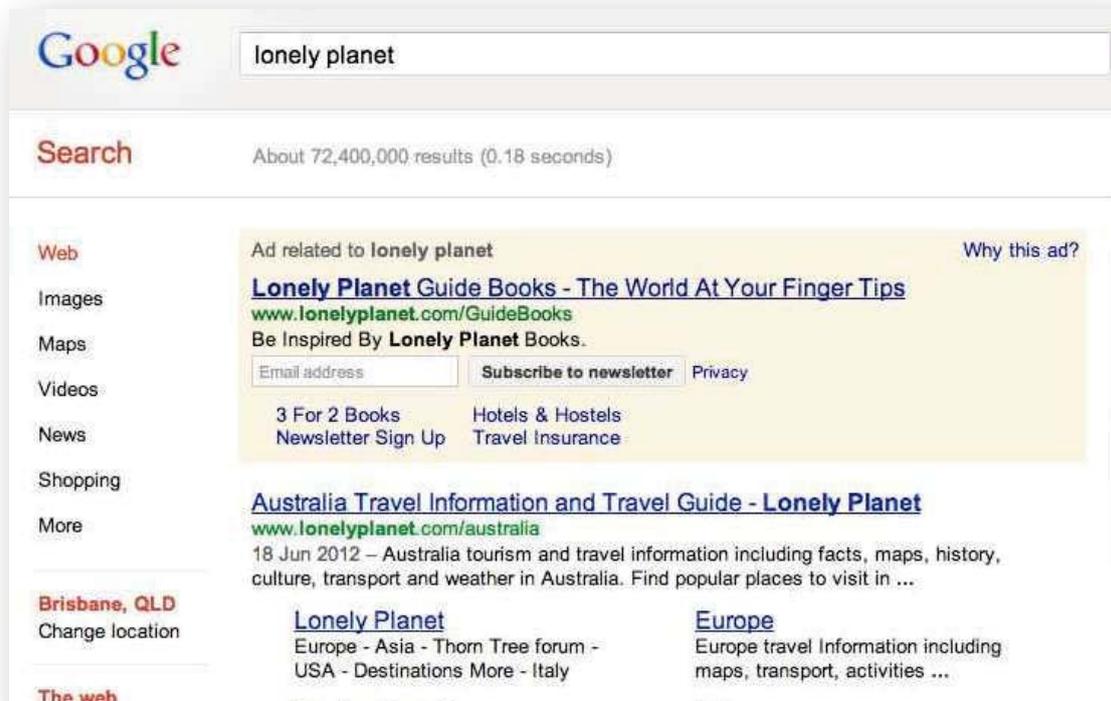
In the Lonely Planet example below, one can see that the title of the Lonely Planet homepage (www.lonelyplanet.com) is **Lonely Planet | Travel guides, advice, tips and information**.



Screen capture copyright: Lonely Planet

In web jargon, this title is known as **title tag**. Search engines give immense importance to the title tag of each page as it identifies the content of a web document.

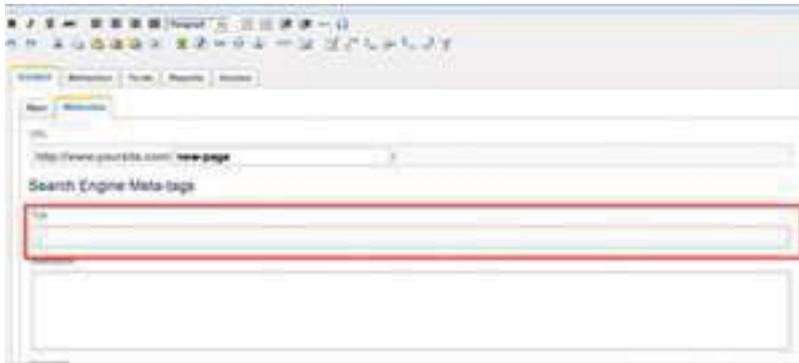
Title tags are not only important to search engines but also to humans as they attract their attention in search engine results. Note the title tag of the Lonely Planet homepage appearing in the Google search for “lonely planet”.



Screen capture copyright: Google

How to edit title tags

Title tags are located in the header section (top section) of each webpage. As a website owner, you should be able to edit the title tags using your content management system or in your HTML page itself if you do not have a content management system installed.



Example of the location of the title tag in a content management system.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
<title>Lonely Planet | Travel guides, advice, tips and information</title>
<meta name="description" content="Travel guides and guidebooks, Travel advice, tips and destinations" />
<meta name="keywords" content="Travel Guides, Guidebooks, Travel Advice, Information, Tips, Destinations" />
</head>
</html>
```

Example of the location of the title tag in the HTML code.

If your website was built by a web professional who has poor knowledge of search engine optimisation, there is a large chance that they did not pay any attention to your title tags.

Example of non-optimised vs. optimised title tags:

Imagine you own a backpacking business called Coconut Shack in Broome:

| Page address | Non-optimised Title Tag | Optimised Title Tag |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| www.coconutshack.com.au | Coconut Shack Home | Backpackers accommodation in Broome |
| www.coconutshack.com.au/about-us | Coconut Shack About Us | Affordable overnight accommodation Hostel in Broome WA |
| www.coconutshack.com.au/prices | Coconut Shack Prices | Budget accommodation Broome |

In the non-optimised version, there is no mention of what the Coconut Shack actually is (backpackers) and no mention of other keywords to describe the business offer.

In the optimised version, the search engine sees the keywords (and keyword combinations) "backpackers", "accommodation", "Broome", "affordable", "hostel", and "budget".

Guidelines to search engine friendly title tags:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique: | Each page must have a unique title tag. |
| Keyword: | It is important the title tag of each page holds the main keywords for that page (as seen in the Coconut Shack example above). Experts also recommend placing important keywords at the beginning of the title. |
| Readability: | Aim for meaningful page titles and avoid making title tags that are simply a long list of keywords. <i>Favour Backpackers accommodation in Broome over Backpackers, cheap, accommodation, Broome, hostel, budget</i> |
| Length: | Search engines will only display the first 65 characters of the title tag. If you require more characters because of your keywords you may go over 65 characters. However, be aware that only the initial 65 will display in search engine results. |

An excellent source of information on title tags is the SEOMoz blog: www.seomoz.org/blog/best-practices-for-title-tags.

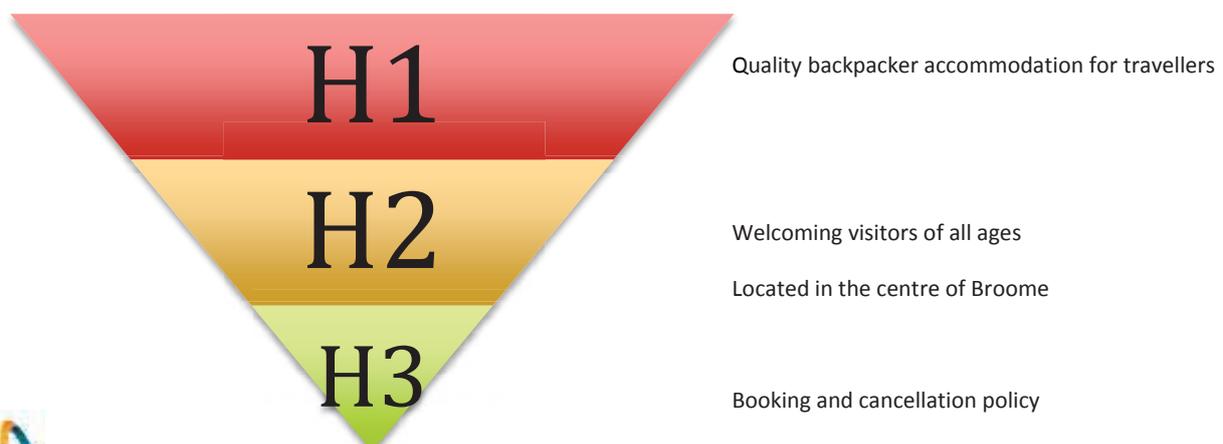
b) Headings

Just like chapters in a book, **headings are used to structure content in a reader-friendly and hierarchical manner**. They describe the section of information that they introduce. It comes as no surprise that search engines rely on headings to understand the weight and relevancy of each section of your page.

In HTML, headings are organised from 1 (H1 - the most important) to 6 (H6). Unless you are writing a webpage that is extremely rich in content - such as a book - there is no need to use H4 to H6.

It is recommended to use headings H1 to H3 in this order, and not to skip levels. Experts also advise to limit the number of H1 to one per page maximum.

Below is an example of the heading structure for the homepage of the Coconut Shack using one H1, two H2 and one H3.

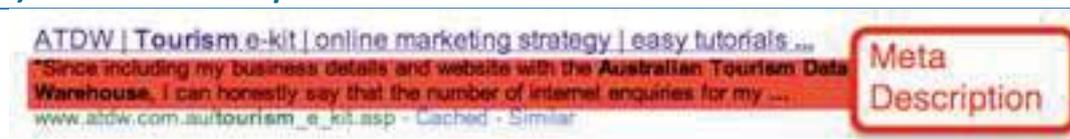


Critical Components Of Optimising A Website

Just like title tags, headings can be changed using your content management system. In the HTML document itself, they are represented by `<H1></H1>` to `<H6></H6>`.

Research has shown in the past year that search engines do not seem to place as much value as they used to on the keywords held within the headings. However, it is still important to use them appropriately as they provide paragraph summary to the users.

c) Meta Description



Screen capture copyright: Google

The description is the snippet of text displayed below a listing in the search engine results page. Search engines do not use it to rank your page but it is a chance for you to stand out from your competitors on the search engine results page.

Use it as a teaser for your webpage content. It will encourage the visitor to click on your listing. Ensure it also holds your page's keywords as the keywords used by the user in the search field (travel advice lonely planet) will be bolded in the description, thus drawing the user's eye.

The description tag, just like the title tag, is also part of the page header. It is referred to as the Meta description tag. It is generally located in the same area as the title tag within your website's content management system. In the HTML files, look for `<meta name="description" content="This is where you have to add your description" />`

Guidelines to search engine friendly description tags:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique: | Each page must have a unique description tag |
| Keyword: | It is important the description holds the main keywords for each page (they get bolded when they match the query of the user) |
| Readability: | Make the description enticing (so they click!) |
| Length: | Descriptions can be any length but search engines generally will only display the first 160 characters. |

d) Meta Keywords

The Meta keyword tag was a location where your web developer used to place your webpage's keywords to tell search engines what a page was about. This tag was crucial when search engines could not read the content (or body) of a webpage. **Now that their robots can feed on almost every piece of content, the Meta keyword tag has become obsolete and useless. It is no longer used by Google to rank pages.**

However, there are still many uninformed developers who use the old Meta keyword method. Pay attention to this when you hire a web developer.

Critical Components Of Optimising A Website

e) *Image Alt attribute*

Alt tags are basically captions for images. Since search engines cannot see images as such they rely on the Alt tag to understand what the image is about.

f) *Structure of the page address (the URL)*

Each web document or page has a unique address that can be typed in a browser to access it directly. This address is called a URL (Uniform Resource Locator).

Example of a URL: www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/australia



URLs appear in many locations:

- In the web browser's address bar
- Below the description in the search engine results
- In the content of other webpages as a hyperlink (as illustrated on the right)

Screen capture copyright: Tourism Australia

Since search engines do not reveal their secret method to rank websites, one will never know the extent of the relationship between the URL structure and the search engine rankings. However, following the below guidelines will help you improve your visibility:

Guidelines to friendly description tags:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Readability: | Which of the below URL is nicer for your customer to see, and could in turn affect the number of clicks the website gets? www.tours.com.au/Id=227#4302&countryId=445#984 or www.tours.com.au/china/great-wall Keywords get bolded in search engine results: if someone searched for "tours great wall of china" the above URL would become: www.tours.com.au/china/great-wall and attract the eye of the web searcher. |
| Used as links: | URLs are often used as links by other users. Keeping the structure simple and keyword-rich will encourage clicks on the URL. |
| Length: | Shorter is best. |
| Separate words: | Use a hyphen to separate words (not underscore or space) www.tours.com.au/china/great-wall instead of www.tours.com.au/great wall and instead of www.tours.com.au/great wall (with a space between great and wall). |

6. Submitting to search engines

Once you had to submit your website to be crawled by search engines however this now happens automatically.

7. Key learning outcomes

- Each page of your website needs to be built for humans whilst keeping search engines in mind
- Page titles are very important in terms of search engine optimisation
- In order to edit your content to make it search engine friendly you require a content management system. If you don't have one you will need to rely on your web developer making the changes on your behalf.

8. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Website 101: usability and technology
- Images 101
- Keywords
- Search engines 101

b) *Related websites*

- Google basics: www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=70897
- Google webmaster tools: <http://support.google.com/webmasters/?hl=en>
- Search engine optimisation: www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35291
- SEOMoz 2011 ranking factors: <http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors>

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 21

Keywords

Keywords are the key to a successful web strategy. This tutorial will cover everything you need to know about keywords from research to implementation on your website.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What are keywords?

Keywords, by definition, are words used as reference points for finding other relevant information.

In the online space, they become the link between users and search engines. Combinations of keywords are often referred to as keyphrases.

For your business, they are the password to online marketing success.

Imagine you are the owner of the “Sand Castles Motel” in Manly, Sydney. Your pages should contain a mixture of the following keywords: accommodation, beach, overnight, Manly, budget, family etc.

Search engines determine how relevant webpages are to user queries by looking at how keywords are organised on each webpage. **It is vital to ensure that you use keywords in appropriate places throughout your webpage, as this is fundamental to how search engines rank your site.**

Getting into the mindsets of your customers by researching what words, terms, or jargon your everyday customers use is first and foremost. Remember, your potential clients do not know industry jargon so speak to them in their language.



2. Why unique keywords are crucial

Google reported in 2007 that **25% of searches conducted every day are unique searches** that they had never seen before.

“The Long Tail” theory, when applied to search, highlights that the **majority of the world’s demand for information through search engines originates from rare, unique keyword combinations.**



The Internet has revolutionised the way in which consumers shop. There are more and more choices that have resulted in consumers becoming more selective and demanding in their choices in products and services. The fact that unique queries are becoming more common highlights why they should not be ignored. Successful online businesses use these Long Tail keyword combinations to their advantage by researching their target market and using the information to create content-rich websites that cater to specific consumers needs.

Copyright: UntangleMyWeb.com

Below is a brief example of Popular vs. Long tail keywords for an accommodation property in Darwin.

Keywords

| Popular keywords | Long tail keywords |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel Gold Darwin • Accommodation Darwin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romantic getaway in Darwin • Weekend escape in Darwin |

3. Keyword research strategy

The Long Tail paragraph above demonstrated the importance of keyword research. This section will go through the steps you should follow to find your keywords.

a) *Brainstorm and competitor analysis*

My business

First start by identifying the core offerings of your business, these are the offerings that you do best and what sets you apart from your competitors. You should try to really pinpoint these offerings and have no more than three or four keyword combinations.

Example: if you were a small hotel in Queenstown New Zealand, one of your core offerings would be “ski accommodation Queenstown”

If you have an existing site, go through its pages and identify at least 3 offerings (3 x combinations of 3 to 4 keywords). Do not just focus on your main activity (e.g. accommodation for the Queenstown example above) but also what other services you offer (ski hire? ski tours?)

Fill out the table below with each of your offerings and list related keywords using the bullet points provided:

| Core offering 1: | Core offering 2: | Core offering 3: |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... |

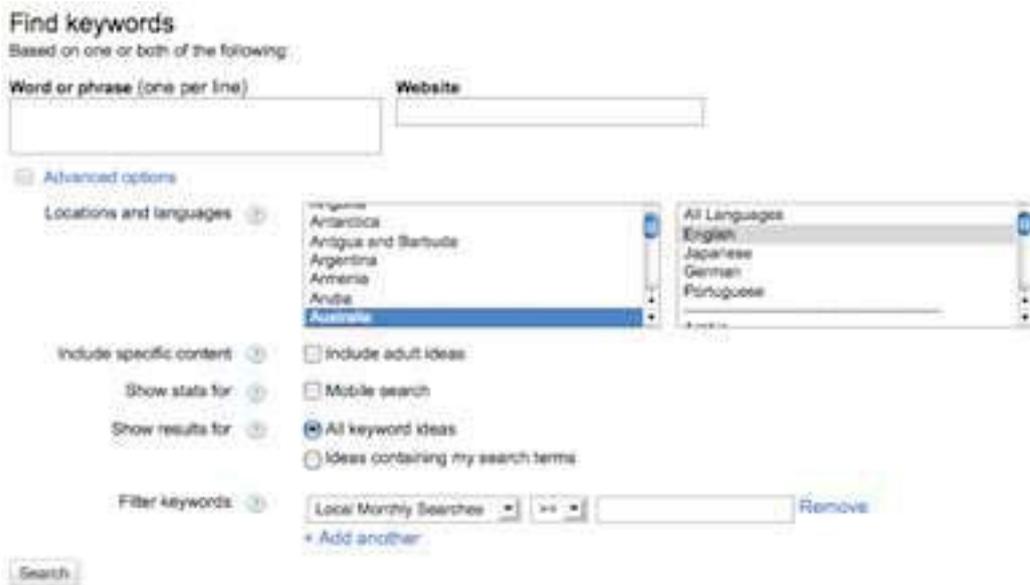
Keywords

My competitors

Repeat the task above. However, this time use a competitor's or another website that provides a similar service. Do as above but with your competitor's or other websites that provide a similar service. If you are unsure of your competitors, Google your three core offerings and look for someone similar to you in the search results. Try and identify 3 more keyword combinations (that differ from your own).

| Core offering 1: | Core offering 2: | Core offering 3: |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... • ... |

You can also use the Google AdWords keyword tool to extract the keywords held in your competitor's website. Go to <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> and write the website address (www.websiteaddress.com) under the website box.



Doing so will not only provide you with a selection of keywords that your competitor has been using in their site but will also suggest many other related keywords. You don't have to use all these keywords within your site's content but they are a great indication of what your target market is interested in. You may therefore want to consider using them when developing new content using a blog for instance.

Keywords

When provided with the results of the Google AdWords keyword search focus on the “Local Search Volume” column and change the Match Type from Broad to Exact.

| Keywords | Advertiser Competition | Local Search Volume: August | Global Monthly Search Volume | Match Type: Exact |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| [kangaroo island] | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18,100 | 27,100 | Add Exact |
| [kangaroo island accommodation] | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2,900 | 2,400 | Add Exact |
| [kangaroo island hotels] | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2,900 | 8,100 | Add Exact |

b) Broad search

You should have 6 keyword combinations as well as their respective list of keywords. It is now time to broaden your search and run your core offerings through other free online tools to complete your list, such as Quintura.

Quintura

Quintura.com is a visual search engine that allows you to see what words are related to your search query: www.quintura.com

We ran our core offering “accommodation Queenstown” through Quintura (see screenshot below)



Quintura returned related words to our core offering. Many of which we hadn’t thought of!

Screen capture copyright: Quintura

How can I complement my initial research?

Your head should now be buzzing with a growing list of keyphrases that you previously hadn’t thought of. Use the keywords you discovered using Quintura and AdWords to complete the diagram below. Only keep the keywords and keyphrases relevant to your business.

Keywords

| Reason behind trip | Keyphrase 1: | Keyphrase 2: | Keyphrase 3: |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| What is the theme behind the holiday? | | | |
| E.g. snow trip? Honeymoon? | Related keywords: | Related keywords: | Related keywords: |
| | ... | ... | ... |
| | ... | ... | ... |
| | ... | ... | ... |
| | ... | ... | ... |
| | ... | ... | ... |
| | ... | ... | ... |

4. Where to use keywords

You now have an optimal list of keywords and keyphrases to use in the content throughout your website. Decide on the focus of each individual page of your site and then attribute the relevant keywords or keyphrases to its content.

This section will show you exactly where to put the keyphrases in the structure of your page's content.

a) Title tag

Use your keyphrase in the title tag and complement it with related keywords.

E.g. Luxury ski accommodation in Queenstown

b) Headings

Use your keyphrase or its related keywords in the H1 (header 1) and use related keywords in H2 and H3 when possible. Remember that you do not want your content to be overloaded with keywords and sound unnatural.

E.g. Chalet accommodation for your ski or snowboarding trip

c) Image Alt attribute

Aim to use an image that is related to the page's theme and use your keyphrase or its related keywords in the text of the image alt attribute.

d) URL

Use the keyphrase or the main keyword in the page address (the URL). If your content management system doesn't allow you to do this, ask your web developer to see if some necessary changes could be made in order to reach the style of the address shown below (using

Keywords

keywords and hyphens).

E.g. www.mylodge.co.nz/ski-accommodation-queenstown.html

e) **Page copy (content)**

Use your keyphrase and its related keywords at least 2-3 times in the page's content itself. Try and bold the keyphrase or appropriate keywords once at least.

f) **Meta description**

Even though it has been established that the Meta description (the information below the site's listing in a search engine) doesn't primarily affect search engine rankings, you should still include your keywords in it, as this will gain your customers' attention because it usually reinstates what they have searched for originally.

g) **Hyperlinks**

Keywords should also be used in hyperlinks. However, the keywords used in links to a page should be the keywords identifying the linked page and not the theme of the page the link originates from.

E.g. Imagine I am on a different page than www.mylodge.co.nz/ski-accommodation-queenstown.html. For instance, I could be on the page about prices. If I want to add a link within the prices page that takes customers to the accommodation page, I would use the accommodation keywords in the link. It could look like something like this:

Visit our page about our [skiing accommodation offer in Queenstown](#)

5. Keyword ranking in search engines

Once you have optimised your site for your most profitable keywords it is important to continuously assess how they are ranking on search engines. You could "Google" these keywords once a month however this wouldn't be the best use of your time. There are free tools such as the SEOBook RankChecker that allow you to set up a search which you can save and run once a month (or whenever you wish).

The SEOBook RankChecker tool is available as a plugin for the Firefox browser. You can download it from SEOBook.com by following this link: <http://tools.seobook.com/firefox/rank-checker> (if you do not use Firefox you will need to download Firefox first). If you wish you may also download the SEOBook toolbar which will provide you with RankChecker and a series of other search engine optimisation tools. Ensure you watch the introduction video which is on the same page.

6. Key learning outcomes

- Keyword research is crucial in order to give your website the most chances to rank high on search engines for the keywords your target market is most likely to use



Keywords

- Once the keywords have been found they need to be strategically placed in each page of your website
- You then need to assess how you are ranking for these keywords on a monthly basis
- You can conduct your own keyword research and search engine optimisation or pay a search engine optimisation company to do it on your behalf.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Understanding inbound links to my site

b) *Related websites*

- Better understanding keywords: www.searchengineguide.com/keywords/
- SEO book: www.seobook.com

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 22

Understanding Inbound Links To My Site

This tutorial will review the different types of inbound links and what influences the value they bring to your website.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. Why link building

The previous tutorial discussed why links are important and reviewed their primary role of connecting webpages together. **Search engines also use inbound links to a website to gauge its popularity and importance.** Seomoz.com, a renowned search engine optimisation community says that link indicate endorsement from other websites, thus giving the receiving website greater credibility.

Since links are an important factor to search engines, it comes as no surprise that growing the quality and number of links to your website is critical to increase your online popularity and thus improve your search engine rankings.

This discipline is referred to as “link building” or “**off-site search engine optimisation**” and is one of the most important tasks required to succeed in the online space.

Links are the online version of word-of-mouth.

Many search engine optimisation firms offer link-building services. However, this is something you can do yourself as the key ingredient is quality content people will want to link to.



Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/alx/>

2. Types of links

There are two main categories of links: editorial links and acquired links.

a) Editorial links

Editorial links express the opinion of the editor. In this instance, it is the opinion person linking to you from their website. When checking who links to you, you might realise that there are a few businesses already linking to your site. These websites have decided to reference your content because they find it informative and trust that making it accessible to their users will enhance their online experience.

Editorial links take time to get because they are earned as a reward for providing good, citation-worthy content. They are the links that search engines will favour and therefore have the biggest link value.

b) Acquired links

In this category fall all the other links (paid or unpaid). Getting these links necessitates either:

- Making contact with another organisation to entice them to link to you.

For instance, as the website owner you establish contact with other organisations to convince them that

Understanding Inbound Links To My Site

your content is worthy enough to be linked to.

- Self creation

For example, you have created links back to your website by participating in online discussion forums or by leaving comments on Blogs.

- Reciprocal links, also known as link exchange

“Link to me and I will link to you”. Reciprocal links are links to another website placed on your site in exchange for links back to your site from theirs. Search engines condemn this practice if both sites have nothing relevant in common. However, if you have identified a relevant website and that you both share informative and complementary content, reciprocal links are a good opportunity as both your readers and search engines will be pleased.

Acquired links have less search engine value than editorial links because they bypass the feeling of trust that editorial links have.

For instance, not all acquired links (especially those acquired by leaving comments on blogs) will be followed by search engines; the website where the link originates from might have used special HTML commands to prevent search engines from following the links and improving your website’s search engine placements. These HTML commands are known as “nofollow” attributes.

Even though some links might not pass search engine value, they are still valuable to readers who might follow them and contact you if they find your content informative and useful.

3. Stay away from malicious online directories

There is a number of powerful directories which can positively influence your search engine positions. These are listed in the tutorial called “Sourcing Inbound Links”. However, there are also many dubious online directories.

The purpose of directories is to group information in categories that a user can browse when searching for something specific.

People have soon realised that having their website listed in a directory creates an inbound link to their site, thus possibly providing a positive “vote” for their website and improving their search engine rankings. This has given ideas to many web-savvy entrepreneurs and directories started to flourish. There are now millions of directories on the web and it is difficult to sort the good directories from the ones whose priority is not to help humans find relevant websites **but to make money by selling links that may improve search engine rankings.**



Understanding Inbound Links To My Site

Photo credit: <http://flickr.com/photos/mildlydiverting/>

Google, Yahoo!, Bing and other search engines are well aware of these practices and have recently started removing malicious directories from their search engine rankings.

Stay away from directories that:

- Offer to increase your site's rankings
- Offer you a premium membership with even more links
- Offer you the possibility to put hyperlinks in your keywords
- Talk to you using web jargon, which confirms their intention of helping search engines and not the end user

TIP

Delete all **dubious** emails asking you to purchase a link

There are still thousands of genuine directories. Below is a list of safe directories:

- Yahoo Directory <http://dir.yahoo.com>
- Librarians Internet Index www.lii.org
- Open Directory Project www.dmoz.org
- Nature.com www.nature.com/nrg/info/info_links.HTML
- About.com www.about.com

a) *How can you tell if a directory is dubious?*

- The directory's purpose is generic (indexes anything and everything) instead of niche
- It tells you straight away that purchasing a link will help your search engine rankings
- You can choose what text will be used as a hyperlink to your site
- Try "Googling" the name of the directory. If it doesn't appear in search engine results then it has already been banned by Google

4. Value given to a link by search engines

Paragraph 2 about the different types of links highlighted that editorial links the type of links that search engines prefer. However, there are **other factors that influence the value of inbound links that your website might receive**. No one but the search engines themselves know in full depth the weight of each factor but the following assumptions can be made:

Characteristics of the site linking to you

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Popularity:</p>  | <p>If a website is popular, in search engine terms, it means that it already has relevant and high quality links pointing to it. This infers that links from popular website will provide your site with a better link value than least popular sites.</p> <p>PageRank: Google bases the popularity of each individual webpage on a scale from non-existent to 10. This scale is called PageRank (PR). Even though this measure remains relevant in certain cases, you should consider it with caution as it only gets updated a few times a year. You can check the PageRank of any of your webpages on your Google toolbar or on www.checkpagerank.net</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Understanding Inbound Links To My Site

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Relevancy: | <p>Sites that are related to your industry or sector provide greater link value than non-related sites.</p> <p><i>For instance, if you are a hot air ballooning business, a link from a well-known balloon manufacturer is going to be of greater value than a link from your friend's national lawn-mowing business.</i></p> |
| Trust: | <p>Trust refers to trusted domain names and extensions such as .edu.au, gov.au. Obtaining a link from a trusted domain generally positively increases your page's placement amongst search engine results.</p> <p><i>Think outside the square: is there any way you or your business could obtain a link from an education provider or a government site? Are you involved in an alumni committee? A local council?</i></p> |
| Number of links on the page: | <p>The value of the link will be diminished if the page linking to you has many other links. This demonstrates that the link value from a directory is demised as directories, by definition, list many businesses on each page!</p> |
| Hyperlinks: | <p>When possible, ensure that the site linking to you uses your keywords in the hyperlink to your page.</p> <p>For instance, ask the balloon manufacturer to link to you in a similar manner:</p> <p><i>If you are in North Queensland, our partners doing hot air ballooning in Cairns will provide you with an unforgettable experience.</i></p> <p>Avoid this: for hot air ballooning in cairns click here</p> |

Remember that the above rules also apply when you link to other sites. Help the websites you link to by adding the link within you content, and create a link using the keywords of the person you are linking to.

Finally, keep in mind that it is better to have a handful of quality relevant links than tens of thousands of low-value, inappropriate links. Search engines focus on **quality** and **relevancy**.

5. Key learning outcomes

- Search engines place a high value on relevant links to your website and this will help your website rank better on search engines
- It is therefore important to have a link building strategy in place to continuously grow the number of relevant and quality links pointing to your website.

6. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Target market 101



Understanding Inbound Links To My Site

- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Keywords
- Sourcing inbound links
- Travel and tourism links

b) *Related websites*

- Editorial link building: www.ask-kalena.com/articles/editorial-link-building-with-article-marketing/
- Link exchange (Google)
www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=66356&query=link+exchange&topic=&type
- Link building to watch out for: www.untanglemyweb.com/About/Blog/articleID/2/Link-Building-What-Tourism-Operators-should-watch-out-for

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 23

Sourcing Inbound Links

This tutorial explains how to check the inbound links to your site and help you source new links.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Understanding Inbound Links To My Site



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. How do I check who links to my site?

The very first thing to do is to check who is already linking to your website. A simple way to do this is to use SEOMoz's OpenSiteExplorer.org tool. To utilise this free tool visit www.opensiteexplorer.org. Click on the "see how it works" link to watch a short video.



Screen capture copyright: OpenSiteExplorer.org

2. Checking competitors' links

Go through the same process as above but use your competitors' website instead of yours. You can also use the address of sites that rank well in search engines for your keywords. You will discover a lot of doors to knock on to acquire new links!

3. What about my business name?

OpenSiteExplorer will show you which sites link to you. However, there are many other people or businesses that might have mentioned your business name online but who haven't linked to you using a hyperlink. Google your business name to find these webpages. Pick this low hanging fruit first. Contact them and ask if they could kindly put a hyperlink on the article in order to allow the reader to access your site for further reference.

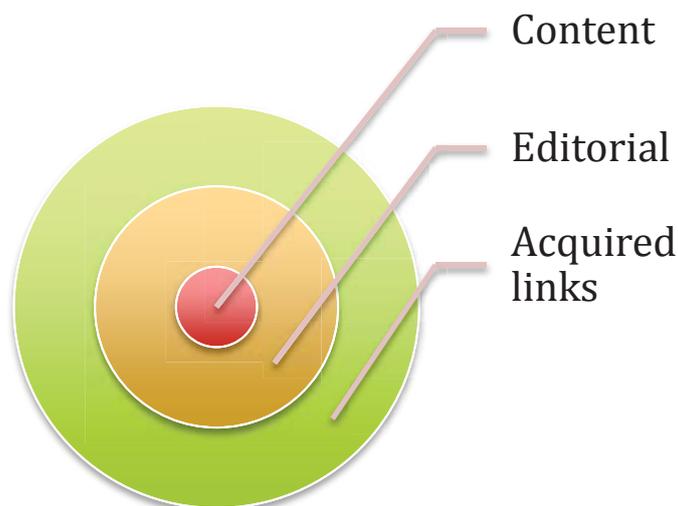
IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ESPECIALLY THERE IS A LARGE CHANCE THAT YOUR BUSINESS HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN A MEDIA RELEASE (TRAVEL MAGAZINE, LOCAL OR NATIONAL NEWSPAPER, OTHER). DIG

FOR YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS NAME ON SEARCH ENGINES AND CONTACT THE EDITORS!

4. Different link building techniques

The first focus when building links should be on writing informative website content. **If the content is not worth linking to, you can try as hard as you want but no one will link to you. Content is key.**

Unfortunately many amateur search engine optimisation companies will focus all their efforts on acquiring links without first looking at the bulls-eye: the content. If the content is compelling enough, many sites will start to naturally link to you or will happily link to you once you establish contact and show them the value your website's copy could bring to their users. If you intend to work with a SEO company, ensure that they provide guidance on how to best improve your content.



Before we start reviewing all the techniques, it is important to clarify that it is **the individual pages of a website that are linked to** and not the website itself as a whole. Therefore, you should direct your newly acquired links to your website's most relevant page and not to the homepage (unless the homepage is the most relevant one in that instance).

Once you have checked your existing inbound links as well as your competitors', print them out and put them aside. Then get a blank piece of paper and a pen.

Turn your computer off, and think about:

- Your past clients
- People who you know
- Existing or past connections through a client, through a friend
- Suppliers
- Associations you are a member of
- Charities you regularly donate to
- Universities you collaborate(d) with
- Regional councils you are part of

a) *Customers, suppliers, industry contacts*

Go through your entire existing supplier list and do the same for your customers. **There is a significant chance that your past customers own a business that is related to your main offer or to another service you provide to your clients.** As mentioned above, they could already have

Sourcing Inbound Links

written about you but they might not have created a hyperlink.

Are you part of an association, chamber of commerce, tourism association? Establish contact and ensure you are being linked to from their site. Often all you might need to do is upgrade to the next membership level and you will be provided with a link. Because these organisations are generally themselves a member of more relevant, popular, and larger organisations, the value of their link will be maximised.

b) Regional partners or cluster

Identify regional partners who could link to you providing they complement your offer.

Do you offer massage therapy services to complement your bed and breakfast accommodation offer? Ask your therapist to link to you. Work out an arrangement if you cannot link to them directly from your website (you wouldn't want your clients to calculate the mark-up you make from their site!). Think about including the link as part of your contract even.

Think about setting up a meeting with your regional tourism partners to discuss how you could work together to improve both your own and your region's visibility. Setting up a joint blog for instance is a very simple way to add fresh content that shows clients how they can maximise their experience in your tourism region. Brainstorm ideas offline and find a way to market them in a web environment.

Tourism operators can have very different levels of Internet-readiness but working in clusters is a sustainable way of making positive changes to the online visibility of your region.

c) Safe, relevant directories

Consider submitting your site to safe, genuine directories. Be prepared to write a compelling description of your business and to wait for up to 6-12 months sometimes for your listing to be reviewed and accepted by the search engines. Your application can however be fast-tracked if you pay a certain sum of money.

This article from search engine watch

<http://searchenginewatch.com/showPage.HTML?page=2167881> offers good guidelines to follow when submitting to both the Yahoo! and the DMOZ directory.

Try to also identify some niche directories. To find directories, go to Google and search for: allintitle: "the name of your sector" directory.

Avoid dubious travel directories, as the majority are only there to make money by selling links. Their purpose is not to genuinely help the traveller. Think outside the square, what other activities apart from tourism does your business offer? What other sectors do you tap into?

- Arts? Look for specific arts niche directories → google: allintitle: arts directory
- Music? → google: allintitle: music directory
- Bushwalking → google: allintitle: bushwalking directory



Sourcing Inbound Links

- Adventure? → google: allintitle: adventure directory

d) Blogs and forums

Using other people's blogs

Identify blogs and forums about your main and secondary industry sectors. Leaving comments on other people's blogs and participating in forums will not provide link value as such. **However, you are going to soon start developing an online profile.** Participating in discussions about the development of your industry will also develop your brand and you will soon see new opportunities and contacts develop.

- Start with a search engine and search for blogs relevant to you.

Search for a blog about luxury travel, a blog about bed and breakfasts in Australia, a blog about small tourism businesses, a blog about hot air ballooning, a blog about white water rafting etc.

- When appropriate, leave comments on blog articles. Also make a note of the name and website of other people who left comments. Run their website through the Yahoo! links analyser tool and see if there is a link you haven't thought about.
- Forums are another way to interact with your industry. Think of them as a lively online discussion group where people ask questions and others help by providing answers. TripAdvisor.com hosts a highly regarded travel forum where you can advise visitors on things to do in your region!



The screen capture from TripAdvisor shows a forum page asking if Australia Zoo is worth a detour. A user replied and also mentioned Underwater World at Mooloolaba in their response.

Screen capture copyright: TripAdvisor

Starting your own blog

One of the main search engine optimisation benefits of blogs and forums is the generation of new content. Advancing the world's knowledge will allow you to maximise your online presence and attract many passers-by who will opt to naturally link to you.

e) *Press releases*

Press releases are also a great way of generating interest in your business, especially since they can now be distributed for free online. The link value of the online press release itself can be trivial. However, the press release will be indexed by search engines and increase awareness of your business in the long run.

www.pr.com, www.newswiretoday.com and www.prlog.org are three sites that will distribute your press releases for free.

5. Establishing contact

By now you should have a list of linking possibilities. **Go and check the website of every company on your list.** Look for pages that would be relevant to the content of one of your webpages. Write down the contact details (phone and email).

The hot air ballooning company might have identified a hot air balloon supplier. The ballooning company owner visited the supplier's website where he found a page describing the fabric used to make the balloon itself. He believes that this page would benefit from being linked to a specific page on his site where he has got photos of that fabric floating in the air!

Now think about how to best establish contact with the website owner. Google them and find out what you have in common. Are they going to be more responsive on the phone? Or is email best? **Do not mention that your end objective is to receive a link but focus on how your businesses complement each other and how fantastic their content is.**

Aim to develop an offline relationship. The Internet is only a medium and should never be the basis of the relationship itself. After having established contact and only when you believe the relationship has got a solid, concrete base, suggest that, **since your sites complement each other so well, it would be a good idea for them to link to you.** The company might ask for a link from you (link exchange).

6. Where do I ask them to put the link?

Special "links pages" are obsolete and should be avoided. You should ask the person linking to you to put the link within their text, where it would benefit the reader most. This also applies to your website when you link to someone else.

For example: Before visiting our Alpaca farm, why not enjoy a morning breakfast amongst [lorikeets in the](#)



Sourcing Inbound Links

[beautiful Norman Park bird sanctuary?](#)

Remember to use the keywords in the hyperlink of the website you are linking to (for instance, lorikeets Norman park bird sanctuary) as search engines feed on it to understand what the page you are linking to is about. Avoid the “click here” link that doesn’t say anything about the destination.

7. Key learning outcomes

- OpenSiteExplorer.org Is a great tool to use to find out who links to you. Ensure you also check who links to your online competitors using the same tool.
- Work with your regional partners to create linking strategies.
- Remember, the key to attracting highly relevant and quality links is to have really good content.

8. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Target market 101
- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Keywords
- Understanding inbound links to my site
- Bringing people to my website with e-marketing
- Travel and tourism links
- Blogging for tourism

b) *Related websites*

- Link building resources: www.searchengineguide.com/link-building/
- Link schemes: www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=66356&query=link+exchange&topic=&type

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 23A

Travel and Tourism Links

This tutorial lists sites that could provide relevant inbound links to your website.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: Sourcing Inbound Links



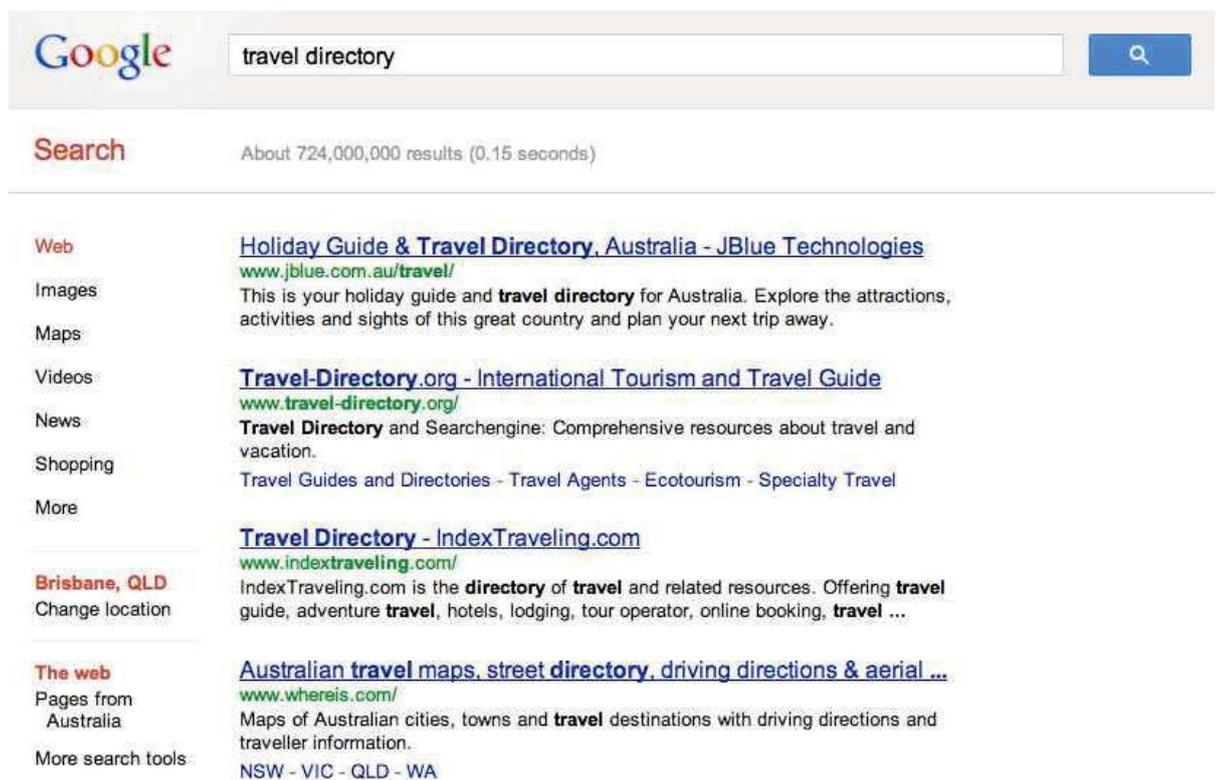
1. List of travel related sites or directories

These directories and travel related sites rank well on search engines and you could consider registering with them. They are listed in no specific order. Not all these pass link value to your website and not all of them are free.

- WikiTravel.org
- TripAdvisor.com
- About-Australia.com
- Stayz.com
- Wotif.com
- Au.TotalTravel.Yahoo.com
- AdventureTravelTips.com
- TravelNotes.org
- Booking.com

2. Where to find more travel links?

- If you Google “travel director” you will find many potential website to link to your site. However, remember to assess each and every one of these website. How many links do they themselves have, are they popular and relevant?



The screenshot shows a Google search for "travel directory". The search results are as follows:

- Search** About 724,000,000 results (0.15 seconds)
- Web**
 - [Holiday Guide & Travel Directory, Australia - JBlue Technologies](http://www.jblue.com.au/travel/)
www.jblue.com.au/travel/
This is your holiday guide and **travel directory** for Australia. Explore the attractions, activities and sights of this great country and plan your next trip away.
 - [Travel-Directory.org - International Tourism and Travel Guide](http://www.travel-directory.org/)
www.travel-directory.org/
Travel Directory and Searchengine: Comprehensive resources about travel and vacation.
Travel Guides and Directories - Travel Agents - Ecotourism - Specialty Travel
 - [Travel Directory - IndexTraveling.com](http://www.indextraveling.com/)
www.indextraveling.com/
IndexTraveling.com is the **directory** of **travel** and related resources. Offering **travel** guide, adventure **travel**, hotels, lodging, tour operator, online booking, **travel** ...
- Brisbane, QLD** Change location
- The web**
 - [Australian travel maps, street directory, driving directions & aerial ...](http://www.wherewis.com/)
www.wherewis.com/
Maps of Australian cities, towns and **travel** destinations with driving directions and traveller information.
NSW - VIC - QLD - WA
- Pages from Australia
- More search tools

- Also review and assess the inbound links to your competitors’ websites. Are there some relevant links you could get to your own website? To view your own and your competitors’ inbound links visit OpenSiteExplorer.org.

Screen capture copyright: Google

3. Key learning outcomes

- Inbound links to your site are important as they help with ranking high in search engines results.
- Focus on getting relevant inbound links such as links from travel and tourism websites
- Some links are free, others aren't so ensure you assess each potential link individually.

4. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Target market 101
- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Keywords
- Understanding inbound links to my site
- Sourcing inbound links

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 24

Bringing People To My Site With E-Marketing

Once your website's content is optimal, it is time to tell the world about your online presence! This tutorial will explain the different ways to drive traffic to your site with e-marketing. The following tutorials will further analyse different e-marketing techniques.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. What activities form e-marketing?

E-marketing, often referred to as “online marketing” or “Internet marketing” is the **suite of online activities that you can pursue to promote and improve your business’s online visibility.**

Just like search engine optimisation, e-marketing is crucial as it will give your website all the chances to succeed and bring you business.

E-marketing activities are broad and often overlap, making it difficult to assign them to a single category. However, most of them rely on a solid website to which the consumer will be directed to establish contact with you.

This document will review the following three e-marketing techniques:

- Partnering and clustering
- Media releases
- Banner advertising

The below e-marketing activities will be discussed in separate tutorials:

- Email marketing
- Pay per click (PPC) 101
- Social media for tourism
- Customer reviews and TripAdvisor
- Blogging
- Videos for my website
- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
- Tourism Exchange Australia

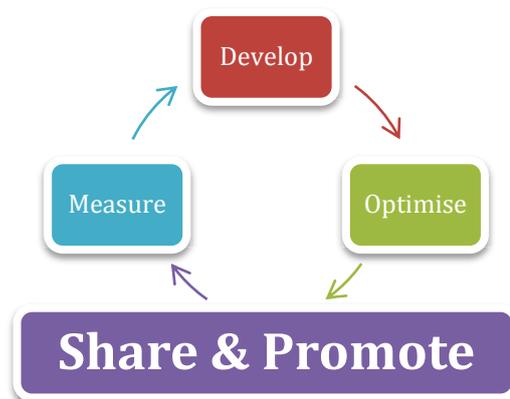
Furthermore, over the past year one has started to use to the term “web content strategy” more often. A content strategy refers to the planning, creation and delivery of useful content. Many of the above listed e-marketing activities (such as blogging, social media) can be organised under a content strategy.

Not all online marketing activities should be conducted concurrently, but relevant ones should be selected and trialled. The main relevant ones are discussed below.

2. Partnering and clustering

Partnering and clustering is crucial to help your tourism region attain high levels of social and economic developments.

Providing your clients with “things to see and do” recommendations is something that you



Bringing People To My Site With E-Marketing

probably do a dozen times a day to your clients when they are already here.

Whilst you are here you should also visit such and such winery. They have a great courtesy bus service that will pick you up from our bed and breakfast door at 4pm.

Most of the times, your clients were not previously aware of all the additional experiences your region had to offer. You might have stated a few of these activities on your links page of your website but probably have never thought about integrating them to your content, allowing the visitor to imagine how they could be taking advantage of the region's full offer.

By adding these options into your website's content (not on a separate links page), you are not only showing your target market that you care but you are also participating in the development of your region's online visibility.

People searching for wineries in your area might come across your site and realise that there is a lovely bed and breakfast they could stay at!

a) **First step (beginner)**

Get rid of your "links page" and incorporate the links information into your page's content. Use hyperlinks to direct the users to your region's webpage and other attractions. Your content management will let you modify your webpages. If you don't have one ask your web developer to install a search engine friendly one.

Within your "Things to see and do page" for instance, add a short paragraph about such and such winery and a link to their site!

Inform your clients that you can arrange everything for them, just ask them to pick and choose and you will bundle it all together for them. Bundling is a better option than pre-determined packages as it empowers the client to mix and match what they really want.

b) **Second step (advanced)**

Think about teaming up with your key partners in the area and set up a joint, independent blog to which you will each participate and write a weekly post about your region.

THIS WILL BUILD A LOT OF ONLINE CONTENT SEARCH ENGINES WILL FEED ON AND WHICH WILL IN TURN INCREASE YOUR REGION'S VISIBILITY ON THE INTERNET. IT WILL ALSO ATTRACT A LOT OF VISITORS THAT WILL FIND THEIR WAY TO YOUR SITE.

Remember, web 2.0 is the era of 2-way dialogue. By having a blog and encouraging your region's visitor to participate by leaving comments, you are creating credibility.

Blogs are very easy to set up and you do not need hosting. Blogger www.blogger.com offers a free version that will get you up and running in no time.

3. Media releases

A media release can be defined as a way of making an announcement, written as closely as possible to the way in which it will be reported in the media. Releases are a great way of broadcasting a message and directing people to your website. They need to be particularly relevant to time-sensitive communication announcements or response to external events or news.

a) *Handy tips for writing media releases*

- Given the fact that it needs to be written as closely as possible to the way it would be reported in the media, you need to **ensure that you have the medias you are sending your release to in mind when writing it**. This is to ensure that your writing aligns with that publications style of writing.
- In order to first decide what publications you are going to send your media release to, you need to have a firm understanding of **what publications your target market reads** and aim your release at those publications.
- In order for the publications to want to pick up your media release and turn it into an article you will need to ensure your **release embodies a strong news angle and is not simply an advertisement of your organisation**. To ensure your media releases incorporate a strong news angle, when writing your media releases you need to be thinking:
 - Why would a newspaper want to print this or display it online?
 - What is the benefit for the newspaper or magazine and their readers?
 - Does it fit with other stories that they have covered recently?
 - Do you think your media release is something you would want to read if you were reading that publication?

b) *Generating media traffic to my site with media releases*

In essence, if done well a media release can be a cost effective way of generating further website traffic, as it gets you more exposure to your target market for free. You need to remember it's not just an advertisement for your organisation but needs to encompass a strong news angle in order to get published.

You should have a section on your website dedicated to your media releases. Use the heading "newsroom" or "media releases" to better your search engine optimisation. This will create new content that search engines feed on (even if it is in a PDF format search engines will still be able to read it).

If your media release is picked up and published by publications, there is a large chance that the latter will also be distributed electronically. If no, you can then post it online yourself using free online tools such as www.pr.com.

c) *Difference between a media release and an advertisement*

If you have written many press releases and very little have been picked up by newspapers, it could be because your releases are seen by the media as a pure advertisement or plug for your business. Differences between media releases and advertisements are explained below:



Media Release:

- Uncontrolled form of communication. As you are not paying for an amount of space, you are not guaranteed it will get published. If it does get published it is at the mercy of the journalist as to what they include and what they don't include about your organisation.
- The aim of a media release is to be published by a news channel to obtain validation from a third party.
- Incorporates a strong news angle. It is used to generate third party credibility.

For example if you are successful in getting a media release published in the Brisbane Courier Mail and readers see that Courier Mail's Travel Editor, Mike O'Connor endorses this wine tour as a great experience, people may be more inclined to remember the name of that tour.

Advertisement:

- A controlled form of communication that you pay for and can therefore have full control over what is said in the advertisement.
- No news angle needed, as you are simply plugging your organisation.
- May not be as effective in gaining readers' attention, as it is not validated by a third party. People are exposed to hundreds of advertisements every day and therefore may not be remembered by your target market. There is a danger of people dismissing advertisements, as they know organisations can tell them how good their product or service is but how do they know the organisation actually delivers on their promise. **This is where a media release it appropriate; as it provides an endorsement from a third party telling readers the organisation lives up to its promise not the organisation simply giving itself another plug.**

4. Banner advertising

Banner advertising is a form of e-marketing that allows operators to display a clickable advertisement on websites with high traffic. This form of advertising is an excellent manner to increase brand awareness. However, it may not provide a return on investment high enough to justify the expense for the majority of small and medium tourism operators.

With an average click through rate of 0.2 % (only 0.2% of all the people who saw the banner click on it), banner advertising is less effective than other forms of e-marketing.

5. Key learning outcomes

- Gone are the days when you could simply rely on your website to market itself. Your business needs promoting online and this is not only done through your website.
- You need to ensure you have a clear e-marketing strategy to promote your business online. This e-marketing strategy should be defined by your business objectives first and foremost.
- A web content strategy is a sub section of an e-marketing strategy which focuses on planning, creating and delivering content to be shared via online media.

6. Related material

a) Related tutorials



Bringing People To My Site With E-Marketing

- Email marketing
- Pay per click (PPC) 101
- Social media for tourism
- Customer reviews and TripAdvisor
- Blogging for tourism
- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
- Tourism Exchange Australia
- Video for your website
- Facebook for tourism
- Twitter for tourism
- Flickr and photo hosting websites
- YouTube and video hosting websites



Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 24A

Converting A Prospect Into A Guest

This tutorial addresses key aspects of your website to increase your chances of converting visitors into guests. This tutorial will not discuss optimising your content for search engines.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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1. Functional and modern design

A well designed website maximises a user's experience and significantly increases the chances people will continue reading and take action instead of bouncing away.

Some of the common features of quality tourism websites are:

- Large image headers with support calls to action (links to bookings, more info, etc)
- Good use of images combined with offers
- Use of video and testimonials
- Multiple ways of navigating
- Good balance and use of white space, not too cramped
- Distinct accent colours

ENSURE YOU BRIEF YOUR WEB GRAPHIC DESIGNER ABOUT THE TASTES AND AGE OF YOUR TARGET MARKET SO THAT THE DESIGN APPEALS TO THEM.

2. Content

Your content should entice your prospects to become guests. It needs to be interactive (include images that pop up and videos) and portray the experience your target market could expect if they book with you.

It is a bad idea to use your print content for the web as brochures generally only list your product's attributes. The web is an interactive platform and allows you to create a story and guide your readers from one page to another using hyperlinks.

a) *Writing for the web*

When writing for the web you need to keep in mind that your readers would like to find answers to their questions straight away. It is therefore important to include the most important information in the first paragraph of each page of your website. This will also help search engines better understand the topic of the page.

For instance, if you are an accommodation provider, ensure you list the number and types of accommodation options first as well as other elements your target market is likely to want to find out straight away. Avoid listing trivial information (such as when the business was

The Island Coastal Cottages are five fully self-contained units set amid shady trees and only metres from the sheltered waters of Eastern Cove. The cottages accommodate two to five guests and each has a patio that overlooks the ocean. All cabins have decks with outdoor settings and barbecues to help you enjoy the peaceful setting. It's just a two minute walk to the wharf and boat ramp, making it an ideal location for those who enjoy fishing.

Converting A Prospect Into A Guest

b) When describing your facilities

- Avoid the long list of bullet points. See the example below.

| What not to do  | This is much better  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Our apartments each have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 big bedrooms ▪ Microwave ▪ Colour TV ▪ Kettle ▪ Clean sheets | <p>Modern and roomy apartments</p> <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">✓ 2 big bedrooms <li style="width: 50%;">✓ Colour TV <li style="width: 50%;">✓ Microwave <li style="width: 50%;">✓ Kettle </div> <p>Each of our family-sized apartments has two double bedrooms and as well as aerial views over Surfers Paradise beach. Our <u>customers are always pleasantly surprised</u> by how large our units are.</p>  <p>The main bedroom has an ensuite with a full-size bath. The second bedroom has twin beds that can be configured into a double bed. The second bathroom has a large shower.</p> <p>We can easily accommodate you with a third bed if you require.</p> <p>All our apartments have the latest mod cons, including brand new dishwashers so you don't spend your holiday in the kitchen!</p> <p>Prices: starting at <u>\$150 per night</u></p> <p><u>To enquire or book contact us now</u></p> <p>(underlined words represent links)</p> |

Converting A Prospect Into A Guest

c) *Call to action*

A **call to action** is a message that directs visitors to act in some specific manner such as making a booking or enquiry. It is important you have calls to action strategically located within each page of your website so that the reader is not left wondering what step to take next.

A call to action needs to:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Stand out:</p> | <p>Inform your web designer that you would like a different heading or font for your call to action. It needs to be evidenced and blend in the design.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>To enquire or book contact us now</p> <p>→View our March specials now</p> <hr style="border: 1px dashed red;"/> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Call now for 10% discount on +61 (0)7 3103 6566</p> |
| <p>Feature at different locations:</p> | <p>For instance, if you list your prices and have an online booking system, ensure you have a “book now” call to action next to each package you offer.</p> |

It is also important to ensure prospects never find themselves at the bottom of the page without guidance on what to do next. Readers should not have to rely on the navigation menu but should be guided by meaningful hyperlinks (e.g. [view our specials page](#)) throughout the text.

3. Smooth check out process

Always ensure that your online booking system’s content reflects what your website says. Also, if the person is interested in booking your 3-day tour, the book now button on that page should take them to the 3-day tour booking page and not to the page that lists all your tours.

Converting A Prospect Into A Guest

ENSURE THAT YOUR ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM IS SECURE AND INFORM YOUR CLIENTS THAT IT IS AS MANY PEOPLE STILL WONDER IF PAYING OVER THE INTERNET IS SAFE.

4. Interactivity

To allow the user to imagine the experience they will have if they book, make sure you use:

- Recent images (either thumbnails which expand when clicked on or medium-sized images)
- Short videos showing people having fun whilst experiencing your product
- Interactive maps such a Google Maps allowing the client to create their itinerary
- Integrate a direct link to your business' Facebook Page (or even a Facebook widget or badge)
- Third-party testimonials such as TripAdvisor, Hostelworld testimonials embedded in your website

5. Contact details

ENSURE THAT YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS ARE PROMINENT ON EVERY PAGE.

For local search purposes (to help your Google Places listing) you should also have your physical address on every page.

It is also a good idea to add your phone number in the meta description which will be displayed on search engine listings. To do this yourself you will need to have a content management system or be proficient in HTML.

6. Testing the user friendliness of your site

You should always test how conversion-friendly your website is. To do so you could ask a few people to form a focus group and give them a goal to achieve on your website (e.g. book a 2 bedroom cottage during the week). There are two highly recommended systems you could also use:

- Usertesting.com: For less than \$50 you will receive a video of a visitor speaking their thoughts as they use your website and a written summary describing the problems they encountered.
- Clicktale.com: this very powerful program shows you video recordings of mouse gestures of people who visit your website so you can assess how they really interact with your website.

7. Key learning outcomes

- First impressions count online and are often made based on your website design and usability



Converting A Prospect Into A Guest

- Your content should be written in a manner that entices prospects to become guests. It needs to anticipate the questions your visitors may have and include a clear call to action
- Ensure that your contact details are clearly visible on each page of your website.

8. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Website 101: visual design and content
- Website 101: usability and technology
- What is a content management system
- Images 101
- Security and backups
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Keywords
- Google tools

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 25

Email Marketing

This tutorial will provide you with guidelines, tips and tricks to succeed in email marketing.

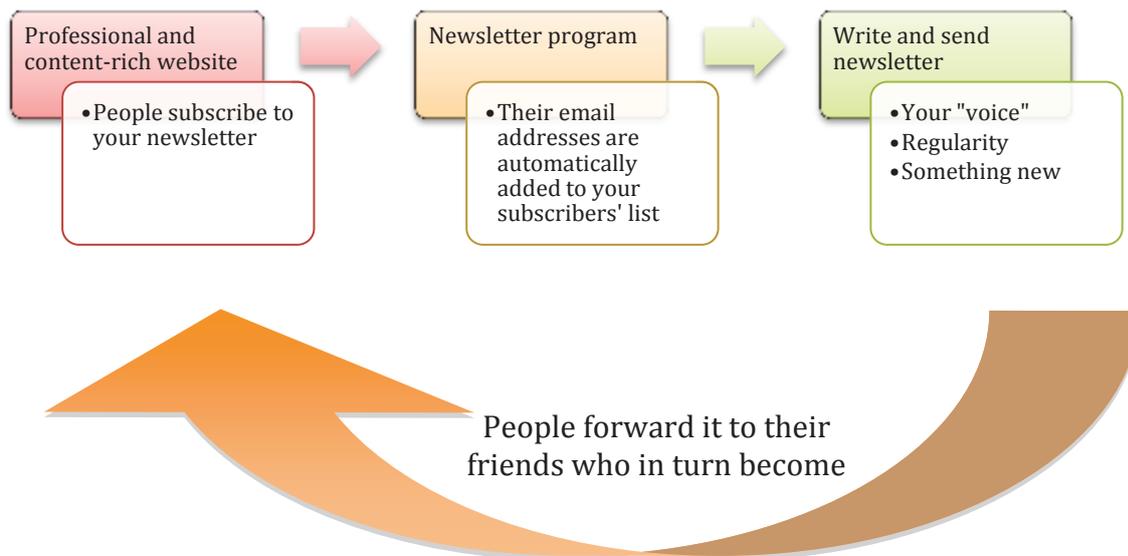
Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is email marketing?

Email remains the most used tool of the Internet. It is therefore a very powerful medium to start or continue to develop a relationship with your target market and existing clients and to keep your brand top of mind. The illustration below explains in three steps how email marketing works:



Since it is so cost efficient and accessible, it is not unusual for office workers to receive from 40 to 60 emails a day. **Your newsletter will therefore need to stand out in their inboxes by being perceived as an unrivalled piece of information.** Following the golden rules below will ensure successful email campaigns.

2. Email marketing guidelines

a) Who to email

- Ask people who contact you on the phone if they would like to be added to your mailing list.
- Look outside your own business and set up cluster email marketing campaigns with your region's tourism partners.
- You are by law only allowed to send broadcasted (as opposed to individual) emails to **people who implicitly agreed to receive your newsletter** or other form of email marketing. If you do not do so, people can mark your email address as spam and you risk not being able to send any future email campaigns to any recipient. This is because your email address could be blocked by Internet Service Providers (ISP) who thinks you are spamming. The table below explains which email addresses are ok to use and which aren't (variations exist – please comply with your email marketing software guidelines):

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Owner opted in from your site (newsletter subscription). ✓ Owner purchased from you within 2 years ✓ Owner handed you their business card knowing you would contact them. ✓ Owner completed an offline form and indicated they wanted to be emailed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ You obtained the email addresses from a third party (incl. purchased a list). ✗ You copied their address from the Internet. ✗ You haven't been in contact over two years. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

b) What to write

- Put yourself in the shoes of your target client: only send relevant information that will teach them something new:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Give your newsletter a personality and a unique voice. ✓ Let your reader feel there is a human behind the email. ✓ Provide educational content, testimonials, and stories. Research proved they are very successful in newsletters. ✓ Use colours, brand your newsletter with your logo. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don't write the newsletter like an ad for your business. ✗ Don't write the newsletter just for the sake of sending something out. ✗ Don't write a novel. 3 to 4 short paragraphs are a better option. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- HTML format with photos and embedded hyperlinks is generally preferred to plain, email-like, text format. However, your target market might be more responsive to plain-text email. If you are unsure do a test over a few months and decide based on the opening and response rate (provided you are using a dedicated email marketing program).
- Think of your newsletter as a webpage:



Email Marketing

- ✓ Title = subject line: Favour creative subject lines (e.g. Two baby wallabies born overnight) over dull and sedative titles (e.g. June newsletter – Broome Wildlife Retreat)
- ✓ Headings: Use headings to keep the reader focused.
- ✓ Hyperlinks: Use them to direct your readers to your website or another website where they will be able to learn something new.
- ✓ Content: Bold your keyphrases, use bullet points, and don't forget the call-to-action and the deadline.
- ✓ Images: Use images showcasing your products, experiences and guests participating.
- ✓ Keywords: Use keyword-rich vocabulary.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Content: ✓ Images: ✓ Keywords: | <p>Use images showcasing your products, experiences and guests participating.</p> <p>Use keyword-rich vocabulary.</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Keep in mind that customers are bombarded with email marketing messages numerous times a day.
- Your newsletter **design should convey professionalism and be consistent.**
- Invite staff to participate and write the content of the newsletter.
- Always include an “unsubscribe” or opt-out link.
- Forwarding to friends is useful and encourages new subscribers.

c) *When to send*

- Aim for regularity and consistency:

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Monthly or bi-monthly newsletters are manageable for small businesses. ✓ Seasonal newsletters are also popular ✓ Use a different format (e.g. news flash) to communicate a different message or a limited offer. ✓ Write down every newsletter idea when they arise. A “newsletter ideas book” is a good way to keep track of everything you want to say. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Avoid sending out newsletters when you have nothing to say. A boring newsletter might negatively affect your next newsletter’s opening rate. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Think about what time of the day is best for your clients to receive your message. Sending the email on a Friday evening will only ensure sure your newsletter is at the bottom of their inboxes on a Monday morning. Newsletters sent on Monday and Tuesdays usually get the highest opening rate.

d) How to do it?

- Avoid sending newsletters from your email program, as they are not designed for this purpose. Ensure you utilise a dedicated email marketing program. It will ensure that:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Your emails look professional when opened by any email client (Outlook, Hotmail, Gmail, Mail for Mac). ✓ Your pictures open and won't be replaced by a big red X. ✓ You will be able to automate the use of personal data (e.g. Dear John) in your email. ✓ Your emails are not marked as spam or junk mail (providing your content is not spammy). ✓ Your emails are sent by a dedicated email broadcasting server. ✓ You will have access to crucial statistics (opening rate, click on attachment and hyperlink, etc). ✓ You will save hours of work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Using your own email client (such as Outlook or other) will only result in your newsletter appearing unprofessional. ✗ Your newsletter could be marked as spam as it wasn't sent by a dedicated email broadcasting server. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Ask your web professional or peers for recommendations as the majority of email marketing programs are rebranded by web companies. You can also Google "email newsletter tools".
- Track the success of your campaign using your newsletter tool report facility. Aim for an opening rate close to 30%.

Segment your database or email list. For instance, if you are an accommodation business and you cater both to couples and families with kids you need to segment your subscribers list into 1) couples and 2) families with kids. If you don't the couples will receive information that isn't relevant to them (e.g. discounted family passes to theme park) and will instantly unsubscribe.

3. Cost and return on investment

Email marketing is very cost effective.

Depending on the program you use, you will either have the choice to pay a monthly subscription fee (AUD30 – AUD60) or a flat fee per broadcast (AUD10-AUD25):

- Choose a monthly subscription if you are sending 3 email campaigns a month or more (rare).
- Opt for the flat fee (per newsletter) if you aim to send less than 3 a month.

On top of the subscription or flat fee you will be required to pay a “per recipient” fee. This generally varies between 2 cents to 10 cents, depending on your provider.

IF YOU ARE SENDING AN EMAIL TO 500 RECIPIENTS, YOU CAN EXPECT YOUR CAMPAIGN TO COST YOU ON AVERAGE AUD40 (AUD15 FLAT FEE + 5 CENTS PER RECIPIENT). THAT IS MONEY WELL SPENT FOR YOUR BRAND TO STAY “TOP OF MIND” AND ENCOURAGE BOOKINGS!

4. Last but not least!

- Do not forget to include a call-to-action or two in your newsletter. A link to a special offers page on your website or a discount code for your product when you book within 48h often goes a long way and encourages conversions.
- Test, test and re: test:
 - Send out a test newsletter to different email accounts (Outlook, Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail) before you send out the real one. If you don't have any of these accounts, set them up (visit www.hotmail.com, www.gmail.com, www.yahoo.com and follow the steps to set up a free email account). If the newsletters do not display properly in each email account or if they land in the junk mail inbox (generally because of some words in it that would be considered as spam) you will be able to rectify in time.
 - Test different subject lines, styles, and “tone” of the newsletter during the first few months at least. Your opening and response rate statistics will indicate which one is best.
- Track the number of enquiries you receive after your newsletter was sent out. How many phone and how many email enquiries? Did you see an increase of visits to your website in your website statistics program? Make a note of it and aim to beat it with your next mailing!

5. Key learning outcomes

- It is important to capture the email addresses of your potential or past guests and to keep the communication going
- Make sure you use the right tools that will ensure your email newsletter will be



delivered in a professional format

- Content is key – focus on developing newsletter that adds value and not just standard information. People receive hundreds of emails per week and have become very selective in their reading.
- Segment your database and don't send the same message to different target markets.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Email best practices

b) *Related websites*

- Email marketing services:
http://email.about.com/od/emailmarketingservices/Email_Marketing_Services.htm
- Email marketing tips and tricks:
http://email.about.com/od/emailmarketingtips/Email_Marketing_Tips_Tricks_and_Secrets.htm
- Anti spam legislation:
www.dbcde.gov.au/communications_and_technology/policy_and_legislation/spam/anti-spam_legislation

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 26

Pay Per Click (PPC) 101

Search engine marketing, also called pay per click, is a cost-effective way to increase your online visibility. This tutorial will give you the knowledge to get started with pay per click.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. What is Pay Per Click?

Pay per click (PPC) is a form of e-marketing that involves setting up an online advertising campaign which will be displayed on search engine results pages and advertising networks such as websites and blogs.

In Australia, the 3 major PPC players are Google AdWords (<http://adwords.google.com>), Yahoo! Search Marketing (<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com>) and Microsoft adCenter (<http://adcenter.microsoft.com>).

Setting up and managing search engine marketing is time consuming and necessitates a lot of research. However, all the tools are at your disposal to do it yourself, without the assistance of a professional. If you do not have sufficient time to dedicate to optimise your campaign, we recommend you hire a pay per click professional to at least set it up for you.

2. How does it work?

Once you have selected the search engine you would like your ads to be displayed on, you will need to:

- Set up an account
- Do your keywords research
- Create your campaigns (groups of ads, keywords, bid price)
- Go live
- Let the campaign run its course
- Track and fine tune on a weekly basis



3. What are the benefits?

The main difference and benefit between search engine pay per click and other forms of online or offline advertising is that PPC targets an audience that is **ready to buy and actively searching for your product**. The ads will only be displayed when people



enter the keywords you specified.

Imagine you are a company located in Cairns that sells PADI diving courses. Your ad in a local paper or tourism publication might not appeal to all the readers. However, when you set up a PPC campaign you can target it to your audience by specifying your ads only to be displayed when people search for “PADI certificate in Cairns” or other relevant keywords.

Photo copyright: Yahoo!

a) **Cost effective**

PPC is cost effective: you will only pay a predefined amount when **someone clicks on your ad**. Your ads will therefore be displayed for free. In PPC jargon, the number of times your ads are displayed is called the number of impressions.

b) **Immediate**

There is no need to work with a third-party such as an agency or pay per click consultant: you can set up your campaign yourself and it will be live as soon as you press “ok”. You can also make all the changes you like to your campaign 24/7.

c) **Flexibility**

Pay per click is a form of advertising that can be set up, left running for as long as you want, paused, re-started, altered, cancelled, etc. The campaign can be accessed and changed at any time using any Internet-enabled computer as the majority of PPC services are online-based and fully automated.

d) **Tracking**

Because everything is based online, you will be able to know exactly which ads were clicked, which ads converted, and which keywords your target market is using to search. Basically you will gain market intelligence on what works, what doesn't and will be able to use the keyword information within the content of your website to naturally increase its search engine rankings!

4. **When could I use it?**

Because of its high flexibility and very low cost, PPC is an online marketing avenue that every tourism business should consider. If the campaign is not successful or timely, you can simply pause it.

Below are a few examples of uses of PPC campaigns in the tourism industry

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Low occupancy for upcoming peak period: | It's the start of the school holidays in 2 weeks and you haven't sold all your rooms/tours/trip |
| Upcoming seasonal event: | There is a seasonal event in your region (e.g. Mt Isa rodeo) happening every year. People are going to search for it online so use the event's name in your add and offer these people an experience that complements the event. |

Strategic purpose: Set up a PPC campaign to research what your target market searches, what keywords they use and use this market intelligence in your own website to optimise it for search engines.

5. Key learning outcomes

- Pay Per Click marketing is an e-marketing strategy that is cost effective and targeted
- Each tourism operators should consider Pay Per Click marketing. The biggest player is Google AdWords.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Keywords
- Setting up a PPC campaign

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 27

Setting Up A PPC Campaign With Google AdWords

This tutorial will give you the knowledge required to set up a pay per click campaign with Google AdWords.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Pay Per Click (PPC) 101



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1. Key concepts

Google is the most widely used search engine in Australia. It is therefore recommended that you use Google's pay per click program (AdWords) if you are a beginner in the PPC field. We will use Google AdWords as an example. However, the same principles apply to other search engines offering Pay Per Click.



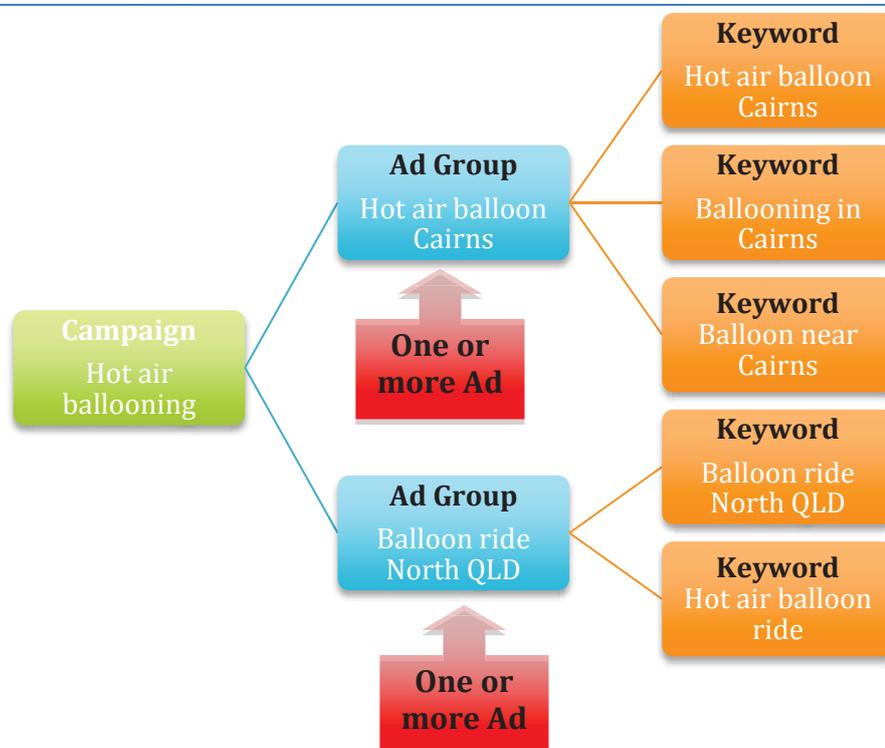
Screen capture copyright: Google

Google AdWords allows your ads to be displayed on the Google search engine results pages and other websites (such as YouTube, blogs etc).

Google AdWords Express (a new service from Google) allows you to display your ad on Google Maps. For further information on Google AdWords Express visit this page:

<http://www.google.com.au/adwords/express/>.

a) Good campaign structure



Setting Up A PPC Campaign With Google AdWords

A PPC campaign is made of many AdGroups, which are in turn made of many keywords. These keywords, when entered by a searcher on Google, trigger the ads that are associated with each AdGroup. Your ads are then displayed on the search engine results page.

John from Sydney is planning a holiday in Cairns. He researches “Hot air balloon Cairns” in Google and he sees the following ad on the search engine results page:

Hot Air Balloon Cairns

View the World from Above

Half-day adventure at AUD₃₁₀

www.HotAirBalloonCairns.com.au

Since the ad uses John’s keywords (which become bolded), his attention is immediately drawn to the ad. He is therefore more likely to click on this ad than on another one, which might have different headline where his keywords are not present (e.g. “Balloon Ride North Queensland”).

When web searchers enter their keywords in the search engine, they expect to see them displayed in the search results. To achieve this, you will need to group your ads based on the keywords that trigger them.

MANY UNEXPERIENCED GOOGLE ADWORDS USERS GROUP ALL THEIR KEYWORDS IN ONE SINGLE ADGROUP. THIS IS NOT OPTIMAL AS THE CHANCES THAT THE AD MATCHES THE KEYWORDS THAT TRIGGERED IT ARE VERY SMALL.

b) Setting up my AdWords account and campaign

The steps below will guide you to successfully setup your AdWords account. The Learn with Google website (<http://www.google.com/ads/learn/>) offers videos courses and how-to guides we recommend you watch to improve your AdWords campaigns. The AdWords Get Started page is also very helpful:

<http://adwords.google.com/support/aw/bin/static.py?hl=en&guide=21899&page=guide.cs>

Once you feel ready go to <http://adwords.google.com>

1. Click “Start Now” (top right corner)
2. Create your account by following the prompts to setup you campaign. Use the online help available on the left of your screen or follow this link:
<http://support.google.com/adwords/bin/topic.py?hl=en&topic=1713937&path=1710534&ctx=leftnav>.



2. Researching keywords

It is a good idea to research your keywords before creating your first AdWords campaign. Keywords will trigger your ad. You will need as many keywords as possible for your ads to be triggered as often as possible.

1. Start by brainstorming and writing down all the keywords you have on your mind:

Hot air balloon, Ballooning Cairns, Balloon ride near Cairns, Hot air balloon ride, Ballooning gift certificates, hot air balloon adventure ...

2. Then cluster your keywords in very tight-matching categories (AdGroups). Give the category a name that summarises the keywords.

| AdGroups | Hot air balloon | Balloon ride | Gift certificate | Balloon adventure |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Keywords | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hot air balloon hot air balloon cairns air balloon ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> balloon ride hot air balloon ride balloon ride near Cairns cheap balloon ride ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ballooning gift certificate buy balloon gift certificate ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> balloon adventure adventure in a balloon hot air balloon adventure ... |

3. Use the AdWords keyword tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>). Also ensure the country you select is the one of your key target market (e.g Australia).
4. You can also use the Quintura tool www.quintura.com. It will help you find more keywords.
5. Add your keywords to your AdGroups. You will probably have discovered many other keywords that you could group into new AdGroups. You should aim at between 6-12 AdGroups to start with.
6. Watch the Google Keyword video: <http://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/breeze/378766/index.HTML>
7. Refine the matching type of your keywords. Visit: <http://adwords.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=6100>
8. Source your negative keywords and add them to your AdGroups and campaign:

For instance, Gold Coast would be a negative keyword for the above Hot air balloon campaign. This will prevent the ads from appearing when someone searches for "hot air balloon Gold Coast". Other negative keywords would be Melbourne, Perth etc.



3. Tips for AdWords success

a) Campaign settings

You will find a few tips below with regards to your campaign settings. To modify them go to the Campaign tab and click on “settings” then on the name of your campaign.

1. Ensure your ads are only displayed on Google Search network (otherwise you will be paying too much for very low visibility). If you want your ads to be displayed elsewhere (not only on search engine results page) set up a second campaign with a much lower bidding price.
2. Set up your ad scheduling. There is no need for your ads to be displayed at midnight unless your target market is awake and searching at that time.
3. Target your customers by location. Where is your target market located?

b) Keywords

Below are some tips to help you with your keywords:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use negative keywords and appropriate phrase matching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gold Coast (negative keyword) ○ hot air balloon, “hot air balloon” and [hot air balloon] ✓ Ensure you use qualifying words with your keywords (e.g. cheap hot air balloon flights, champagne hot air balloon adventure). ✓ Use permutations (e.g. hot air balloon Darwin, Darwin hot air balloon). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don’t put a long list of keywords in one single AdGroup. ✗ Don’t use broad match only. ✗ Don’t use few negative keywords otherwise your add might appear in an untargeted search. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

c) Ads

Below are some tips to help you with your ads:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure your ads headlines match the keywords in the AdGroup. ✓ Ensure your ad directs visitors to a corresponding page (called landing page) on your site. The content of the landing page must be similar to the content of your ad. ✓ Have (at least) 2 ads for each AdGroup. Check which one has the highest click through rate and improve the other one to beat it (this is called split testing). Use this tool: www.splittester.com. ✓ Always rotate and split test your ads. ✓ Capitalise the first letter of important words. ✓ Put the benefit of your product on the 2nd line and the description on the 3rd line. ✓ Create friendly URLs in your ad (www.HotAirBalloonCairns.com instead of www.hotairballooncairns.com). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ If your ad text doesn't match the keywords in the group it is because there are too many different keywords in the AdGroup. ✗ Don't target the first position: lower positions are often better as people shop around! ✗ Don't direct users solely to the homepage. ✗ Don't use the name of the business in the headline! Use the keywords instead. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

d) *Key metrics*

To view your AdWords metrics click on the “Reporting and Tools” tab. There are two key metrics in PPC: Click through rate (CTR) and conversion rate.

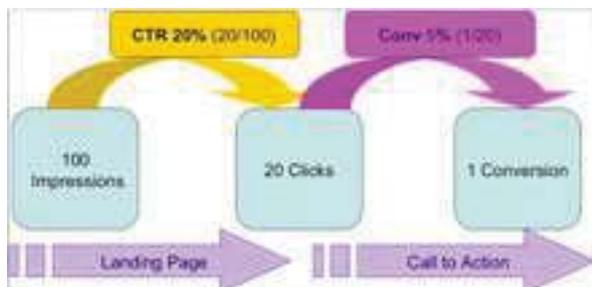


Image copyright: UntangleMyWeb.com

The click through rate relates to the ad. It is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of clicks by the numbers of impressions (in yellow above). A click through rate of 1% to 5% is generally considered very good. The more targeted your keywords are, the higher click through rate you will achieve.

The conversion rate is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of conversions (people who purchased or contacted you after clicking on your ad) by the number of clicks. To maximise your conversion rate you need to ensure that:

- The landing page’s content meets the requirements of the people who visited after clicking on your ad.
- There is a call-to-action (a motivation for people to buy). An example of a call-to-action would be: Click here to book now!

4. **Key learning outcomes**

- Google AdWords is a fantastic online marketing tool that allows you to target your advertising. It works extremely well for the travel and tourism industry provided your campaigns are setup up properly and follow basic rules outlined in this tutorial
- It is important to track the conversions using conversion tracking or at least goals in Google Analytics

5. **Related material**

a) *Related tutorials*

- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Pay per click (PPC) 101

b) *Related websites*

- Learn Google AdWords: <http://www.google.com/ads/learn/>



Setting Up A PPC Campaign With Google AdWords

- Google AdWords beginner guide:
<http://adwords.google.com/support/aw/bin/static.py?hl=en&guide=21899&page=guide.cs>
- Show your ad on YouTube:
<http://support.google.com/adwords/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=2456100>
- Google AdWords Express: www.google.com.au/adwords/express
- Google AdWords help: <https://adwords.google.com/support/>
- Google AdWords blog: <http://adwords.blogspot.com/>
- Paid search advertising resources: www.searchengineguide.com/paid-search-advertising-ppc
- www.perrymarshall.com: subscribe to the free newsletter. His AdWords guide is also excellent and worth buying if you are going to do your own AdWords campaign
- Subscribe to Perry Marshall 5-day free AdWords course here:
www.perrymarshall.com/google/index.htm



Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 31

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

This tutorial will explain how to give your product a broader exposure thanks to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)?

The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) is Australia's most comprehensive digital tourism database and distribution network.

ATDW was created in 2001 as a joint initiative of Tourism Australia and all of the Australian State and Territory Government Tourism Organisations (STO) to market a comprehensive range of Australian tourism product and destination information without limitations of geographical boundaries.

ATDW operates to provide tourism operators with increased online exposure by delivering their listed products across ATDW's growing and robust multi-channel distribution network.

a) ATDW's national database

ATDW's national database is made up of over 27,000 listings and 140,000 images across eight product categories including Accommodation, Attractions, Destination Information, Events, Information Services, Hire, Transport and Tours.

Tourism operators list their product directly through their State or Territory tourism organisation, this content is quality assured and compiled in a nationally agreed format and updated daily to ATDW's national database by each STO.

See 'How do I list on ATDW and what are the costs' below.

b) Broader exposure through ATDW's Distribution network

Once the tourism product is listed on ATDW's national database it is then electronically accessible by ATDW's travel distributors to be published, promoted and sold through their websites and other digital channels.

ATDW currently has over 100 licensed travel distributors, including Australia.com, all the Australian state and territory consumer websites, About Australia, PlanBookTravel, PleaseTakeMeTo, a range of regional and niche publishers, together with a growing number of mobile applications. You can view the full list at www.atdw.com.au/traveldistributors.aspx.

ATDW'S COST-EFFECTIVE, QUALITY SOURCE OF TOURISM INFORMATION, INCREASES INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC EXPOSURE FOR TOURISM SUPPLIERS.

c) Make it bookable

ATDW offers an all-inclusive booking platform, Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA), which enables tourism operators to sell their inventory (rooms, tours, events and attractions) online through ATDW's travel distributors. So your product is not only being published but is also bookable through multiple websites, connecting suppliers and consumers instantly.

See 'What is TXA?' below, and Tourism e-kit Tutorial 31, Tourism Exchange Australia, for more information.



2. What are the benefits of listing your product on ATDW?

The benefits of being listed on ATDW can be summarised as follows:

- Simple and easy listing with your State or Territory tourism organisation
- Increased product exposure, nationally and internationally
- Retain control of your product listing information
- Cost effective online marketing
- Sell your product by using TXA

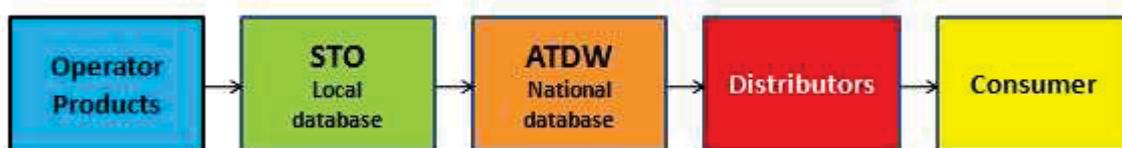
BEING LISTED ON ATDW IS A SIMPLE WAY TO MAXIMISE YOUR PRODUCT'S EXPOSURE. AS A TOURISM OPERATOR, YOU WILL ONLY NEED TO SUBMIT YOUR PRODUCT INFORMATION ONCE SO IT CAN BE ACCESSED BY MULTIPLE WEBSITES AND OTHER DIGITAL CHANNELS THAT MAKE UP ATDW'S DISTRIBUTOR NETWORK.

3. How do I list on ATDW and what are the costs?

1. List your product through your State or Territory tourism organisation
 - a. Each State or Territory tourism organisation has an ATDW representative, you can find their contact details at www.atdw.com.au/tourismoperators/howtolistorupdate.aspx
2. Costs vary depending on which State or Territory you are based in
 - a. Yearly subscription can range from approx AUD\$0 - \$250
3. Once your product is listed through your State or Territory tourism organisation it will be quality assured and uploaded to ATDW's national database

a) ATDW flow chart

The following diagram shows the stages of listing your product on ATDW:



4. A free app to support ATDW listed operators, iGrow Australia

Get ready to download the latest tool for tourism operators from ATDW, **iGrow Australia**.

iGrow Australia is an iPad application designed specifically to support tourism operators listed in ATDW, to grow their distribution network and enhance their online exposure.

A simple and easy to use app, iGrow will allow tourism operators to list and update their ATDW listing, share their product information, cross promote their region and engage with their community through social media.

iGrow will also be useful to local tourism organisations and visitor information centres, as a tool to aggregate, publish and share regional product and destination information with their customers.

iGrow Australia is currently being tested and will be available at the iTunes store by December 2012.

5. What is the TXA?

To respond to the demand of travellers who would like to be able to not only read about different tourism experiences but also book them online, ATDW has set up the Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA).

The TXA allows multiple booking systems to connect at the same time and sell your inventory (rooms, tours, events, attractions) instantly online through ATDW's connected TXA distributors.



This gives you, as the tourism supplier, the opportunity to sell your rooms, tours, events or attractions online through several websites with little effort and without the trouble of phone call or email bookings. The TXA looks after the transactions for you while bookings are being made through multiple websites.



a) How do I get involved in the TXA?

In order to take advantage of the TXA and sell your products instantly online **you need to be listed on the ATDW first**. By following the steps previously outlined to join ATDW you will have the opportunity to sell your inventory through ATDW distributors who use the TXA.

Then simply advise ATDW that you would like to enable the TXA on your listing. For more information on taking advantage of the TXA please see tutorial 32, Tourism Exchange Australia

6. Key learning outcomes

- Being listed with ATDW will provide your tourism business with increased exposure
- To get listed please contact your state or territory's ATDW representative:
www.atdw.com.au/tourismoperators/howtolistorupdate.aspx

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Tutorial 32, Tourism Exchange Australia
- Tutorial 34, Online booking systems 101

b) *Related websites*

- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
 - Benefits: www.atdw.com.au/tourismoperators.aspx
 - How to list: www.atdw.com.au/tourismoperators/howtolistorupdate.aspx
- Tourism Exchange Australia www.atdw.com.au/tourismexchangeaustralia.aspx

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 32

Tourism Exchange Australia

This tutorial will review how you can make your product bookable at once on many tourism websites using Tourism Exchange Australia.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: Australian Tourism Data Warehouse



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is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

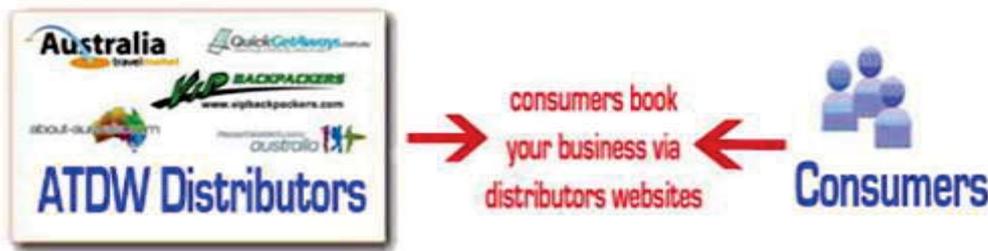
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1. What is the Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA)?

TXA is Australia's national open and inclusive booking platform. TXA will transform your existing ATDW product listing into a 'live' bookable product, thus allowing you **to sell your product on a vast number of tourism distributor's websites simultaneously.**



Enabling your product to be bookable online should bring you significant new business as 60% of travellers indicate that they book online when the product is available and has secure payment and instant confirmation.



a) Why is a booking button on my website no longer good enough?

It is important to understand that travellers do not only view individual tourism operator's websites but also browse many travel portals, online travel agent websites, as well as tourism distributor websites that aggregate many products and let the user conduct a search, compare different options and complete an instant booking. Being present, visible and **bookable** in this space will give you the chance to sell more.

As well as your own website, **you should therefore consider other distribution opportunities like larger tourism, travel or media related websites.** They have well developed online marketing strategies aimed at capturing and retaining consumers and they have a greater market reach. They generally have bigger marketing budgets, consumer brand awareness and loyalty programs. Due to the nature of consumer online search behaviour, using as many of these sites as possible will not only deliver bookings through those sites but also increase the likelihood of increasing bookings through your own website.

b) How does the TXA simplify things?

Traditionally, registering with each distributor and allocating your inventory has been a lengthy, manual, difficult, and individual process. To simplify it, TXA can automatically deliver your rates and availability live to multiple distributors on your behalf through a single input.

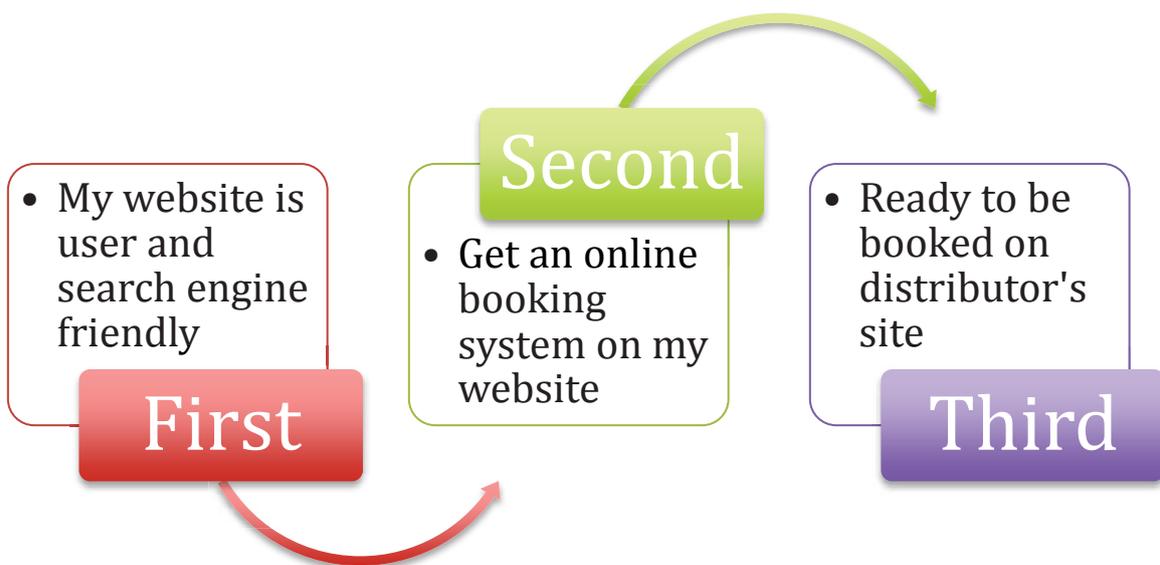
TXA IS THE SMART WAY TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE THROUGH MULTIPLE TRAVEL DISTRIBUTOR WEBSITES IN A VERY SIMPLE MANNER

To have your product live and bookable on all TXA distributors websites you need to select a booking system that is integrated to TXA (see "Online booking system" tutorial).

You are in total control. You choose which distributors you want to use, agree to the distributor's terms and conditions (including commission charges) and your pricing on an individual basis and simply click to opt in. You can opt out at any time.

2. How to join TXA?

If you want to allow customers to see your availability and rates online you need to firstly ensure your product can be booked online. This means that you **will need to enable your website with an online booking system to allow consumers to book there and then.**



ADDING A TXA POWERED BOOK BUTTON TO YOUR WEBSITE IS VERY EASY AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

You won't need to pay a web developer to build a customised booking engine for your website. All you need to do is choose an off-the-shelf online booking system and connect it to your website. Online booking systems are very reasonably priced and help increase conversion rates tremendously. Ensure that you select an online booking system that is compatible with the TXA and you can have a high booking conversion TXA book button embedded (see tutorial 34 about online booking systems).

Once the online booking is set up on your website, the TXA will pull the information you stored in the online booking system (such as rates and inventory) and make it available to and TXA distributors and your website if you wish.

a) Why should I get an online booking button?

Suppose you run the "Adelaide Hills Luxury B&B". Imagine Wendy, a busy Sydney executive travelling to Adelaide for work next Friday. She has decided to explore the region and make the most of the business trip. She

is on the Internet at home at 10.30 pm and has found your website, is so excited about your romantic getaway and is ready to book, credit card in hand... but when she looks for the book button to check availability and pay she can't find it (there isn't one). In a hurry, she clicks the back button to return to the search engine results list and clicks on your competitor because she only has 5 minutes and needs to book now. Your competitor has a book now button. Wendy books. You have missed a sale, without even knowing it.

- If you do not have an online booking system, Wendy won't be able to check your availability. Wendy wants an easy solution. She will find someone who has an instant booking system instead, simply because she doesn't have the time to pick up the phone or send an email and wait for a reply. She expects to search, book, pay, and confirm.
- If you have a booking system, Wendy will book you there and then, and you won't need to spend 15 minutes on the phone at 10.30 pm (or calling her back in the morning) telling her about your availability. Moreover, an integrated online booking system is the prerequisite to be part of the TXA.

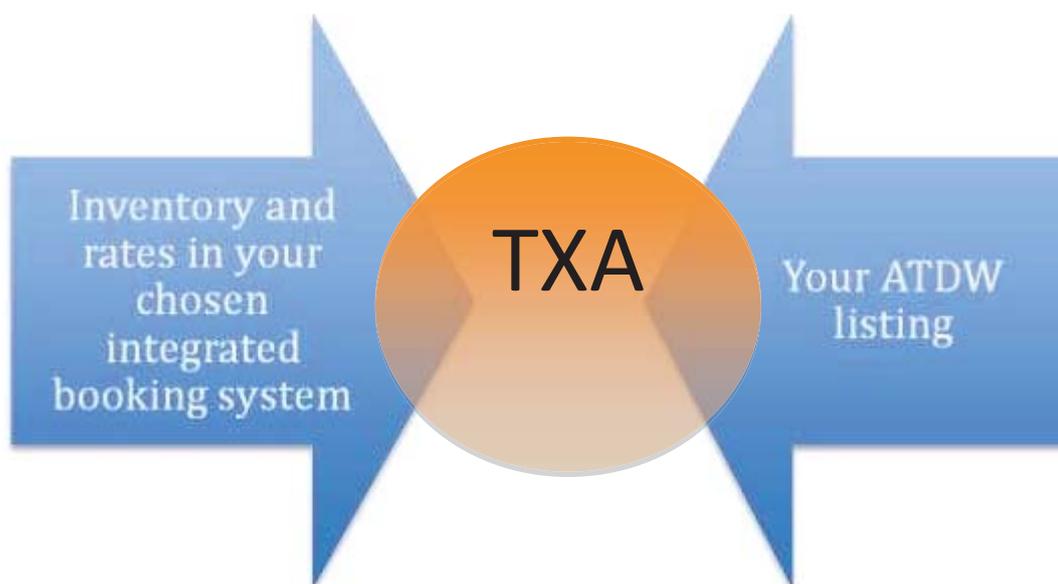
b) Who do I contact to install a booking system?

Paragraph 3c) explains to you how to select an online booking system. However, doing so takes time and you should look into this as soon as possible, in parallel to registering for TXA.

There are many organisations that provide small and medium tourism businesses with easy to use booking systems. The tutorial about online booking will help you select one. You will however, need to ensure that the booking system you choose connects with TXA.

3. How do I get my business on TXA?

TXA will marry up the information that resides in your booking system and your listing information in the ATDW.



You will therefore need the two components (booking system and ATDW listing) to benefit fully from TXA.

a) What is my current situation?

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>I am not part of the ATDW but I already have a booking system:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your relevant state or territory tourism organisation to become a member of the ATDW: www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp • If you need to enquire whether your system is connected or not, send an email to txa@atdw.com.au. • We are continually connecting new systems. If you wish your system to be connected contact the system vendor or contact txa@atdw.com.au. |
| <p>I am not part of the ATDW and don't have an online booking system:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your relevant state or territory tourism organisation to become a member of the ATDW: www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp • Follow steps 1) to 3) below • Read the tutorial about "Online booking systems" to help you select a TXA Connected Booking System. • Contact V3 on 1300 266 582 regarding booking systems |
| <p>I am part of the ATDW and I don't have a booking system:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact txa@atdw.com.au to let them know that you would like to benefit from the TXA. • Follow steps 1) to 3) below. • Read the tutorial about "Online booking systems" to help you select a TXA Connected Booking System. • Contact V3 on 1300 266 582 regarding booking systems |

b) Step 1: register on the ATDW via my State/Territory Tourism Organisation

1. Each state and territory tourism organisation has different processes for inclusion on the ATDW. See www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp for their contact details.
2. Complete the registration forms and submit them to your state or territory tourism organisation. The process for registration may take a couple of weeks. Keep a copy of this on a Microsoft Word document so that you can use it later as it can be useful for



- copying and pasting into your product description in your online booking system.
- Your business will then be listed on a multitude of websites and increase your product's exposure.

If you are already registered with the ATDW, please go to step 2 below.

c) Step 2: getting the basics right

Have a close look at your own business. In order to be sold online you need get organised:

- Contact your bank or shop around to other banks as you may need to organise an **“online merchant facility (OMF)”**. By having an OMF, the customer transacts directly with you. You receive the funds directly into your nominated Bank account in a totally secure environment which is approved by both the banks and credit card issuers. It ensures that customer's credit card details are NOT stored or available to any party in the purchase cycle and helps protect you and the customer from credit card fraud. The bank can take a while to process your application so get on to this early.
- Make sure you **understand what “distribution commission” means**. Ask your regional or state tourism organisation to explain to you what it means. You might also like to consider standardising your rates so that consumers do not find price variances on the Internet.
- You will need to write a **business description** for most systems. You should have already written one for your ATDW registration so consider using the same information in your online booking system to ensure consistency.
- Your product description should contain general motivation information about your property or tour company. It should provide the consumer with enough information to make an informed decision and it should answer the following: what, where, how, when and why.
- In your product description include keywords that a consumer may use to search for your product.
- You are probably going to issue a **tax invoice** to the consumer. This isn't issued until after the consumer has booked and paid, so you can be generally confident in adding more confidential information about your business at this point, for example “where to find the key”.
- The consumer will also need to be aware of your **booking terms and conditions** unless your business is sold by a third party. Consider your terms and conditions very carefully. Don't forget your **cancellation policy**.
- Base your terms and conditions on the ones you use in a non-web environment. All you will need to do is to adapt them for web usage.
- You will need to consider how much **inventory** you wish to put in the system.
- You'll need to **set your rates** and rules that apply to those rates.

d) Step 3: Selecting a booking system to hold my rates and availability

AN ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM WILL HOLD YOUR RATES AND AVAILABILITY AND MAKE YOU BOOKABLE



INSTANTLY ON YOUR WEBSITE.

It is important you acquire enough information to assist you to choose an online booking system that is appropriate to your business. We have put together a separate tutorial called “Online booking systems” to help you select a suitable system. Whilst the “Online booking systems” tutorial does not provide an exhaustive list of potential systems and their features and the things you should consider to help you make a suitable choice, it will provide you with a helpful guide.

To be sold on TXA your booking system needs to be connected to the TXA technology.

- If you are using a system that is already connected to TXA (please refer to the tutorial about “Online booking systems”) your product is already able to be sold on ATDW’s distribution channels and every booking from an ATDW distributor will go straight through into your reservation system. You will be trained on the use of the TXA Dashboard which is the tool that will give you access to review the Distributor’s terms and conditions, and will be able to choose to opt in to be sold via the Distributor channels you desire.
- If you are using another reservation system that is not yet integrated to the TXA or if you need to enquire whether your system is integrated or not, we recommend you contact txa@atdw.com.au so they can integrate your system to TXA. Once this is done, every booking from an ATDW distributor will go straight through into your reservation system and you won’t need to run two systems or continually manually allocate inventory. You will then be trained on the use of the TXA Dashboard which is the tool that will give you access to review the Distributor’s terms and conditions, and will be able to choose to opt in to be sold via the Distributor channels you desire.

4. Systems already integrated with the TXA

The following online booking systems and polling partners have been already been integrated with the TXA:

- AAATourism
- Discover Australia Holidays
- frontdesk
- Jewel Reservations Systems
- Myfidelio.net
- ResOnline
- Respax Australia
- RMS
- Roamfree
- roomMaster
- Seatem
- Siteminder
- TravelPoint Holidays - An AOT Group Company (Tour Plan)



Visit <http://www.atdw.com.au/tourismexchangeaustralia/bookingsystems.aspx> for the most up-to-date list.

5. Key learning outcomes

- TXA is Australia's national open and inclusive booking platform
- TXA will transform your existing ATDW product listing into a bookable product, thus allowing you to sell your product on a vast number of tourism distributor's websites simultaneously
- In order to benefit from TXA you need to be using a booking system that is connected to TXA
- You will be able to choose which distributor websites you would like to be listed with.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Tutorial 31, Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
- Tutorial 34, Online booking systems 101

b) *Related websites*

- Tourism Exchange Australia:
www.atdw.com.au/tourism_exchange_australia_operators.asp

Topic | E-Marketing

Tutorial 33

Google Tools

This tutorial will review the different tools offered by Google and how to use them to maximise your online presence.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. What tools?

Google is the most widely used search engine however it evolved to offer many more services than its search engine rivals. Over the years, Google has developed a **series of free tools to increase your exposure on the Internet**.

This document will review the main ones that every tourism business should have set up:

- Google Places for Business (integrated to Google+ Local Pages)
- Maps
- Webmaster tools
- Alerts

Google Analytics and Google AdWords are reviewed in depth in separate tutorials.

Before you start, you will need to set up a Google account:

2. Setting up a Google account

The following is a list of steps that will guide you through the process of creating a Google account.

- Type in www.google.com into your browser
- Go to the top right hand side of the screen and click on sign in
- You will be taken to a new page asking you to either sign in with your Google account details or to create a new account (sign up)
- If you have an existing account (such as Gmail, or have installed Google maps on your site) you don't need to create a new Google Account.
- If you have never heard about Google accounts, you probably don't have any so simply create one.
- You will be asked to fill in the required information for a Google account. Do so and click on "I accept. Create my account".
- After completing this Google will send you an email for verification purposes. In the email you will be asked to click on the supplied link to activate your account.
- To sign in to your Google account, go back to point 1) to 3) and sign in instead of registering for a new account.



Screen capture credit: Google

3. Google Places for Business

Log in at: <http://www.google.com/placesforbusiness>

Search engines have been improving for numerous years now to provide results that take into consideration location attributes such as city, area, and even where the searcher is located. This



Google Tools

practice is known as “local search” and goes hand in hand with how tourists research – by location:

Bed and breakfast Perth

Google integrates maps into its search results, based on the information provided by the business in the Google+ Local Pages tool. These results show first in the search engine rankings.

Google will never reveal the mathematical formula used to rank the different properties. However, implementing the following recommendations will give you the best chance to succeed in local search

Your online presence in local search is even more essential due to the ever-growing number of phones with Internet navigation facilities.

a) Local search settings

To achieve the best results, ensure that you utilise all the fields in your Google Places for Business listing to your advantage. This includes categories, photos, videos, getting your customer to write reviews, opening hours, and type of payment.

The more information you provide the more attention Google and your readers will pay to your listing.

This website reviews the factors affecting your local search rankings:
<http://www.davidmihm.com/local-search-ranking-factors.shtml>

b) Key things to have on my website

You need to ensure your website is search engine friendly.

Furthermore, you should:

- Ensure your business address and phone number is visible on every page (header or footer) and on the contact page.
- Try and increase the number of quality links to your website which come from local businesses or resources. These are called citations.

4. Maps

Maps are one of the most searched items on the Internet. Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>) allows you to:

- Automatically display your Google+ Local Pages listing on the map.
- Create a personalised map especially designed for your target market (e.g. to show the different bushwalks around your property).
- Place any Google map (the standard or the personalised one) on your website.

Here is the basic Google Map user guide:



<http://maps.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=68480>

a) **Placing my Google+ Local Page listing on the map**

Once you have enabled your Google Places for Business listing, it will be automatically placed on the map.

If there is already a listing of your business on Google Maps but you haven't set it up yourself you need to "claim" it firstly by clicking on the "more" link on your map, then by clicking on the "edit details" and then click on "edit your page". Google will require a confirmation from you (depending on your settings you may get a phone call or postcard).



Screen capture copyright: Google

b) **Creating my personalised map**

You can create your personalised, customised map on Google Maps and either keep it private or release it to everyone publicly. When users will search for a place or attraction which matches the one you have set up in your personalised map, Google will retrieve your customised listing and display it on the map. The user will then be able to click on it to see all the other places or attractions that are part of that same customised map.

You can of course embed this personalised map in your website.

Personalised maps are extremely useful and a fantastic way to increase your business' online visibility for free. You could for instance:

- Show the directions to your property from the centre of town.
- Show where key tourist attractions are located.
- Show public places such as bus stop, train station.

Local tourism associations should personalise their regional Google Map to showcase all their members.

To learn more go to

<http://maps.google.com/support/bin/static.py?hl=en&page=guide.cs&guide=21670&topic=21676&from=21676&rd=2>.

c) **Embedding (placing) my Google Map on my website**

Embedding is an easy task and should take you approximately 10 minutes, provided you have access to your site's files or you have a content management system.

- Go to <http://maps.google.com> and search for your listing (enter your business name and location).
- Then click on the "Link" button on the top right corner. A drop down menu will appear.
- If you would like to embed the map itself in your website, copy the code located under "Paste HTML to embed in website" and paste it on your site (log into your content management system or use your site's files to do so)



Google Tools

- If you want to customise the size of the Google Map image that will be integrated to your site, click on the “Customise and preview embedded map” after point 2).

If you simply want to give your clients the link via email (in a response to an enquiry for example), you need to select the code under “Paste link in email or IM”. Copy it and then paste it wherever you would like the link to appear.

For more information view this Google Help article:

<http://maps.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=68478>.

Screen capture copyright: Google

5. Webmaster tools

Activating the Google Webmaster Tools will give your online visibility a boost. These tools are not only available to webmasters and you can set them up yourself.

Once again, you will first need to own a Google account.

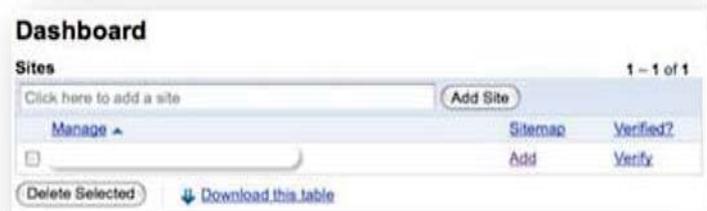
Then go to www.google.com/webmasters/tools/ and follow the prompts.

There are many things that can be done via this tool. However, not all of them are critical. What you should aim to do is:

a) *Verifying my website and submitting my sitemap*

This can be done via the Dashboard once you log in.

A sitemap is a file that tells search engines how your site is organised. If you have a content management system installed, the latter should provide you with a dynamic sitemap that gets automatically updated when you make a change to your website’s structure or pages. Thus it will inform Google every time there is new page on your site.



If you do not (yet) have a content management system, there is a good chance that you won’t have a sitemap. You will need to create one manually and update it every time you add or remove pages to your site. This website <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com> will create one for you instantly.

Screen capture copyright: Google

b) *Other settings*

Google Webmaster Tools evolves constantly. Ensure you explore all options of the menu on the left and configure them according to your requirements.

6. Alerts

Google Alerts is a very easy way to subscribe to what the world is saying about you or about any topic of your choice! Set up as many Google Alerts based on your keywords and any new webpage mentioning them will land in your inbox!

E.g. If you are a bed and breakfast called “Gold Coast Lone Star” on the Gold Coast, create a few Google alerts: “Gold Coast Lone Star”, “bed and breakfast Gold Coast”, “tourism Gold Coast” etc. Set alerts for the name of your competitors, your staff, your State or Territory’s Minister for Tourism...

- Go to www.google.com/alerts.
- Enter the terms you want to subscribe to. Put the terms inside quotes if there is more than one (so write “tourism marketing” if you want to subscribe to tourism marketing).
- Confirm your email address.
- Repeat the same process for more alerts.
- Set up a Google account if you want to manage your alerts (however, you don’t need one to set up the alerts).
- It is free and you don’t even need a Google account.

This blog post provides further information on how to monitor your company’s online presence: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4203/How-to-Use-Google-Alerts-to-Monitor-Your-Company-s-Online-Presence.aspx>.

This blog post provides information on how to further customise Google alerts: <http://labnol.blogspot.com/2006/11/google-alerts-tutorial-to-help-you.html>.

7. Key learning outcomes

- Google is the most widely used search engine in the majority of western countries. It is therefore important you leverage off the tools it has to offer to market your business
- A Google Places for Business listing is crucial for tourism businesses. You should ensure it is as complete as possible
- Google Webmaster tools should also be setup by your web developer
- Finally, use Google Alerts to your advantage. Set up as many Google Alerts based on your keywords and any new webpage mentioning them will land in your inbox.

8. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Understanding inbound links to my site
- Source inbound links



Google Tools

- Videos for your website

Topic | Online Booking

Tutorial 34

Online Booking Systems 101

This tutorial will help you understand online booking systems and review a number of tourism specific systems against certain criteria.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. What is an online booking system?

Latest research suggests that 60% of travellers book online when it is available. As a tourism operator, you may therefore wish to enable your website to be booked online.

An online booking system is a technology that will:

- Display your availability in real time on your website and on the selected distributors' websites
- Accept payments from consumers on your own website securely and without requiring human interaction
- Give you the opportunity to also make your product bookable on a variety of the selected distributors' websites (by joining the TXA)
- Update your inventory on your website and on the selected distributors' websites (optional) when a purchase is made.

There are many online booking systems available to Australian tourism operators. They are very simple to install and can be much cheaper than custom-built systems.

a) What are the benefits to my business?

The online booking system offers convenience as well as opportunities for exposure to new customers. It also means the booking system will automatically update your records without the need for emails and manually entering in guest details. Payment via credit card is processed online and the booking is confirmed with the guest. Online booking systems will save you a lot of time.

ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEMS PROVIDE BIG TIME SAVINGS IN HANDLING BOOKINGS, DATA-ENTRY, AVOIDING DOUBLE HANDLING OF DATA, AND STREAMLINING PAYMENTS.

They also allow you to display your availability on your website and offer reporting tools.

b) How much does it cost?

Online booking systems vary in cost. There are generally three types of costs associated with an online booking system:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Licensing cost: | Cost to use the system. It could either be a fixed monthly or annual licensing fee, a percentage of the value of the transaction (commission) or a combination of both. Usually includes support and upgrades to the system. |
| Installation and training: | Cost to install the system and to be initially trained on how to use it. |
| Support: | Cost for support once the system is installed. May be charged as "pay as you use". |

We recommend you do the maths and take into account the different types of costs and contact the system vendor to verify the information.

c) Will it bring me any extra business?

Online booking systems can be compared to an online credit card machine: they are services that encourage and simplify a monetary transaction.

If your existing website is search engine friendly and its content is up-to-date, installing an online booking system will increase the chances for conversions (bookings) since you have made it easier for the consumer to book. They won't require an extra step (e.g. making contact with you by phone or email) in order to purchase and they can transact with you any time of the day or night.

If your website's content is not up to the standards of today's consumer and your site isn't search engine friendly, you may not see a significant increase in bookings. We recommend you first work on your website and search engine strategy to ensure your website is visible to the web searcher.

By installing an online booking system on your site and joining Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA) you will enhance the visibility of your product or service, as it will be bookable on a growing number of distributor's websites.

Installing an online booking system on your website may not provide you many extra bookings if your site's content and functionality does not respond to the needs of your online visitor. However, an online booking button and the TXA will increase the visibility of your product and therefore could increase your bookings.

d) Which system is best for me?

As the business owner and operator, you are best suited to answer this question. We have prepared this document to help you compare the system's features and functionality against your checklist of requirements. Whilst we can't guarantee its accuracy we will endeavour to maintain its currency through regular updates of information provided by the system vendors.

e) Channel Management - How do I manage over-bookings?

If you are currently selling inventory on third party sites (such as Wotif.com, lastminute.com.au) or via booking agents you will need to:

- Assess if the online booking system you choose offers a feature that automatically distributes and updates your inventory to third party websites. This feature is commonly known as "channel manager".
If your chosen online booking system doesn't offer a channel management feature or doesn't link to your desired third party website, you may need to manage over-bookings manually.
- If a channel manager is supported, you will need to check which third party websites the channel manager links to. Every online booking system is different and may not partner with the third party sites you use. Ask if the channel manager system can add your third party sites to its list of linked sites. The channel manager may already link to a range of additional sites you don't use - this will extend your reach into the market.

You may also require the channel manager to distribute individual rate plans (e.g. add-ons and



specials to your preferred customers or wholesaler). If the channel manager does support individual rate plans:

- Find out how flexible the channel manager is by asking:
Does it handle multiple rates for each room type (e.g. 7 day rate, 3 day rate, 1day rate), or
must room type inventory be split and a specific number of rooms allocated to each rate (this will be more time consuming to administer).
- Find out whether the channel manager updates each linked site with an individual rate plan, or whether it updates all linked sites with the same rate plan.

f) What equipment and support will I need?

To manage an online booking system you should not need to invest in any additional hardware. The system is either manageable from your computer or online directly. However, you will need to organise an online merchant account which will allow you to transfer the money securely from the online booking system into your bank account. Discuss the different types of online merchant accounts with your bank.

g) Will the online payments be secure?

If the system is hosted on the vendor's server there should not be a need for you to purchase an SSL certificate. An SSL certificate is an electronic key that will ensure the online transaction is secure.

If the system is hosted on your server (and not on the vendor's server) you may require an SSL certificate to secure the transaction between the customer's computer and your server.

We strongly recommend you discuss SSL and security with your vendor.

2. How do I choose an appropriate online booking system?

Please follow the steps below that have been designed to help you choose a booking system.

1. Assess your business needs. Every tourism operator is different and different systems offer different options. To do so, refer to paragraph a) below which will help you put together a checklist of what you would like the system to be able to do for you.
2. Then talk to your peers, regional tourism organisation, and local visitor information centre. Find out what system they are using and which ones they recommend. Ask for their opinion on different systems. What challenges they are facing? Are there any features that you should absolutely get?
3. Read section 3) which compares some of the systems in the Australian market, as it will help you focus on a smaller number that you can investigate further.
4. Use this as a guide only and make your own enquiries with the vendors to make an informed decision. The information in this tutorial is based on the online booking system vendor's website and the vendor's responses to our questionnaire so it might not answer all the questions on your checklist.
5. Please be aware that the list of systems is not exhaustive and there may be other systems you might want to consider. Not all systems in the list offer online booking



- from your own website.
6. If you review other systems, assess them against the criteria presented in section 3) below. Also check:
 - How long has the software been on the market and the company been operating for.
 - What type of support is offered.
 - The company's reputation: enquire with trusted industry and Google the company name and system name.
 7. If you are planning on joining the TXA, talk to the system vendor or the ATDW (txa@atdw.com.au) to assess if the booking system is, or will soon be, integrated to the TXA.
 8. Don't forget to compare the functionality of the system against your original checklist.
 9. Understand the charging model. Some solutions offer a lower upfront cost and charge ongoing commissions based on transaction values, others provide for flat ongoing fees but may charge more to set the system up. Pick the solution which best matches your business and cash flow.

a) Checklist of my requirements

Assessing your business needs first is crucial. To help you, we have put together a few points that should be on your checklist:

What functions do you want the system to perform (e.g. do you want it to pass information to your financial or property management system without having to re-key it)?

.....

.....

.....

What information do you need from the system?

.....

.....

.....

Online Booking Systems 101

What will you need to change and add (e.g. changing specials, putting on specials, putting on add-on products)?

.....

.....

.....

Which channels do you need the system to support (lastminute.com.au, about-australia.com)?

.....

.....

.....

Which business type and size is the system designed for?

.....

.....

.....

Do you need the system to support packages?

.....

.....

.....

Do you need the system to be able to liaise with my website analytics program? (Strongly recommended)

.....

.....

.....

3. Comparison of booking systems

We commissioned an independent review of a number of online booking, property management, and other systems suited to small and medium tourism businesses. This list is not exhaustive.

The results are displayed in the following tables to help you compare each system.

The first table reviews the online booking systems based on sub industry types. The second table assesses the online booking systems on different functionalities.

| | Small operators (up to 10 rooms) | Medium operators (10 to 100 rooms) | Large operators (more than 100 rooms) | Booking Agents / Tour Desks / Visitor Centres | Hotel / motel | B&B / hostel / guesthouse | Lodge / apartment / resort | Day Spa | Holiday & caravan park / marina | Condominium | Multiple properties | Tour / event / attraction operator | Year of release |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| BookConfirm | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2002 |
| BookEasy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 2002 |
| Book & Pay button | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2007 |
| Charts | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | 1998 |
| eTourism online | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | 2001 |
| EZYield | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 2000 |
| frontdesk | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2005 |
| Genkan | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2010 |
| Globeres | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | 2002 |
| Globekey | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2000 |
| GuestCentric | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2007 |
| Guest Connect | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | 2004 |
| GuestPoint | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2011 |
| HiRUM | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1996 |
| iStay (iHotelier) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2003 |
| Jewel Reservation & B'king System | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | 2000 |
| Levart Booking Engine | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2003 |
| Maxial | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 2011 |
| NetBookings | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1998 |
| Netroomz | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2004 |
| PatronBase | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | 1997 |
| Procharter | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | 2000 |
| ResOnline | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2004 |
| ResPax | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | 1999 |
| Rezdy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | 2011 |
| Rezgo | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | 2006 |
| RMS online | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 1998 |
| Room Manager | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2004 |
| ROS2006 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2001 |
| Satin Front Office | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | 1996 |
| Seekom iBex | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2002 |
| Siriusware | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | 1990 |
| The Booking Button (SiteMinder) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2007 |
| STAAH | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2006 |
| Touring To Australia | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2012 |
| tourstogo.com | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | 2005 |
| TravelRez | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2009 |
| TryBooking | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | 2008 |
| Web Reservations | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 1998 |
| WebVantage | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | 2006 |
| YesBookit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2000 |

| | Web-based real time booking and payment from operator's website | Add on sales | Group check-in/ticketing | Integration with back office system (PMS, accounting, finance) | Real-time sales reporting | Data import / export to MSExcel, Crystal Reports etc | Links to website analytics package | List and search on room facilities | List properties by location or by type | Waiting list management | Property management system | Manages multiple tour sectors | Control over seating allocation | Control over fare/price structuring | Re-scheduling of tour/event | Waiting list management | Distribution to 3rd party site | Auto management of over booking | Distribution of rate plans | Individual rate plan for each site | Integrated with TXA |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | | | | Accommodation specific | | | Tour/attractions/events/ticketing specific | | | | | Channel Management | | | | | |
| BookConfirm | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| BookEasy | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| ChannelManager | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| Charts | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| eTourism | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| EZyield | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| FrontDesk | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Genkan | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Globeres | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Globekey | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| GuestCentric | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Guest Connect | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| GuestPoint | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| HiRUM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| iHotelier | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Jewel Reservation System | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Levart | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Maxial | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| NetBookings | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Netroomz | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| PatronBase | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Procharter | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| ResOnline | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ResPax | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rezdy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Rezgo | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| RMS | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| RoomManager | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ROS2006 | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Satin Front Office | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seekom iBex | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Siriusware | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| SiteMinder | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| STAAH | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Touring To Australia | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| tourstogo.com | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| TravelRez | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| TryBooking | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| Web Reservations | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| WebVantage | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| YesBookit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

4. Independent ranking of online booking systems

We have ranked the various online booking systems according to different criteria to help with your research and selection. The criteria used in this exercise was limited to:

- The range of functions offered by the booking system.
- The range of functions offered by the channel manager (if any).
- The degree to which the vendor's website clearly outlines all the functions the booking system performs.

Cost has not been taken into consideration.

a) *Systems suited to accommodation businesses*

| Highest rating  | High rating  | Intermediate rating  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charts | Book & Pay button | BookConfirm |
| Frontdesk | BookEasy | eTourism online |
| GuestCentric | EZYield | Globekey |
| GuestPoint | Genkan | ROS2006 |
| HiRUM | Globeres | Satin Front Office |
| Jewel Reservation System | iStay | STAAH |
| Netroomz | Levart Booking Engine | Touring to Australia |
| ResOnline | Maxial | |
| RMS online | NetBookings | |
| Room Manager | WebVantage | |
| Seekom ibex | | |
| The Booking Button | | |
| TravelRez | | |
| Web Reservations | | |
| YesBookit | | |

b) Systems suited to tour businesses

| Highest rating  | High rating  | Intermediate rating  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Frontdesk Jewel Reservation System Rezgo Seekom ibex TravelRez | BookEasy iStay NetBookings ResPax Rezdy Tourstogo.com WebVantage | BookConfirm PatronBase Procharter Touring to Australia |

c) Systems suited to events

| Highest rating  | High rating  | Intermediate rating  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rezgo | TryBooking WebVantage | PatronBase Siriusware Touring to Australia |

If you are a vendor and would like to get your system evaluated and included on this list, please contact txa@atdw.com.au. The ATDW reserves the right to evaluate systems at its discretion.

5. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Online booking systems: advanced

Topic | Online Booking

Tutorial 35

Online Booking Systems: Advanced

This tutorial will provide you with more details on the online booking systems discussed in the "Online booking systems" tutorial.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Online Booking Systems 101



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If you are a vendor and would like to get your system evaluated and included on this list, please contact txa@atdw.com.au. The ATDW reserves the right to evaluate systems at its discretion.

1. BookConfirm



a) System description

BookConfirm is a straightforward online booking system with all the basic functions for small to large sized accommodation and tour/attraction operators of all types. The system allows the tour or accommodation operator to sell their inventory in a real-time, secure environment. Partnership with local tourism associations and portal owners to help with distribution. BookConfirm aims to display client's products on as many relevant websites as possible.

b) System vendor

BookConfirm is an independent company, founded in Australia in 2005 and supporting clients in Australia, Asia and the Dominican Republic.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitbookconfirm> **Phone:** 07 3503 6816

Email: admin@bookconfirm.com **Address:** PO Box 476, Annerley QLD, Australia 4103

c) Installation

The BookConfirm system runs on secure servers hosted by BookConfirm. The operator requires an Internet connected PC with a browser. BookConfirm builds all information, images and rates into the BookConfirm system. The operator adds a Book Now button on their website. Customisation to the artwork of the booking system is undertaken to match the logos and colour of the operator's website. This can only be carried out by BookConfirm.

d) Case studies

<http://junglesurfing.com.au>

<http://lakemaroon.com.au>

<http://goseakayakbyronbay.com.au>

<http://daintreetreetops.com.au>

<http://sunrover.com.au>

<http://capetribulation.com.au>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | No initial set-up or on going maintenance fees. 5% commission, which includes all credit card, merchant and account keeping fees. |
| Training: | No training cost. |
| Support: | No fees for support. Is available whenever the client requires it, via phone or email. There is also full online web demonstration on how to maintain availability/change rates on the BookConfirm website. |
| Channel management: | Displaying inventory on portals and other websites may incur a higher % commission. There are no listing fees for this service. |



2. BookEasy



a) System description

Bookeasy provides a suite of web-based software which enables operator information, rates and availability status to be viewable online. The system delivers a complete solution for any sized tourism region or business. Australian Tourism Organisations and companies install Bookeasy to increase revenue, reduce costs, build real-time strategic marketing intelligence and distribute inventory around the world. Includes real-time online bookings, integrated eMarketing and surveys, sales and marketing tools, client database management, free channel manager, financial integration with accounting systems, detailed finance reports. Bookeasy integrates with numerous channel managers and property management systems.

b) System vendor

Owned, developed, licensed, and supported by an Australian company Bookeasy Pty Ltd. Bookeasy has a strong global distribution channel and integrates with numerous online travel agents and OTAs.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitbookeasy> **Phone:** 07 5668 2530
Email: support@bookeasy.com.au **Address:** PO Box 3727, Australia Fair, Southport QLD 4215 Australia

c) Installation

No Installation required, Bookeasy provides a secure web hosted solution. Only requires an Internet connection and web browser, Internet Explorer 7+, Firefox 4+ and Safari are supported.

d) Case studies

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| www.bendigotourism.com | www.visitmandurah.com |
| www.winecountry.com.au | www.stkildamelbourne.com.au |
| www.geographebay.com | www.margaretriver.com |

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | From AUD\$2,500. |
| Training: | Bookeasy provides an intensive initial training process for booking centres and their operators. |
| Channel management: | Free Channel Manager - 5 channels for free (Current free channels include Wotif, Agoda, Roamfree, BookItNow, RateToGo and other Bookeasy info centres) |
| Support | Ongoing support available via a dedicated Support call centre, email ticketing system and an extensive online knowledge base. |



3. Book & Pay button (ChannelManager)



a) System description

Online booking button that includes a front office system and channel manager.

b) System vendor

ChannelManager is marketed, sold and supported in Australia by Channel Manager.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitchannelmgr> **Phone:** 03 62602622
Email: support@channelmanager.com.au **Address:** po box 90 Richmond Tasmania

c) Installation

The ChannelManager system runs on servers hosted by ChannelManager. The operator requires an Internet connected PC with a browser.

d) Case studies

<http://www.channelmanager.com.au/new/testimonials.html>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | No setup cost. Monthly fee depending on number of rooms. Book and Pay button 3%. Refer to http://www.channelmanager.com.au/new/costs.html . |
| Training: | Phone training. |
| Support: | Provided via email or telephone 7 days a week 8am - 8pm. |
| Channel management: | Refer to website for costs. |



4. Charts

a) System description

Charts PMS is a comprehensive hospitality software solution for hotels, hostels and B&Bs with over 20 years of ongoing innovation. It offers extensive integration with PABX, point of sale, lock and credit card systems to name a few. It provides a customisable web booking engine and includes a fully automated and integrated portal channel manager to keep inventory up-to-date on such third-party websites as Booking.com, Expedia, HostelWorld.com, LastMinute.com, etc with automated download of reservations straight into Charts. It also provides a powerful competitor interface that keeps tabs on the competition with pop-up alarms for immediate correction of rates.

b) System vendor

Australian company, OnLine Systems, develops, supports and sells Charts PMS and its online booking system. Distribution/support divisions located in Australia, Europe, South Africa and Latin America. GDS connectivity with ReservHotel.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitcharts> **Phone:** 02 9906 3900

Email: info@online-int.com.au **Address:** Suite 20, Greenwich Square, 130-134 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065

c) Installation

Charts software and data reside on the server and Charts is activated on client computers via shortcuts to the server. The Charts server is recommended to operate on a Windows server operating system and Charts clients on Windows 2000/2003/XP/Vista Business/Win7. Charts PMS can be installed on a 'cloud' based server and operate as a 'cloud' based solution.

d) Case studies

www.nomadshostels.com

www.countryclubs.com.au

www.usahostels.com

www.atlantictowermotorinn.com

www.clinkhostels.com

www.emeraldmotel.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Setup from AUD\$1,000 to \$4,000 (includes training). Licencing depends on size of property and interfaces selected.

Training: Implementation, training and rollout can be provided remotely or on site.

Support: Charts support is provided 24/7 via remote access software, email, telephone, web and Skype.

Channel management: Depends on number of websites and charged monthly. Over 40 channels available.





5. eTourism online

a) System description

eTourism has been on the market since 2001 and is used by over 350 accommodation operators from 2 bed B&B to 400 room properties. It is also designed for booking agents. eTourism supports online bookings direct from the operator's website (via eTourism Online), as well via 3rd party channel managers (such as SiteMinder), and a portal. eTourism integrates with the leading PMS systems RMS and EzyRes.

b) System vendor

eTourism Online is marketed, sold and supported in Australia by eTourism.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitetourism> **Phone:** 1300 551 448 or +61 7 5591 5441

Email: info@etourism.com.au **Address:** PO Box 3270
Nerang BC, QLD 4211

c) Installation

eTourism Online can be integrated on the operator's computer(s) by eTourism as part of the setup, or via a 3rd party developer using the eTourism Online Integration guide. eTourism Online software is hosted centrally on eTourism servers, and the operator requires only an Internet browser.

d) Case studies

Please refer to: <http://www.etourism.com.au/testimonials.html>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | A fee of \$199 is charged for the set-up of the eTourism Online system and integration of the search form and booking links into your existing website. Other integration options are available. Monthly fees from AUD\$22 per month dependant on property size and other services included within package. Discounted set-up fee offered based on commitment periods. |
| Training: | Full training provided at time of setup. |
| Support: | Ongoing support included in monthly fees |
| Channel management: | eTourism does not provide channel management services but has integration with leading channel managers including Siteminer, HiSite, Resonline, Levart & Update 247 |



6. EZYield



a) System description

EZYield thanks to Fuzion Hospitality Suite enables hoteliers to drive efficiencies and revenue generation through an innovative suite of web-based and mobile friendly solutions, including integrated hotel reservation delivery capabilities, a proprietary web booking engine and channel management technology.

b) System vendor

No information provided

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Web: | http://bitly.com/ekitezyield | Phone: | 02 9211 0999 |
| Email: | sales@ezyield.com | Address: | Level 6, 64-76 Kippax St., Sydney, NSW 2010 Australia |

c) Installation

No information provided

d) Case studies

www.gracehotel.com.au
www.meritonapartments.com.au
www.togahotels.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Initial setup fee plus subscription fee |
| Training: | Web based training. Easy hotel implementation within 30 days or less. |
| Support: | 24x7x365 days per year Live customer support and email response. |
| Channel management: | Through Fuzionlink. |



7. **frontdesk**

a) **System description**

frontdesk is a complete business management system specifically designed for small and medium, operators. It is used by over 6,800 accommodation, tour, events, and attractions in many countries. It has the features of a high quality PMS including automation and easy management of inventory content, rates, offline and online bookings, control of distribution, inbuilt CRM, exports to accounting systems, comprehensive reporting. Online bookings via customised booking pages on your website with automated payments via most TXA channels with funds directly deposited into operator's bank at time of booking.

b) **System vendor**

frontdesk is marketed, sold and supported in Australasia by V3.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitfrontdesk> **Phone:** 1300 266 582 Or 08 9227 3933

Email: sales@v3sales.com **Address:** 9/333 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

c) **Installation**

Software is loaded on your computer so if web connection fails the booking system e.g. check-in check-out can still be managed. All information on frontdesk is automatically backed up and can easily be retrieved if computer lost. Free Book Button design/placement on own website. Inventory data is stored, backed up and managed on V3's server. Windows XP or higher with Internet Explorer 6 or higher is required on a desktop computer with a minimum 1.2 GHz Pentium processor.

d) **Case studies**

www.emurun.com.au

www.goldcoasthouseboats.com

www.toddys.com.au

www.aussiewanderer.com.au

www.belgraviahouse.com.au

www.sandybayholidaypark.com.au

e) **Indicative costs and further information**

Setup/software licencing/commission: 1 - 5 rooms: free, 1 – 3 tours: free, larger operators: from AUD\$39.00 per month. 5 to 6% booking fee for online bookings.

Training: Free installation, set up/training.

Support: Free Helpdesk support. Free yield support. Free upgrades.

Channel management: No additional cost.



8. Genkan



a) System description

Genkan is the total management system for Holiday Rental managers and Real Estate agents for the management of short term, holiday and permanent rentals. GENKAN incorporates every element of the industry and includes integrated trust accounting, email and SMS marketing, scheduled email and SMS, ability to create unlimited extras, specials, controls inventory management, integrated surveys and statistics. GENKAN is not a booking engine, it is a total solution.

b) System vendor

Genkan is marketed, sold and supported by Genkan PTY LTD.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitgenkan> **Phone:** 02 9929 7944

Email: ges@genkan.com.au **Address:** PO Box 48 Cammeray NSW 2062

c) Installation

Genkan training and installation is performed “one to one” through a screen sharing application or personal training on site on application.

d) Case studies

www.thredbo.com

www.lantern.com.au

www.eventsinthevines.com.au

www.elevationapartmentsthredbo.com.au

www.hamorent.com.au

www.portdouglasreservations.com

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Setup cost is dependant upon user requirements. Commission is AUD\$15 per booking (non-refundable).

Training: Genkan training and installation is performed “one to one” through a screen sharing application or personal training on site on application.

Support: AUD\$1,500 one-off fee. Provided via email and telephone.

Channel management: Channel management is provided through ResOnline and soon, Siteminder.

9. Globekey



a) System description

Globekey is used by over 3,000 accommodation providers of all sizes and types (including agents), in more than 60 countries. Globekey is a mature product (available since 2000) which specialises in online reservations, whilst providing links to the operator's PMS and back office financial systems (if required). Globekey has no limits on number of guests, properties, or users.

b) System vendor

Globekey is developed, sold and supported in Australia by Globekey Systems Pty Ltd.

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Web: | http://bitly.com/ekitglobekey | Phone: | 02 9968 3422 |
| Email: | sales@globekey.com | Address: | Level 2, Ashton House, 66 Spit Road, Mosman, Sydney, NSW 2088, Australia |

c) Installation

The Globekey system is hosted on Globekey's server and is accessed via a link from the operator's own website. The system works from any computer with Internet access via a browser. It is not necessary to install software and no special hardware is required.

The operator's website is hosted by Globekey. The Globekey reservations screens match the look and feel of the operator's website. Globekey will customise any reservation screen with header information provided by the operator.

d) Case studies

www.globekey.com/pdf/clients.pdf

[www.globekey.com/reservation software client testimonials.html](http://www.globekey.com/reservation_software_client_testimonials.html)

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | All inclusive monthly fee based on the number of rooms in a property, ranging from A\$50 to A\$200 per month. Setup: included in monthly fee. |
| Training: | Included in monthly fee. Provided by telephone. |
| Support: | Support: Provided via email and telephone. |
| Channel management: | Fees subject to level of management required. |

10. Globeres



a) System description

Globeres is designed to suit all types and sizes of accommodation, from self-catering cabins to multiple properties. It provides a booking engine for operators taking bookings from their own website, or travel portal websites selling accommodation as 'wholesale' or direct. Globeres is used by over 400 clients globally and has been available since 2002.

Globeres supports multiple rate types and added-value package setup, without needing to create different room types or splitting inventory. Globeres is linked to 3rd party and last minute sites via channel management vendors.

b) System vendor

Globeres is developed by Globeres in Canada and supported in Australia/NZ by HOC Technologies Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitgloberes>

Phone: +61 408 326 646

Email: sales@au.globeres.com

Address: 2/19 Bass Place, Mount Colah, NSW 2079

c) Installation

Globeres is set up via a button on an operator's web site and no modification is needed to the site. Globeres can be accessed from any browser on Windows PC or Mac. The operator supplies inventory details for initial setup. Operator then has control of inventory and rates via user logins. The operator's data is stored on the Globeres server. Customising the user interface can be done by a non-technical operator.

d) Case studies

www.innkeeper.com.au

www.cradlevillage.com.au

www.bluegumscabins.com/-/index.php

www.staroftheseaterrigal.com

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | One-off setup fee according to room count in the range AUD\$40 to AUD\$400. Monthly fee according to room count. |
| Training: | Full initial and ongoing training Included in setup fee. |
| Support: | Via email (7 days), telephone and fax. Help files are on each admin web page. Cost included in monthly licencing fee. |
| Channel management: | Available via 3rd party channel management software, pricing from AUD\$29/month. |



11. GuestCentric

a) System description

GuestCentric provides an All in One Solution that includes all the features needed for sales and marketing success: booking engine, website, channels, social and mobile. Guests are provided with incentives to shop, book and distribute virally; and hoteliers are provided with decision support data and performance indicators to make better business decisions.

In addition, GuestCentric invests heavily in product development, ensuring that your solution is up-to-date with the latest sales & marketing trends, with a history of innovation and awards (Hermes Award 2011, WebAward 2010).

b) System vendor

GuestCentric is marketed, sold and supported in US, UK, Spain and Portugal by GuestCentric Systems.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitguestcentric> **Phone:** +1 (203) 517-0720

Email: info@guestcentric.com **Address:** 695 Route 46 West, Fairfield, NJ 07004, USA

c) Installation

GuestCentric is a (cloud) hosted solution and no installation is required; the operator needs a desktop PC or Macintosh running a browser and connected to the Internet. Implementation of the booking system takes around 4 hours.

d) Case studies

<http://www.guestcentric.com/customers>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Flat monthly fee or percentage fee available. |
| Training: | Included. Delivered via an initial setup session, weekly webinars |
| Support: | Included in licence fee. Support is provided via email, telephone, case management system, messenger system and support portal. Quarterly revenue management analysis. |
| Channel management: | Access to over 700 international channels via integration with GuestCentric |

12. Guest Connect

a) System description

Guest Connect gives individual hotel and hotel group operators complete control of the booking engine design and booking process to help increase conversion rates. Guest Connect offers features such as: channel specific rates and inventory, interactive availability calendars, customised confirmation and pre/post stay emails and full internationalization. Guest Connect is seamlessly integrated into the SynXis CRS platform so hotel data, rates and availability can be distributed as a single image of inventory or managed completely separate from other channels.

b) System vendor

Guest Connect Booking Engine is owned by Sabre Hospitality Solutions.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitguestconnect> Phone: +61 2 8923 5200

Email: shsalesrequest@sabre.com **Address:** Level 9,15 Blue Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2050, Australia

c) Installation

The software is web based, all that is required is a browser to access the system and load inventory.

d) Case studies

<http://www.hamiltonisland.com.au>

<http://www.lizardisland.com.au>

<http://www.langhamhotels.com>

<http://sydney.frasershospitality.com>

<http://www.palazzoversace.com.au>

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: The software is web based, all that is required is a browser to access the system and load inventory.

Training: Training is handled remotely via a combination of live and recorded online educational webinars.

Support: Business Support is provided within Australia and Technical Support is available 7*24 via either phone, email or client portal.

Channel management: The Synxis CRS has a broad Channel Management capability including next generation channels such as TripAdvisor Check Rates and Google.



13. GuestPoint

a) System description

GuestPoint is an easy to use accommodation management solution, streamlining every step from reservation to guest check-out. It is designed for small to mid-sized motels, boutique accommodation properties, B&Bs, guest houses and farm stays. Features: easy to use, multi-task reservation plan, simplify your online reservations and web booking channels, understand your guests' needs and preferences, communicate with your guests with built-in email tool, track your property's performance, automated backups, unlimited users, remote management access and secure credit card storage for peace of mind.

GuestPoint is delivered to you with WebPoint – your online booking button.

b) System vendor

GuestPoint is developed and supported by Centium Software, based in Brisbane, Queensland. Centium Software has a long history developing and supporting world-class accommodation management systems.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitguestpoint> **Phone:** 1300 236 848

Email: sales@centiumsoftware.com **Address:** Brisbane Technology Park 60 Brandl Street
Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113

c) Installation

You can have GuestPoint installed on as many computers and laptops as required. Installation is quick and easy with all your configuration done for you.

d) Case studies

www.centiumsoftware.com/guestpoint/case-studies.html

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: <http://www.centiumsoftware.com/guestpoint/pricing.html>

Training: One off initial fee and a monthly plan based on number of rooms

Support: 24/7 support via telephone and email.

Channel management: You can choose from GuestPoint + Channel Manager bundle or integrate to your own Channel Manager such as SiteMinder, Seekom, Levart



14. HiRUM



a) *System description*

The HiRUM property management software has been on the market for over 15 years and is used by over 900 operators from 4 to 800 rooms. HiRUM suits all types of accommodation businesses, from B&B and boutique properties to hotels and resorts of all sizes, as well as multiple properties.

Functions include online bookings via your website as well as channel management via the HiSite module, front office functions, and interfaces for point of sale, credit cards, and back-end accounting and financial systems, strata title trust accounting. Tickets to tours, events and attractions are available through a link to TicketMates.

The HiRUM booking engine can also be fully integrated with HiRUM's own online accommodation website, as well as a wide range of affiliated booking portals and agents.

b) *System vendor*

HiRUM is developed, sold and supported by HiRUM Australasia Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekithirum>

Phone: 07 5502 9944

Email: www.hirum.com.au/contact.aspx

Address: PO Box 225, Helensvale, Qld, Australia 4212

c) *Installation*

The booking software is completely configured by HiRUM, and run on your computer or hosted remotely on a third party server. It will run on a Pentium 3 computer or higher using Microsoft Windows 95 or higher.

d) *Case Studies*

Testimonials are available on HiRUM's website at: www.hirum.com.au/testimonials.htm

e) *Indicative costs and further information*

Setup/software licencing/commission:

Setup from AUD\$440.00, software use from AUD\$132.00 per month.

Training:

From AUD\$550.00 (3 hours).

Support:

Email, phone, fax and website support inclusive in monthly rental cost. FAQ page on the website and advanced Learning Centre available on the website via secure login.

Channel management:

From AUD\$58.00 per month + integration.





15. iStay (iHotelier)

a) System description

iHotelier is a comprehensive Central Reservation System (CRS) which includes a white label booking tool (iStay). iStay can be fully integrated seamlessly with the operator's website and is ideal for measuring/reporting electronic marketing activities. iHotelier provides the ability for guests to continue to shop. Guests can include additional products or services when they book online.

TravelCLICK provides a channel management tool to multiple (over 160 global sites) 3rd party sites, GDS and brand websites from a single web-based platform. With pooled inventory and linked room type's greater rate & inventory control is achieved.

b) System vendor

iHotelier is used by over 14,000 hotels in 140 countries, including over 650 in Australia. TraveCLICK has been developing and supporting iHotelier for 10 years.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitistay>

Phone: 03 9699 9969

Email: swilliams@travelclick.net

Address: 291 Coventry Street, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205, Australia

c) Installation

Computer facilities needed: A computer with a browser and access to the Internet. Software installation is not required. The operator's data is stored on iHotel's servers.

Customising the user interface is done via online CMS or via customer care team.

d) Case studies

www.evolutionapartments.com.au

www.thehotelwindsor.com.au

www.kingfisherbay.com

www.crowntowers.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | One-time set-up fee is under AUD\$1,000. Other prices on application. |
| Training: | 10 hours of training provided, ongoing assistance is complimentary throughout the term of the agreement. |
| Support: | Email, phone, fax and website support inclusive in monthly rental cost. FAQ page on the website and advanced Learning Centre available on the website via secure login. |
| Channel management: | Annual subscription less than AUD\$2,000. |





16. Jewel Reservation System & Integrated Booking System

a) System description

Jewel offers two systems: JIBS provides accommodation and tour bookings via tour desks and Visitor Information Centres; Jewel Reservation System is an online booking system for tour operators. JRS provides a solution for tours, commuter, express and charter operators of all sizes and types, and for attraction and venue ticketing. All have the online Booking module attached to enable direct on-line inventory checking and credit card transactions to be taken. The Jewel Integrated Booking System (JIBS) allows visitor information centres and tour desks to book and confirm availability of tours, accommodation, attractions and events via the TXA. JIBS also supports tour bookings via a link to the JRS system.

b) System vendor

Jewel Business Systems in Australia has been developing and supporting JRS and JIBS since 2004.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitjewel> **Phone:** 03 9857 3299
Email: richardw@jbs.com.au **Address:** POBox 4190, Balwyn East, Victoria 3103, Australia

c) Installation

Once the system is configured, it can be installed using a standard Windows Install shield. The system is available for Windows desktop and mobile devices. For almost all clients, JBS host the system to guarantee security, availability and performance. Customising is implemented by JBS.

Training is conducted for most clients in less than 2 days.

d) Case studies

www.captaincookcruises.com.au www.grayline.com.au
www.thehotelwindsor.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Licence (1-off) is AUD\$400 per user. Support is AUD\$100 per user per year. There is a monthly charge per passenger depending on volume. Configuration is AUD\$1000 – 3000. Also 1-off charges for interfaces to accounting, website etc. |
| Training: | AUD\$1,500. |
| Support: | Support is provided during go live, often with JBS staff on site. Ongoing support is via email and 24x7 telephone. Further training is provided as needed. |
| Channel management: | No additional cost for linkage to TXA. |



17. Levert Booking Engine



a) System description

Levert provides a Hotel Website and Booking Engine that provides immediate confirmations for a number of property types and sizes. Levert also enables the operator to control its distribution using the Levert Booking Engine through the operator's own website (hosted by Levert), via travel portals (hosted by Levert), and via 3rd party sites (such as Wotif), or 3rd party travel portals not using the Levert Booking Engine). Inventory and rates can be managed via the PMS system; bookings flow through to the PMS systems as well as the option for inventory and rates to flow from the PMS to Levert.

b) System vendor

Levert Booking Engine is developed, sold and supported in Australia by Levert Distribution Systems.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitlevert>

Phone: 08 9382 8001

Email: ian@levert.net.au

Address: Suite 3, 316 Onslow Road, Shenton Park
Western Australia 6008

c) Installation

The Levert Booking Engine is hosted on Levert's server and can be integrated seamlessly with the operators own web site. Levert Booking Engine works from any computer with Internet access via a browser. The operator's website is hosted by Levert and provides for a number of pages relevant to the operator's business. The content can be administered by the operator. The property can arrange for the design the look and feel of the website which is applied to the Content Management system by Levert staff.

d) Case studies

www.questapartments.com.au

<http://www.countrycomfortcoffs.com.au>

www.esplanadehotelfremantle.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Annual amount depends on options selected. Setup: AUD\$110.

Training: 4 hours initial training, plus half and 1-day courses if required.

Support: Support is provided provided via email and telephone.

Channel management: No additional cost.



18. Maxial*



a) System description

Maxial is a property management system aimed at hotels and resorts of any size. It doesn't have its own online booking button but utilises the online booking buttons from the many channel managers it integrates with. Functions offered by the latest version of the software include bookings through channel managers, front and back office functions, and interfaces for point of sale.

* Please note that Maxial is a front desk and back office system and does not support online bookings without extra coding or utilising a compatible channel manager.

b) System vendor

Maxial software is developed, sold and supported by Maxial Solutions.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitmaxial> **Phone:** 07 3852 3122

Email: sales@maxial.net **Address:** P.O. Box 750, Fortitude Valley, Qld, 4006, Australia

c) Installation

Maxial will run on Microsoft Windows 2000 or higher (preferably XP). Maxial staff will load all necessary Maxial software on the servers, and will train you to configure computers and other equipment used for training. You will be responsible for loading Maxial on the remainder of computers.

d) Case studies

www.hermitage.co.nz

www.outrigger.com

www.westplaza.co.nz

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Please contact supplier.

Training: On site training

Support: Support is provided via email, telephone, 24/7 via pager and online support system. Please contact supplier for further information

Channel management: Interfaces with Levart, Siteminder, Wotif.com, iHotelier – all Channel Managers. Both one way and two way interfaces are offered.





19. NetBookings

a) System description

NetBookings is an Australian online booking system and has been on the market for 10 years; it is used by over 200 accommodation providers (1 to 100 rooms), tour, attraction operators (1-100 people), and up to 20 day-spa rooms. It is designed for all types of accommodation, day spas, attractions and tours and integrates gift certificates with all business functions.

Functions include: online bookings and secure payment via the operator's website or affiliated online networks, online bookings for day spas, gift certificate sales, front office functions, interfaces for point of sale, and a range of customised reports.

b) System vendor

NetBookings is developed, sold and supported in Australasia by NetBookings Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitnetbookings> **Phone:** 03 5972 0596

Email: info@netbookings.com.au **Address:** 140 Springs Lane,
Fingal, Victoria, 3939

c) Installation

NetBookings can gain access to your website and load software or can email the details to your web developer. Remote hosting of the system is available. All data is backed up every day with export capabilities.

d) Case studies

www.peninsulahotsprings.com

www.whaleone.com.au

www.bayplay.com.au

www.candlelightcottages.com.au

www.chocolategannets.com.au

www.woodmanestate.com

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Select from Standard setup (different levels of commissions) or Priority setup (maintenance contract plus commissions). |
| Training: | Free via Phone and Email, On site available at \$120/Hr plus travel expenses. |
| Support: | Free via Phone and Email, On site available at \$120/Hr plus travel expenses. |
| Channel management: | Channel Management is included for the NetBookings Accommodation Module. All availability and pricing is managed from the NetBookings Accommodation Calendar. All channels included with Priority Setup (\$1,200 year) |



20. Netroomz / Freeloader



a) System description

Netroomz provides a sophisticated online distribution system comprising a highly customisable online booking engine and an integrated channel management tool (Freeloader). Netroomz includes features designed to meet the needs of chains and independent properties alike and includes a mobile version, an iPhone app and Facebook Plugin.

b) System vendor

Netroomz is developed, sold and supported in Australia by Netroomz Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitnetroomz> **Phone:** 02 8011 4375
Email: contact@netroomz.com.au **Address:** PO Box 641 North Ryde Business Centre
 NSW 1670

c) Installation

Netroomz is a fully hosted and supported system. The operator requires a computer with Internet access via a browser.

Netroomz customises the user interface based on a library of standard style sheets for operators to choose from. Many features of Netroomz can be configured specifically for an operator, so the application can behave quite differently depending upon the operator's business requirements. These requirements are identified as part of the system setup.

d) Case studies

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| www.amorahotels.com | www.viewhotels.com.au |
| www.big4.com.au | www.atpm.com.au |
| www.shoalbayresort.com.au | www.top10.co.nz |

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | For independent hotels, motels, holiday parks there is a flat monthly fee ranging from \$59 per month to \$139 per month (depending on number of rooms). For chains, we offer a reducing percentage fee option which is 1.95% of booking revenue (or less depending upon volume of bookings). There are no setup fees. |
| Training: | Installation and training is provided at no additional cost. Furthermore online tutorial videos are available covering a wide range of features and functions of the system. |
| Support: | Support is included in the pricing above. Support is available via phone and email as well as a support link direct from our administration console. |
| Channel management: | Our Channel Management tool Freeloader is included with the Netroomz booking engine at no additional cost. |





21. PatronBase / Siriusware

a) System description

PatronBase has over 50 clients in Australia, NZ, UK and Ireland and developed the first release of its system in 1998. PatronBase provides functions to support ticketing for tourism operators (boats, scenic flights), entertainment venues, performing arts and sporting venues. It also has a box office module for POS as well as general product sales, donations and venue management. An agency module allows for offsite agents to sell via an online link

Since then, the first client has processed over 1 million tickets and PatronBase has refined the system based on feedback from management and Box Office staff from customers.

b) System vendor

PatronBase is developed, sold and supported in NZ, Australia and UK by PatronBase Australia.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitpatronbase2> **Phone:** 03 9999 1960

Email: info@patronbaseaustralia.com.au **Address:** PO Box 75,
Carlton South VIC 3053, Australia

c) Installation

Preferred site set up is for the system to be installed on site; hosting offsite is an option if required. Customisation is carried out by CriusGroup generally included in support options, subject to requirements.

d) Case studies

<http://www.ipswichciviccentre.com.au/>

<http://www.thestreet.org.au>

<https://uk.patronbase.com/VikingSplash/Productions>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Software costs varies dependant on modules a client requires. Costs can be arranged to suit client from 1 off payment to monthly or other such arrangement that is mutually agreeable. |
| Training: | Onsite and remote training is available and support is provided via email, telephone and an online portal for logging requests. |
| Support: | Set up costs will vary dependant on the complexity of the client and products being managed. Support costs are fee based on a % of the software costs. Support cost can also be negotiated, from 1 off payment to monthly or other such arrangement. |
| Channel management: | Not applicable. |

22. ProCharter



a) System description

Procharter systems focus on vessel charters and adventure tours. Client reservations are made via a Web form which is submitted and sent to the tour operator. The system also performs back end accounting functions. Channel management is available through agents.

b) System vendor

Procharter software is developed and supported in Australia by Clockwork Computing Pty Ltd.

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Web: | http://bitly.com/ekitprocharter | Phone: | +61 7 3889 8240 |
| Email: | support@clockworkcomputing.com.au | Address: | Clockwork Computing Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 100, Dayboro QLD 4521, Australia |

c) Installation

Computer facilities needed: Data resides on operator's servers and is synchronised to Clockwork servers for feeding availability to Web customers, agents, and other ProCharter customers

Customising the user interface: by Clockwork Computing only.

d) Case studies

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| www.explorewhitsundays.com | www.whitsundayssailingadventures.com.au |
| www.backpackersworld.com.au | |

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | AUD\$1500-6000 per month. |
| Training: | AUD\$6,000 (one-off cost). |
| Support: | Included in licence costs. Support: via email, telephone and remote desktop connection. |
| Channel management: | Not available. |

23. ResOnline



a) System description

Resonline (formerly Roamfree Advanced) is a channel management system (with 30+ distribution channels available including the TXA) and booking button used by over 1,000 accommodation providers, and has been on the market since 2004. Resonline suits all property types including hotels, motels, apartments, holiday rentals, house boat operators, caravan parks, B&Bs and farm stays as well as real estate agencies.

Resonline supports an iPhone and smart phone interface, to allow management of online distribution from anywhere. Resonline fully integrates with many PMS systems. ResOnline also has an integrated PMS called Room Manager if required. For a list of these go to www.resonline.com

b) System vendor

ResOnline is marketed, sold and supported in Australia and internationally by ResOnline Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitresonline> **Phone:** 1800 061 610 or +61 7 5668 2540

Email: support@resonline.com.au **Address:** 30303, Level 3, Southport Central 3, 9 Lawson Street, Southport QLD 4215

c) Installation

The 2010 version of ResOnline has an easy to use interface and is installed in less than 10 minutes. It is Web based, with instant sign up.

d) Case studies

www.amblesidenelson.co.nz/bookings.html

www.emaroccottages.com.au

www.landmarknelsonbay.com.au

www.semaraseminyak.com

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---------|---------|-------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: (excl. gst) | Property size (rooms) | 1 – 10 | 11 – 20 | 21 – 50 | > 51 |
| | Six free channels* | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| | All channels booking button | \$39 | \$59 | \$89 | \$109 |

Training: Free setup with full online tutorial videos.

Support: There is full online and phone support at no cost.

Channel Management: 6 free Channels included: Wotif, RatesToGo, BookEasy, Roamfree , Agoda and BookitNow. Other channels available.

24. ResPax



a) System description

ResPax offers tour reservation software designed to suit a broad range of operators from the smallest day tour to the largest international organisation. Tour operators all around the world are currently using ResPax tour reservation software to improve their business practices. Availability, reservations and booking confirmations are provided in real-time to their booking agents.

b) System vendor

Respax products are developed, sold and supported by Trinity Software Australia for Australian and overseas tour operators.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitrespax> **Phone:** 07 4041 1017

Email: sales@respax.com.au **Address:** 18 Scott Street, Cairns, QLD, 4870

c) Installation

A free demo of Respax can be downloaded from the Respax website and activated by the operator when ready to go live. Remote hosting is the most popular and cost effective solution for operators using Respax Enterprise, however, a licence can be purchased and the software installed in-house if required.

d) Case studies

www.adventuretours.com.au

www.greenisland.com.au

www.quicksilver-cruises.com

www.ragingthunder.com.au

www.tropicwings.com.au

www.passions.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: For current Respax product information and pricing, refer: <http://www.respax.com.au/index.php/products>

Training: Respax Enterprise training is performed onsite, online or offsite. Please contact us for more information.

Support: Support is provided by way of online documentation and demonstrations, email, telephone and Skype. Respax Enterprise training is performed onsite, online or offsite.

Channel management: Respax offers linkage to TXA, Website Travel and DCMRES with many more being integrated in 2012/2013.





25. Rezdy

a) System description

Rezdy is an online tour and activity booking system which gives operators the tools to accept online bookings, manage customers and connect to agents. Real-time availability means that customers can see and book any time online, instant payment to the operator's bank account means they can maximise cash flow. All information in one place makes managing bookings quick and easy. Rezdy doesn't take commissions or lock operators into a contract. Full features: <http://rezdy.com/features/>

b) System vendor

Rezdy is a software development company based in Sydney. Rezdy focuses on taking extremely powerful tools available to major companies (such as dynamic booking, secure payment gateway, geo-localisation, cross selling, dynamic packaging, last minute deals) and making them accessible to anyone.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitrezdy> **Phone:** 0450 259 174

Email: support@rezdy.com **Address:** Rezdy, Fishburners, Level 2, 608 Harris Street, Ultimo 2007, NSW, Australia

c) Installation

Rezdy is a cloud-based solution; everything is done over the internet. There is no hardware or software installation, no set-up fees and you can usually get started in minutes. Rezdy offers full support, as well as access to an online knowledge database and community forum - <http://support.rezdy.com>

d) Case studies

<https://demoyogaclass.rezdy.com> <https://democookingclass.rezdy.com>

<https://demo-dive-centre.rezdy.com> <https://demo-eco-tours.rezdy.com>

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Rezdy has no set-up fees or commissions and the first 25 bookings per month are free. In addition, all offline or manual bookings are also free and unlimited. Monthly plans start from just \$19/month

Training: Rezdy is designed to be as simple and intuitive as possible, however we also have a sizable knowledge database with text and video tutorials, plus email support

Support: Rezdy offers full support, as well as access to an online knowledge database and community forum - <http://support.rezdy.com>

Channel management: Under development





26. Rezgo

a) System description

Rezgo is suited to tour and activity companies who provide in-destination scheduled activities such as guided tours, walking tours, biking, boating, and adventure excursions. Features include a fully customisable booking engine, point of sale interface for back-office bookings, fully secured and PCI compliant payment processing, online vouchering, on location ticket printing, mobile check-in, connections to major Australian banks, a WordPress plugin which allows operators to add the booking engine directly to their WordPress powered website, a Facebook application which gives operators the ability to list their tours and activities on their Facebook page, and a mobile booking engine designed especially for smartphone users.

b) System vendor

Rezgo is developed and supported by Sentias Software Corp (Canada) to global clients, including Australia.

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Web: | http://bitly.com/ekitrezgo | Phone: | 02 8003 4803 |
| Email: | info@rezgo.com | Address: | Suite 320 718-333 Brooksbank Avenue, North Vancouver, BC, Canada V7J 3V8 |

c) Installation

Rezgo operates from any computer with Internet access via a browser. It can be setup directly by tourism operators on the Rezgo website. Tourism operators can carry out changes to the template. A fully documented interface is available for more sophisticated integrations (e.g. with back-end systems or channel managers).

d) Case studies

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| www.backroads-touring.com.au | www.lifesanadventure.com.au |
| www.riverlife.com.au | www.mountainbiketours.com.au |
| www.barossabikehire.com.au | www.fremantletrams.com |

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | No set-up or monthly cost for Rezgo. 5% for Sales via operator's own website, 1% for Point of Sale, 5% for sales via Rezgo's distribution network. |
| Training | No additional cost. Advanced support and training is available if required. Tutorial videos and how to articles are available on-line. |
| Support: | No additional cost. Email, telephone, contact forum, webinars, live web support. |
| Channel management: | Full channel management. Suppliers have the opportunity to market their products through 3 rd party distribution partner websites, social media and their own dedicated reseller/affiliate network. |



27. RMS online



a) System description

RMS is a Property Management System with over 3,000 clients in 20 countries, and has been operating since 1983. The online booking module was released in 2004 and is now used by over 1,200 clients across the full gamut of hospitality business types from 1 room B & B's to 300 room resorts. RMS Online has a broad range of features including a function rich easy to use booking engine from the property or group website; direct connections to a range of third party booking sites; all major channel managers. Comprehensive information is available on the website <http://www.rms.com.au/our-products/rms-online/online-bookings-and-reservation-system>

b) System vendor

RMS is developed, sold and supported in Australasia by RMS (Aust) Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitrms> **Phone:** 03 8399 9462
Email: sales@rms.com.au **Address:** 116 Harrick Road, Keilor Park, VIC 2042, Australia

c) Installation

Configuration of RMS Online is now performed in a web based application. There are no minimum hardware specifications. Simply use any computer with an internet connection.

d) Case studies

www.woodbridgehillhideaway.com.au www.devineescape.com.au
www.centalspringsinn.com.au www.goldcoastholidaypark.com.au
www.nisekoalpineaccommodation.com www.bogongvillage.com

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: No setup fee. AUD\$1 +GST per reservation. Min monthly fee: AUD \$35 +GST (includes the first 35 reservations). Max monthly fee: AUD\$195 +GST (unlimited reservations).

Training: Assistance provided.

Support: Business hours via customer service web portal and telephone. See also www.rms.com.au/Our-Products/RMS-Online/test-drive/videos/

Channel management: Included in licencing fees (refer above).





28. Room Manager

a) System description

Room Manager is a complete Property Management and online distribution system (through the ResOnline channel manager. You manage your bookings in the Room Manager console, and your online distribution takes care of itself. When you fill your last room, Room Manager will automatically close out all your online [distribution channels](#). (Currently there are 30+ distribution channels and counting)

Room Manager comes complete with the ResOnline channel manager fully integrated into the Room Manager console. All online bookings drop directly into Room Manager.

Some of the features are easy to use reservation calendar, send guest itinerary and tax invoice with the click of a button, fully integrated ResOnline channel manager, seamless distribution to over 30 of Australia's and the world's major online travel sites, all online bookings drop directly into Room Manager, included booking button for your website

b) System vendor

Room Manager, sold and supported in Australia and internationally by ResOnline.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitroommanager> **Phone:** +61 7 5668 2540
Email: support@resonline.com.au **Address:** 30303, Level 3, Southport Central 3, 9 Lawson Street, Southport QLD 4215

c) Installation

Room Manager is web based and setup is very easy.

d) Case studies

www.emaroccottages.com.au

www.thebankandtellers.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Monthly fee of \$30 for the first room and \$10 for subsequent rooms capped at \$129, or 1% of bookings. The choice is yours. (These rates exclude GST). |
| Training: | No setup or training costs. |
| Support: | Included in software costs. |
| Channel management: | Included in software costs. |



29. ROS2006



a) System description

Digital Rez Australia was founded in 2002 to support the ROS Reservation Operating System in Australia and New Zealand. Digital Rez has been providing software, support and systems to over 4000 properties worldwide in the Camping, Holiday Park, Charter and Motel accommodation industry since 1993. Digital Rez has a very broad client-base, and serves operators from individual B&Bs to large 500+ property resort networks.

ROS2006 is an easy to use Property Management System that provides an integrated online reservation module providing real time availability and reservation requests from the properties website (using a booking button). Online bookings are transferred to the front desk, credit card details are tokenized and payment processing is performed at the property.

b) System vendor

Digital Rez Australia was founded in 2002 to market and support the ROS Reservation Operating System in Australia and New Zealand.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitdigitalrez> **Phone:** +61 7 4925-4400

Email: info@digitalrez.com.au **Address:** PO Box 154, Emu Park QLD 4710

c) Installation

The online user interface can be customised by the property through a new online console. The property follows a check list to identify web rates, inventory segments, descriptions and photos.

d) Case studies

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| www.citywaters.com.au | www.centralcityhobart.com |
| www.ballinalakeside.com.au | www.flashpackersnoosa.com |
| www.coralbaywa.com | www.stanleycabinpark.com.au |

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | A service fee of 2.75% on confirmed bookings, billed monthly in arrears. Any cancellations are credited the full 2.75% in the month the booking is cancelled. |
| Training: | Digitalrez provide setup & training for all installations. |
| Support: | Included in above fees. |
| Channel management: | Available 2012. |



30. Satin Front Office System*

Satin Software

a) System description

The Satin Front Office System has been on the market since 1995 and is used by over 160 properties from 12 to 200 rooms. The system is designed specifically for Australian motels. Satin is a comprehensive Property Management System, intended to do everything you need on a motel front desk.

*This system is PMS and supports online bookings via a channel manager such as SiteMinder, Levart, STAAH, MYOB, Phone, Cash drawer, Guest room internet, Card door locks, and Point of sale.

b) System vendor

Front Office System is developed, sold and supported in Australasia by Programania Software Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitsatin> **Phone:** 04 2838 4858

Email: sales@satin.com.au **Address:** PO Box 274, Nowra NSW 2541

c) Installation

Satin Front Office System is fully installed on-site by Satin staff. Satin runs on MS Windows XP / Vista Windows7.

Customisation is possible but rarely required, as Satin is suitable for its purpose. You just set the options to tailor Satin to the needs of your business. Any additional programming that may be required to incorporate your requirements is included in the licence fee.

d) Case studies

A list of clients is available on Satin's website at www.satin.com.au/users.html.

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: AUD\$140.00 to AUD\$380.00 per month depending on number of rooms, all inclusive.

Training: Included in licence fee.

Support: Support is provided via email, telephone, on-site, and via remote control. Complete and unlimited support is an integral part of the licencing arrangement.

Channel management: Integration with ChannelManager is included in the licence fee.



31. Seekom iBex



a) System description

Seekom is a fully hosted (cloud based) online multiproperty Property Management System (PMS) with a fully integrated channel manager, online web booking module and optional content managed website accessible from a single login. Suits all property types from single room to holiday parks or hotels in excess of 200 units or rooms.

b) System vendor

iBex is developed, sold and supported in Australasia by Seekom.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitseekom> **Phone:** + 64 4 974 8008

Email: sales@seekom.com **Address** PO Box 11567, L9 Willbank House, 57 Willis St, Wellington New Zealand

c) Installation

User self registers using a Wizard. Seekom then provides initial training and the first month is free. There is no software to install. The system is hosted in Seekom's dedicated data centre. No more backups required as Seekom does this on customers behalf. Full access is available from any internet connected PC or laptop from anywhere in the world.

d) Case studies

www.abbotsfordhouse.com

www.rainforestranch.com.au

www.armadaleapartments.com.au

www.redwoodmanor.com.au

www.barossapavilions.com.au

www.waterfrontmelbourne.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Set up from \$150 depending on property size. Monthly lease starts from \$45 per month depending on size. Ten room property would cost \$70 per month.

Training: Web conference for individualised training. Online help and video help is freely available.

Support: 7 day free email support included in licence cost. Priority phone and after hours support available at extra cost.

Channel management: The channel manager now connects to over 50 sales channels. For a list of current and pending connections, view <http://web.seekom.com/channel-management> and for pending connections <http://web.seekom.com/channel-management/channel-connections-pending>





32. Siriusware

a) System description

Siriusware has over 200 clients in Australia, NZ and USA and developed the first release of its system in 1990. Siriusware supports retail sales and ticketing for tourism operators, including bus, rail, boat, scenic flights, attractions, museums, waterparks, zoos, arts centres, and ski resorts. It also has a POS module for general product sales.

b) System vendor

Siriusware is developed, sold and supported in NZ, Australia and USA by C-riusObjectives.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitsiriusware>

Phone: 03 9999 1960

Email: seanryan@criusgroup.com.au

Address: PO Box 75,
Carlton South VIC 3053, Australia

c) Installation

Preferred site set up is for the system to be installed on site; hosting offsite is an option if required. Customisation is carried out by CriusGroup generally included in support options, subject to requirements.

d) Case studies

See www.siriusware.com or www.criusgroup.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Software costs varies dependant on modules a client requires. Costs can be arranged to suit client from 1 off payment to monthly or other such arrangement that is mutually agreeable. |
| Training: | Onsite and remote training is available and support is provided via email, telephone and an online portal for logging requests. |
| Support | Set up costs will vary dependant on the complexity of the client and products being managed. Support costs are fee based on a % of the software costs. Support cost can also be negotiated, from 1 off payment to monthly or other such arrangement. |
| Channel management: | Not applicable. |

33. The Booking Button (SiteMinder)



a) System description

SiteMinder's TheBookingButton is a world class, commission free, feature packed booking engine that allows you to take direct bookings through your own website 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

TheBookingButton offers the most comprehensive feature set available in today's market, ensuring properties of all sizes convert more website traffic into confirmed, commission free bookings.

Trusted and used by thousands of properties in over 90 countries, SiteMinder connects to the world's leading Booking websites and integrates to more than 50 PMS and CRSs from one central cloud application, allowing seamless rate and inventory control 2-way reservation delivery.

b) System vendor

SiteMinder is marketed, sold and supported in Australia and internationally by SiteMinder Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitsiteminder> **Phone:** 1300 736198 or +61 2 9221 4444

Email: enquiries@siteminder.com.au **Address:** Level 4, 200 George St
Sydney 2000, NSW, Australia

c) Installation

The Booking Button function is customisable by the operator to suit the look & feel of the operator's website. The system is hosted by SiteMinder at a secure and fail-safe site. No software installation is required at the property, and the operator requires only an Internet browser.

d) Case studies

<http://www.siteminder.com/clients/case-studies>

<http://www.thebookingbutton.com/hotel-booking-systems/case-studies>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | www.siteminder.com/pricing |
| Training: | Included telephone training. |
| Support: | Support via email and telephone included in above fees. |
| Channel management: | Access to over 120 local and international Channels via integration with the SiteMinder Channel Manager www.siteminder.com/integrations/distribution-channels |



34. Touring To Australia

a) System description

Suits any tourism business, is fully customisable, calendar and widget based. OpenTravel compliant, supports all major currencies and multi-languages. Support hot deals and can be embedded in tourism websites.

b) System vendor

Touring To Australia is owned by Maybray Digital Pty. Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekittouringtoaustralia> **Phone:** 07 3814 2909
Email: sumith@maybray.com **Address:** PO Box 4104, Springfield, QLD, 4300

c) Installation

Information not provided

d) Case studies

www.rentadreamcar.com.au/availabilitybooking www.goldcoastfishingcharters.com.au/
www.fraserdingo4wdhire.com.au/book_now www.touringtoaustralia.com/travel/Urangan/Tasman+Venture,+Hervey+Bay.html
www.besttour.com.au/tours.php www.adelaidehillsbedandbreakfast.com/Rates--and--Reservation.php

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: Annual subscription for premium listing at \$99.00. No commissions or any other on going costs.
Training: Training provided via email and phone
Support We provide free phone and email support.
Channel management: Currently not supported



35. STAAH



a) System description

The STAAH system has over 100 operators, the majority in New Zealand. It is designed for small to medium operators of all accommodation types.

STAAH offers applications with channel management, real time bookings and secure payment functionality. STAAH focuses on the channel management function and interfaces the operator's website booking system to a number of 3rd party websites and PMS systems.

b) System vendor

The STAAH system is developed by STAAH in NZ and supported by HOC Technologies in Australia and has been on the market since 2006.

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Web: | http://bitly.com/ekitstaah | Phone: | +64 9 480 8184 |
| Email: | sales@staah.com | Address: | 53 Coronation Road, Glenfield, Auckland, New Zealand |

c) Installation

Computer facilities needed: STAAH is a web based product hosted on STAAH servers so the operator simply requires any computer with a browser and an internet connection. Operator's data is stored on the STAAH server.

d) Case studies

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| www.colonial.co.nz | www.victorialodge.co.nz |
| www.absolutelakefront.co.nz | www.crashpalace.co.nz |

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Online booking: 1-off cost of AUD\$299 plus AUD\$20/month based on number of rooms. Support and software updates included in above fees. No commissions. STAAH offers website design and build. |
| Training: | Included in above fees. One-on-one online training is available. |
| Support: | Telephone and email. Operator websites look and feel can be managed by STAAH or via a content management system that allows the vendor to self manage/customise with some training from STAAH. |
| Channel management: | Channel management: 1-off cost of AUD\$99 plus AUD\$50/month based on number of rooms. |

36. **tourstogo.com**



a) System description

tourstogo.com provides 5 possible channels of business to tour operators around Australia. 1. Receive bookings through the tourstogo.com website and associated affiliates. No signup, listing or ongoing fees. 2. Instant Online Booking System (IOBS) or Book Now button. 3. Affiliates and Operagents. Affiliate-style booking system for website owners, agents and tourism related businesses. 4. Tour Ticketing Gateway and reporting system for agents, hotels, tourism related businesses and product providers. 5. Reservation System. Functionality for manifesting, reporting, user management, online bookings and agent bookings.

b) System vendor

tourstogo.com is developed and supported by tourstogo.com in Australia and has been operating since 2005.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekittourstogo> **Phone:** 07 4041 3244

Email: admin@tourstogo.com **Address:** 1/190 Brown St, Cairns, QLD 4870

c) Installation

tourstogo.com is web based so all that is required is a computer with a browser and internet access. Installation of the online booking system requires the addition of products to tourstogo.com and adding Book Now buttons. Can fully integrate its systems with suppliers and affiliates websites. Also offers white label solutions and full XML and API capability.

d) Case studies

<http://www.kookaburrriverqueens.com/>

<http://www.headingbush.com/>

<http://www.tjapukai.com.au/>

<http://www.flamesoftheforest.com.au/>

<http://www.groovygrape.com.au/>

<http://www.surfandsun.com.au/>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | No signup or ongoing fees. Optional Instant Online Booking System (IOBS) set up ranges from FREE - \$440 + GST. |
| Training: | Phone training is provided. Onsite training is dependent on availability of our sales team. System manuals are also available. |
| Support: | Telephone, email and Web based support. Face to face support subject to geography and availability of staff. |
| Channel management: | Suppliers content is distributed to tourstogo.com affiliates, agent and partner websites. No extra cost for this. |



37. TravelRez



a) System description

TravelRez is a sophisticated booking, reservation and business management system. It is designed for travel agents, regional booking services, tour operators and some of the largest wholesale / retail travel groups throughout the world since 1987. Complex itineraries can be built with every product or service required to suit any type of client requirement, including Free Independent Travellers.

The system offers both direct client and travel agent portals. TravelRez also offers a Membership Management system (reMember) and FINesse, a financial accounting suite.

b) System vendor

TravelRez is developed, sold and supported in Australia by BANANACOM.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekittravelrez>

Phone: 03 9852-8636

Email: info@bananacom.com

Address: 72 High Street,
Kew 3101, Victoria, Australia

c) Installation

A hosted solution is the preferred option for small-medium operators; a full hardware and software installation on site is only recommended for medium to large operators. For major in-house installations, Bananacom offers full customisation on a time and materials basis.

Hosted operators may customise logos and product images. These operators may customise their web sites which will use the Bananacom booking engine.

d) Case studies

Please contact Bananacom

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | 1-off payment of AUD\$10K – 100K depending on client size; monthly payment: AUD\$500-AUD\$5,000 depending on client size. No commissions. |
| Training: | Refer support costs above. |
| Support: | Included in above fees. Additional and non-standard services may be provided at current hourly charge rate. |
| Channel management: | Included in above fees. |

38. TryBooking



a) System description

TryBooking is a do-it-yourself ticketing / booking / event management system that easily enables operators to create, manage and ultimately publish events of any size. Patrons can book and pay at the time of booking with e- tickets being issued. TryBooking is accessible from any operator's own website with a range of functions that allow operators to perform ticketing, registrations, seating plan etc over events, tours, festivals, exhibitions, launches, performances and dinners. Supports a box office (including group ticket sales and credit card payment) as well as online functions such as creation of customer lists and seating plans and secure payments. If the event is free, the TryBooking service is free of charge. e-tickets can be scanned at entry.

b) System vendor

Trybooking is developed and supported by Trybooking.com in Australia and has been operating since 2008.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekittrybooking> **Phone:** 07 3173 1570 or 03 9012 3460

Email: info@trybooking.com **Address:** Suite 602, 1 Princess Street, Kew, Victoria, 3101, Australia

c) Installation

Users access the TryBooking website via any computer with a browser and an internet connection.

Operators can customise their own TryBooking web page by uploading logos and image. Hyperlinks from your website can be setup direct to your event.

d) Case studies

<http://www.trybooking.com/html/testimonials.shtml>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | 30 cents per ticket if payment is collected. FREE for non-paid events. Includes support. |
| Training: | Included. Telephone assistance on an as required basis at no cost. |
| Support: | Online and telephone support included. Online support documentation and videos http://www.trybooking.com/html/support.shtml |
| Channel management: | Offered. |

39. Web Reservations



a) System description

Web Reservations provides systems, personal service and ongoing support to Australian accommodations that will help businesses increase Internet sales while simplifying management tasks. The system provides secure Online Booking links to the operator's website and many sales channels including Global Systems used by travel agents for corporate and retail bookings. Web Reservations has several management systems built to match any budget and technical need. The integrated Front Office Software is PC and MAC compatible and they have options that run on iPad.

b) System vendor

Web Reservation Systems is partnered with Booking Centre - serving accommodations in Australia with Front Office systems, Online Booking, GDS connection and websites since 2001.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitwebreservations> Phone: 02 6684 8101

Email: webmaster@webreservations.com.au Address: 9 Cape Vista Drive, Byron Bay, NSW 2481

c) Installation

The online booking module is hosted on a central reservation system that is then linked to the various sales channels. The operator manages booking rules, availability and rates through either the desktop module at the front desk or the online booking module. Set up involves helping load booking rules and rates. Most installations are done remotely to keep costs low. Customised systems are not provided. Macintosh, Windows XP or higher, browser and email software is required.

d) Case studies

www.beachfrontmotel.com.au

www.takeabreak.com.au/SwanseaMotorInn.htm

www.greatoceanroad.com.au/beachfront

www.jollyswagman.com.au

www.swanseamotorinn.com

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Setup prices start from \$495. Online booking costs vary based on sales channels with fixed fees for direct bookings and commissions for agent bookings. |
| Training: | No setup or training cost. |
| Support: | Free with booking services. Provided via email and telephone. |
| Channel management: | Direct Bookings, Local Agents and GDS (includes over 800,000 travel agents and +3,000 websites thru Pegasus, Galileo, SABRE). Allocate rooms and pricing by sales channel. Multiple Rate Plans for specials. |



40. WebVantage



a) System description

Webvantage's Booking Management System has been on the market since 2006. Booking Management System is designed for small to medium accommodation operators and tour/event/attraction operators.

Functions include online bookings and secure payments via your website as well as a front desk functions such as point of sale and data import/export links to MYOB. A number of reports are available and can be customised. Optional modules allow the operation of loyalty and gift voucher programs. Integration into the shopping cart module allows the sale of ancillary items such as souvenirs and memorabilia.

Links to third party distribution networks are available through the XML gateway. The Booking Management System provides a comprehensive agent portal for booking agencies to use.

b) System vendor

Booking Management System is developed, sold and supported in Australasia by WebVantage Pty Ltd.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekitwebvantage> **Phone:** 02 9016 7136

Email: sales@webvantage.com.au **Address:** PO Box 1135, North Sydney, NSW, 2059

c) Installation

The Booking Management System is hosted remotely on WebVantage's server. The operator will need the Booking Management System's licence and the login and password provided by WebVantage. The operator's web developer can then integrate the Booking Management System wizard into the operator's website.

d) Case studies

Refer to <http://www.webvantage.com.au/marketing/portfolio.html>

e) Indicative costs and further information

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setup/software licencing/commission: | Licence cost: from AUD\$1,495.00 plus monthly hosting cost. |
| Support: | Support is included with hosting costs. |
| Channel management: | Agents can be set up as either paid in full or deposit only. Flexible commission reporting is also available on an agent by agent basis or system wide basis. |
| Training: | Simple implementation included with licence cost. Website and customising services available from AUD95 per hour. |

41. YesBookit



a) System description

YesBookit is a booking management system designed specifically to meet the needs of holiday rentals/letting agents and property managers. The system includes many powerful productivity and marketing tools. The system also allows agents to upload properties to leading holiday accommodation portals such as Stayz, and keep availability and pricing information synchronised across the leading holiday accommodation portals. The YesBookit connectivity means that bookings made in portals enter the booking system directly, avoiding any chance of over bookings. The system continues to evolve based on valued feedback from users.

b) System vendor

YesBookit is an Australian designed and owned product developed by Midac. Midac has been developing leading products for thirty years and has specialised in online tourism innovations for fifteen years.

Web: <http://bitly.com/ekityesbookit> **Phone:** 02 4992 3040

Email: info@yesbookit.com **Address:** PO Box 155 Dungog NSW 2420

c) Installation

YesBookit provides a secure PCI DSS compliant hosted solution. YesBookit only requires a computer with an internet connection and a popular Internet browser. There is no need to install any software onsite.

d) Case studies

www.bestofmagnetic.com

www.greatoceanroadholidays.com.au

www.portstephensaccommodation.com

www.accomcaloundra.com.au

www.centralcoastholidays.com.au

www.pacificpalmsholidays.com.au

e) Indicative costs and further information

Setup/software licencing/commission: YesBookit offers two main pricing models: A low upfront investment with commission on bookings, and a subscription model.

Support: Support is provided online and via email and telephone or Skype. By default product support is included in the package. Additional training packages can be purchased.

Channel management: Please contact YesBookit for details on our current pricing structure.

Training: Initial training is provided online or face to face.

42. Related tutorials

- [Online booking systems 101](#)
- [Tourism Exchange Australia](#)

Topic | Analysis And Statistics

Tutorial 36

Tracking And Reporting

This tutorial will explain why measuring the success of your website is crucial and what key metrics you should focus on.

Reading time: 10 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. Risk without measurement is suicide

Do you know how much business your website is **really** generating? **If you cannot tell how much return on investment your website brings your business then this tutorial is for you.** By taking the time to understand what aspects of your website work and what aspects don't work you will be better equipped to attract visitors to your website and convert them into customers.

One of the many advantages of the Internet is that it is extremely well suited to measure and track. It does it automatically once you have installed an analytics program. It will be easy to find out if your website is delivering and what to do to increase its performance.

You will also be able to track your traditional marketing campaigns (such as an advertisement in a magazine) by using a call-to-action (an enticing phrase) directing readers to your website. You will then be able to track how many visitors followed the call-to-action thus measuring if the ad was successful or not.



2. Good website statistic packages

The number one website statistic package for small and medium businesses is called Google Analytics <http://analytics.google.com>. It is free and can be easily installed by a person who isn't web savvy in less than 30 minutes. If you don't have an analytics package yet, don't wait any longer. Install it today (the next tutorial will explain you how to do so).

The intelligence you will obtain from Google Analytics will allow you to take advantage of opportunities, identify and fix problems associated with your website and maximise the return on investment from your web strategy. Let's look at an example which diagnoses an issue in terms of traffic to a website.

The simple report below shows that the majority of visits to the website are not coming from search engines but from visiting the site directly. This means that most people (75% of people in this example) are coming to the website using the website's address (e.g. www.mytourbus.com). The website is actually preaching to the converted and not reaching people who have never heard about the product. For the majority of tourism operators, new business is crucial!



Screen capture copyright: Google

The example above is typical of small and medium tourism websites that have been set up and

left running on the Internet, without any further development, maintenance or optimisation.

If you would like to view a video overview of what Google Analytics has to offer, follow this link: http://services.google.com/analytics/tour/index_en-US.html.

3. Key metrics to measure

Once you have installed a web analytics program on your site, you will generally have to wait 24 hours for your first results. Then you will be able to look at the data and devise a strategy to improve your results!

a) Visits

Measuring the number of visits to your website is crucial. However, there are different types of visits. You should focus on the number of unique visitors instead of the number of visits.

Visits: A visit to your website is the number of times your website was viewed within a period of time. This measure is not very indicative as a single visitor can be counted many times.

For example, imagine that your competitor checks your website 10 times a day over 1 month. That corresponds to 300 visits to your site over one month.

Pageviews: This is the same metric as above but instead of counting the number of visits to the website the program will count the number of pages that were viewed.

Average pageviews: This is a calculation that corresponds to the number of pageviews divided by the number of visits.

For example, if a website has 3.2 average pageviews it means that on average, per visit, the visitor visited 3.2 pages

Unique visitors: This measure is the most important and significant one. The number of unique visitors to your site is the real number of individuals that visited your site within a period of time. Only the initial visit is counted.

If you have 450 unique visitors to your site a month it means that you have had 450 different individuals (who really are in fact different computers) visiting your site. Your nosey competitor is only counted once.

Tracking And Reporting

Hits: **Hits are a misleading and useless measure.** Hits are the number of requests that your browser makes to a website server in order to display one or more pages.

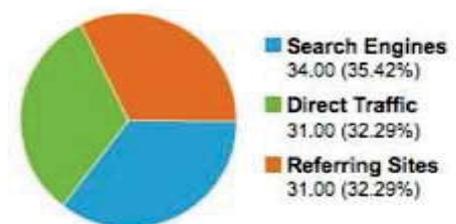
Imagine a webpage with 10 images. The number of hits for this page would be 11 because the browser had to request to display 10 images plus the page itself. If a visitor views 4 of these pages, it would average 44 hits. However, you only had one visitor who in reality visited only 4 pages.

Many uninformed web marketers and web developers still talk in terms of hits. They can quote astronomical number of hits which realistically have nothing to do with the popularity of your website.

Do not use this measure and count the number of unique visitors instead.

b) Traffic sources

To understand the 3 different types of traffic source, imagine a pie chart representing the 3 different routes visitors could take to travel to your site: directly, using search engines or being referred to your site by a different website.



What is actually measured is the number of visits to your website within a certain timeframe.

Screen capture copyright: Google

Direct traffic: Number of visits that came directly to your site. It means that these people have entered your website address (e.g. www.whalewatchingherveybay.com.au) in their browser. These people already knew your website address.

Search engines: These are the number of visits that came to your website because it appeared in the results of a search they conducted on a search engine. When websites are not search engine optimised, the percentage of the traffic originating from search engine will be very low.

Referring sites: These are the number of visits that came to your website because it was referenced on another website.

They might have seen a reference to your website on the website of your local tourism organisation.

c) Content

Statistics programs will not only let you know who your visitors are, and where they come from but it will also gather valuable data to illustrate **what they are doing on your site and in what**

order.

It is important to check which of your pages are the most popular, and which pages receive a very low number of visits. If a page received a very low number of visits but it is an important page that you need to promote, make sure you link to it from within the content of your homepage. Check your statistics after one and two weeks and see if this link brought more traffic.

Also check which pages have the highest exit rate. This means that people visit these pages and then decide to leave your website. They probably do so because they didn't find what they expected to find on that page. What you need to do is to work on the content of that page to ensure it meets the needs of your target market. You need to include a call-to-action to entice the visitor to perform an action you want them to do or continue navigating your site rather than leave or exit.

d) Conversions

A conversion is an action that you want your visitor to take when they are visiting your website.

A conversion could be a booking, establishing contact via email, visiting a certain page, subscribing to your newsletter.

Analytics programs allow you to measure conversions by letting you set up goals. Once your visitor has achieved that goal, the program will count it as one conversion. To learn how to set up goals in Google analytics, watch this presentation:

<http://services.google.com/analytics/breeze/en/goals/index.html>

MEASURING CONVERSIONS IS CRUCIAL AS YOUR WEBSITE IS NOT THERE TO LOOK GOOD BUT TO TURN THESE VISITS INTO PURCHASES OR ENQUIRIES.

4. Key learning outcomes

- The Internet allows you to track almost every single visit to your website. Doing so is crucial to ensure you target your e-marketing strategy
- One of the most popular tool to track visitation to your site is called Google Analytics and is free.

5. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Organising hosting for my site
- Google Analytics

b) Related websites

- Google Analytics IQ:
<http://www.google.com/support/conversionuniversity/bin/topic.py?topic=20332>



Topic | Analysis And Statistics

Tutorial 37

Google Analytics

This tutorial will explain how to install Google Analytics and will help you interpret the results.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Tracking And Reporting



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. How do I install Google Analytics on my site?

You can easily install Google Analytics yourself. It is a quick and easy process that takes approximately 30 minutes from start to finish, provided that you know how to access your website's files.

As soon as you have installed Google Analytics, it will start collecting data that you will be able to view within 24 hours.

To install Google Analytics you will need:

- Access to your websites files.
- A Google account (see tutorial about Google tools to learn how to create a Google account).
- An email address.

a) *Installing Google Analytics*

1. Navigate to: <http://analytics.google.com> and click on "Create an account" located on the top right of the page.
2. Log in with your Google account details.
3. Follow the prompts.
4. Don't forget to action the verification email.
5. Sign in your Google Analytics account by going to the address under 1) and clicking on the "Sign in" button.

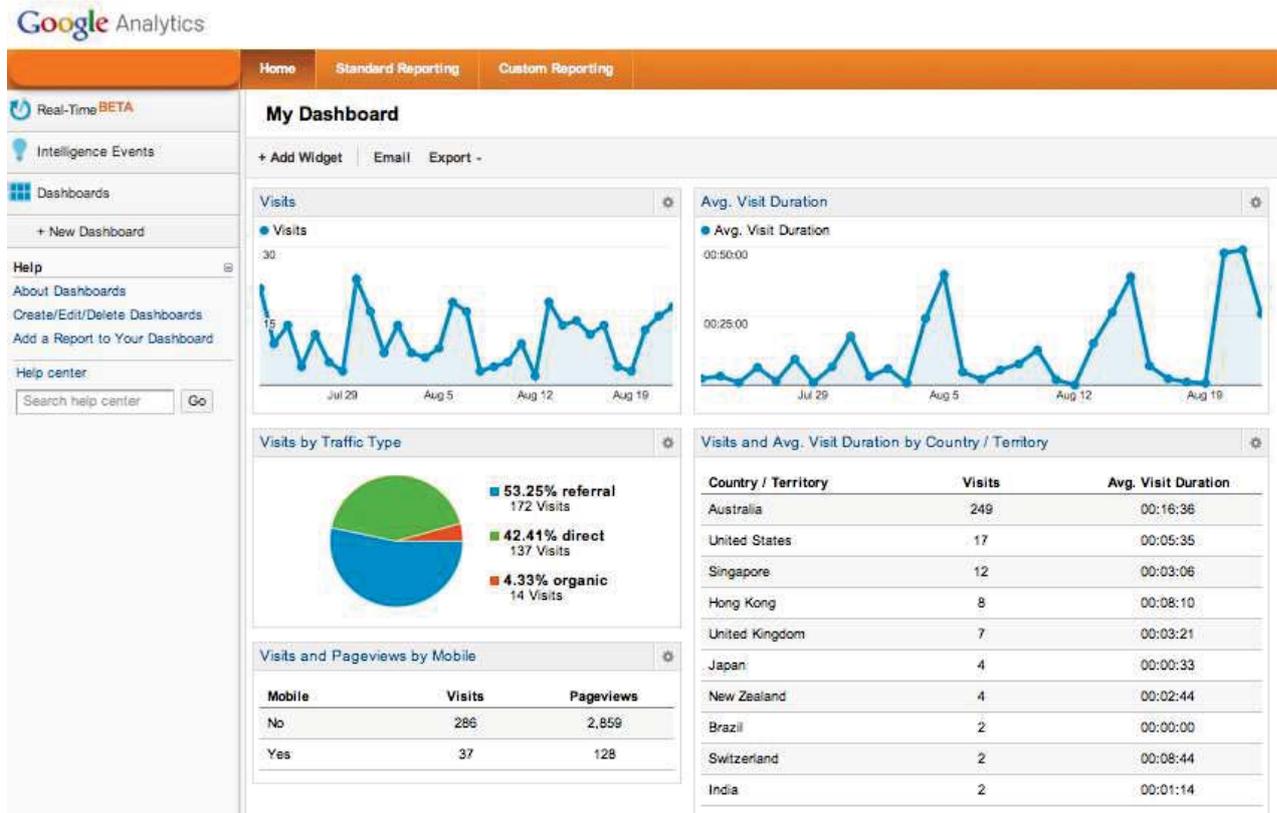
2. Inside Google Analytics

Please note that Google Analytics has recently launched a brand new version of Google Analytics with significant changes to the program and the user interface. New features that stand out are:

- New navigation bar
- Ability to add more than one dashboard
- Name of the reports

a) *Home tab > Dashboards*

The dashboard will become your first point of contact with your Google Analytics account. **It will provide you with an overview of your key metrics.** Visit it once a week.



Screencapture copyright: Google

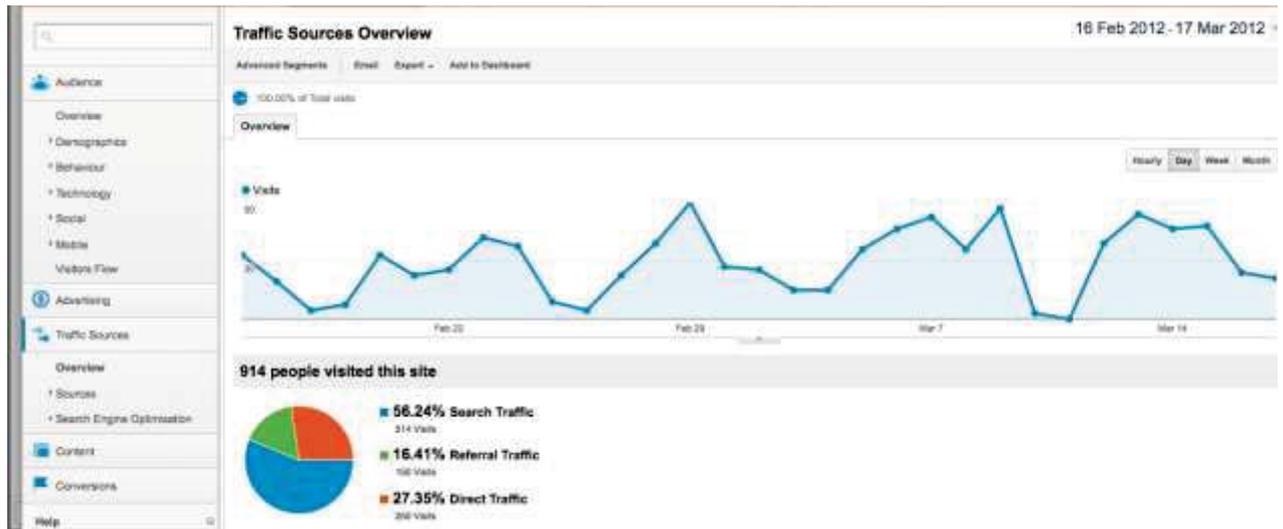
One of the main features of the dashboard is that it is customisable by adding “widgets”. The dashboard has changed quite a bit with the new Google Analytics version.

b) Standard reporting tab

In this section you will find the key reports broken down into 5 sections:

- **Audience:** the demographics sub menu will give you information on the origin of your visitors. For instance, if you conducted a print campaign in a travel magazine distributed in Melbourne you should be able to see an influx of visitors from Melbourne
- **Advertising:** this section focuses on your Google AdWords campaigns and data.
- **Traffic sources:** the most important section of Analytics with regards to search engine optimisation. You will find information about your keywords and referring sites in this section.

The example below is a printscreen of the new Traffic Sources overview report.



Screencapture copyright: Google

- **Content:** in this section you will find information and data to improve your site's content and increase conversions. The Exit Pages report is very important, as it will show you which pages people leave your site from.
- **Conversions:** finally, the conversions section will allow you to see which visitors convert into buyers and how they do so. Google has a very simple and clear guide to help you set up goals: www.google.com/support/googleanalytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=55515. Once your goals are set up Google Analytics will begin tracking the conversions. Google can't backtrack and measure conversions prior to set up of your goals. You can also watch this Google Analytics University presentation: http://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/analytics_breeze/en/goals/index.html.

3. Key learning outcomes

- Google Analytics is free and very easy to install. You can do it yourself (provided you have access to your files and/or that your content management system support is) or you can ask your web developer to install it for you
- There are key reports that you should be checking on a monthly basis
- It is also important that you set up your Goals in Google Analytics in order to track conversions and not only visits to your website.

4. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Organising hosting for my site
- Tracking and reporting

b) Related websites



Google Analytics

- Goals in Google analytics:
<http://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/analyt/breeze/en/goals/index.html>

Topic | Online Distribution

Tutorial 38

Online Distribution 101

Getting a handle on tourism distribution, commissions and channel managers can be a bit daunting, but once you read this tutorial it will become easier.

Reading time: 40 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. Getting started: working out my current bookings

To work out which distribution options make sense for your business, you will need to understand where your current bookings come from and how much they are costing you. When you have finished this exercise you will have a clear idea about how much revenue each distribution channel is generating. You can then use this information to focus your efforts and evaluate new distribution channels.

a) Step 1: Origin of the booking

Over a typical medium to high sales month, record the details of each booking you take in a notebook or spreadsheet. You will need to calculate how much each type of distribution channel is costing you and ask your customers how they reached you. For each booking over your chosen month, record:

- Where your guest physically made the booking

For instance: on the phone with you, phone call to a travel agent, or online booking through a distributor such as Roamfree or Wotif.

- The postcode (or country) of the your guest
- The dollar value of the booking
- Any commission you had to pay for this booking.

b) Step 2: Distribution channels

Make a list of all the distribution channels your business is currently using and write down what commission or fee you are paying for the service.

For example:

- Online distributor A: x% commission
- My own online booking system: x%
- Local visitor information centre x%
- X & Y travel agent x%

c) Step 3: Making sense of the numbers

At the end of your chosen month, you can now combine the two lists you made above.

Create a new document, using one line per every distribution channel you listed in Step 2 (see next page for example). On each line include the following:

- Name of the distribution channel (e.g. Total Travel, Wotif, Visitor information centre)
- Total number of bookings during that month from that channel
- Net value of the bookings that are directly attributable to that channel; that is total sales revenues minus any commissions payable. We have called this "Income" in the example below
- Total fixed costs (FC) for each distribution channel, such as set up fee, participation



Online Distribution 101

- fees, and membership fees that you averaged per month
- Total variable costs (VC) which are the total of the commissions paid for the month on the bookings made using this distribution channel
 - Calculate the total cost of selling your product (“total cost to market”) by adding your fixed costs for the month (FC) and your variable costs for the month (VC)
 - Finally, divide the total cost to market by the number of bookings to work out the cost to market for each booking from that distribution channel
 - Repeat this exercise for every single one of your distributors to identify which of these gives you the most business and what their fees and charges are.

Example

The table below shows an example motel’s bookings from two distribution channels:

- 3 bookings with online distributor A at \$200 each including 10% commission
- 10 bookings at your local VIC at \$300 each including 3.5% commission

| Distribution channel | Number of bookings | Income for the month (less commissions) | Fixed costs (averaged per month) (FC) | Variable costs (VC) | Total cost to market (FC + VC) | Cost to market per booking (Cost to market / Number of bookings) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online distributor A | 3 | \$540 | \$40 ¹⁾ | \$60 (10%) | \$100 | \$33.30 |
| Local Visitor Information Centre | 10 | \$2,895 | \$50 ²⁾ | \$105 (3.5%) | \$155 | \$15.50 |

1) Membership fee is \$480 per year

2) Membership fee is \$600 per year

d) Analysing the results

In the example above, although the online distributor’s commission is 10%, the cost of a \$200 booking is slightly higher (\$33.30 instead of \$20 for VC) when other fixed costs are considered. On the other hand, while the local visitor information centre has higher fixed costs, it generates

far more bookings at a lower commission, giving it a much lower total cost per booking (\$15.50)

Looking at your own sales and cost figures in this way, you can work out the value of each distributor by understanding:

- how much business each distributor generates for you per month
- what the average cost to market per booking is for each distributor

IT IS WORTH REMEMBERING THAT THE COST TO MARKET OF EACH DISTRIBUTOR SHOULD NOT BE THE ONLY CRITERIA BY WHICH YOU JUDGE DISTRIBUTORS.

In the example above, for instance, the online distributor and the local visitor information centre have very different target markets. The increased exposure to new demographics through the online distributor may provide the motel owner with long-term business opportunities that are worth the comparatively higher short term cost.

2. Traditional vs. Online Distribution

Distribution means making sure that your product or service information reaches consumers. It is not a tourism-specific concept; all goods regardless of their origin require distribution to their target market.

In recent years, the Internet has further redefined the distribution of travel products. The industry now talks about **online distribution** (which requires the use of the Internet) and **traditional distribution** (which doesn't require the use of the Internet).

a) *Not all distributors are equal*

Consumers generally expect to pay less if they buy products directly from the producer rather than through a retailer. For instance, most consumers expect apples will be cheapest at the farm gate, a little dearer at a supermarket chain that buys in bulk and a little dearer again at a local shop.

And while consumers' expectations of tourism product shouldn't be any different, travellers can become upset if they pay more for a room buying it at place A instead of place B.

b) *What are distribution channels?*

You may have heard the term distribution channel. A channel is simply a mechanism by which your product reaches the consumer.



- Cooperative marketing initiatives

- Regional tourism brochures or travel planners
- Visitor Information Centres
- Online via regional, state or commercial websites
- Direct to you either via a website, email, phone or walk-ins.
- Retailers, travel agents or booking agents
- Wholesalers
- Inbound tour operators

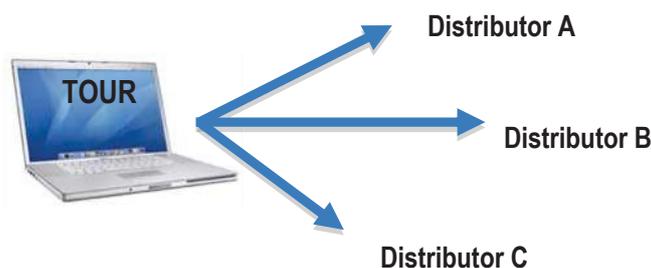
You may now want to return to your list that you compiled above and add a few distribution channels that you may have forgotten.

3. So what is online distribution?

Traditional and online distribution channels are converging. Consumers are using the Internet more and more to access information and book tourism products. They may research online and book offline, or vice versa. Either way, **the use of the Internet to research and book holidays is growing every day**. Therefore your online presence needs to be broad, professional and engaging.

There are several options available to distribute your products online.

First of all, we should point out that this tutorial will not talk about your own website as an online distribution channel but will focus on using third-party online distributors to distribute your “live” inventory.



ONLINE DISTRIBUTORS ARE TOURISM ENTITIES OR BUSINESSES WHOSE OBJECTIVE IS TO REPRESENT MANY INDIVIDUAL TOURISM BUSINESSES ON THEIR WEBSITE, SHOP FRONTS, AND/OR DATABASE.

They will present them to the travel consumer who will be able to:

- see the real-time availability of each tourism product
- book online directly on the distributor website.

There are many online distributors available to Australian tourism operators, and the Tourism Exchange Australia allows you to easily distribute your product through them provided you have a compatible online booking system.

Because in most cases online distributors have a broader online presence than your own website, they often list higher than you on search engine rankings for the main “blockbuster” keywords such as “accommodation Gold Coast” for instance. It is therefore important to ensure

that your product is available to be booked via the key online distributors for your target market.

a) Website distributors

These are the online distributors you are generally most familiar with. They have a website and present tourism product in a variety of consumer experience pathways that ultimately result in the consumer being able to buy your tourism product online.

E.g. Lastminute.com, Neditnow.com, Totaltravel.com, and About-Australia.com

b) Shop front distributors

These are perhaps not as well known as online distributors but are extremely valuable in the selling of your tourism products on the global market. They are every bit as sophisticated as the website distributors in collecting your inventory availability and selling it in real time, but the technology facilitates the screen of a consultant who then uses this information to assist a consumer who is in their shop.

E.g. Kangaroo Island visitor information.

c) Wholesale and Inbound distributors

These distributors have been an important part of the tourism industry for a long time and in the age of digital marketing they still play an important part in potentially delivering customers to your business. Many wholesalers now have the technology to receive your inventory, availability and booking capability in real time and can then pass this onto other retail travel agents, website distributors and in some cases even other wholesalers or inbound tour operators.

E.g. DiscoverWest Holidays.

4. Key terms and concepts in online distribution

Below is a list of key terms you will need to understand before selecting one or more online distributors.

a) Allocation (allotments) versus Real time inventory

Understanding this difference is vital to selecting the right online distributors for your products and to getting the maximum return for your business.

- Allocation is where you give or allocate a distributor or wholesaler a **limited number of your inventory at set time intervals**.

For example you may have 10 rooms and allocate 2 rooms to a distributor and then update this once every day. In doing this you hand over the ability to sell that stock to the wholesaler or distributor. They can sell it at a particular price and agreed commission.

- Real time inventory is where you give a distributor access to all of your 10 rooms all of



the time, and availability is updated automatically.

If you sell 1 room on your own website via your own online booking system, the distributors will be automatically notified that there are now only 9 rooms left for sale.

Generally speaking allocating inventory results in you only being able to use a small number of distributors and a large amount of manual work for you. This traditionally has worked well for large hotels and tour companies who could allot 20 rooms here and 20 rooms there. The issue for them has become the time required to manage these allotments, taking back stock in busy periods and moving it around. For the small operators with small businesses this is particularly difficult.

REAL TIME INVENTORY MEANS YOU CAN USE AS MANY DISTRIBUTORS AS YOU LIKE AND MOST OF THE WORK IS AUTOMATED.

For those of you who wish to expose your business online, allotting room stock to a large distributor may still prove to be beneficial. For others, real time inventory is a better solution as it involves less manual work and minimises the risk of overbooking.

b) Payment methods

Most online distributors fall into two payment types:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Direct payment: | This is where the consumer pays you (as the business supplying the product) the cost of the product and you in turn then pay the online distributor their distribution commission. |
| On-Account: | This is where the consumer pays the online distributor who then in turn pays you the funds less their distribution commission, which they retain. |

c) Distribution commission

This is the fee a third party charges for bringing the consumer to your product. This third party may be a travel agent, wholesaler or inbound tour operator.

This is generally a percentage of the booking value but may also be a flat fee.

YOU WILL ONLY PAY COMMISSION WHEN A SALE IS MADE.

It is equally important to note that you will not pay commission on all of your bookings, those consumers that come direct to you will not incur any commission. Therefore you need to understand where your business is coming from to accurately price your product.

How much commission will I be paying?

That depends on the source of the booking. As a guide you can expect to pay anything between 10 and 30; 10% for retail agents; 20% for wholesalers; and 30% for inbound tour operator

working on behalf of the international travel trade.

When pricing your tourism product, make sure to include your commission in your retail rate and not to add it on.

What do I get for my commission?

Third parties who will distribute your product will promote and sell it using different channels. They are your link to the consumer who hasn't reached you directly.

For example a wholesaler will normally provide the following services:

- *Product development*
- *Brochure production and distribution of brochure to consumers through travel agents*
- *Advertising to visitors and travel agents*
- *Travel agents training*
- *A point of sale (e.g. travel agency), in-store merchandising, and window displays*
- *Invoicing and collection of participation fees.*

d) Distributor's terms and conditions

These are the contractual terms between the distributor and your business under which that online distributor will sell your product.

e) Merchant

This is the party that takes the consumer's money.

f) Yield

This is the amount of money after distribution commissions are paid that you want to receive for a given product you have for sale.

g) Channel managers



Channel managers act as a go-between for you and the distributor and manage your inventory via multiple distributors for a relatively low fee. They are a "behind the scenes" tool used by the

tourism business to manage inventory on the third party websites and/or their own website.

A CUSTOMER CANNOT BOOK ON A CHANNEL MANAGER BUT BOOKINGS TAKE PLACE ON THE DISTRIBUTOR'S WEBSITE.

Advantages of using channel managers

Using channel managers can expose your business to many distributors at the same time, even if you have a small number of rooms or tours available.

An effective channel manager will save you time and hassles by decreasing labour costs and increasing productivity and profits. It will also allow you to increase your online exposure by being listed with more online websites.

Choosing a channel manager

There is a vast range of prices which generally depend on the number of rooms a property has. Each channel manager charges differently with or without a lock-in contract. You should look for a channel manager that is cost effective and should question lock-in contracts.

Be cautious of channel managers that charge commissions based on "per booking made" as these can add up very quickly and you may think it is cheaper but in long run they can be more costly depending on the number of bookings that go through the channel manager.

Apart from assessing costs and target market, you should also look at the number of channels that the company can offer you both domestically and internationally.

Examples of channel managers that you may want to utilise are:

- SiteMinder (www.siteminder.com.au)
- Levert (www.levartdistributionsystems.com.au)
- ResOnline (www.resonline.com)
- Ezyield (www.ezyield.com)
- ChannelDirect (www.travelclick.net/reservation-solutions/channel-direct/index.cfm)
- Allotz (www.allotz.com)
- Ezyrates (<http://www.ezyrates.com>)

5. Key learning outcomes

- To work out which distribution options make sense for your business, you will need to understand where your current bookings come from and how much they are costing you
- There are many distribution channels you can use to promote your business. For instance, you may want to consider working with Visitor Information Centres. One of the most effective ways to get your product to many online distributors is to use channel managers.



6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Online distribution advanced
- Tourism Exchange Australia
- Online booking systems: 101
- Online booking systems: advanced
- Online travel agents:101
- Online travel agents: advanced

b) *Related websites*

- Tourism Exchange Australia: <http://www.atdw.com.au/tourismexchangeaustralia.aspx>

Topic | Online Distribution

Tutorial 39

Online Distribution: Advanced

In this advanced tutorial you will learn how to select an online distributor. You will also be provided with information on cost and equipment required.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Online Distribution 101



1. How do I select an appropriate online distributor?

The selection of appropriate online distributors is fundamentally different for those businesses that have an online booking system and those that don't. If you do not have an online booking system you will have to manually allocate your product between various distribution websites or use a channel manager.

a) *Integrating with the TXA (Tourism Exchange Australia)*

If you have an online booking system that doesn't integrate with the TXA you are also missing out on being able to utilise a large number of online distributors.

On the other hand if you do have the appropriate online booking system, you are in the position of being able to use all available online distributors.

This section will present the selection process for businesses that have an online booking system which is connected to TXA.

2. Accessing important details?

First of all you need to view your options. All online booking systems connected to the TXA are able to share a list with you which will display:

- The business details of the online distributors who can distribute your product
- The distributor's terms and conditions
- The distributor's commission

Generally speaking, if you have an online booking system that can **present real time inventory**, all online distributors are potential resellers of your product. Provided your online booking system has the capability to present variable prices to different online distributors based on their distribution commission this will ensure your desired yield is maintained.

If your online booking system does not have this capability it is recommended you look at changing it or you will need to ascertain the yield you are seeking and only select those online distributors that charge no more than the level of distribution commission that results in your set yield being achieved.

What to look for in a potential online distribution partner:

a) *Business details*

The primary features to look for in an online distributor's business details are:

- The number of unique visitors that visit the online distributor's website or shopfront. Generally speaking, the higher the number of unique visitors the better value the distributor will be to your business.
- The geographical spread of the online distributor. If a distributor does not feature the tourism area you are located in or only does so in a superficial way, then this online distributor will be of less value than an online distributor that specialises in your



tourism area.

- Niche market: If your product is suited to particular niche markets e.g. a wilderness lodge that appeals to environmentally conscious travellers, then look at whether the appeal of the online distributor fits with your niche market.

b) Distribution commission

If your online booking system has the capability to present different prices to different online distributors then you can work with any distribution commission, as you simply need to alter your product price to ensure your yield is maintained.

c) Payment method

Whilst both types of payment methods are acceptable (direct payment and on account), they have differing positives and negatives. Depending on the priorities of your business, one form will be more attractive than the other.

| Payment Method | Positives | Negatives |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Direct Payment | Your business receives the customer's funds directly to your bank account on booking | You are required to deal with the customer's changes, cancellations and refunds |
| | | You will need to manage the payment of the distributor's commission to the distributor |
| On Account | The online distributor is required to deal with the customer's changes, cancellations and refunds | The online distributor receives the Consumer's money and you must wait for the online distributor to pay you depending on their individual payment terms |

d) Online payments security

Most online distributors will detail if their system has an SSL certificate. An SSL certificate is an electronic key that will ensure the online transaction is secure. If you have any doubt as to whether the online distributor has an SSL certificate, then do not use that online distributor. We strongly recommend you discuss SSL and security with your online booking system vendor.

e) What best suits my business?

Whilst the above points will give you a guide to selecting online distributors, you should always undertake the following steps:

- Assess your business needs. Every tourism operator is different and different online distributors offer different options.
- Then talk to your peers, regional tourism organisation, and local visitor information centre. Find out what online distributors they are using and which ones they recommend.



3. What equipment do I need?

To participate in online distribution you should not need to invest in any additional hardware other than the one you use for your online booking system. If you do not have an online booking system you will need to select one. The online distributors should either be manageable from your computer or, better, online directly. Your online booking system should also have an online merchant account which will allow you to transfer the money securely from the online booking into your bank account. Discuss the different types of online merchant accounts with your bank.

4. How much will it cost?

What is important to understand here is that being listed on an online distributor's website is a good thing because it will bring you business that you otherwise wouldn't be able to attract. The people that arrived on the online distributor's website probably didn't know about you and probably hadn't found your website.

The cost of having your inventory available for sale on an online distributor varies according to the online distributor. There are generally three types of potential costs associated with an online distributor:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Listing fee: | Cost to be listed on the online distributor's site. It could either be a fixed monthly or annual listing fee. |
| Booking commission: | A percentage of the value of the transaction (commission). |
| Booking fee: | A fixed fee charged by the online distributor for providing the booking or a combination of all three. |

It is recommended you take into account all of the different types of costs as outlined in the distributor terms and conditions. Then either adjust in your online booking system the price you set for your products for that online distributor and hence achieve your desired yield.

If you have an online booking system which does not allow you to set different prices for different online distributors you will need to decide to opt in to that online distributor if you are satisfied with the yield or not opt in if the yield is too low.

5. Will it bring me extra business?

Online distributors need to be considered as an essential marketing tool for any tourism business. Online distributors will increase the chances for bookings since you have made it easier for the consumer to find and book you. An online distributor won't bring you bookings all the time. However this does not mean that this particular online distributor is of no value. You should remember that every listing on an online distributor is another advertising medium and often consumers will see your product on an online distributor and then book via another online distributor or even on your own website (provided it has Online Booking capability).

a) How do I get the best value?

To gain maximum benefit out of online distributors it is helpful to have a real time online booking system that has the capability of having a different price for each online distributor. Having this means all online distributors represent a potential additional sale and **no matter what the cost of that online distributor; you can achieve your desired yield.**

6. How do I price my product?

In order to price your product you need to identify your fixed and variable costs and your average commission, you also need to establish your profit margin. Your rate should be a combination of all of the above, it needs to be sustainable and it needs to suit the target market.

If you haven't yet done so refer to the Distribution 101 tutorial and do the exercises at the beginning of the tutorial.

a) What is the difference between a net, gross and rack rates?

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nett rate: | A rate excluding commission (but it usually includes GST). |
| Gross rate: | The total rate including GST and commission. |
| Rack rate: | A publicly listed rate and it's usually the highest rate. |

7. What online tools should I consider for my business?

To help you with taking steps in the online space and selecting the right options to distribute your inventory online we have set up the below diagram. Historically the bigger your business the more options you had. Technology has advanced and enabled the much wider distribution of product even for the smallest business.

| Business Size (number of rooms, tours available for sale) | Direct via manual system. Email request via a website, traditional methods. | Allotment to Wholesaler etc | Channel Manager | Online Booking System – single channel ¹⁾ | Online Booking System – Multi channel |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| □□□ | 😊 | 😞 | 😐 | 😐 | 😊 |
| □□□□ | 😊 | 😐 | 😊 | 😐 | 😊 |
| □□□□□ | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 | 😞 | 😊 |
| □□□ | 😊 | 😊 | 😊 | 😞 | 😊 |

¹⁾ Online booking single channel means that you only make your inventory available in one place: either your website, on online distributor A’s website, or your local visitor information centre.

😞 - The “sad” face indicates you should consider this option carefully, for small businesses giving allotments to a wholesaler may limit your ability to receive direct bookings, unless of course the wholesaler gives you significant business. For larger businesses the single-channelled online booking system may be an administrative overhead.

😐 - The “neutral” face indicates that this is a distribution channel worth considering to see if it suits your business. For small businesses ensure that the “duplicate” booking issue is easily resolved by a channel manager, also consider the single channel online booking option only if you receive most of your bookings through one channel.

😊 - The “happy” face means that this method of distribution is worth investigating.

8. Key learning outcomes

- Selecting an online distributor requires careful planning and assessment
- There are 2 main payment methods: direct payment and on account
- There are also different types of costs involved such as listing fee, booking fee and/or booking commission
- All these elements should be taken into consideration to allow you to price your product.

9. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Online distribution 101
- Tourism Exchange Australia
- Online booking systems: 101
- Online booking systems: advanced
- Security and backups
- Online travel agents: 101
- Online travel agents: advanced

Topic | Online Distribution

Tutorial 39A

Online Travel Agents 101

This tutorial outlines the role of Online Travel Agents and how to work with them.

Reading time: 15 minutes

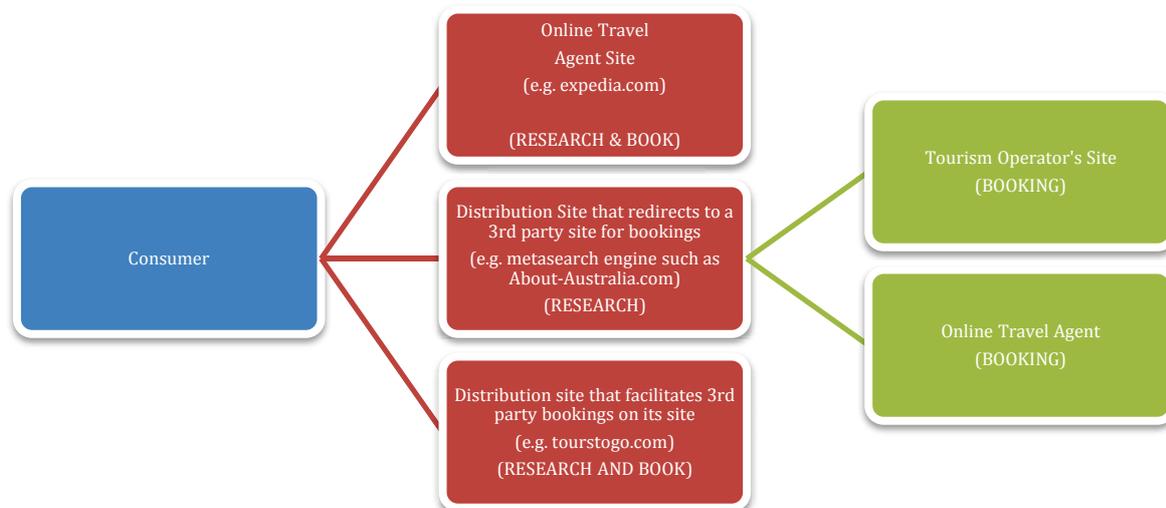
Prerequisite: none



Tutorials 38 and 39 (Online Distribution 101 and Online Distribution: Advanced) reviewed online distributors and how to work with them. This tutorial goes one step further, covering a particular group of online distributors known as Online Travel Agents (OTAs).

1. What are Online Travel Agents (OTAs)?

There are countless online travel distribution sites available with more popping up all the time so it can be confusing to know how each one works. However they generally fall into one of three categories:



a) Online Travel Agent sites

OTA sites allow consumers to check live availability and pricing then book travel products in real time through the OTA site.

Examples include Travelocity and Expedia.

The financial transaction on these sites is generally between the customer and the OTA. The OTA is acting as the merchant who takes the money and forwards the net amount (i.e. payment less commission) to the tourism operator/supplier (usually after travel). There could be plenty of variations so it is important businesses review all the terms and conditions of the OTA in relation to commission payable and the process involved.

- Some OTAs forward the funds to the operator/supplier prior to travel
- In some cases the customer's credit card is used to secure the booking and the guest pays directly upon checking out of the hotel (with commission invoiced after departure)
- The terms and conditions agreed to by the customer are those of the OTA

- If customers need to amend or cancel the booking they need to contact the OTA. They basically act as a traditional travel agent does, but with the booking taken online.

b) Sites that redirect to a third party site for bookings

These sites allow the customer to search for travel products and then redirect them to a third party site where the booking is made between the customer and a third party (this could be the operator/supplier or an OTA).

Examples include www.travelozinfo.com, www.visitgoldcoast.com

- In some cases the website includes indicative pricing only and customers are directed to a third party site to check availability/pricing and make the booking.

E.g. Total Travel (Yahoo!7)

- In other cases customers can check availability and pricing but are still redirected to a third party site to make the booking.

For example, About-Australia.com allows customers to search more than 20 other booking sites through their site and once the customer has decided what they want to book they are redirected to a third party site to make the transaction (could be the operator's own site or an OTA site).

Sites that aggregate (collate) search results from lots of other sites are known as aggregators or metasearch engines and generally receive payment (commission) if a booking is made as a result of the redirection from their site (i.e. for the referral).

c) Sites that take bookings but don't act as merchant (i.e. don't process payment)

These sites allow the customer to stay on the original website to make the booking so it appears seamless (i.e. they do not redirect to another site). However, the booking is still actually between the customer and a third party (the operator/supplier or OTA) so the site does not act as the merchant.

Examples include toustogo.com, check-in.com.au and jasons.com.

Their terms and conditions clearly state they are a booking facility or intermediary only, even though they process the payment on their site.

- Often with these online reservation services the financial transaction is between the customer and the tourism operator. The tourism operator generally receives payment at the time of booking (less commission payable to the online distributor) directly into their nominated bank account. This would mean the merchant listed on the customer's credit card statement would be the name of the tourism operator.

- The customer agrees to the terms and conditions of the tourism operator / supplier (as well as the booking site).
- Amendments and cancellations usually need to be made directly with the tourism operator / supplier.
- These sites are known by many names including online reservation or booking service, travel portal and online distributor.

It is important to keep in mind that there are no hard and fast rules here and the dot points are indicative only. Always read the terms and conditions of a distributor to check payment process and policies.

d) Summary

| | Online Travel Agent Site | Other Distributor Site (Online Reservation Service, Travel Portal, Travel Metasearch Engine etc.) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contracted parties | Consumer is entering into a contract with the agent and agrees to their terms and conditions. | Consumer is often entering into a contract with the supplier (operator) and agrees to their terms and conditions. |
| Cancellations / Amendments | Cancellations and amendments are made through the agent. | Cancellations and amendments must generally be made directly with the supplier/operator. |
| Payment | The OTA is the merchant (i.e. the website name appears on the customer's credit card statement). Payment is generally 'on account' meaning funds are held by the agent and forwarded to supplier/operator just prior to or after travel (as stipulated in the contract) – just as an operator would normally deal with a traditional travel agent. | The supplier/operator is often the merchant (i.e. their accommodation or tour company name appears on the customer's credit card statement). Payment (less commission) is often paid upon booking to the supplier/operator (i.e. up-front). To act as an online merchant (i.e. process payments for online bookings) the operator needs to have an online merchant service facility (OMSF) established with their bank. An OMSF enables consumers who book product to pay securely online, with the booking revenue deposited directly into the operator's nominated bank account. The bank takes a fee of around 1%. |

2. How do OTAs source their product?

OTAs can source their product offering using different methods such as channel managers and direct contracting:



e) **Channel managers**

Channel managers (such as SiteMinder, Resonline and Levert) allow tourism operators to manage inventory which is distributed across multiple sites and only have to update the information in one place (refer to Online Distribution 101 tutorial). Through these sites operators can choose to opt in to various distributors, many of which are OTAs. Opting in involves agreeing to the terms and conditions (including commission) of the distributor.

f) **Direct contracting**

This is a more traditional approach where either the OTA or the operator initiates a relationship (many OTAs have online forms on their website operators can use to register their interest) and a contract is agreed to. Some OTAs provide an extranet service that allows operators to set room rates, manage inventory, upload content, create promotions and view performance reports. Extranet means a computer network to which outsiders have controlled access (i.e. through a site requiring a password).

3. **Do all OTAs sell exclusively to consumers?**

Not all OTAs sell exclusively to consumers; some OTAs concentrate on making their online travel product available through other distributors such as travel agents (traditional and online) and wholesalers.

Instead of a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) business model, they have a Business-to-Business-to-Customer (B2B2C) model. This means the product they have contracted does get sold to individual consumers but only after it has passed through another link in the distribution chain.

Other OTAs prefer to focus on corporate travel so this would be a Business-to-Business (B2B) model.

GTA (Gullivers Travel Associates) is a good example of a company that focuses on distributing to the travel trade.

Gulliver's website www.gta-travel.com/aboutUs/distributionModel.html has a good diagram (below) which explains their model. Just like the traditional distribution system (i.e. Inbound Tour Operators, wholesalers and actual shop-front travel agents), the commission payable to an online distributor will be higher if they in turn need to pay commission to a travel wholesaler or agent. In return they can generally offer you a larger distribution network.



Screen capture: www.gta-travel.com/aboutUs/distributionModel.html

4. Why do I get bookings from a site I have never even heard of?

Operators often comment that they are receiving bookings from online distributors they have never heard of, let alone signed an agreement with.

One reason for this is because many companies have multiple brands (websites with different names) and automatically make the product available across these brands. This should however be stipulated in the contact between the operator and the distributor.

Also, there are a lot of relationships between OTAs and other distribution points. Some OTAs have thousands of affiliate resellers which means their content (all or just some, for example a particular region) is available on thousands of sites – anything from a dedicated travel site through to a completely unrelated site.

An example might be a sporting group or school undertaking a tour. On their web page about the upcoming trip they might include a link to an OTA search engine (for the cities they are going to) so parents and friends can book their trip. Any bookings made as a result of clicking the link will earn the affiliate (in this case the sporting group or school) a

commission.

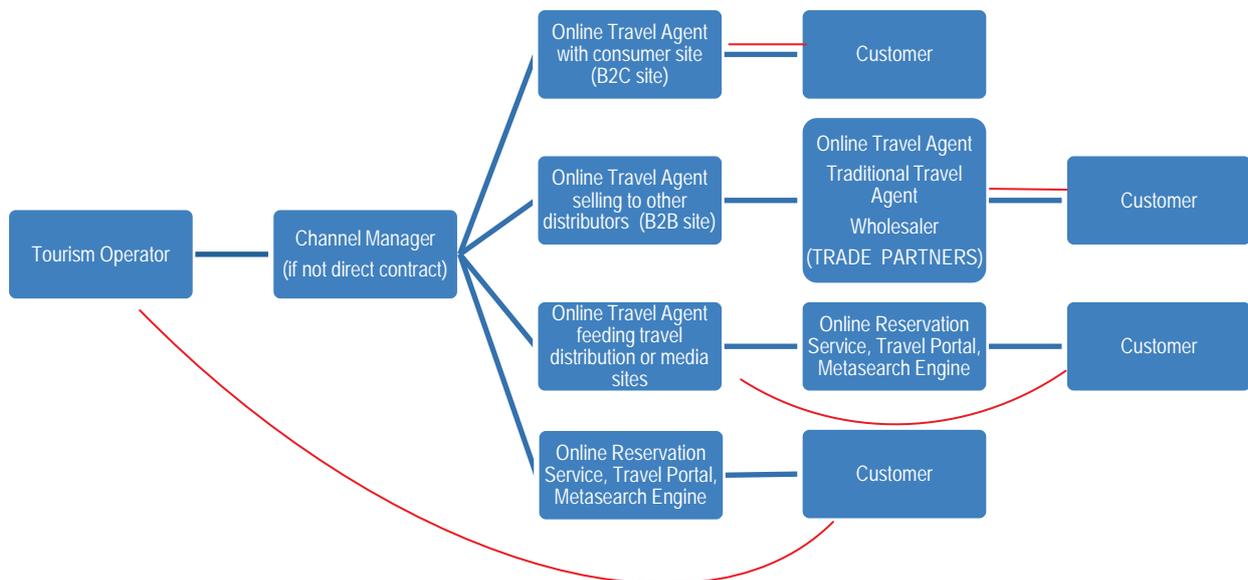
Let's look at another example:

An accommodation provider using SiteMinder as its channel manager opts in to booking.com as a distributor (i.e. agrees to their terms and conditions including commission level). This means that they would not only be available to be booked through the booking.com site (in more than 40 languages) but also on other sites that draw on the site for their content (such as About-Australia.com.au).

The company profiles listed in the advanced tutorial will further clarify the key brands and websites of the key players. This will help demystify the relationships.

g) Product flow (distribution) from operator/supplier to consumer

The diagram below illustrates the location of the contractual relationship (in red) between the operator/supplier and the consumer in the case of distribution through a third party.



h) OTA overview diagram

The diagram below provides an overview of the key players and their brands and affiliations.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Agoda (Priceline) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agoda.com | Australian Online Travel (AOT Group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> needitnow.com.au travelmate.com.au needtoescape.com.au New South Wales Holidays and Great Aussie Holidays sites | Booking.com (Priceline) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> booking.com | Ctrip International Ltd. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ctrip.com |
| Discover Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discoveraustralia.com.au | Expedia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expedia.com hotels.com venere.com hotwire.com egencia.com tripadvisor.com elong.com | GTA (Gullivers Travel Associates) (Kuoni Group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main activities are business-to-business (B2B) Agent site: agents.octopustravel.com.au | Odigeo Online Travel Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opodo.com (incl Travellink brand in Scandinavia) Go Voyages / Govolo eDreams |
| Orbitz (Travelport) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> orbitz.com hotelclub.com (powers Virgin Australia's hotel only booking engine) ratestogo.com asiahotels.com ebookers.com cheaptickets.com | Quickbeds (Flight Centre) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quickbeds.com | Readyrooms.com (Qantas Holidays/Jetset Travelworld) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> readyrooms.com.au | Roamfree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> roamfree.com.au |
| Travelocity (Sabre) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> travelocity.com zuji.com (Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, India) incl. Blue Holidays - the holidays program of Virgin Australia lastminute.com (not lastminute.com.au which is owned by Wotif Group) | Viator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> viator.com | Webjet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> webjet.com.au and other associated local domains (e.g. webjet.co.nz) | Wotif Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wotif.com lastminute.com.au (not lastminute.com which owned by Travelocity) travel.com.au asiawebdirect.com latestays.com godo.com.au |

5. Will OTAs bring me domestic or international business?

The answer is potentially both, depending on which OTA tourism operators select. Some focus just on the Australian domestic market but there are many OTAs with a global audience that have a huge range of Australian product. Where available, this information is included in the company profiles contained in the advanced tutorial.

6. Do all OTAs focus on distressed inventory?

Not all OTAs focus on distressed inventory. Distressed inventory refers to excess capacity (generally accommodation) that operators are prepared to sell at a reduced rate rather than have it empty. There are certainly OTAs that target travellers who are prepared to book at the last minute to get a cheaper rate (obviously at the risk of missing out on their choice of accommodation). Typically these sites have a short booking window (only showing availability for the coming weeks) resulting in a short lead time (i.e. the time between when the booking is made and when travel will be undertaken). However many OTAs have booking windows of 365

days (i.e. bookings can be made up to a year in advance), some of which also offer last minute deals. Where available, this information is included in the company profiles contained in the advanced tutorial.

7. Can Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs) or wholesalers that also have a consumer-facing travel site charge me their inbound or wholesale commission rates for sales made through their consumer site?

Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs) work in the international marketplace and generally charge suppliers/operators around 30% commission, much of which is then passed along the distribution chain to international wholesalers and travel agents.

Likewise, operators/suppliers are used to paying around 20% commission to wholesalers, who then have to pass about half of that to a travel agent. Some ITOs and wholesalers have a consumer-facing website (i.e. customers can book directly with them, cutting out the middle-man) and operators have asked whether they would be paying the higher commission rate for products sold in this way. It would certainly pay to clarify this with the distributor upon signing a contract with them, but generally their online content is contracted separately and tourism operators would expect to pay 10-15% commission for product sold through this method.

8. Key learning outcomes

- Online Travel Agents are online distributors that allow travellers to research and book their travel on the same website and they also act as the merchant (i.e. process payment)
- OTAs can source their product offering using different methods such as channel managers and direct contracting
- OTAs can deliver both domestic and international business to tourism operators
- OTAs don't always sell distressed inventory with short lead times.

9. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Online Distribution 101
- Online Distribution: Advanced
- Online Travel Agents: Advanced – Profiles of Key Players

Topic | Online Distribution

Tutorial 39B

Online Travel Agents - Advanced Profiles of Key Players

This tutorial provides detailed profiles of Online Travel Agents.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Online Travel Agents 101



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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This tutorial provides an overview of some key OTAs in the Australian marketplace. Generally they match the profile of an OTA outlined in tutorial 39A but some have the dual role of reservation service (contract between the consumer and the tourism operator/supplier) as well as the capacity to act an OTA (where they are the merchant).

Please note all the companies included in this overview were given the opportunity to provide feedback and further information. Some provided supporting information ATDW is unable to substantiate which is generally included under 'Benefits of doing business with this OTA' and 'Other Notes'.

If you are an online travel agent and would like to update information or be included in this tutorial, please contact enquiries@atdw.com.au. The ATDW reserves the right to include companies and sites at its discretion.

Profiles are arranged in alphabetical order (by company name) and in the case of companies with more than one key website, the websites have been profiled separately (immediately beneath the company profile)

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1) Agoda

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Agoda |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.agoda.com + local sites (in 37 languages) |
| Launched | Agoda Company Pte. Ltd was established in 2005 but its history dates back to late 1990s when American founder Michael Kenny started PlanetHoliday.com in Thailand. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Acquired by Priceline.com in 2007. Priceline also owns European-based Booking.com but they are operated separately. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | 38,000 |
| Country of Origin | Thailand |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Asia, UK/Europe, North America, Australia |
| Target Markets | Budget, moderate, deluxe Corporate, leisure, FITs |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation only |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting) | Supplier hotels can register online and use Agoda's Yield Control System (YCS) to set room rates, manage inventory, upload content, create promotions and view performance reports. Agoda also connects with many channel managers such as SiteMinder. |
| Benefits of doing business with the OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | Largest OTA in Asia and expanding into Europe very fast, translated into 37 languages, over 5000 affiliate partners worldwide, customer rewards program, owned by priceline.com and part of the world's largest online travel agency group. |
| Commission | 15% |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Not provided |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Ranked in order of popularity with customers |
| Local Office Location(s) | 22 offices worldwide including Sydney |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contact Details | <p>Contact: James Troon, Senior Market Manager</p> <p>Address: Level 6, 14 Martin Place Sydney, NSW, 2000</p> <p>Phone: 02 8247 4500</p> <p>Email: bd-au-nzteam@agoda.com</p> |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

2) Australian Online Travel (The AOT Group)

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Australian Online Travel (The AOT Group) |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | <p>www.needitnow.com.au – see separate profile below www.travelmate.com.au (established 2000 as road travel specialist and acquired by AOT in 2004) - accommodation, car hire, transfers, tours, attractions</p> <p>www.needtoescape.com.au (established 2001 and acquired by AOT in 2007, 365 day booking window, specialising in luxury, romantic, spa and family getaways) – accommodation, car hire, attractions, tours, cruises</p> <p>Also New South Wales Holidays and Great Aussie Holidays sites. Supply product to Webjet.</p> |
| Launched | Australian Online Travel established 2004 but founding company established in 1987. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | <p>Australian Online Travel is part of The AOT Group, owned by founders Andrew and Cinzia Burnes (100% Australian owned and operated).</p> <p>As well as its online division, AOT is a domestic travel wholesaler (Sunlover Holidays and Travelpoint Holidays) and inbound tour operator (AOT Inbound, Pacific Spirit, Experience Tours Australia).</p> |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Over 500,000+ to Australia and NZ (AOT Group as a whole) |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <p>AOT offers over 4,500 hotels for instant confirmation at last minute rates throughout Australia, NZ, and South Pacific.</p> <p>AOLT attracts over 30,000 unique visitors per day.</p> <p>AOLT run a loyalty programme ‘pillowPOINTS’ open to all those that book via Need It Now and AOT Group sites. This offers loyalty points per booking made on each site, which can be redeemed against future travel.</p> |
| Local Office Location(s) | Australian Online Travel head office is based in Melbourne. AOT Group has offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland with sales offices in Shanghai, Mumbai, Singapore and Jakarta. |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contact Details | <p>Suppliers interested in being sold through Australian Online Travel can Register Online or email service@needitnow.com.au.</p> <p>Or contact:</p> <p>Need it Now supplier help</p> <p>Telephone: 1300 738 111 (within Aus) or 0800 728 366 (from NZ)</p> <p>Email: supplier@needitnow.com.au</p> |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

needitnow.com.au

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.needitnow.com.au - last minute accommodation site |
| Launched | Established in 2001, acquired by AOT Group in 2004 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually (through this site specifically) | Not advised |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia and some New Zealand |
| Target Markets | Budget, Moderate, Deluxe Corporate, Leisure Groups, FITs |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation and car hire |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | A mixture of direct contracting and via channel managers |
| Commission | 10 – 15% |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 3 months |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | 7 -14 days |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | 1-2 days |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Ranking is based on factors such as price and location |
| Other Notes | There is no cost to register and no monthly fees. |

3) Booking.com

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Booking.com B.V. |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.booking.com |
| Launched | 1996 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Owned by Priceline (they also own Agoda which is operated separately) |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually: | Not advised |
| Country of Origin | The Netherlands |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Worldwide |
| Target Markets | All accommodation product |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation only |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Channel managers or extranet |
| Commission | 12% |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 365 days |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Not public |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia if possible) | Not public |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Performance based ranking |
| Benefits of doing business with Booking.com (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <p>Booking.com provides a cost-effective commission based model, offering accommodation providers the opportunity to access global markets via the website and over 5,000 affiliate partners.</p> <p>The website is available in 41 languages and offers over</p> |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | 212,000 hotels in over 160 countries. Booking.com is the world's leading online hotel reservation agency booking more than 325,000 room nights every day. |
| Local Office Location(s) | Offices worldwide including Sydney. Headquarters in Amsterdam. |
| Contact Details | Guillaume Wolf, Senior Account Manager Address: Level 11, 95 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW 2000 Email: Australia@booking.com Phone: 02 9255 9200 |
| Other Notes | All bookings are guaranteed with a credit card and guests pay directly upon checking out of the hotel (commission invoiced after departure). |

4) CTRIP

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Ctrip.com International Ltd. (CTRP) |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.ctrip.com |
| Launched | 1999 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Publicly traded company - listed on NASDAQ in 2003 Owns some economy hotel chains in China |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually: | Information not available |
| Country of Origin | China |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | Ctrip is the leading hotel and airline ticket consolidator in China offering: A leading travel brand in China Large supplier network and nationwide coverage Scalable platform and flexible cost structure Excellent customer service Advanced infrastructure and technology Experienced management team |
| Local Office Location(s) | Company's headquarters is in Shanghai, China. The company has branch offices in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and other major cities throughout China. |
| Contact Details | Information not available |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | China |
| Target Markets | Information not available |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, hotels, vacation packages and car rentals |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Ctrip.com is a consumer site |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Information not available |
| Commission | Information not available |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Information not available |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Information not available |
| Average Length of Stay | Information not available |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Information not available |
| Other Notes | Ctrip primarily targets frequent independent travellers in China who do not travel in groups. These travellers form a traditionally under-served yet fast-growing segment of the China travel industry. |

5) Discover Australia

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Discover Australia |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.discoverAustralia.com – see separate profile below www.discoverWest.com www.skywestholidays.com.au www.airnorth.com.au www.skippers.com.au |
| Launched | Discover Australia Holidays has grown out of the very successful Discover West Holidays that has been operating for around 20 years. Discover Australia is now one of the largest inbound-wholesalers for Australia. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Discover Australia is a major Domestic Wholesaler and Inbound Tour Operator. Discover Australia Holidays also operates : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover West Holidays (1 in 5 holiday makers to WA) • Skywest Holidays (on behalf of Skywest Airlines) • Airnorth Wholesale (on behalf of Airnorth Airlines) • Skippers Holidays (on behalf of Airnorth Airlines) • Discover Australia is part of Kalhaven Group, owned by the Harding Family. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually (organisation as a whole, not just via website) | Approximately 150,000 longer stay, touring passengers |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | Get bookings you would have otherwise not had and fill empty rooms/seats. Discover Australia delivers additional 'upside' bookings due to its unique dynamic holiday package (eg Flight + Hotel Packages) and its additional broad distribution / promotion of suppliers through travel agents. |
| Local Office Location(s) | Discover Australia is based in Perth, Western Australia with an office in the Philippines (Manila) |
| Contact Details | Suppliers interested in working with Discover Australia should contact the Discover Australia Supplier Support Department: Email: product@discoverAustralia.com Telephone: 08 6263 6421 Address: 19 Olive Street, PO Box 8073, Subiaco WA 6008 |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Other Notes | Discover Australia is growing at a very strong rate and welcomes new Supplier Partners. You can distribute and promote your product through high volume Holiday Packages and retail travel agents. A single connection to Discover Australia enables you to easily access retail agents and all of websites. |
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discoveraustralia.com.au

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| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.discoveraustralia.com.au |
| Launched | 2005 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually (through this site specifically) | 150,000 longer stay, touring passengers |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Worldwide |
| Target Markets | Holiday Packages Flight + Hotel Packages Self-Drive Packages Leisure Short Breaks |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, car hire, tours, flights, packages |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Through 4,000 retail travel agents and to consumers. |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | SiteMinder, Levart, ResOnline, Bookeasy, TXA, EZYield, Channel Direct, Pegasus and our Supplier Web Interface. |
| Commission Level | Varies |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 12 months |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Average 46 days (7 weeks) in advance of travel |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | Average 8 nights per booking |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Various criteria, including price, popularity and commission |
| Other Notes | Join more than 2,000 other Supplier Partners that benefit from Discover Australia's broad distribution and holiday packaging. |

6) Expedia

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| Business Name | Expedia, Inc. |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | <p>www.expedia.com – full service online travel agency with localised sites in more than 30 countries (see separate profile below)</p> <p>www.hotels.com – hotel specialist with sites in more than 60 countries (see separate profile below)</p> <p>www.venere.com – agency hotel company</p> <p>www.hotwire.com – discount travel site offering opaque deals</p> <p>www.egencia.com – corporate travel management company</p> <p>www.localexpert.com – destination services and activities provider</p> <p>www.classicvacations.com – luxury travel specialist</p> <p>www.elong.com – China’s second largest booking site</p> |
| Launched | 1996 (Expedia Inc.) - Founded as a division of Microsoft and later spun off as a multi-billion dollar company |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Parent company is Expedia Inc. which became a publicly traded company on NASDAQ three years after being created by Microsoft. InterActiveCorp's (IAC) acquired a controlling interest in Expedia in 2002. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Information not available |
| Country of Origin | United States |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <p>In over 15 years Expedia has grown to become the world’s single most popular online travel booking company, generating more leisure and business travel bookings combined than any other travel agency – on or offline. We are a publically traded company whose internet birthplace makes us both a travel and technology company with an established history of delivering value to our consumers and partners through our world class global brands.</p> <p>In Australia Expedia operates two different models – Global and Local. Joining either model is free. There are no registration fees, fixed costs, exit fees or marketing costs.</p> <p>Exposure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your property will be promoted globally across 100 localised Expedia, Inc. branded websites across 70 countries including Expedia, Hotels.com brands and |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| | <p>over 10,000 global affiliate websites such as Lonely Planet, New York Times and joint ventures such as AirAsia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50 million customers per month visit Expedia's websites globally with strong sales from North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia • We translate your property into 38 languages increasing the rate of conversion from non-English speaking guests. • Access to Free global and local marketing campaigns with millions spent on advertising your region and your hotel on your behalf • 1-to-1 consultation expertise in the form of a dedicated Market Manager for your market • Over 90,000 Travel Agents worldwide book through Expedia at no additional commission to you • Access to an opaque selling channel where your hotel discounts are effectively hidden from the public eye, maintaining your pricing parity |
| Local Office Location(s) | Offices worldwide including; Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland. Headquarters in Bellevue, Washington. |
| Contact Details | New properties please visit www.joinexpedia.com |

expedia.com and hotels.com

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| Website / Brand | www.expedia.com and www.hotels.com |
| Launched | Refer above |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually (for this website) | Information not available |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Americas, Europe and Asia |
| Target Markets | All markets |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, hotels, rail, car hire, cruises, holiday packages, activities |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer as well as affiliate programs via travel agents globally |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting) | Through channel managers and direct |
| Commission | Two models: |

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| | <p>1. Global Distribution (including ANZ)</p> <p>10% on Australian and New Zealand points of sale bookings within 28 days and 25% for all other bookings. All international bookings outside of Australia and New Zealand are 25% commission.</p> <p>2. Local Distribution (only ANZ)</p> <p>Flat 10% commission for all bookings</p> |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Rates can be loaded 500 days out and customers can book 365 days out. |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Information not available |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | Information not available |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Rankings are algorithm orientated taking into consideration; parity, customer reviews, inventory, content and promotions. |
| Other notes | <p>How to work with Expedia:</p> <p>Global Distribution:</p> <p>We connect to your channel manager (such as SiteMinder, Levart, STAAH, Ezyield, Seekom, Resonline etc). You must have a channel manager to connect to the global model. If you do not, you can still proceed with the local model. You will have over 365 days full control over your content, rates and inventory.</p> <p>Expedia takes full payment from the guest upon booking. You then invoice Expedia once the guest has departed. You can opt for instant payment via virtual credit card or invoice us via an online payment service (processed in 7 days). It's your choice and there is no need to wait for a particular time of the month to invoice.</p> <p>Local Distribution:</p> <p>We connect to your channel manager (such as SiteMinder, Levart, STAAH, Ezyield, Seekom, Resonline etc). If you do not use a channel manager, you will be provided with access to our Extranet site and training .You will have over 365 days full control over your content, rates and inventory</p> <p>Expedia takes full payment from the guest upon booking. You then charge Expedia upon guest departure via a unique credit card number that we supply per guest booking. Instant payment!</p> |

7) GTA Gullivers Travel Associates

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| Business Name | GTA (Gullivers Travel Associates) |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | GTA Corporate website www.gta-travel.com GTA Wholesale booking system http://rs.gta-travel.com/Home.jsp OctopusTravel Retail booking system www.agents.octopustravel.com.au – see separate profile below |
| Launched | GTA was originally established in London as a tour operator in 1975 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | The Kuoni Group (based in Zurich, Switzerland) purchased GTA from Travelport in 2011. Kuoni is one of the world's leading globally-active leisure and destination management travel organisations, with a worldwide workforce of more than 10,000 employees. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually (organisation as a whole, not just via website) | Approximately 320,000 |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 35 years experience • More than 50,000 contacted hotels in over 155 countries around the world |
| Local Office Location(s) | GTA has offices in 27 countries around the world in North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, Japan, Middle East, Japan and Asia Pacific. GTA has had an office in Sydney since 1996. |
| Contact Details | Suppliers interested in working with GTA should contact: Address: GTA Australasia PTY Ltd, Level 3, 655 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065 Tel: 02 9493 9999 Fax: 02 9493 9988 Email: reservations@gta-travel.com.au |

agents.octopustravel.com.au

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| Website / Brand | www.agents.octopustravel.com.au |
| Launched | 2003 |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually (through this site specifically) | 290,000 |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Information not available |
| Target Markets | Budget, moderate, deluxe Corporate, leisure Groups, FITs |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, sightseeing tours, private transfers and shared transfers |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Retail travel agents in Australia and New Zealand |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Direct contracting via GTA |
| Commission Level | Various |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 12 months |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies depending on destination - for Australia, 40 days |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | 7 days |
| Ranking in site search results | Information not available |
| Other Notes | <p>OctopusTravel is an innovative online travel company with offices in 27 cities including Sydney, London, Beijing and New York. The site boasts listings for more than 45,000 hotels and apartments with instant confirmation, throughout 135 countries. Other travel services include, sightseeing tours and attractions, private transfers, group travel and airport lounges. The site also provides destination information including 300 extensive city and country travel guides, weather reports, currency conversion and travel health advice.</p> <p>OctopusTravel Retail is a preferred partner with every major travel agency group in Australia.</p> |

8) Odigeo – the Online Travel Group

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| Business Name | Odigeo – The Online Travel Group |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | <p>www.opodo.com – Opodo - European consumer site, main markets UK, France, Germany, Scandinavia. Branded Travellink in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland (see separate profile below)</p> <p>www.govoyages.com – GO Voyages/Govolo – Consumer sites, main market France plus other European</p> <p>www.edreams.com – eDreams – Global consumer site. Present in Europe, APAC, LATAM and North America (see separate profile below)</p> |
| Launched | Odigeo is the corporate identity for the e-travel group that was formed when AXA Private Equity and Permira brought together GO Voyages, eDreams and Opodo (with sub-brand Travellink) in July 2011 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Odigeo is owned by AXA Private Equity, Permira, and members of its management. |
| Local Office Location(s) | Offices in Barcelona (head office), London, Paris, Hamburg, Miami and Stockholm. |
| Contact Details | Information not available |

edreams.com

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| Website / Brand | eDreams.com is present in over 30 sites around the world, including Europe, The Americas and Asia Pacific. |
| Launched | Founded in March 1999 |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Worldwide - particularly Spain and Europe |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, flights, packages, cruises, car hire |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |

opodo.com

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| Website / Brand | www.opodo.com which links through to 11 local European consumer sites (including those branded Travellink in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland) |
| Launched | Opodo was founded by nine European airlines in 2001. Opodo launched its first site (www.opodo.de) in Germany in November 2001, its UK site (www.opodo.co.uk) in January 2002, its French site (www.opodo.fr) in April 2002 and its Italian site (www.opodo.it) in January 2006. Having established a presence in Spain, Portugal, Austria and Scandinavia, Opodo now operates in 11 markets. Amadeus took control in 2004 but sold the business in 2011 to AXA Private Equity and Permira Funds. |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Europe |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, flights, packages, cruises, car hire |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |

9) Orbitz

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| Business Name | Orbitz Worldwide, Inc. |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | <p>www.orbitz.com - see separate profile below</p> <p>HotelClub brand (primarily Asia Pacific) which has three sites:</p> <p>www.hotelclub.com (head office Sydney, acquired by Orbitz 2004) – see separate profile below</p> <p>www.hotelclub.com/travelagent.asp</p> <p>www.asiahotels.com</p> <p>www.ratestogo.com – a last minute hotel deals – see separate profile below</p> <p>The Away Network brand (primarily aimed at the Americas) has three sites:</p> <p>www.away.com – travel planning and booking</p> <p>www.gorp.com – adventure and outdoor travel information (e.g. camping and national parks information for the US)</p> <p>www.adventurefinder.com – directory of adventure travel experiences</p> <p>www.trip.com – allows customers to search for cheapest fares across multiple travel sites</p> <p>www.ebookers.com - Primarily UK/Europe audience.</p> <p>www.cheaptickets.com</p> <p>www.orbitzforbusiness.com – Corporate travel</p> |
| Launched | 2001 |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Ownership / Affiliations | <p>Publicly traded company listed on the New York Stock Exchange.</p> <p>Orbitz was originally formed by a group of leading U.S. airlines in 1999 to participate in the rapidly growing online travel industry. The airline investors in Orbitz consisted of American Airlines, Continental Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines and United Air Lines. The Orbitz website was launched in 2001. In November 2004, Orbitz was acquired by Cendant and assumed responsibility for Cendant's domestic online travel business, which included CheapTickets, a leading online travel brand focused on the value-conscious traveller, and for Flairview Travel, which operated the international online hotel websites HotelClub.com and RatesToGo.com. In February 2005, Cendant acquired ebookers, a leading international online travel brand with an online presence in 13 countries in Europe. Orbitz Worldwide was formed through the combination of Orbitz and the online travel assets of Cendant's travel distribution services division and became a public company in July 2007.</p> |
| Country of Origin | <p>United States</p> |
| Local Office Location(s) | <p>Offices worldwide including Sydney. Headquarters in Chicago, Illinois.</p> |
| Contact Details | <p>Tim Enstice, Corporate Communications Manager tim.enstice@gmail.com +1.312.894.4721</p> |
| Benefits of doing business with the OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <p>Over 18 million unique visitors per month across all websites. Operating in more than 140 countries and 16 different languages.</p> <p>Orbitz Worldwide Distribution: industry leader in the development and delivery of private label travel solutions to a broad range of partners, including many of the world's largest airlines. From easy-to-use, turnkey services to powerful, custom developed end-to-end solutions, Orbitz Worldwide Distribution has the experience, technology and supplier relationships to deliver best-in-class travel products to your customers.</p> |

orbitz.com

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| Website / Brand | <p>www.orbitz.com</p> |
| Launched | <p>2001</p> |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Main Geographic Market(s) | Americas |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, hotels, rail, car hire, cruises, holiday packages, activities |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |

hotelclub.com

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| Website / Brand | www.hotelclub.com and www.hotelclub.com/travelagent.asp |
| Launched | 1996 and 2001 |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Asia Pacific |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation only |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | www.hotelclub.com Direct to consumer www.hotelclub.com/travelagent.asp Travel Agents (worldwide) |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 12 months |
| Contact Details | Travel Agent Program Manager : Steven Voak travelagent_support@hotelclub.com Consumer 24/7 customer support: https://faq.hotelclub.com/ |
| Other notes: | HotelClub has a loyalty program where members receive up to 7% back on every booking. The rewards can be used on their very next booking. Membership is free and easy to sign up: http://www.hotelclub.com/promo/memberrewards . HotelClub for Travel Agent Program offers Nett Rates to bona fide Travel Agents globally. Nett Rates enables the Agency to on sell at prices they deem suitable which gives them control of their earning capacity, on a per booking basis. |

ratestogo.com

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| Website / Brand | www.ratestogo.com |
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Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Launched | 2002 |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Asia Pacific |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation only |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Anytime from same-day check-ins to 12 months in advance |
| Contact Details (if different from those already provided in company profile) | Consumer 24/7 customer support: https://faq.ratestogo.com/ |

10) Quickbeds

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| Business Name | Quickbeds.com |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.quickbeds.com |
| Launched | 2002 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | A division of Flight Centre Ltd. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually: | 250,000 |
| Country of Origin | Australia |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia |
| Target Markets | All; Budget, Moderate, Deluxe. Corporate and Leisure |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation and car hire |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer, B2B to retail and corporate agents |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Mostly via a number of channel managers, some direct |
| Commission | 6-12% for retail / corporate agents |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 365 days |
| Average Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | 7 days |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia if possible) | 2-3 nights |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Default is 5 star to 1 star |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | B2C and B2B Online hotels solution for Flight Centre Ltd Overseas expansion to other FCL markets in 2012/13 |
| Local Office Location(s) | Brisbane |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Contact Details | <p>Operators interested in being sold through Quickbeds.com should contact:</p> <p>Address: Level 1, 545 Queen Street, Brisbane, QLD, 4000</p> <p>Email: john_feenaghty@flightcentre.com</p> <p>Phone: 0409 581 046</p> |
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11) ReadyRooms

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| Business Name | readyrooms.com |
| Website(s) / Online Brand(s) | www.readyrooms.com.au - online hotel aggregator servicing the Australian market |
| Date Launched | 2009 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | <p>Readyrooms.com is operated by Qantas Holidays Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Jetset Travelworld Limited.</p> <p>Jetset Travelworld Group is an integrated travel business operating several wholesale travel businesses (holiday packaging), franchise-based and affiliate retail agency networks, air ticket consolidation, airline representation and travel management services.</p> <p>See brand profile.</p> |
| Approximate number of passengers to/within Australia annually: | Information not available |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | Information not available |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia |
| Target Markets | Budget, Moderate, Deluxe, Corporate, Leisure Groups, FITs |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, travel insurance, flights, car hire |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Inventory is sourced internally |
| Commission Level | Not advised – contact ReadyRooms for details |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | From last minute to 365 days in advance |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Information not available |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | Information not available |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Based on our partner agreement – contact ReadyRooms for details |
| Local Office Location(s) | Head office is in Sydney. The Jetset Travelworld Group has operations in Australia, New Zealand, the US, Fiji, Asia, UK and South Africa, with offices in Sydney, Auckland, Los Angeles and Johannesburg. |
| Contact Details | Suppliers interested in working with ReadyRooms should email: product@readyrooms.com.au Qantas Holidays Limited Trading as ReadyRooms Level 10, 241 O'Riordan Street, Mascot, NSW, 2020 |

12) Roamfree

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| Business Name | Roamfree |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.roamfree.com.au – consumer accommodation booking website (see separate profile below) |
| Launched | 2006 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Gold Coast-based Tourism Holdings led by David Oliver purchased Roamfree in 2009 (Oliver was a co-founder of the site). At the time, subsidiaries of Roamfree included BookEasy (online booking and inventory management system for visitor/booking centres and their supplier members) and ResOnline (channel manager which has since been sold). |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | With access to a large affiliate network, Roamfree will have your property distributed into areas you never thought possible. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | In excess of 10,000 |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia |
| Target Markets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget, Moderate, Deluxe • Corporate, Leisure • Groups, FITs |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Inventory sourced using channel managers including Roommanager, ResOnline, Bookeasy, SiteMinder, Levart, Hirus as well the other major channel managers and Property Management Systems. |
| Commission Level | 10 – 15% |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 365 days |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | 45 days |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | 5 days |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Price and relevance in destination |
| Local Office Location(s) | Southport, Queensland (Gold Coast) |
| Contact Details | <p>Suppliers interested in working with Roamfree should contact:</p> <p>Scott Hampson</p> <p>Email: scott.hampson@roamfree.com or support@roamfree.com</p> <p>Telephone: (toll free) 1800 061 610</p> |
| Other Notes | In some cases Roamfree acts as a distributor site where they are an intermediary (i.e. transactions are between the accommodation supplier and the customer). In some cases Roamfree acts as an online travel agent, with Roamfree processing the payment – they are a licensed travel agent. |

13) Travelocity

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| Business Name | Travelocity |
| Main Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.travelocity.com – see separate profile below www.zuji.com – see separate profile below www.lastminute.com - see separate profile below |
| Launched | 1996 as a subsidiary of Sabre Holdings Corporation (which grew out of American Airlines) |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Owned by Sabre Holdings Corporation. Travelocity also owns and operates other brands including igougo.com (online travel community) and Travelocity Business (corporate travel). Travelocity has a large affiliate marketing program called World Choice Travel. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Information not available |
| Country of Origin | United States |
| Local Office Location(s) | Offices worldwide including Sydney and Auckland (Head Office in Southlake, Texas) |
| Contact Details | Operators interested in working with Travelocity should contact: Address: Travelocity Market Coordinators, Level 9, 15 Blue Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060 Phone: 02 8923 5272 or 02 8923 5229 Email: zujiauhotels@zuji.com |
| Benefits of doing business with this company (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | Global distribution. Hotels receive exposure on a variety of websites which have different booking profiles. Ranging from Travelocity in the US and Canada to lastminute.com in Europe. Hotel descriptive content on European sites is translated into French/Spanish/Italian and German to give exposure in these markets. Travelocity is the official packaging partner for Blue Holidays (the holidays program of Virgin Australia). Hotels must be working with Travelocity to be part of the Blue Holidays packaging programme. Can create tailor made holiday packages to include a flight, hotel and car hire in one transaction which allows us to offer the customer not just a hotel room, but a holiday. |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| Other Notes | Hotels signing up to be part of our programme have access to a Travelocity Market Manager. Their role is to drive business for you. Our Market Managers provide a consultative approach and can provide market intelligence and are there to support you. |
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travelocity.com

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| Website / Brand | www.travelocity.com |
| Launched | 1996 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Information not available |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | United States, Canada and New Zealand. |
| Target Markets | 4-5 star - leisure customers. |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, hotels, rail, car hire, cruises, holiday packages, activities |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer – and via affiliate partners. |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Connected to all major channel managers Proprietary contracted product. |
| Commission | Please contact coordinator |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 365 days |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| Average Length of Stay | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| Other Notes | Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/travelocity |

zuji.com

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website / Brand | www.zuji.com and associated site |
| Launched | Asia Pacific operation, launched 2002 with Travelocity as technology provider and investor, Travelocity took full ownership in 2006. |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Information not available |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia, India, Hong Kong, Singapore |
| Target Markets | Budget, moderate, deluxe, leisure |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, hotels, rail, car hire, cruises, holiday packages, activities |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer and affiliates |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Connected to all major channel managers Proprietary contracted product. |
| Commission | Please contact coordinator |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| Average Length of Stay | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Your Market Manager can provide this |
| Other Notes | <p>Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/zujiAU</p> <p>Zuji is a partner of Virgin Australia's 'Blue Holidays' program (the holidays program of Virgin Australia).</p> <p>Zuji has recently re launched its off line sales capabilities. This is to provide additional assurance to our customers. Customers can call our travel experts and make their booking through the call centre. This is particularly useful for customers wishing to book a multi stop holiday.</p> |

lastminute.com

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.lastminute.com (NOT lastminute.com.au which is owned by the Wotif Group) |
| Launched | 1998, acquired by Travelocity in 2005 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Information not available |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | UK and Europe |
| Target Markets | Budget, Moderate, Deluxe, Leisure, |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, hotels, rail, car hire, cruises, holiday packages, activities |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Connected to all major channel managers Proprietary contracted product. |
| Commission | Please contact coordinator |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| Average Length of Stay | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Varies depending on market. Your Market Manager can provide this. |

14) Viator

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Viator |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.viator.com + 30 additional consumer-facing websites including eleven local-language sites in Europe, Japan and Latin America. |
| Launched | 1995 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Viator is a privately held company with lead investment from The Carlyle Group, one of the world's largest private equity firms. |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | Viator is the world's leading online resource for travel experiences, providing access to more than 10,000 tours, attractions and activities in 800-plus destinations in more than 150 countries. Viator offers a one-stop shop to plan, research and book trip activities via its Web and mobile platforms with resources such as over 300,000 traveler reviews, ratings and photos, suggested itineraries and the Viator Travel Blog. Viator's in-house travel experts hand-pick trusted local operators to ensure quality, value and service, all backed by a low-price guarantee. Viator sells its products through Viator.com, the Viator Tours and Activities App for iPhone, the Viator Ultimate Experience Guide for iPad, nine local language sites for the European, Latin American and Japanese markets and more than 2,000 affiliated sites that include major hotel chains and airlines, online travel agencies, city-specific sites and more. |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Global |
| Target Markets | Budget, moderate, deluxe Tour, activities and attractions for all FIT markets Adventure, sightseeing, individuals |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Tours and activities |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer through viator.com. Content is shared with a global network of more than 2000 affiliates including hotel chains, airlines, online travel agencies (including Priceline, lastminute.com, Opodo, eBookers, Zuji, Air New Zealand, Jetstar, Air Asia) and destination sites. |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Viator Inc. contracts wholesale rates directly from local operators. |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Commission | Information not available |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | More than 1 year |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies. Bookings can be taken up to departure, and as far as 1 year in advance |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | Information not available |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | The ranking depends on traffic, conversions, bookings, the number of reviews posted and the average score of the review (i.e. If a product has lots of 5 star reviews and traveller photo, it will rank higher). |
| Local Office Location(s) | Viator is headquartered in San Francisco with regional offices in Sydney, London and Las Vegas. |
| Contact Details | Suppliers interested in being sold through Viator should contact Michelle Bassil Product Manager Asia Pacific Tel: 02 8219 5445 Email: michelleb@viator.com Operators can also complete a new supplier survey online. |

15) Webjet

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Business Name | Webjet |
| Website(s) / Brand(s) | <p>www.webjet.com.au and other local sites including www.webjet.co.nz (New Zealand), www.webjet.com in English and Spanish(US), www.webjet.ca. (Canada), www.webjet.com.sg (Singapore), www.webjet.com.hk (Hong Kong), www.webjet.co.uk (UK)</p> <p>Establishing presence in South Africa through franchise agreement with BidTravel. (July 2012)</p> <p>‘Lots of Hotels’ – new Dubai-based business offering a business to business international hotel aggregation platform initially marketing in Dubai, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Webjet. (June 2012)</p> |
| Date Launched | Established in 1998 (Australian site) |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Public company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange since 2002 |
| Benefits of doing business with OTA (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webjet are Australia’s leading online travel agency • Webjet have an email database of over 1.7 million in AU and over 260,000 in NZ. As well as a Facebook fan base of over 66,000 in AU and 24,000 in NZ. • Customers can book all travel needs in the one place as Webjet offer all leading airlines as well as hotel product from 6 providers (Orbitz, Expedia, GTA, Tourico, AOT and Hotelbeds), travel insurance and car hire. • Webjet have technology such as Deal Finder that allows customers to easily find a good deal • American Express, Flybuys and Bank West customers can use their membership rewards to purchase travel at Webjet • Webjet have teamed up with flybuys, Australia best shopping rewards program. Now members can earn 1 point per \$2 spent every time they make a booking for any flight or hotel. |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia, North America, New Zealand, UK, Asia (Singapore and Hong Kong), South Africa, Middle East |
| Target Markets | Those who want to control their trip planning and don’t want to rely on a travel agent. |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Flights, accommodation, car hire, insurance |
| Distribution | Direct to consumer |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flights are sourced through a GDS and APIs • Hotels are sourced from 6 providers, Orbitz, Expedia, GTA, Tourico, AOT and Hotelbeds • Travel insurance is sourced from Allianz • Car hire sourced through a GDS. |
| Commission Level | Varies depending on the product. |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | 12 Months |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Information not available |
| Average Length of Stay (in Australia) | Information not available |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | <p>Flight search results are in price order with cheapest on the left.</p> <p>Hotels are ordered by the sort by filter. Webjet recommendations are sorted by most booked hotels.</p> <p>Insurance options are all available on the page in order of most comprehensive at the top.</p> <p>Car hire results are ordered by price similar to Flights.</p> |
| Local Office Location(s) | Level 9, 492 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004 |
| Contact Details | <p>Mathew Fagan Brand & Communications Manager Email: mfagan@webjet.com.au Phone: 03 9828 9714</p> <p>For advertising opportunities: Michael Zhang Email: michael@maxinteractive.com.au Phone: 03 9828 9781</p> <p>For hotel related enquiries: Email: onlinetravel@webjet.com.au</p> |

16) Wotif Group

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| Business Name | Wotif Group |
| Main Website(s) / Brand(s) | www.wotif.com www.lastminute.com.au www.travel.com.au www.asiawebdirect.com and affiliated www.lateststays.com www.godo.com.au – GoDo.com.au – activity booking site acquired 2009 |
| Launched | 2000 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Listed on the Australian Stock Exchange since 2006 (Wotif.com Holdings Limited) |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually: | Information not available |
| Country of Origin | Australia |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia and New Zealand with growing presence in Asia, Europe and United States. Focus on travel to/from and within Asia Pacific region. |
| Benefits of doing business with Wotif Group (e.g. geographic coverage, size, number of foreign language sites, key affiliates, loyalty programs) | <p>Wotif Group operates leading online travel brands in the Asia Pacific region.</p> <p>We provide both business and leisure customers alike with a highly convenient booking service for all their travel needs. Our services are simple to use, value-focused, and provide a wide range of choice whether for accommodation, flights, car rental, insurance, travel packages, activities or tours.</p> <p>Our family of brands includes Wotif.com, lastminute.com.au, travel.com.au, Asia Web Direct, LateStays.com, GoDo.com.au and Arnold Travel Technology, along with approximately 100 other travel content and destination websites.</p> <p>We strive to be the first choice for business and leisure consumers with a particular focus on those travelling to, from and within the Asia Pacific region. We work as partners with our travel suppliers providing a very cost-effective distribution platform for their products.</p> <p>Since launching in 2000, we have grown to be a truly international company, employing more than 450 staff in 13 countries on five continents. Our head office is in Australia, and we have additional offices in New Zealand,</p> |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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| | <p>Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Canada. We listed on the Australian Securities Exchange in June 2006 as Wotif.com Holdings Limited, trading under the ASX code “WTF”.</p> <p>In 2008 the company’s operations expanded with the takeover of travel.com.au Limited and the purchase of the businesses conducted by Asia Web Direct (HK) Limited, and we adopted the name Wotif Group for the parent company.</p> <p>The Group further consolidated its position in the travel market in December 2009 when we purchased the activity booking website GoDo.com.au. Then in early 2010, we added an innovative flight booking platform to the leading accommodation brand Wotif.com.</p> |
| Local Office Location(s) | Brisbane (Head Office) – Also offices in New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, UK and Canada |
| Contact Details | <p>Address: Level 1/ 7 Baroona Road, Milton, QLD, 4064</p> <p>Email: regos@wotifgroup.com</p> <p>Phone: 07 3512 9983</p> <p>Potential suppliers can register their interest on the Wotif website through an online registration form - https://supplier.wotif.com/SupplierEntry.jsp</p> |

wotif.com

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website / Brand | www.wotif.com |
| Launched | 2000 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Every month our site attracts almost 5.3 million visits, with customers making more than 252,000 bookings. |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia and New Zealand with growing presence in Asia, Europe and United States |
| Target Markets | Our brand and promotions focus on the leisure customer. We work with all types of accommodation from large 5 Stars in CBDs to holiday houses in regional areas... and everything in between. |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation and Flights |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as | Suppliers sell their inventory across our websites via the Wotif Group extranet which can be updated directly or via |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | a channel manager. |
| Commission | 10% including tax and merchant fees |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Customers can book accommodation up to 6 months in advance. |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies between regions. Contact the dedicated Product Manager for your region for more information. |
| Average Length of Stay | Varies between regions. Contact the dedicated Product Manager for your region for more information. |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Accommodation is listed in star rating/ alphabetical order and every hotel in a region is included on Page 1! All suppliers have the opportunity to receive extra exposure to our customers through promotions including Wot Hotel, Flaming Deals, Wot Bonus and inclusion in our Wotmail newsletters which are sent to a loyal database of 1.6 million subscribers. |
| Other notes | <p>Wotif.com sells more rooms than any other travel website in Australasia. Every month our site attracts 5.3 million visits, with customers making more than 252,000 accommodation bookings. 1 in 10 Australian online accommodation bookings are made through Wotif.com. Our customer database reaches more than 1.7 million people in Australia and New Zealand.</p> <p>Our website is the first choice for business and leisure travellers in Australia and New Zealand, with a growing presence in Asia, Europe and America. We are a well-known and trusted brand, and have been ranked by Hitwise as the number 1 Travel - Destinations & Accommodation site in Australia for four years running.</p> <p>Our accommodation suppliers are always in control of their rates and allotment via our secure Supplier Extranet, and backed up by our award-winning 24/7 Customer Service Centre.</p> <p>Listing your inventory, taking part in our extra promotions and inclusion in our direct marketing campaigns are all free of charge, and our margin on confirmed bookings is one of the lowest in the industry. Our terms and conditions are set out in our Supplier Agreement, which you can read as part of our registration process.</p> |

travel.com.au

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Website / Brand | www.travel.com.au |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Launched | 1997 – acquired by Wotif Group 2008 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | Travel.com.au attracts almost 250,000 visits per month. |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australia |
| Target Markets | Our brand focus is on both leisure and business customers looking for big brands at the best prices. |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, flights, package holidays, cruises, car hire, tours, activities and travel insurance. |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer. |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Via the Wotif Group extranet which can be updated directly or via a channel manager. |
| Commission | 10% including tax and merchant fees. |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Customers can book accommodation up to 6 months in advance. |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies between regions. Contact your Product Manager for more information. |
| Average Length of Stay | Varies between regions. Contact your Product Manager for more information. |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Accommodation is listed in price order from lowest to highest in within location categories however other search options are also available. |
| Other Notes | <p>Established in September 1997, travel.com.au is one of Australia's most experienced online travel companies, providing customers with endless travel possibilities.</p> <p>We offer the best of both worlds – the flexibility of booking online 24 hours a day or with a passionate and experienced Travel Expert over the phone.</p> <p>We work with all the big brands to offer our customers a variety of international and domestic flights, holiday packages, tours, hotels, travel insurance and car hire at better prices.</p> |

lastminute.com.au

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website / Brand | www.lastminute.com.au (NOT lastminute.com which is owned by Travelocity) |
| Launched | 2000 – established as a joint venture between lastminute.com (UK) and travel.com.au. Acquired by Wotif Group when it purchased travel.com.au in 2008 |
| Approximate number of passengers to Australia annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 million unique visitors a month • 1,230,000 visits per month • 10,000,000 page impressions per month |
| Main Geographic Market(s) | Australasia |
| Target Markets | lastminute.com.au has a particularly loyal female following and works with all types of accommodation from large 5 Stars in CBDs to small B&Bs. |
| Trip components that can be booked on the site | Accommodation, flights, package holidays, gifts, experiences, travel insurance and car hire |
| Distribution (e.g. direct to consumer, to other industry distributors) | Direct to consumer |
| How inventory is sourced (e.g. through channel managers such as SiteMinder, TXA or direct contracting, extranet) | Via the Wotif Group extranet which can be updated directly or via a channel manager. |
| Commission | 10% including tax and merchant fees |
| Booking Window (i.e. how far in advance can bookings be made) | Customers can book accommodation up to 6 months in advance. |
| Lead Time (i.e. average time between booking and travel) | Varies between regions. Contact the dedicated Product Manager for your region for more information. |
| Average Length of Stay | Varies between regions. Contact the dedicated Product Manager for your region for more information. |
| How products are ranked in search results on the site | Accommodation is listed by star rating/ lowest price order (averaged over the first 14 days) and every hotel in a region is included on Page 1. All suppliers have the opportunity to receive extra exposure through newsletters and promotions. |
| Other notes | http://www.lastminute.com.au/hotels/documents.html No. 4 Online Travel Agent in Australia (hitwise). |

Online Travel Agents – Advanced Profiles of Key Players

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|--|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Our customer database reaches more than 500,000 subscribers. |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------|

17) Related material**a) *Related tutorials***

- Online Distribution 101
- Online Distribution: Advanced
- Online Travel Agents 101

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 40

Social Media For Tourism

This tutorial explains what social media is and what main networks are available to your tourism business

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is Social Media?

Wikipedia defines social media as the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos and audio. Social media is more than a new way to communicate; it refers to **an entire online environment built on people's contributions and interactions.**

The communication in social media is done using social networking websites or platforms as they connect groups of people together. They replicate in an online environment the behaviours that people have in an offline environment (e.g. being part of an association or a special interest group). The online environment is extremely well suited to networking, as it doesn't involve location or time constraints. Anyone can participate from anywhere at anytime.

Leveraging off social media to market tourism products has proven to be an excellent strategy. However, you will need to be involved for you and your business to reap the rewards.

a) Why can't I avoid social media?

SOCIAL MEDIA EXIST WHETHER YOU GET INVOLVED OR NOT. IF YOU REMAIN PASSIVE YOU MIGHT LOSE BUSINESS.

If you don't want to start creating your own social media content, **we recommend you at least monitor what is being said about you online as anyone can say anything about you on the Internet.** The Online reputation management and TripAdvisor tutorials provide more information on how to manage your online reputation. If you stay passive, you might lose business.

b) How much time will I need?

It is important that you take time to immerse yourself and be a spectator in social media before you start creating your own content. First you should consider engaging in the social media networks listed in section 2a):

- Give yourself 30 minutes to one hour to set up your account per social media network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor)
- First watch and "listen" (a good way to start is to conduct a search on your destination and/or your keywords)
- Then aim for one hour each week per social media network. Start by responding or engaging in existing conversations
- When you feel ready, start creating your own content to initiate your own conversations.

c) How can I get involved?

Social media networks are to the online world what an association is to the offline world. Social networks are the meetings, exchange of information and knowledge that derive from you being a member of the association. **You will only get out of your association what you put in. The**

same applies to social media networks.

As a small or medium operator, you may not have time to focus on a lot of social media. This gives you the opportunity to focus instead on quality interaction with a smaller number of media. You may be better suited to offer a higher level of individual customer service than larger operators. This individual, one on one relationship is also the core component of a successful social media strategy. You should therefore consider engaging in social media to gain competitive advantage.

Let's have a close look at the steps you should take to become successful in social media. There are 5 steps and you will need to follow them in order.



| | Social media (online) | Association (offline) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inactive: "I am not involved in any manner" | Examples I don't use social media. I have never looked at a blog, have never opened YouTube, and have no idea what a podcast is. | Examples I am not part of the association. |
| Spectator: "I watch but haven't joined" | I have searched for videos on how to play the guitar on YouTube but I don't have my own account. | I am thinking about joining the local chamber of commerce and have done some initial research, read some of their material, and know who to contact. |
| Joiner: "I joined but I am not very active" | I have now signed up for a Facebook account, I know the basics but I haven't really explored all it has to offer. | I am now a member of my local chamber of commerce but haven't attended a meeting yet. |
| Critic: "I am an active member and voice my opinion" | I have started to upload photos to Flickr and left comments on other people's photos. | I have attended a few meetings, met some other members and we chatted about relevant topics. |

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Creator: "I am the owner" | I have now set up my own blog, or made my own videos and posted them on YouTube. | I have become heavily involved and became chairperson or even started my own association. |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The above demonstrates that you cannot expect successful outcomes from social media if you jump the steps and are only using them as a means to an end. Just like being part of an association, business opportunities will eventually arise but they are secondary. Social media requires the willingness to genuinely participate and make a positive difference.

2. Social media networks

Since social media networks come in different shapes and forms, a one size fits all strategy is not suitable.

a) *What social media networks are available?*

There are key social media networks that you need to consider as they could help you successfully market your business online and distinguish yourself from your competitors.

All the social media networks listed in this section are free to use and are able to be embedded (placed) within the content of your website. If you do so (e.g. embed a TripAdvisor widget on your site) their content will then appear twice: on their respective social media sites (e.g. TripAdvisor) and on your website. To embed a relevant channel of your social media network you will need access to your files or use your content management system (CMS). If you have a CMS it should only take you a few minutes to place the video, map or reviews on your site.

Powerful social media networks.

A list of powerful social media networks has been provided below. Note that countries may have different sites (e.g. www.RenRen.com and www.Qzone.qq.com for China)

Audience numbers taken from network websites' media and about pages 19/09/2011

| Name | Medium | Audience | Required Account Type |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Facebook  | Mixed (text, images, video etc) www.facebook.com | 955 Million + worldwide. Not restricted to clients or connections | Business page <i>Refer to Facebook tutorial for further information</i> |
| Twitter  | 140 character text & images www.twitter.com | 500 Million + worldwide. Not restricted to clients or connections | Standard account <i>Refer to Twitter tutorial for further information</i> |
| Google +  | Mixed (text, images, video etc) plus.google.com | 250 Million + worldwide. Not restricted to clients or connections | Standard account |
| YouTube  | Videos www.youtube.com | 800 Million + each month. Not restricted to clients or connections | Standard account with business profile <i>Refer to YouTube tutorial for further information</i> |
| TripAdvisor  | Text reviews & related images www.tripadvisor.com | 65 Million + monthly visitors worldwide | Standard business account Can upgrade to paid account if preferred <i>Refer to TripAdvisor tutorial for further information</i> |
| Blogging  | Mixed (text, images, videos etc). | Any internet user | Part of your website or via a platform such as Blogger or WordPress <i>Refer to Blogging tutorial for further information</i> |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LinkedIn*  | Text www.linkedin.com | 175 Million + users worldwide. | Standard account with business listing *Used for professional networking |
| Flickr  | Images www.flickr.com | 6 Billion + images worldwide. Not restricted to clients or connections | Standard account <i>Refer to Flickr tutorial for further information</i> |
| Pinterest  | Images www.pinterest.com | 100 Million visits in February 2012 | Standard account |

3. QR codes

Quick Response Codes (known as QR codes) consist of black modules (square dots) arranged in a square pattern on a white background. QR codes can be scanned by smartphones/tablets using a combination of the built in camera and a specific QR code scanning application. Once scanned, they open a browser window and a specific page pre-determined by the shape of the code itself.



For instance, if scanned the QR code used in this tutorial redirects to <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>

QR codes are an excellent way to add a web call to action to print media such as brochures, flyers or simple tax receipts.

A QR code redirecting to a business' TripAdvisor page could be added on the tax invoice clients get when they check out of a hotel to encourage them to review the property on TripAdvisor without having to search for their listing.

Tourism operators can create their own QR codes using different free or paid QR code builders such as <http://www.grstuff.com> and print it on their print material.

4. Developing a social media strategy

Social media works best when planned for. While you can manage social media accounts ad hoc you won't receive the same interaction and benefits as you would if you plan your content first.

You need to create a social media strategy for your business so you are able to see a full bird's eye view of what is occurring on each of your networks as well as ensuring that you do not duplicate content on each.

a) *What is a social media strategy?*



A social media strategy is a living, breathing collection of documents or plans that are put together to ensure your image and persona on your social media accounts is strongly in line with your business. In its best form a social media strategy will maximise your marketing strategy and when used to its full potential will help you source bookings in both peak and low seasons.

A social media strategy is often made up of 2 main elements:



Conversation calendar

Use it to schedule in the different posts and initiatives you plan on publishing on each site. A good conversation calendar will take into consideration:

- multiple social media networks, products/services, traditional marketing and the high and low seasons of the year
- who will write and post the content

You can start building a conversation calendar in your diary or as part of an Excel spreadsheet. Simply note down any upcoming events in your area, specials you have planned, holiday periods etc.

Once you have your events scheduled use these to create corresponding posts or content that you can post before, during and after the event.

E.g. you could create different mini conversation calendars for each social media you will use:

- Facebook conversation calendar
- YouTube conversation calendar
- Twitter conversation calendar



Social media policy

This is the go-to document to ensure that the items in your conversation calendar fall within the aims and goals of your social media accounts and are constructed according to business procedures.

While building a social media policy may seem irrelevant at first, as you get into the population and ongoing growth of your social media accounts you will need to reassess the current position and how you are using the accounts to determine if you are getting the most from them.

Create a policy and include at a minimum:

- your goals
- the type of people you would like to connect to
- any standards that you would like to adhere to
- and what you will do if your social media accounts are sabotaged or used incorrectly.

View further information and examples here:

http://humanresources.about.com/od/policysamples/a/blogging_policy.htm

5. Measuring the success of your social media strategy

As with any strategy you need to be able to assess the return on investment of your time and resources. To measure your success start by defining your objectives:

For instance, if you intend to set up a Facebook Page for your product, your objective could be to grow the listing by 10 “likers” a week. If you are using Twitter to promote a new tours page on your website, measure how many visits were generated by your Tweet using TinyURL (<http://tiny.cc/faq.php>) and/or Google Analytics.

Every month report on your objectives and achievements:

| | <i>Objective</i> | <i>Achievement</i> | <i>Relevant social media activities during the month</i> |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Facebook: | 10 fans | 15 fans | Added 12 photos and 3 guests commented on the wall |
| Twitter: | 80 new visits | 104 visits | Tweeted once a week in the late afternoon |

Repeat every month.

a) URL shortening services

One way of measuring the success of your social media strategy is to use a URL shortening service. These services will shorten your URLs into smaller ones (e.g. bitly.com/xdte8). One of the main advantages of such services is that they allow you to create different URLs for different social media networks and track how many times there were clicked.

A few popular URL shortening services are:



- www.bitly.com
- www.tinyurl.com

For instance, let's say that you are posting a new photo of a conference on Flickr.com. The URL of the photo could be <http://www.flickr.com/photos/untanglemyweb/5834646704/>. Instead of linking to this photo using the long, standard link you could use a service such as www.bitly.com and shorten it to <http://bitly.com/umwfb> for a Facebook post and to <http://bitly.com/umwtt> for a Twitter post. Once you log into your bitly.com account you will see how many clicks you had on each.

Further information about how to measure each media is provided in the media specific tutorials.

6. Social media monitoring and management tools

a) Why do I need to monitor my social media presence?

Monitoring your social media accounts enables you to see how successful you are in your efforts and provides you a way of receiving feedback from your network. Without monitoring your accounts you might not know that people are “unliking” your Facebook Page or have stopped following your Twitter account. Missing these items could be vital to the success of your social media.

b) What monitoring services are available?

There are a number of tools and services available. The below table outlines some of the most popular and easy to use services:

| Platform | Tool | What it will show you |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Facebook  | Facebook Insights www.facebook.com | Number of people that like your Page, have unliked your Page or have unsubscribed from you in the newsfeed. Key demographics of your Page “likers”, which posts are most popular and how often people interact with your page. |
| Twitter  | Twitter Analytics (to be released shortly by Twitter) | How much traffic your Twitter account has generated for your website, which of your tweets have had the most clicks and which content is tweeted about the most. |
| YouTube  | YouTube Insight www.youtube.com | Number of views, demographics, popularity, subscriber numbers, source of viewers etc. |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Blogging</p>  | <p>Google Analytics (http://www.google.com/analytics)</p> | <p>Google analytics on a blog will show all of the same details you get for your website, clicks, keywords, popular articles, demographics etc.</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

7. Key learning outcomes

- Travellers use social media tools such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and others to research their holiday and also use such tools to share information during and after their trip. It is therefore important you at least monitor key social media sites your visitors may be likely to use.
- 3 of the key social media networks used by travellers are Facebook, YouTube and TripAdvisor.
- An effective social media strategy is usually composed of a calendar and a social media policy.

8. Related items

a) *Related tutorials*

- Managing multiple social media accounts
- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- Blogging for tourism
- Online reputation management
- TripAdvisor for tourism
- Facebook for tourism
- Twitter for tourism
- YouTube and video hosting websites
- Flickr and photo hosting websites

b) *Related websites*

- Twitter Search in Plain English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGbLWQYJ6iM
- Social Media in Plain English: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MplOCIX1jPE>
- Social Networking in Plain English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7TYKVC

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 40A

Managing Multiple Social Media Accounts

This tutorial outlines different approaches for managing multiple social media accounts and the tools available to help you do it.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Social Media for Tourism

Facebook for Tourism

Twitter for Tourism

Online Reputation Management



1. Managing multiple social media accounts

Many tourism marketers are becoming more proficient with social media and are managing multiple accounts across many social media channels. Juggling different social media channels can be difficult, however there are tools that allow you be more time efficient by bringing all of your social media accounts together, this is called consolidation. This tutorial will help you understand your consolidation options.

THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS THAT CAN MAKE MANAGING MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS EASIER AND MORE TIME EFFECTIVE.

a) Am I ready to consolidate my social media?

You must have a strong level of understanding of the different types of functionality of social media that you use before you embark on consolidating your social media, for example do you:

- Administer multiple Facebook pages, a personal page and a business page?
- Regularly check your Facebook insights to see which posts are working?
- Use Twitter regularly including #hashtags and @mentions?
- Manage at least 2 social media accounts regularly?
- Have a social media strategy and a content calendar that helps you to strategically plan your posts?

2. Options for managing social media content

There are 3 ways that you can handle social media content flow:

a) Continue to manage each social media channel separately

- The benefit of maintaining your current method is that you have an ongoing understanding of the functionality of each social media channel as it evolves, for example the functionality changes when Facebook Timeline was launched.
- The actual layout of the social media site itself is often a good reminder as to what audience you are speaking to. For example when on LinkedIn it is likely that your posts are very corporate in nature and the layout of LinkedIn would be a subtle reminder to you.
- While continuing to use each individual social media channel separately is beneficial, it can be frustrating managing multiple tabs in your internet browser and flicking between apps on your phone.
- This approach would work best if you only use a couple of social media platforms and find managing them pretty straightforward and not too time consuming.

b) Link your social media accounts together

- Some people prefer their content to flow from one social media channel to the next. For example your tweets on Twitter go straight to your Facebook Page.
- Depending on your content it may be inappropriate for all of your tweets to end up on



Managing Multiple Social Media Accounts

Facebook. For example, your Facebook audience may get confused by a proliferation of #hashtags and @mentions. This could result in likers hiding posts or 'unliking' you because you are filling up their feed.

- There is however a twitter app called Selective Twitter, where you put #fb at the end of every tweet you want to go to Facebook.
- This approach would work well if you only have a few social media accounts and it's possible to link the content between them.



c) *Use a dashboard*

- Social media dashboards are designed to make managing different social media accounts simpler.
- A dashboard is where all information from your social media accounts is housed in one location.
- Dashboards arrange the information in simple columns making it easier to monitor what customers are saying and how they are interacting with you.
- You can filter your streams to only receive posts relating to business related topics to keep you focused.
- They can be useful when trying to maintain a constant 'voice' across all channels.
- You can easily select which posts will go to which social media channel.
- You can allocate which posts need responding to by your staff in other locations.
- Not all social media channels are represented on dashboards so you may need to manage some externally.
- There is also a risk of losing touch if you don't regularly visit the original social media website to see how customers are using the latest functionality.
- This approach would best suit a business with at least a few social media accounts that are very active, with regular content updates.



Screenscapture credit: www.tweetdeck.com

3. Linking social media accounts together

a) Feeding directly from one social media to another

Some social media simply connects to the other with minimal effort; it requires a onetime login. For example if you want to put Pinterest pins on Facebook you can go into your Pinterest settings and authorise Facebook to access the information from Pinterest.

YOU CAN LINK SOME SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS WITH A ONCE-OFF LOGIN.

However Facebook has a different process which is called adding 'Apps'. To add a Twitter feed to Facebook type in 'Twitter' into the Facebook search box and choose one of the apps, this will then ask for your Twitter login details. To edit or delete Facebook apps, go to the Apps menu in General Settings.

The below table shows direct links between social media:

| | Facebook Business Pages | Facebook personal Accounts | Google+ | Twitter | Flickr | Foursquare | Instagram | Linkedin | Pinterest | Tumblr | Youtube |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------|--------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|---------|
| Facebook business pages to: | | | | Y | | | | | | | |
| Facebook personal accounts to: | | | | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | |
| Google+ to: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Twitter to: | Y | Y | | | | | | | | | |
| Flickr to: | Y | | | Y | | | | | | Y | |
| Foursquare to: | | Y | | Y | | | | | | | |
| Instagram to: | | Y | | Y | Y | Y | | | | Y | |
| Linkedin to: | | | | Y | | | | | | | |
| Pinterest to: | | Y | | Y | | | | | | | |
| Tumblr to: | Y | Y | | Y | | | | | | | |
| Youtube to: | | Y | Y | Y | | | | | | | |

4. Dashboards

a) *What to consider when choosing a dashboard.*

Most available dashboards now have similar functionality; however you may like to consider:

- Are they compatible with all of your social media accounts?
- How much do they cost?
- Can they provide translations?
- Do they have web based desktop and smartphone app?
- Do they have the ability to save searches?
- Can they assign posts to be responded by team members?

b) *What are the most popular dashboards?*

There are many dashboards on the market. The most popular are Tweetdeck, Hootsuite and Seismic. Both Hootsuite and Seismic have different levels where you incrementally pay for more functionality.

Managing Multiple Social Media Accounts

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hootsuite http://hootsuite.com | <p>Hootsuite is the most popular social media dashboard. There are three levels of functionality, the first being free. If you manage a business Facebook page as well as your own personal page you will need to pay the upgrade to the 'Pro' version to have that functionality, you will be able to accommodate many accounts. Great for sharing accounts with other team members and flagging your audiences posts for other departments or locations to answer.</p> |
| Tweetdeck www.tweetdeck.com | <p>Tweetdeck is owned by Twitter and is a very popular free option for managing both Facebook and Twitter in one location. It is downloaded onto your computer however there is an online version which you can access if you use Chrome as your browser. Apps are available for your smartphone.</p> |
| Seesmic https://seesmic.com | <p>Seesmic is one of the three most popular dashboards. You can schedule posts to all connected social media channels from their website or download their Windows Desktop Application. Their smartphone app is very user-friendly.</p> |

c) *What other dashboards are there?*

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bottlenose www.bottlenose.com | <p>Bottlenose offers many features however the most outstanding is it sorts all of your news feeds across all social media accounts into related streams such as 'news', 'entertainment' and 'business', a great way of separating work from play. You can post across multiple accounts and read feeds in a newspaper style.</p> |
| Buffer www.bufferapp.com | <p>Buffer is designed to be used as you are browsing the web on your smartphone or tablet. It's free and is ideal for sharing and scheduling externally generated content easily. There are a number of apps and extensions to integrate with your web browsing regardless of what device you are on.</p> |
| Dlvr.it dlvr.it | <p>This service distributes your Blogger blog to your social media channels. They also have a publishing service where for a fee; they will send your story to many other sites.</p> |
| Grouptweet www.grouptweet.com | <p>Allows many contributors to tweet from the same twitter account, the base account is free. However with the premium account of \$4.99 per month, tweets can be contributed but moderated before they are published, ensuring the tweets align with your social media strategy. The premium version also includes scheduling.</p> |
| Involver www.involver.com | <p>Involver is a paid service for larger businesses. It lets you create Facebook apps for your business pages and also has a conversation suite that allows you to manage all conversations with your consumers in once place.</p> |

Managing Multiple Social Media Accounts

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MarketMeSuite www.marketmesuite.com | <p>The display of this dashboard is in style of a 'social inbox'. It's designed to be more like your email inbox with a similar workflow, for example: coloured flagging, automatic replies, marking as leads and smart inboxes.</p> |
| Mediafunnel www.mediafunnel.com | <p>MediaFunnel allows different levels of users, so your staff may just contribute; but you have permission to manage accounts. It can also schedule posts and monitor your band on Twitter. Cost is approximately \$5 per month.</p> |
| Postling www.postling.com | <p>The Postling dashboard is a "social inbox" which is similar in design to your email inbox. Its strength is that it shows you a snapshot view of your recent posts and allows you to organise responses to those comments. \$5 per month.</p> |
| SocialOomph www.socialoomph.com | <p>Has the same functionality as Tweetdeck however it has a very plain interface, Twitter entry level is free, Facebook and other functionality at various prices.</p> |
| Sprout Social www.sproutsocial.com | <p>Combines easy to understand statistics across all of your Facebook pages and Twitter accounts with the ability to post content across social media channels. It also has access to Google Reader which introduces another layer of content that can be passed on to your audience. Easy tracking of 'tasks' are used to remind you to respond to comments. Free.</p> |

d) What dashboards connect to my social media accounts?

Which social media your dashboard connects to will be crucial to your decision making process:

| | Bottlenose | Buffer | Dlvr.it | Group Tweet | Hootsuite | Involvr | MarketMeSuite | Mediafunnel | Postling | Seismic | Social Omph | Sprout Social | Tweetdeck |
|-------------------------|------------|--------|---------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|-------------|----------|---------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| Blogger | | | | | | | | | | | Y | | |
| Facebook business pages | Y | | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | |
| Facebook personal page | Y | Y | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y |
| Flickr | | | | | Y | Y | | | Y | | | | |
| Foursquare | | | | | Y | | | | | Y | | Y | |
| Google reader | Y | | | | Y | | | | | Y | | | |
| Google+ | | | | | Y | | | | | | | | |
| Instagram | | | | | Y | | | | | | | | |
| Linkedin | Y | Y | Y | | Y | | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pinterest | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tumblr | | | Y | | Y | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | |
| Twitter | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Wordpress | | | | | Y | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | |
| Youtube | | | | | Y | | | | Y | Y | | | | |

5. Content

a) *Is scheduling posts a good idea?*

Dashboards and some social media channels have scheduling functions (you can schedule posts in Facebook for example), which means that you can create many posts in one sitting and schedule them to appear at any stage in the future. This can be very effective if you have a business where you can't put content on your social media accounts regularly, such as a tour or transport operator.

When scheduling posts for the future ensure that you haven't inadvertently forgotten something significant on the day. For example a regular tweet on Monday mornings might say "come in and grab a coffee to start the new week". On the Monday of a public holiday it may confuse some consumers.

Also be aware of what posts you have coming up and be mindful of news and trending topics, an innocent tweet may be misunderstood in light of new news. Keep in mind that even if you schedule a post when you are unavailable, you still will need to manage the subsequent responses to your posts as soon as possible.

PRE SCHEDULED UPDATES SAVE TIME AND GIVE YOU A WELL DESERVED DAY OFF FROM SOCIAL MEDIA DUTIES!

b) *Which content where?*

If you have your content linked or use a dashboard you must consider where your content is going to end up.

For example: LinkedIn is very much a corporate social media channel, if you put a link on your Facebook page (which is coupled to LinkedIn) of some staff party photos, it may seem inappropriate to your LinkedIn audience. Conversely many insightful tourism industry comments on Twitter may not appeal to your friends on Facebook.

See Tutorials 40 to 50 for more information on each social media channel.

ALWAYS CONSIDER THE END AUDIENCE THAT YOUR CONTENT WILL REACH

6. Monitoring social media

There are many social media tools that measure, monitor, report engagement, workflow and provide analytics. Once you have chosen your method of content flow you may like to consider how to measure your engagement, here are some options:

a) *Within your social media:*

- Facebook Insights
- YouTube Analytics

b) *Within your Dashboard*

- Most dashboards have measurements and reports

c) *External sites:*

- <http://www.google.com/analytics/>: (or similar website analytics) will provide information on which social media is driving traffic to your website.
- <http://twitrratr.com>: rates the sentiment of tweets about your product.
- <http://tweetreach.com>: how far your tweets have reached.
- <http://www.google.com/alerts>: searches the web for your specified keywords and sends you an email with any new content.
- <http://kred.com/>: sees which communities engage with your brand and how much influence you have.
- <http://www.socialbro.com/>: helps you better understand how to interact with your Twitter community.
- <http://twittercounter.com/>: provides statistics on your Twitter account and compares any accounts against each other.
- <http://www.socialmention.com/>: type in your product name and see statistics across different social media including number of posts, sentiment, reach and passion.
- <http://klout.com/home>: gives you a score for your social media influence and reach.
- <http://tweetstats.com/>: turns your social media stats in too simple to read graphs.
- <http://statigr.am>: Instagram web viewer, accounts statistics and community manager.
- <http://www.pinreach.com>: tools to help you understand activity, measure impact and gauge success.
- <http://www.pinerly.com>: posts content to Pinterest from your website, measures how your content performed and optimize content to drive more traffic to your site.
- https://apps.facebook.com/selectivetwitter/?fb_source=search Selective Tweets lets you update your Facebook status from Twitter, but only when you want by ending the tweet with #fb

7. Key learning outcomes

- There are three ways you can manage social media content flow; separately, linked or with a dashboard.
- It's important to consider which message is going to which audience on what social media channel.



Managing Multiple Social Media Accounts

- No one dashboard is going to do everything that you want it to.
- There are many tools to choose from.

8. Related items

a) *Related tutorials*

- Social Media for Tourism
- Facebook for Tourism
- Twitter for Tourism
- Online Reputation Management

b) *Related Websites*

- Twitter Search in Plain English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGblWQYJ6iM
- Social Media in Plain English: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MplOCIX1jPE>
- Social Networking in Plain English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7TYKVC

Topic | Online Distribution

Tutorial 41

Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites - Overview

This tutorial explains how deals and discount voucher promotion websites work and will help you decide whether they can benefit your tourism business.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None



What are daily deal and group buying websites?

Daily deal and group buying websites are a relatively new phenomenon made popular by companies such as Groupon, Scoopon, Cudo and LivingSocial. Though they have only been around since 2009, daily deals are now advertised to millions of email subscribers around the world. Daily deals, group buying, social buying and flash sales are terms you may hear used interchangeably.

THESE SITES LEVERAGE COLLECTIVE BUYING POWER TO SECURE DEEPLY DISCOUNTED SERVICES OR PRODUCTS THAT ARE ONLY MADE AVAILABLE FOR A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME AND WHICH SOMETIMES REQUIRE A MINIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO PURCHASE (KNOWN AS THE "TIPPING POINT") IN ORDER TO BE ACTIVATED.

So for example, a restaurant may offer \$100 worth of food for \$50, but requires at least 100 people to purchase the deal and it is only available for one or a few day(s), hence the term daily deal.

Recently, daily deal websites have been actively targeting tour and activity based businesses in order to diversify their offerings and break into more "things to do" type services rather than just food and beverage. Travel products are highly valued by these sites and their customers – this places tourism operators in an ideal position to negotiate positive deal conditions.

Users of the sites are encouraged to spread the word about deals they like using email, Facebook and Twitter. While not being responsible for their emergence, social media enables the sites to communicate quickly with an ever-increasing number of people.



Most daily deal sites are hyper local, meaning that **they generally target locals. This is important to remember because, if your customers are primarily international or interstate tourists, you will most likely not be targeting them with daily deals and if you do, they are unlikely to be repeat customers.** Some daily deal sites, such as Travelzoo, provide daily deals that are targeted at travellers.

Each site has its own point of difference.

For example, when someone purchases a deal through LivingSocial, they are sent a link they can send to their friends inviting them to get the deal too. If three of their friends purchase the deal then the original purchaser gets the deal for free. A number of sites offer to credit a certain dollar value to a user's account if they refer a friend who makes a purchase.

Another interesting variation is deal sites that donate a percentage of all deals sold to the charity selected by the customer. For further information on the main players in Australia relevant to tourism businesses please refer to the tourism e-kit tutorial 41A that provides overviews of the different deal providers.

There is some debate around whether the emergence of these sites is attributable to the tough economic times and whether they are here to stay. The number of sites has grown quickly and there are now so many that there are sites known as deal aggregators such as 'Deal Zoo' and 'all the deals' (pictured on page 1) that provide subscribers with a daily overview of the deals available from a variety of other sites.

1. How do daily deals work?

Here are the basic steps for running a daily deal. Please note these may change depending on the deal provider:

1. A sales person from the daily deal site will contact you to see if you are interested in offering a deal. Some sites allow businesses to send a message through the daily deal site expressing interest
2. **The representative from the daily deal site works with you to put together a compelling deal.** Usually the deal must represent a saving of 50% for the consumer. In addition to this discount offered, you will need to pay a commission to the deal site for every deal sold – this can range from 20-50%.
3. The representative will then review the contract with you. Once the contract is signed, the daily deal will be queued for publication.
4. When the daily deal is published, an email is sent out to the daily deal site subscribers informing them of the deal.
5. Subscribers visit the page on the daily deal website explaining your deal, where they have the option to purchase the deal.
6. If the subscriber purchases the deal, they pay the daily deal site for the deal with their credit card.
7. The subscriber in most cases receives a voucher that they can download and print.
8. When the deal expires, no other subscribers can purchase the deal.
9. Depending on the daily deal site, you may receive your portion of the sales within a specific time period after the deal closes – this can be as early as five days. Then at the end of the redemption period (i.e. at the end of the voucher validity) remaining funds will be forwarded to you. In general, you will receive between 50-80% of the



sales proceeds. You will also receive a listing (i.e. spreadsheet) containing a list of the voucher codes that were sold.

10. Subscribers who have purchased the deal will begin to make bookings and redeem their deal.
11. When paying for services, those who bought the deal will present some form of proof which may be a voucher as proof of payment for the service.
12. You can verify the voucher by checking the list provided by the daily deal site.

2. Daily deals pros and cons

Pros

- Build brand awareness to a large local market
- Build a customer base quickly
- Can generate business during quiet times if planned carefully
- Upfront payment (or at least a portion of it) for deals sold
- Generate more visits to your website
- Helps to create a perception of popularity

Cons

- Must offer 50% or more discount and a commission on top of that
- Relatively high customer acquisition costs
- Difficult to plan (based on deals sold)
- Increased administrative burden
- Brand and price compromise if a drastically discounted price is established as the market value (i.e. eroding rate integrity)
- Conflict with your trade partners by undercutting them – the discounted rate is out in the open so there could be rate parity issues (i.e. not having the same rate and same conditions on all public channels)

3. Do daily deals work for tourism businesses?

Daily deals are **very well designed for**:

- Businesses that have a fixed cost base and excess capacity

For example, an attraction that has slow days can use daily deals to drive customers to their venue on otherwise low revenue days.

- Low cost, high capacity tours such as hop on hop off sightseeing tours are also a good option, since the costs of running the bus are the same if there are 10 passengers or 50
- New businesses who are looking to spread the word locally may also be good candidates for daily deals. In the case of a new business, the costs of the daily deal can be attributed to start-up marketing.



Daily deals are **not well designed for**:

- Businesses that have limited capacity or a variable cost base.

For example, if you offer a tour that has a limited number of seats and the costs of running the tour increase depending on the number of passengers.

4. What are the costs of running a daily deal?

While there are no upfront costs to run a deal and you only pay when sales are made, there are always costs associated with any marketing or sales initiative. It is important to consider a daily deal a marketing activity, not a way to generate revenue. **The costs of running a daily deal depend on two factors:**

- The terms you negotiate with the daily deal site
- The number of deals that are sold.

The net revenue for the merchant can be as low as 25% of the retail value of the service offered (worst case scenario). So, for example*:

| Retail value of the Deal = \$100 | Value of the Deal = \$100 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Discount on the deal site = 50% | Discount on the deal site = 50% |
| Cost to the buyer = \$50 | Cost to the buyer = \$50 |
| Deals sold = 500 | Deals sold = 1,000 |
| Gross Revenue = \$25,000 | Gross Revenue = \$50,000 |
| Credit Card Fees (4%) = \$1,000 | Credit Card Fees (4%) = \$2,000 |
| Daily Deal commission (50%) = \$12,000 | Daily Deal Commission (50%) = \$24,000 |
| Net Revenue = \$12,000 | Net Revenue = \$24,000 |
| Net Value of services sold = \$50,000 | Net Value of services sold = \$100,000 |
| Net Cost (to use deal instead of getting full price customers) = \$38,000 | Net Cost (to use deal instead of getting full price customers) = \$76,000 |

* This is an example only. Different deal companies may have different terms and conditions and commissions.

You can see that your costs for a daily deal can vary greatly depending on the number of deals sold. In the first example, selling 500 deals results in a net cost of \$38,000. In the second example, selling 1,000 deals results in a net cost of \$76,000.

Another way to look at the costs is based on customer acquisition. If we assume that all the customers from the daily deal are new customers, the cost of acquisition for each new customer using this method is \$76 per customer (38,000 / 500).

Keep in mind that the above calculations assume the business would have been able to get the same amount of business paying full price (i.e. full opportunity cost). It also doesn't take into account that an estimated 10-35% of vouchers are not redeemed by the expiry date (generally the higher the value of the voucher the lower the non-redemption rate is). You will generally be paid your share of vouchers that are not redeemed but of course don't have to provide the service.

There are other considerations such as:

- How many customers you get through running a deal will be new?
- How many would have paid full price without the offer?
- How many will buy again at full price?
- How many will spend more with you when they redeem their voucher (i.e. up-sell and cross-sell)?
- What is the value of links and increased traffic to your website which could improve your search engine ranking?
- What is the value of brand awareness (or cost of brand damage) as a result of offering a discount?
- What is the value of good word-of-mouth and referrals from deal customers?
- What is the value of building your customer base and data?

5. How to structure a successful deal?

Daily deals are popular because they generally represent a great deal for the consumer. The high value proposition for the consumer comes at a cost to the merchant, as described above. When negotiating terms with the daily deal site take the following points into consideration:

a *Limit inventory for deal seekers*

If your reservation system has the ability to allocate specific inventory to the deal, then you should do this well in advance of the deal running, and make sure that "Limited Availability" is built into your deal terms.

For example, if your tour supports 15 seats you may want to allocate a maximum of 5 seats to be available for daily deal customers. This serves to limit your exposure to 33% of your inventory on any given tour and still allows enough inventory for regular paying customers.

Ensure you appropriately limit the number of deals you are prepared to sell overall, taking into account the costs to you per booking.

This is important because you want to ensure you do not have a blowout in costs but also because there must be sufficient opportunity for the voucher holders to make bookings within



the redemption period and you don't want your existing customers to get frustrated they can't get a booking. Many consumers are becoming frustrated with daily deals when they struggle to find availability. Consider how many vouchers you will allow each person to purchase – for example some hotels allow customers to buy multiple deals to combine for a longer stay while others offer a special rate per night to extend the stay. You can generally stipulate how many they can buy for themselves and also whether they can purchase more vouchers for gifts.

b *Limit redemption of your deal to slow days*

Most tourism businesses have busy days and slow days. The problem is that, like most of your customers, your deal seeker customers are probably going to want to book on popular days.

CONSIDER LIMITING THE DEAL SEEKERS TO SLOW DAYS.

If you want to allow deal seekers to purchase during your busy times, refer to the previous suggestion of limiting the number of bookings to deal seekers.

This is basic yield management and is a practice popular with hotels and other accommodation providers to fill rooms during slow periods. If you add this limitation, it ensures that your busy days will be filled with your highest paying customers, therefore maximizing your revenues.

c *Drive/limit deal seekers to online bookings*

Provided your online booking system supports such functionality, make it clear that deal seekers need to use your online booking system to redeem their vouchers or book your product. This allows you to control how the deal is redeemed and what restrictions will be applied.

For example, if the deal seekers do a search for availability and you specify that they must book a specific tour, then you can limit the number of seats they can book and the pricing that is displayed to the customer.

Limiting the deal seeker to online bookings also has the added effect of reducing your administration and managing the booking. Since your revenue for deal seekers is going to be much less, it is important to find ways to reduce the human costs for managing these bookings.

Even though you may pay a little more for your technology to handle the booking, the cost will always be less than the cost of a human to process the same booking.

IN THE CASE OF EMAIL OR PHONE BOOKINGS, ENSURE YOUR STAFF ARE FULLY BRIEFED ABOUT THE DEAL INCLUSIONS AND HOW THE PROCESS WORKS.

d *Create a unique offering for deal seekers*

Instead of discounting your regular tours or activities, try creating something totally different for your deal-based customers. This has the effect of allowing you to determine the costs and revenues for a specific product rather than cannibalising your core products. It also allows you to limit the bookings and availability for the specific product which guarantees that your existing

Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites - Overview

products will not suffer from deal seeker overload.

The unique offering should be different enough from your regular offering to avoid confusion and to reinforce the value of the deal. When creating a deal offering like this, consider partnering with other local services to enhance the deal without increasing your costs. Consider including a voucher worth a certain dollar amount towards the next (full price) booking the customer makes with you – this will add value to the deal and also encourage repeat visitation.

It is important to remember that the deal still has to be good value for the consumer. It won't take long for them to do the sums and work out if the value-adds are unreasonably priced.

For example, consider including a discounted meal at a local restaurant, free admission to a partner attraction, or a coupon for a local retailer. This way, you can actually extend the benefits of the deal to your partners who may run a similar deal that includes your business in the future.

e Offer a cash equivalent instead of a discounted service.

Let's take the example of a sightseeing operator who offers a daily tour valued at \$150 per person.

If you offer your tour at a discount of 50% off (i.e. cost of \$75 to consumer) and pay (for example) 35% commission to the daily deal provider, then your revenue on the tour will be \$48.75.

Assuming that the customer purchasing this voucher won't be a repeat customer and is not going to purchase anything beyond the value of the coupon (worst case scenario!), your revenue on this sale will only be \$48.75. If you change the voucher to be a fixed value voucher with a cash equivalent, for example \$50 towards any tour for a cost of \$25 (i.e. 50% off), then your revenue changes dramatically. Using the same example, your revenue will be made up of:

- \$100 paid directly to you by the customer (\$150 less their \$50 voucher)
- \$16.25 which is your 65% share of the \$25 paid by the customer to the deal site

This is a total of \$116.25

This is quite a big difference compared to \$48.75. Offering the cash equivalent deal has an added benefit of not devaluing your core offering as the tour is still \$150.

Such cash equivalent deals have been used fairly widely by restaurants and retailers. They work well because they don't limit what the customer can purchase which means that the up-sell potential is higher but they are not as good for the deal provider because the deals are smaller and they tend not to be as attractive to customers. Structuring your deal this way also means not having to change your existing pricing or product offerings.

f Be confident with your numbers

Don't commit to a deal that doesn't work for you. For many businesses that have not been careful with their deals, only the deal provider and the customer benefit.



g ***Make the most of the opportunity to impress your customers***

Treat your visitors as though they are paying full price and deliver all promised elements of the deal without having to be reminded.

If you use the aforementioned techniques to structure your deal and stick to your requirements, then you will increase your chances of ensuring that your deal is good for your business, great value for your customers and successful for the deal provider.

6. Future of the industry

Daily deal sites are considered by some to be a recessionary phenomenon that will eventually disappear. Others believe they are here to stay. Regardless, the market for them continues to grow for the time being. There are however so many deal sites and deals that subscribers are reporting 'deal fatigue' and are becoming increasingly difficult to impress.

7. Industry Regulation and Complaints

While group buying companies that do the wrong thing are in the minority, consumer protection agencies have seen an increase in complaints about the industry. To address this, the Australian Group Buying Code of Practice was established in November 2011. This initiative is a world-first, with ADMA (Australian Direct Marketing Association) and AIMIA (Australian Interactive Media Industry Association) taking the lead to develop a Code of Practice specifically for the group buying industry. The Code establishes industry benchmarks for group buying sites and introduces standards that will increase consumer confidence. Signatories to the code include the eight sites that generate ninety five percent of industry revenue * (Scoopon, Cudo, LivingSocial, Spreets, Groupon, OurDeal, deals.com.au and Ouffer). See the ADMA site for more information and a copy of the Code - www.adma.com.au/regulatory/group-buying-code-of-practice/

If you have a complaint about a group buying company that you have not been able to resolve through communication with them, you can lodge a formal complaint through the ADMA site, provided the company is a signatory to the Code of Conduct. A link to a complaint form can be found at the bottom of this page - www.adma.com.au/consumer-help/faq/group-buying

* Australian Online Group Buying Merchant Study 2011, Telsyte (www.telsyte.com.au/?p=1223)

8. Key learning outcomes

- While not suited to all businesses, group buying can be an effective marketing activity
- As a tourism operator you need to carefully consider group buying deals as they can have a high cost to your operation
- Do the maths and find your cost per acquisition
- Use the techniques mentioned in this tutorial to ensure your deal is good for your business and for your customers.



Related material

Related tutorial

- [Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players](#)

Topic | Online Distribution

Tutorial 41A

Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles Of Key Players

This tutorial provides an overview of the main daily deal and group buying sites in Australia to help you select the one that best suits the needs of your business.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Tutorial 41 – Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites - Overview



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

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Introduction

There are now so many group buying or daily deal sites operating in Australia it can be hard to keep track of them and work out their points of difference. This tutorial provides an overview of some of the key sites and will give you an insight into which ones would be the best fit your company should you wish to offer a deal. Included are profiles on the eight sites that generate ninety-five percent of industry revenue * (Scoopon, Cudo, Living Social, Spreets, Groupon, OurDeal, deals.com.au and Ouffer). In addition, you will find profiles on dedicated travel sites Getaway Lounge, Travel Factory and Travelzoo.

*Australian Online Group Buying Merchant Study 2011, Telsyte (www.telsyte.com.au/?p=1223)

When selecting a partner for your offer, consider that some are very flexible and are open to negotiation and others are not. Some offer lower commission charges but do not have such an extensive database of members/subscribers or media reach. Some are owned by multinational corporations and others are Australian owned and operated by their founders.

Please note all the companies included in this overview were given the opportunity to provide feedback and further information. Some provided supporting information ATDW is unable to substantiate and this is clearly marked as ‘Other comments provided by company’.

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If you are from a group buying or daily deal site and would like to update information or be included in this tutorial, please contact enquiries@atdw.com.au. The ATDW reserves the right to include companies and sites at its discretion.

1. Cudo

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.cudo.com.au |
| Business Name | Cudo.com.au Pty Ltd (ACN 145 598 894) |
| Launched | September 2010 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Cudo is a joint venture between Microsoft and Nine Entertainment Co and sits within the ninemsn group of companies. Cudo acquired Getaway Lounge group buying site in June 2012 (it was already owned by Nine Entertainment). |
| Size of Membership Database | More than 800,000 active subscribers |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Cudo Satisfaction Guarantee – 100% happy or customer can get refund Cudo provides businesses with mainstream media exposure through dedicated TV spots on Channel 9, exposure on the ninemsn homepage and placement on the Cudo website |
| Deal Frequency | Daily |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Yes Negotiable: Yes |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Deals are available for anywhere between 24hours and 5 days Negotiable: Yes |
| Fees/Commission Charged | No upfront fees, commission of 50% for main deals Negotiable: Yes, depending on attractiveness of deal and payment timeline agreed upon Is this variable depending on the % of vouchers redeemed? No Do merchants still receive their share of revenue on unredeemed vouchers? Yes – Revenue is paid irrespective of redemption of vouchers |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Negotiable |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% |
| Office Location(s) | Sydney |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contact Details | Address: PO Box 40, PYRMONT, NSW 2009 Online enquiry form: http://cudo.com.au/help |
| Business Registration of Interest | Submit details on the website (http://cudokit.com.au/get-featured/get-featured-form/default/default.aspx) and Cudo will get in contact |
| Travel Specialisation | No |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | 7 Major areas: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Newcastle and Gold Coast, as well as a Nationwide category Merchants can target any number or all of these areas |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Yes |
| Other comments provided by company | Cudo have run some of the highest grossing travel deals in Australian Group Buying including Outrigger Koh Samui and Sea World, both of which generated Gross Revenue in excess of \$1 million. |

2. Deals.com.au

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.deals.com.au |
| Business Name | DEALS.com.au Pty Ltd (ACN 139 798 191) |
| Launched | July 2010 - Founded by Jeremy Same and Adam Schwab. Originally known as Zoupon but re-branded deals.com.au domain in early 2011. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Privately owned by Same and Schwab who also own www.MyTable.com.au , www.BigThanks.com.au and Living Corporate. DEALS is fully Australian owned and managed. DEALS also recently merged with Ouffer.com to create the largest independently owned group buying business in Australia. |
| Size of Membership Database | More than 750,000 people have signed up to receive daily emails, with another 270,000 on Facebook groups. Combined, the DEALS.com.au/Ouffer network has a reach of more than 1.8 million people. |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | If a member refers a friend who signs up then they receive credits to the value of 10% of everything their friend spends for a year. Offers sold are limited to ensure availability for purchasers. |
| Deal Frequency | Daily |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Yes Negotiable: Yes |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Between 24 and 96 hours Negotiable: Yes |
| Fees/Commission Charged | No upfront fees, commission flexible depending on specific offer Negotiable: Yes Commission is set at the commencement of the offer Merchants receive all payment for unredeemed vouchers |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Most of the payment is made within 5 business days – a small residual amount is paid at the end of the redemption period Negotiable: No |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% off rack rate |
| Office Location(s) | Melbourne/Sydney/Brisbane |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Contact Details | Address: Level 1/259 Coventry Street, South Melbourne VIC, 3205 Email: info@deals.com.au Phone: (03) 9020 0245 |
| Business Registration of Interest | Email info@deals.com.au or call (03) 9020 0245 |
| Travel Specialisation | No (see further comments provided by company below) |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Tasmania |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Yes. DEALS actively limits numbers sold to ensure clients are able to cope with demand. |
| Other comments provided by company | DEALS.com.au is the largest independent Australian group buying website and Australia's leading group buying TRAVEL website. DEALS has run the most successful tourism campaigns for Australian resorts hotels in Margaret River, Mornington Peninsula, South and North Coast of NSW, Cable Beach, Victoria's Lakes District, Port Douglas, the Yarra Valley, Hunter Valley and the Gold Coast (as well as several multi-million dollar offers of overseas properties). DEALS provides clients with personalised attention and full individual features on the DEALS website (rather than a smaller part of a separate travel section) – this allows for far better branding and recognition for clients, as well as higher room nights sold. |

3. Getaway Lounge

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.getawaylounge.com.au |
| Business Name | Getaway Lounge |
| Launched | May 2011 - Founding staff were Tim Hughes CEO (formerly Expedia and Orbitz) and Lauren McLaughlin as COO |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Acquired by Cudo in June 2012 - owned by Mi9 (digital joint venture between Nine Entertainment and Microsoft) and operates in conjunction with the long-running Getaway show on Channel Nine. |
| Size of Membership Database | Approximately 200,000 |
| Group Buying Code Member | No |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Members receive a \$20 credit when they refer a friend who signs up and makes a purchase. Getaway Lounge Promise – if travel can't be booked and confirmed within 48 hour of voucher receipt customers can get a refund AND if the same deal is advertised elsewhere for less, then the difference will be refunded. |
| Deal Frequency | Handful of deals provided weekly |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | No |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Usually about a week Negotiable: Yes |
| Fees/Commission Charged | Based on individual contract and Media Pack agreed to. |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Within 5 business days of the end of the first promotional period. |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% |
| Office Location(s) | Sydney |
| Contact Details | Address: PO Box 40, PYRMONT, NSW 2009 Email: sales@getawaylounge.com.au Phone: 1300 889 152 |
| Business Registration of Interest | Information not available |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Travel Specialisation | Fully dedicated to travel deals |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | Information not available |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Yes |

4. Groupon

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.groupon.com.au |
| Business Name | Groupon Australia Pty Ltd (ACN 147 834 151) |
| Launched | Groupon launched in November 2008 in Chicago (originated from a website called The Point, which was created in 2007). Launched as Star Deals in Australia in February 2011 and rebranded as Groupon in August 2011. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Largest stake held by co-founders with private investment from various sources. Went public in November 2011 with a small % offered on the US stock exchange. Acquired Melbourne-based crowdmass.com.au in April 2011. |
| Size of Membership Database | Information not available |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Members receive a \$10 credit for every friend they refer (once that friend has signed up as a member via the special link provided and made a purchase) |
| Deal Frequency | Daily offerings |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Yes |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Information not available |
| Fees/Commission Charged | Information not available |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Information not available |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | Information not available |
| Office Location(s) | Sydney, plus more than 40 countries around the world |
| Contact Details | Email: support@groupon.com.au Phone: (02) 8277 6988 / 1300 962 052 |
| Business Registration of Interest | Email b2b@groupon.com.au or call 1300 962 052 |
| Travel Specialisation | Groupon Getaways - http://www.groupon.com.au/deals/travelcity |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can | Information not available |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| merchants target certain locations?) | |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Information not available |

5. LivingSocial

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.livingsocial.com.au |
| Business Name | LivingSocial Australia & NZ |
| Launched | Founded as Hungry Machine in the US in 2007 – daily deals business launched 2009. Entered Australian market in November 2010 after partnering with Australian shopping site Jump On It (established late 2009). |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Owners include the original four co-founders, with funding coming from various sources including Amazon. Fairfax Media's exclusive group buying partner. Sister site www.jumponit.com.au founded in late 2009 was fully merged with www.LivingSocial.com.au in June 2012 with all subscribers and merchants transferred to LivingSocial. |
| Size of Membership Database | More than 60 million worldwide. 756,000 + Facebook community members in Australia and New Zealand. |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After purchasing a deal, customers get a unique link “3+ me = free” to share via email/social media networks. If three people buy the deal using this link, then the customer gets the deal for free; • 14 day no questions asked refund policy for travel experiences; • Refund outside of 14 day period if LivingSocial is made aware of issues around redemption i.e. no availability prior to expiry or voucher specifics not being fulfilled; • Refunds given as an account credit for future purchases or direct to the credit card; • LivingSocial is the only group buying player in Australia that has a customer service team contactable via email and phone, seven days a week: Mon – Fri (8am – 8pm), Sat - Sun (9am – 5pm); • LivingSocial’s Customer Service team won The Best Customer Service Award from the AMBER awards; • LivingSocial’s iPhone application allows customers to purchase directly from their mobile devices, share the deal with their friends and reduce printing by allowing them to simply access a deal on their phone and show it to the merchant; |
| Deal Frequency | Daily |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Yes |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Negotiable: Yes Escapes deals are available for sale for a week |
| Fees/Commission Charged | No upfront fees; Commission depending on the deal structure |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Merchants receive an upfront payment within 5 working days after the deal ends. This payment is for the first 50% of customers who redeem their vouchers. Merchants then receive monthly payments for customers who redeem in that month to claim their remaining share. Negotiable: No |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% |
| Office Location(s) | Sydney, London, Washington DC plus many around the world – operates in 647 markets in more than 22 countries. |
| Contact Details | Address: Level 11, 37 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000 Email: ANZsales@livingsocial.com Phone: 1800 548 762 |
| Business Registration of Interest | Submit details on the website (https://getfeatured.livingsocial.com/getfeatured/au/apply) and LivingSocial will get in contact – alternatively call 1800 586 766 |
| Travel Specialisation | www.livingsocial.com.au/escapes |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | LivingSocial has the largest reach in the industry being present in 38 markets across Australia and New Zealand, offering deals at hyper-local, citywide and national levels - this means more local deals for the members and more local and targeted customers for the merchant partners. |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Yes |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Other comments provided by company</p> | <p>The merger with Jump on It made LivingSocial the biggest social shopping player in Australia.</p> <p>Merchant Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No risk guaranteed pre-paid customers; • Merchant services team dedicated to liaising with merchants to resolve any issues; • LivingSocial is the only company in the industry which offers merchants access to a variety of online tools, such as Merchant Centre, Partner Tools and the Mobile Redemption apps, which give merchants the opportunity to track, analyse and maximise their campaign ROI; • Professionally written editorial at no cost. • LivingSocial is responsible for selling almost 1 in every 4 vouchers sold in 2011; • LivingSocial has Australia’s largest and most active database of opt in email subscribers; • LivingSocial’s Facebook community of 756,000+ is the largest among all group buying sites in Australia, with 63% of total market share. |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

6. Ouffer

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.ouffer.com |
| Business Name | Ouffer.com (ARBN: 142 100 865) |
| Launched | 2009 - created by two young American entrepreneurs, Anton Bernstein and Joshua David. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Purchased by French company Smart&co (now known as Otium Capital) in October 2010 and operated under the arm of their business known as Lookingo. Ouffer.com recently merged with deals.com.au to create the largest independently owned group buying business in Australia. |
| Size of Membership Database | Information not available |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Ouffer Booking Guarantee – if a member buys a travel deal and can't get the dates they want they can get a refund (within two weeks of the purchase). If a member refers a friend who signs up and makes a purchase within 72 hours then they receive a credit of at least \$5 |
| Deal Frequency | Daily |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Information not available |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Information not available |
| Fees/Commission Charged | Information not available |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Information not available |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% |
| Office Location(s) | Sydney |
| Contact Details | Address: Level 4, 6-8 Underwood Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 Email: contact@ouffer.com |
| Business Registration of Interest | Email businesses@ouffer.com with company details and what you would like to offer - Ouffer will get back to you |
| Travel Specialisation | No specific travel section |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can | All Australian capitals except Darwin and Hobart, some Australian major regional centres, Auckland |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| merchants target certain locations?) | |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Information not available |

7. OurDeal

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.ourdeal.com.au |
| Business Name | OurDeal Pty Ltd (ABN 74 136 842 745) |
| Launched | May 2010 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Ten Network / News Ltd |
| Size of Membership Database | Information not available |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Members receive a \$10 credit for every friend they refer (once that friend has signed up as a member via the special link provided and made a purchase) |
| Deal Frequency | Daily offerings |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Information not available |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Normally 24 - 72 hours but longer for travel products |
| Fees/Commission Charged | Information not available |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Information not available |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | Information not available |
| Office Location(s) | Sydney |
| Contact Details | Email: support@Ourdeal.com.au Website enquiry form: http://www.ourdeal.com.au/contactus |
| Business Registration of Interest | Submit details on the website (www.ourdeal.com.au/business) and OurDeal will make contact. |
| Travel Specialisation | Our Deal Escape www.ourdeal.com.au/Escape |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | Information not available |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Information not available |

8. Scoopon

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.scoopon.com.au |
| Business Name | Scoopon Pty Ltd (ACN 149 779 948) |
| Launched | April 2010 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | 60% owned by founding brothers Gabby and Hezi Leibovich 40% purchased in May 2011 by a consortium led by James Packer Sister sites (online shopping rather than experiences): catchoftheday.com.au, groceryrun.com.au, vinomofo.com.au |
| Size of Membership Database | Information not available |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Information not available |
| Deal Frequency | Daily |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Information not available |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Information not available |
| Fees/Commission Charged | Information not available |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Information not available |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% |
| Office Location(s) | Melbourne |
| Contact Details | Address: 64-70 Cochranes Road, Moorabbin, VIC, 3189 Email: customerservice@scoopon.com.au |
| Business Registration of Interest | Submit details on the website (www.scoopon.com.au/pages/scoopon-for-business) and Scoopon will get in contact |
| Travel Specialisation | www.scoopon.com.au/travel |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | Information not available |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Information not available |

9. Spreets

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.spreets.com.au |
| Business Name | Spreets Pty Ltd (ABN 76 142 688 524) |
| Launched | February 2010 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Acquired by Yahoo!7 in January 2011 |
| Size of Membership Database | 1.3 million members |
| Group Buying Code Member | Yes |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | \$10 credit for every friend referred (when they purchase a deal valued at \$10 or more) |
| Deal Frequency | Daily |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Yes Negotiable: Yes |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | 24 hours or more or until the maximum number is reached Negotiable: Yes |
| Fees/Commission Charged | No upfront fees, commission of 20-30% Negotiable: Yes Variable depending on the % of vouchers redeemed Do merchants still receive their share of revenue on unredeemed vouchers? Case dependent |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Percentages will vary based on deal. Negotiable: Yes |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | 50% |
| Office Locations | Sydney, Auckland, Melbourne Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide |
| Contact Details | Address: PO Box R1469, Royal Exchange, NSW, 1225 Phone: 1300 66 56 54 Email: sales@spreets.com |
| Business Registration of Interest | Submit details on the website (http://spreets.com.au/page/for-businesses) and Spreets will get in contact or sales@spreets.com |
| Travel Specialisation | Some local sites allow users to search for deals in specific categories, including travel - https://spreets.com.au/category/Melbourne/travel |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can | All capital cities and selected major regional centres in Australia / New Zealand |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| merchants target certain locations?) | |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Yes |
| Other comments from company | <p>Spreets has worked with some of the biggest names in the travel industry e.g. Hilton, Ritz-Carlton, APT, Air Vanuatu etc.</p> <p>Spreets has also run the largest travel group buying deal in Australia -</p> <p>http://spreets.com.au/deal/Sydney/travel/11110/hilton-bora-bora-six-nights-for-two-including-all-meals-at-the-islands-exclusive-resort-spa-for-2275-worth-7789-the-ultimate-indulgence</p> |

10. Travel Factory

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.travelfactory.com.au |
| Business Name | Travel Factory (ABN 62 149 739 533) |
| Launched | January 2011 |
| Ownership / Affiliations | 100 % Australian owned & operated (by founder & CEO Gary Trenerry) |
| Size of Membership Database | Approximately 150,000 |
| Group Buying Code Member | No |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Members receive a \$25 credit for every friend they refer (once that friend has signed up as a member via the special link provided and made a purchase within 78 hours) |
| Deal Frequency | 2 – 4 Deals a Week |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Deal is live once 1 deal sold |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | 7 days (1 Week) |
| Fees/Commission Charged | No upfront fees Commission 12.5% of gross deal sold Commission negotiable: depending on the quality of the deal Merchants receive all monies less commission Merchant keeps all unredeemed voucher money |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | 50% 15 days after Deal closes 35% 60 Days after Deal Closes Balance (15%) once deal redemption period ends Negotiable depending on the request |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | No, but deal must be better than can be found on property website and last-minute websites |
| Office Location(s) | Melbourne |
| Contact Details | Address: 227 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051 Phone: 1300 664 291 Fax: 1300 664 357 Email: admin@travelfactory.com.au |
| Business Registration of Interest | Submit details on the website (www.travelfactory.com.au/Feature-Your-Business.html) and Travel Factory will get in contact. Or call direct. |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Travel Specialisation | Dedicated to travel deals |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | All capital cities and selected major regional centres in Australia and New Zealand |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Yes |
| Other comments provided by company | <p>Travel Factory was Australia's First Daily Deal Travel site</p> <p>Travel Factory actively encourages merchants to consider a limit on the number of deals they offer so that merchants get a feel of how a daily deal would work for their business.</p> <p>Our goal is simple:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have the largest database of subscribers looking for value packed travel deals. To have the Lowest commission in the Daily Deal Industry. To fill empty rooms during periods of low occupancy without affecting your higher yielding business. <p>Managed well a daily deal promotion can be profitable and provide flow on benefits. Managed badly it be a huge disaster.</p> |

11. Travelzoo

Travelzoo Local Deals offers an online group buying service. They are affiliated with Travelzoo Australia which is an online publisher of travel deals (through their Top 20 list). Tourism operators pay to be included in the Top 20 list of deals they publish but inclusion is on merit (i.e. best value) and subscribers book the featured deals directly with the supplier. Unless specified, the information in the table below relates to their Local Deals (group buying) service only:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website | www.travelzoo.com/au (see Local Deals tab) |
| Business Name | Travelzoo Local Deals - TRAVELZOO LOCAL (AUSTRALIA) PTY LIMITED (ABN 147 365 455) and TRAVELZOO (AUSTRALIA) PTY LIMITED (ABN 21 129 015 407) |
| Launched | In 1999 Travelzoo US established an email newsletter with a list of top travel deals called the 'Top 20'. The Local Deals service came later. |
| Ownership / Affiliations | Travelzoo (Australia) Pty Ltd is independently owned and operated by Travelzoo (Asia Pacific) Inc. under a license agreement with Travelzoo Inc. (NASDAQ: TZOO) |
| Size of Membership Database | 24 million subscribers worldwide Number of Australian subscribers not available |
| Group Buying Code Member | No |
| Unique Selling Points for Consumer | Test Booking Centre – Travelzoo staff attempt to book every deal to ensure they are accurate and available (easy to book, no hidden costs etc). |
| Deal Frequency | Local deals emailed to subscribers when they become available Top 20 list of deals emailed to subscribers weekly |
| Tipping Point (Minimum sales for the deal to activate?) | Negotiable: Yes |
| Time Limit (How long are deals available for sale?) | Normally 2-3 days |
| Fees/Commission Charged | Information not available |
| Payment Timeline (When do merchants receive their share of revenue?) | Information not available |
| Minimum Discount Required (off RRP, 'rack rate', gross rate etc) | Information not available |

Group Buying Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Profiles of Key Players

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Office Location(s) | Australian office in Sydney and head office in New York City, with 24 offices across Asia Pacific, North America and Europe |
| Contact Details | Address: Level 2, 19 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000 Phone: (02) 8093 7979 Fax: (02) 8093 7901 Email: sydney@travelzoo.com |
| Business Registration of Interest | Information not available |
| Travel Specialisation | Entire site is dedicated to travel and associated activities such as entertainment, dining, spas etc |
| Geographic Target Markets (Where can members subscribe? Can merchants target certain locations?) | Information not available |
| Can merchants place a limit/cap on the number of deals they offer? | Information not available |

12. Related material

Related tutorial

- Group Buying & Daily Deal Sites – Overview

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 42

Online Tourism Communities

This tutorial highlights how tourism operators can engage in online communities to grow their knowledge and business.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What are online tourism communities?

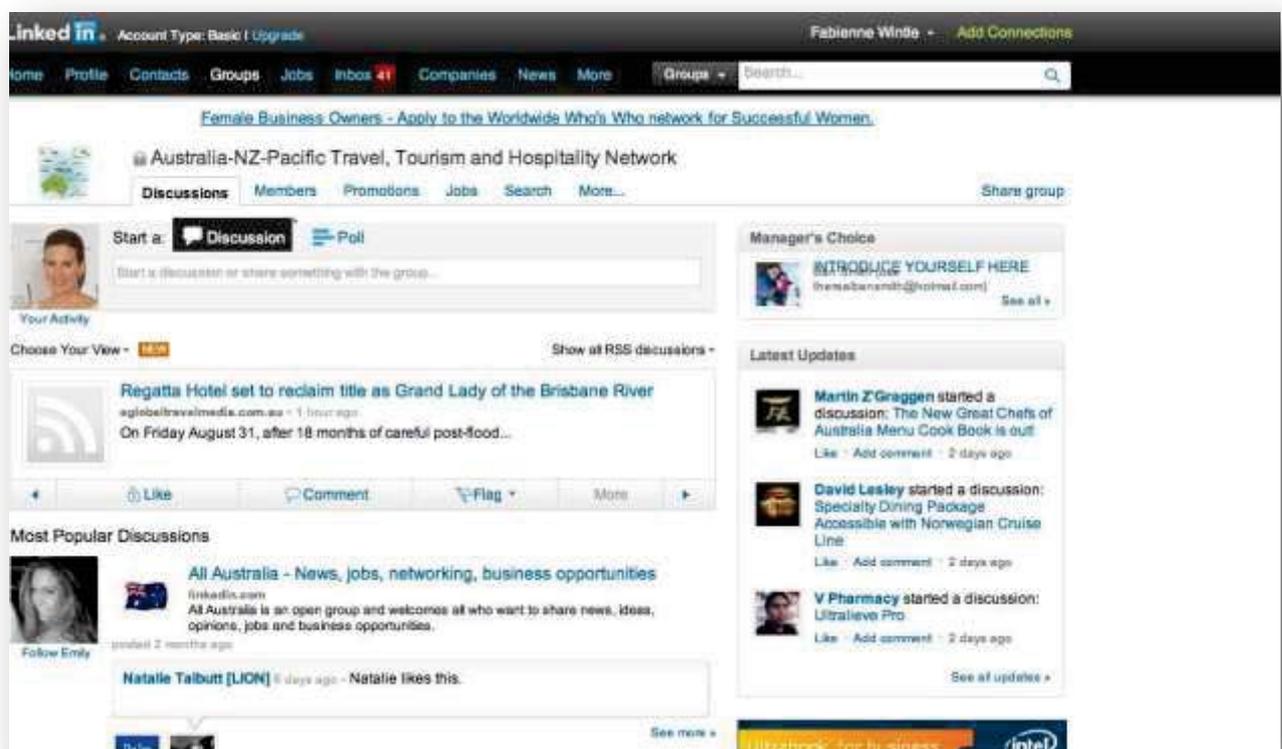
An online community is a virtual community or social network that exists online and whose members enable its existence through taking part in business to business relationships, education and industry networking.

AN ONLINE COMMUNITY CAN TAKE THE FORM OF AN INFORMATION SYSTEM WHERE ANYONE CAN POST CONTENT, SUCH AS A FORUM OR BULLETING BOARD SYSTEM OR ONE WHERE ONLY A RESTRICTED NUMBER OF PEOPLE CAN INITIATE POSTS, SUCH AS BLOGS.

As in real life, an online community is made up of members who discuss issues that are important to them, share calendars to discover events of interest and work on projects together around things that interest them.

This tutorial will discuss and review online tourism communities targeting business owners rather than clients.

Below is an example of one of the tourism groups in LinkedIn called Australia-NZ-Pacific Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Network. The group has over 2,000 members who discuss topics from training seminars, financial management to Facebook updates.



Screencapture LinkedIn.co

Online Tourism Communities

a) *Benefits to my business*

One of the key benefits tourism operators gain from participating in online communities is being able to connect with likeminded professionals they wouldn't have had the chance to engage with otherwise. Other benefits include:

- Low cost or free
- Access to information 24/7 from any Internet connection.

b) *Key communities that I could benefit from participating in*

All communities listed below offer free services. Most of them also offer to upgrade to a paid option for more services.

| Community | Website | Service offered |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LinkedIn  | www.linkedin.com | There are different tourism specific groups available. Below are a few examples of popular groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia-NZ-Pacific Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Network • Australian Tourism Marketing • Tourism 2.0 |
| Smart Company  | www.smartcompany.com.au | Doesn't offer groups or forums as such but does have a community section |
| Flying Solo  | www.flyingsolo.com.au | Extremely popular forums for Australian small businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://flyingsolo.com.au/forums |
| Anthill  | http://anthillonline.com | Highlights the inspiring thrills, spills, trials and tribulations of business development and rapid commercial growth |
| Springwise  | www.springwise.com | Helped by a network of 15,000 spotters Springwise editors scan the globe for smart new business ideas, delivering instant inspiration to entrepreneurial minds |
| Facebook  | www.facebook.com | Different groups exist for different topics |

Online Tourism Communities

| Tourism community | Website | Service offered |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Twitter  | www.twitter.com | The Twitter search functionality is very powerful. Search for keywords such as “tourism internet marketing” |
| Tnooz  | www.tnooz.com | Online community discussing tourism and travel technology changes and innovations. No forum but interaction via comments on blog posts. |
| My Web School  | www.mywebschool.com | Australian online community dedicated to helping tourism operators with online marketing. Includes Q&A forum (www.mywebschool.com/internet-marketing-forum), blog posts and online courses. |
| Tourism Café  | www.tourismcafe.org | Online community dedicated to helping tourism businesses develop and market their product |

2. Participating in the conversation

a) Planning your engagement

No two communities are the same. When you are new to a community it may be a good idea to first observe how that particular community operates before joining the conversation. Every community has rules and guidelines of some sort. They may be written down somewhere on the site but other times you will learn what they are by getting involved.

For example, using only first names when posting in a forum or ensuring you only post constructive comments when people are seeking feedback.

Depending on your communication skills and confidence level you could consider the few steps below before joining the conversation.

1. First select one or more community and join and be a lurker. Don't interact just yet, simply “listen” and read

2. After a few weeks, start adding value by responding to a few topics
3. When you feel confident, start your own topic
4. You may realise that you want to get even more involved and become a forum moderator or a leader or even start your own group.

b) What to consider when engaging online

When engaging online you should pay attention to the type of community you are in. Are you posting publicly (can your communication be connected back to your business) or are you participating in a private conversation that will remain between the people you are speaking with? This is often outlined by the type of online community you are engaging in.

For example, a comment on a public blog that links to your website may direct people to your business if they want to know more about you. If you publish interesting comments this may be beneficial to your business. If you are publishing negatively you should consider how this may be perceived by the public (possibly your future customers or colleagues within the industry).

In many online communities the discussions and comments are read and indexed by search engines. Search engines can be your best friend when the comments are appealing but they can also become your worst enemies when they index your comments forever in their memory.

Twitter user “theconner” was happy as she had just landed a well-paid job from Internet company Cisco, but was not sure whether to accept. She tweeted the following: “Cisco just offered me a job! Now I have to weigh the utility of a fatty paycheck against the daily commute to San Jose and hating the work.” However soon after the company rescinded the offer tweeting: “Who is the hiring manager? I’m sure they would love to know you will hate the work. We here at Cisco are versed in the web.”

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/twitter/5250680/Top-10-worst-tweets.html>)

The golden rules are:

- Do not underestimate the power of search engine reading and indexing your content to serve it to users searching on the keywords it contains later
- Set out the parameters of the discussion upfront
- Structure your question and answer: support it with arguments and examples.

3. Key learning outcomes

- Online communities are a fantastic way for tourism operators to gain knowledge on how to grow their businesses



Online Tourism Communities

- Keep in mind that unless the community is closed to search engines everything you say risks being indexed by search engines and visible to anyone who searches.

a) *Related tutorials*

- Social media for tourism
- Managing multiple social media accounts

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 43

Facebook For Tourism

Learn how to use Facebook the most popular social network with a user base of over 8955 million. It is vital for your business to have a managed Facebook Page.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Social Media for Tourism



1. What is Facebook and how can it help my tourism business?

Launched in February 2004 as a network for university students, the social media phenomenon which is Facebook has been described as the fourth wave in computer networking platforms following the establishment of mainframe computers in the 1970s, the beginning of PCs in the 1980s and the introduction of the Internet in the 1990s.



FACEBOOK STATISTICS REVEAL THAT THERE ARE 845 MILLION MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS AND OVER HALF OF THESE PEOPLE ACCESS THE SITE DAILY MAKING IT THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORK.

a) What are the benefits to my business?

There are a number of benefits for using Facebook, both at the personal and business level:

1. It provides your business with a web presence on a platform where there is a large potential audience in an instant, at no cost
2. It is super easy to use (as user-friendly as an iPhone!)
3. It is very quick to set up

From the point of view of small business operators in the tourism industry, the main benefit of **Facebook is in the more focused (and business-oriented) Facebook Pages**. The advantage of this account is the ability to connect with some of the many people now using the Internet to search for information on holiday destinations.

A WELL-STRUCTURED, INFORMATIVE FACEBOOK PAGE REPRESENTING YOUR TOURISM BUSINESS CAN BE A COST-EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAY OF PUTTING YOUR COMPANY'S NAME BEFORE POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS. IMPORTANTLY, AS WELL AS PROVIDING QUALITY INFORMATION AND UPDATES, IT WILL ALSO ALLOW YOU TO RESPOND TO QUERIES QUICKLY AND WITH EASE.

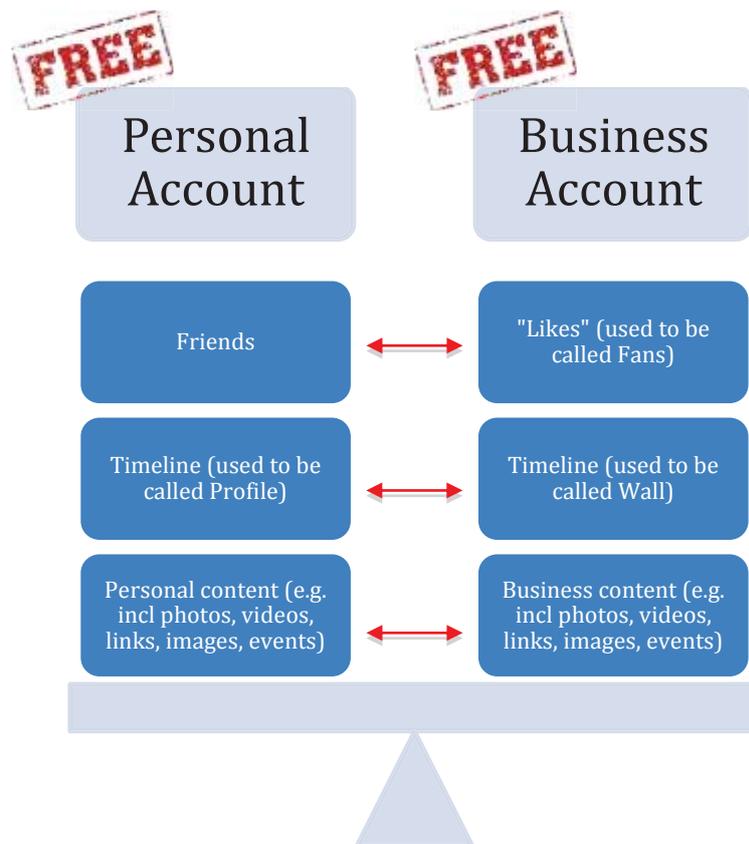
b) In a few words, how does Facebook work?

Facebook users can add their personal profile, follow friends, share links as well as publish images and videos. **The central updating facility in Facebook is its newsfeed, which continually updates posts from friends, subscriptions and Pages which then can be sorted as Top Stories or most recent.** The right hand ticker is a new feature that has been added to further support the newsfeed and displays activities as they happen in real-time.

Private messages (those not shown in the public news feed) and a chat facility are also combined in this versatile social networking platform.

Facebook also allows businesses to create a business Facebook Page (referred to as a Facebook Page or Page) and do similar things to the personal profile, but at a business level. The diagram below offers a simple comparison:





2. How to set up my personal profile?

A Facebook Page can be opened through either a personal (individual) profile or a business account. Facebook now allows access to its Pages through a business account if the account holder doesn't already have a Facebook personal profile and wishes to use it purely for administering business Pages and ad campaigns. However restrictions do apply and business accounts have less functionality than a personal account. **It is strongly advised that you set up a personal account even if you only use it to manage your page and not connect with other users.**

1. Go to Facebook's homepage www.facebook.com
2. Fill in the requested details at the right hand side of the page using your personal details (not business details) and click "Sign Up"
3. Follow the prompts to fill out your Facebook profile (including adding a profile image, personal details and finding friends who already have a Facebook account through your email address)
4. You're there! Now go ahead and connect with people, update your status and start sharing images, links and videos with people who have accepted you as a Facebook friend. Note: these connections are personal ones. Read below for how to set up a Page and connections for your business.

3. Facebook Pages

A Facebook Page is like a mini website set up with an updating newsfeed designed to contain content, advice and conversation relevant to a business — an excellent way for a small tourism related business to advertise their presence to Facebook users. If visitors are interested in your business they will tend to “Like” your Page by clicking on the “Like” button.



Screenshot copyright: Facebook

The key to an effective Page is to:

- Share relevant and engaging content
- Interact with your readers promptly, answering questions and providing information if sought

As social media engages the customer in a two way conversation, the style usually most effective for a Facebook Page is quick, concise updates provided in a relaxed, conversational (even witty) tone.

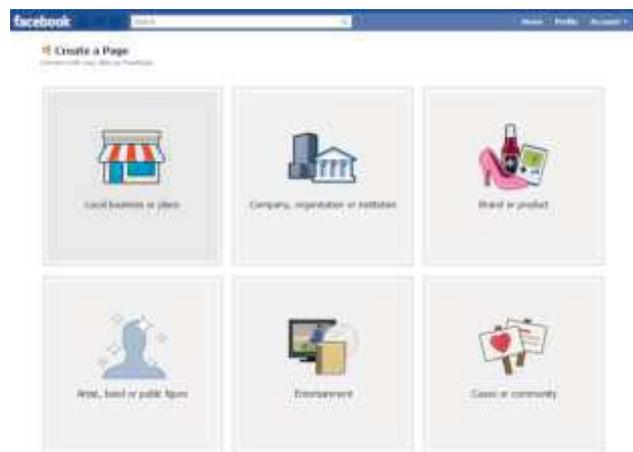
Big Cat Green Island Reef <http://www.facebook.com/bigcatgreenisland> is an example of a popular and effective Facebook Page that uses these techniques.

The layout of Facebook Pages, known as Timeline, is filled with interactive features to help you publish more engaging content about your brand.

a) *How do I set up my Facebook Page?*

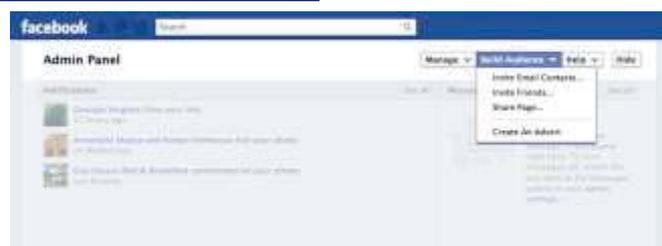
From your personal profile on Facebook (see above), go ahead and create your Facebook Page using these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php> and select the most relevant type for your business (99 % of tourism businesses will use “Local business or place”)



2. Fill in the requested details about your business, click on the box to accept conditions and create your Page
3. On your new Page, upload your profile image (preferably your logo) and a cover image (a great picture that represents the business), fill out all of the fields in the Info page, create photo albums showcasing your business and its people, write your first status update and Like your Page. Make sure you go back and edit your Page details and assign a custom URL (also called a vanity URL) so people can find you at www.facebook.com/YourBusinessName as opposed to the standard lengthy Facebook URL. E.g. www.facebook.com/ThalaBeachLodge

4. Click on the Build Audience link in the Admin Panel of your Page and select a method of telling your friends and family all about it – this is a great first step to start getting “likers”



5. You now have a Facebook Page!
Post engaging updates regularly and share your Page with past and future guests

b) *Creating Facebook content*

What type of content would appeal to people who have “liked” your Facebook Page? From a small tourism perspective, captivating content may include the following:

- images of local scenery
- advice on dates of local events of interest (such as festivals), sporting fixtures
- videos of local interest (such as a tour of local wineries)

Facebook For Tourism

- fact sheets
- newsletters
- updates relating to matters of historical interest
- open ended questions to create interaction of your Page (example below)



Screencapture credit: Facebook

Links to news items and other status updates of interest can be added by simply typing or pasting the link into the status update bar, located at the top of the Page (see example below).



Easterfest

Just in case you missed our announcement earlier today...MercyMe Music are coming to Australia for the first time for Easterfest 2012!



Easterfest 2012 — Artist — Easter Music Festival, Easter 2012, Gospel Music, Australian Music
www.easterfest.com

6-8 April 2012, Toowoomba. Easterfest - a festival about Easter at Easter. Australia's largest drug and alcohol free festival

Like · Comment · Share · Monday at 16:34

32 people like this.

Nicholas Plant seriously get back to work
Monday at 16:35 · Like · 1 person

Jackie Healy Thats totally awesome!Looking forward to it!
Monday at 16:37 · Like

Thomas McNamara who??
Monday at 16:38 · Like

Michael Senior Yay!!! I don't have to keep it a secret anymore :D
Monday at 16:40 · Like

David Stewart YEAH!!!!!!!
Monday at 17:54 · Like

Shannon Wilson YAY!!!!!!!
Tuesday at 11:51 · Like

Write a comment...

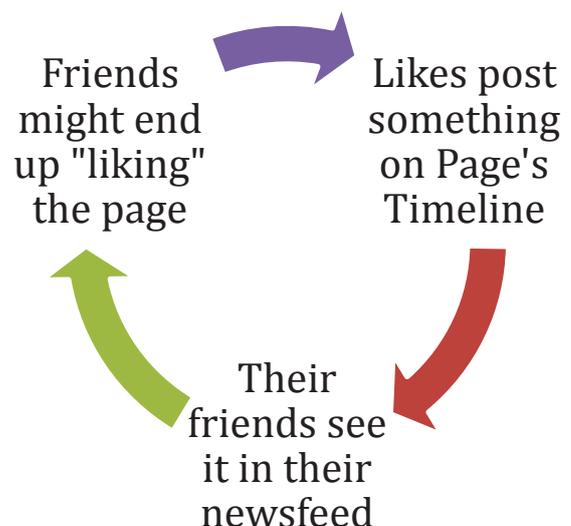
Screencapture credit: Facebook

c) Promoting my Facebook Page

Social media thrives on interaction. The Page offers an excellent opportunity to interact with people who are considering using your product or service. As interaction works both ways, promoting it is about seeking "likes" (the button located at the top of your Page) which means getting people to take enough of an interest to follow your updates.

So, once you have set up your Page, how can you encourage people to like your Page? There are many ways you can do this, but the most important one is very simple:

KEEP YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE UPDATED!

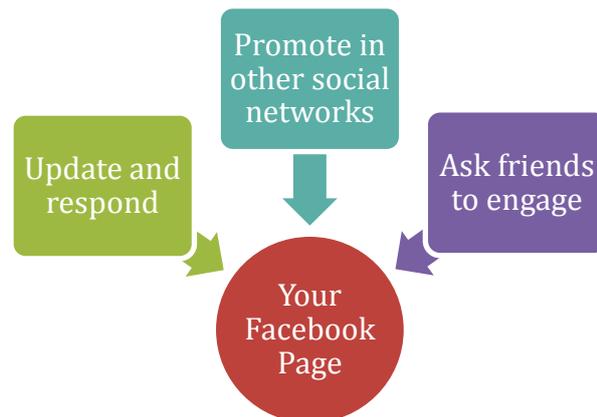


Each time you interact with your “likers,” you increase your chances of this interaction showing up in their friends’ newsfeeds. Facebook uses a formula to decide whose news shows up in the feed however some actions such as questions, videos and pictures are more likely to show up since they require more interaction; Facebook previously confirmed this as part of a F8 presentation.

When users interact with your Page by selecting an option in a Question (using the Questions tool not just a status question) this news will go out to their friends because it is something that Facebook deem to be newsworthy. The main thing to remember is that your posts should entice “likers” to interact with you by liking, commenting or sharing with you. Don’t just post for the sake of posting.

Once you have mastered the first step of keeping your content updated you could for instance:

- Utilise other social networks (e.g. Twitter) to share relevant Facebook posts
- Ask friends for their support



This article from My Web School provides more information about Timeline and its features: <http://www.mywebschool.com/blog/social-media-2/10-ideas-to-get-your-business-ready-for-facebook-timeline>

This article from Social Media Examiner provides more information on other ways to grow your Facebook Page following: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/10-ways-to-grow-your-facebook-page-following>.

This article from Facebook provides a help article on Questions: <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=216076778415953#What-is-Facebook-Questions?-How-do-I-use-it>

d) Compliance

Facebook policy states that pages (sites) administered by a brand or organisation must comply with “Facebook Community Standards policy” (refer to <http://www.facebook.com/communitystandards>). So it would seem that there is an obligation placed upon site administrators to engage in some degree of content moderation, to keep it within the bounds of Facebook’s Community Standards policy.

The Facebook Community Standards policy includes the requirement not to post any content that is “hate speech, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence”.

Moreover, the Advertising Standards Board (ASB) believes that a Facebook site of an advertiser is advertising and marketing communication. What that means in practical terms is that the

content of a site needs to comply with the rules for advertising, as contained in the the Australian Association of National Advertisers' (AANA) Code of Ethics.

What does it mean for businesses who have a Facebook page?

Business owners are responsible for the content (including comment by others) on their Facebook Page. The owners of a Facebook page must remove 3rd party posts that go against the Facebook Community Standards or risk being held responsible.

“They must ensure they understand what rules apply, and put systems in place to provide guidance to users, so they don’t become overburdened with the task of moderating comments to prevent a breach of the applicable law or codes” (Reference: David Simon, ADMA <http://www.bandt.com.au/opinion/facebook-confused-and-concerned-you%E2%80%99re-not-alone%21>).

4. SEO for my Facebook Page

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the science of tweaking your website so that search engines such as Google will rank them higher in their results. Since Google acknowledges social signals highly, your Facebook Page can help to boost your search engine ranking. For this reason it is important that the information on your Page is clear and concise, with a clever use of keywords and links back to the website.



Facebook Pages are now being utilised more and more by small businesses. A well-maintained Facebook Page providing clear and engaging updates has the potential to be a powerful, cost effective marketing tool for small tourism industry operators.

There are two areas that search engines seem to pay extra attention to:

- The fields in your **Basic Information** tab – fill out all of these fields using keywords and links back to your website and product places
- The **Notes** tab – Notes get indexed in Google just like a website page, each time you have a news story or blog post publish a note with great content and a link through to your website for more information

5. Key learning outcomes

- Facebook is one of the most popular social networks available
- It offers a free opportunity for time-poor tourism businesses to market themselves
- It is important you set up a personal account to then set up a Facebook Page
- There are simple steps you can take to promote your Page and increase interactions with your “likers”
- Above all, you need to ensure your Page is optimised for search so it appears in Google and other search engines. Simple keyword principles apply.

6. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Search engines 101
- Social media for tourism
- Managing multiple social media accounts

b) *Related websites*

- Facebook help: www.facebook.com/help
- Guide to Facebook marketing: <http://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/facebook-marketing>
- Facebook DIY tips: www.mywebschool.com/tag/facebook

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 44

Twitter For Tourism

Twitter is a great tool for businesses looking to attract new customers and increase visibility of their branding. By creatively utilising the 140-character limit you can direct traffic to your business and join in on the conversation.

Reading time: 35 minutes

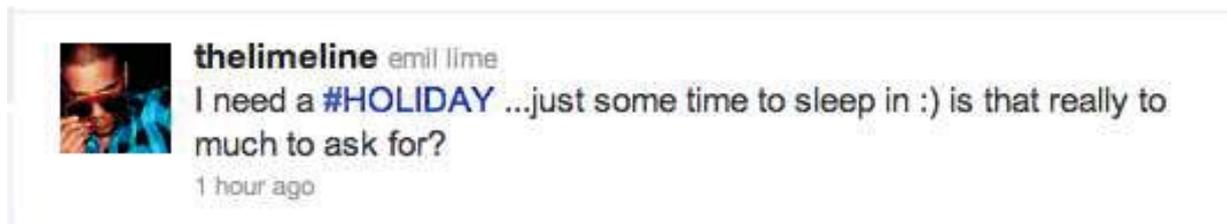
Prerequisite: None



1. What is Twitter and how can it help tourism businesses?

Established in 2006, Twitter is a popular social networking site (also considered a micro blogging site) where registered users can post short messages (known as tweets) as well as photos, videos and links. These short messages are posted on your Twitter profile and visible to anyone including search engines.

JUST LIKE FACEBOOK, TWITTER OFFERS A NEW AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITY TO TIME-POOR TOURISM BUSINESSES WHO WANT TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR AUDIENCE FOR FREE, ON THEIR OWN TERMS.



a) What are the benefits to my business?

One of the main benefits of Twitter is that it is very easy to use. The main feature is a short message often compared to an SMS.

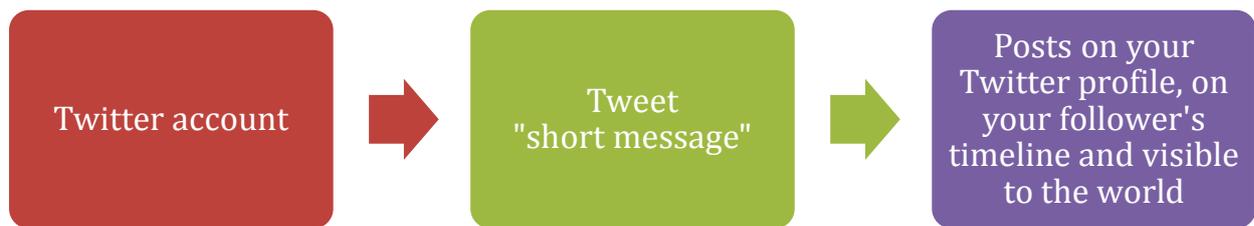
Apart from its simplicity, Twitter offers many advantages such as:

1. It allows your business to tweet – which can include posting photos and/or links – on the site **in a matter of seconds, for free**. This is very important as more people are now using social media to search for holiday destinations and experiences
2. You can configure these tweets to be automatically posted on other social networks such as Facebook and your website **giving your communication more exposure**
3. Majority of the news media are using Twitter to search for new stories and encourage public feedback
4. Twitter can also be used to **gather intelligence on specific topics** e.g. to learn about “internet marketing for tourism”.

TWITTER RANKS HIGHLY WITH SEARCH ENGINES ENABLING SOME USERS' PROFILES TO APPEAR HIGHER IN GOOGLE'S SEARCH RESULTS.

b) In a few words, how does Twitter work?

Twitter allows people to set up free Twitter accounts. You might like to set up one for yourself and one for your business. Once your account is set up, you can use Twitter's website, any one of the numerous programs such as TweetDeck (www.tweetdeck.com) or any Twitter smartphone/iPhone application.



Once you write your message it will be posted on your Twitter profile as well as on the timeline of your followers. For those of you who are familiar with Facebook, the Twitter timeline (example below) could be compared to your Facebook newsfeed. Your message will also be indexed by the Twitter search engines and other engines such as Google; thus becoming findable on the web.



If your message is of interest to a Twitter user they may decide to follow you and receive your tweets in the future.

Twitter also offers direct messages (private messages) and other functionalities such as retweets (reposting your message on their timeline – similar to an email’s “forward” functionality).

c) *The Twitter jargon*

The Twitter lingo isn't as intuitive as some of the other social media platforms. It is therefore important to clarify the jargon:

- **@ symbol** – Called the Twitter handle, this symbol identifies a Twitter user. For instance, ATDW's Twitter handle is @ATDW. If you wish to address your Tweet to ATDW you need to include the @ATDW in your tweet:

E.g. "@ATDW, we loved the latest photos posted on your Facebook Page! Can we join the party next time?"

- **Tweet** – is a message containing 140 characters or less posted on Twitter (the above example is called a tweet)
- **Retweet** – When someone enjoyed your tweet, they can forward it to their followers by using the retweet option. When you manually retweet a message, it should begin with RT followed by the message.

E.g. "RT @ATDW, we loved the latest photos posted on your Facebook Page! Can we join the party next time?"

- **Message** (used to be called Direct Message) - is a private message to a recipient. Keep in mind, you cannot send a direct message to a user who is not following you. A quick way to send a direct message to one of your followers is to add a D in front of their username and drop the @ followed by your message:

E.g. "D ATDW sending you a private message that no one else can see"

- **#** – Called a hashtag, this symbol is used in tweets to mark key words or topics. It was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorise messages for later reference:

E.g. "@ATDW I saw you on the #localnews today"

All of the symbols above can be used on Twitter's website or on Twitter supported programs. They sound tricky at first but after a few minutes they become second nature to any user.

2. How do I set up my account in just ten minutes?

Before you can take advantage of the many benefits of this wonderful communication tool you need to set up a Twitter account. We have outlined the key steps to get you started below. Further information can be found here: <https://support.twitter.com/entries/100990-how-to-sign-up-on-twitter>

1. **Sign up** for a free Twitter account at its homepage www.twitter.com



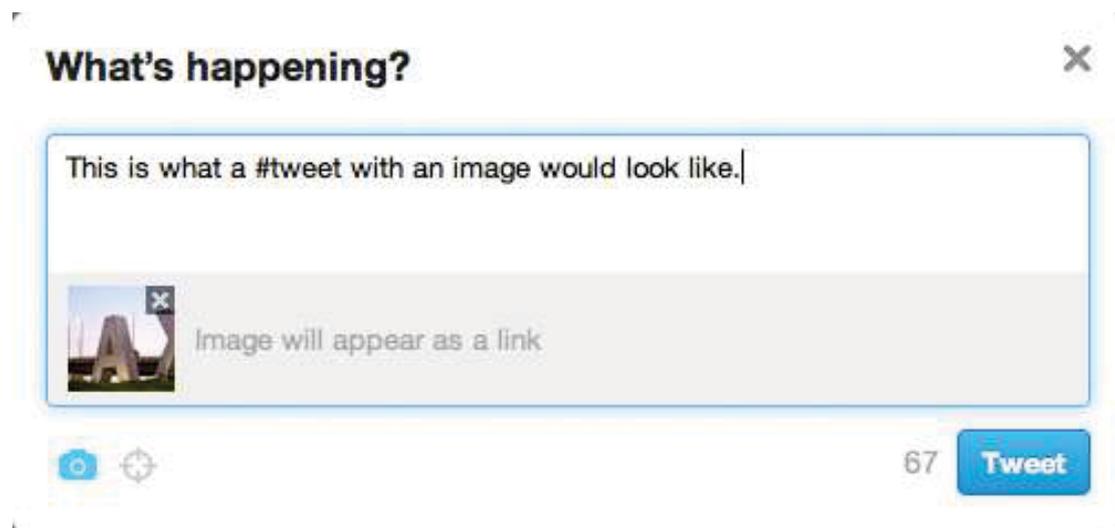
Twitter For Tourism

2. **Fill in your profile details.** Note: if you are signing up in your company's name, use your domain name or business name as the username if it's practical to do so. Your Twitter handle will then become @yourbusinessname
3. **Look for potential followers** through existing email or other social network contacts. Twitter will allow you to find users through such means as Gmail or LinkedIn. This is a great place to begin collecting followers and following your existing contacts.
4. Use Twitter's function to **locate and follow like-minded users.** Look to follow feeds of like-minded organisations or groups.

a) *How do I send my first tweet?*

This is very simple and will only take you a couple of minutes.

1. Visit www.twitter.com and ensure you are logged into your account
2. On the homepage, type your message into the box on the left that says "Compose new Tweet..." or click on the blue button with a feather on the top right to post a message. You can even click on the little camera to add a picture:



3. You can do the same from other programs or from your smartphone

b) *What else can I see on the home tab of my Twitter account?*

On the top left of your homepage, will see numbers in different columns. They may look similar to the below and provide you with a nice summary of your Twitter account. It won't take you long to grow your number of followers once you start tweeting!

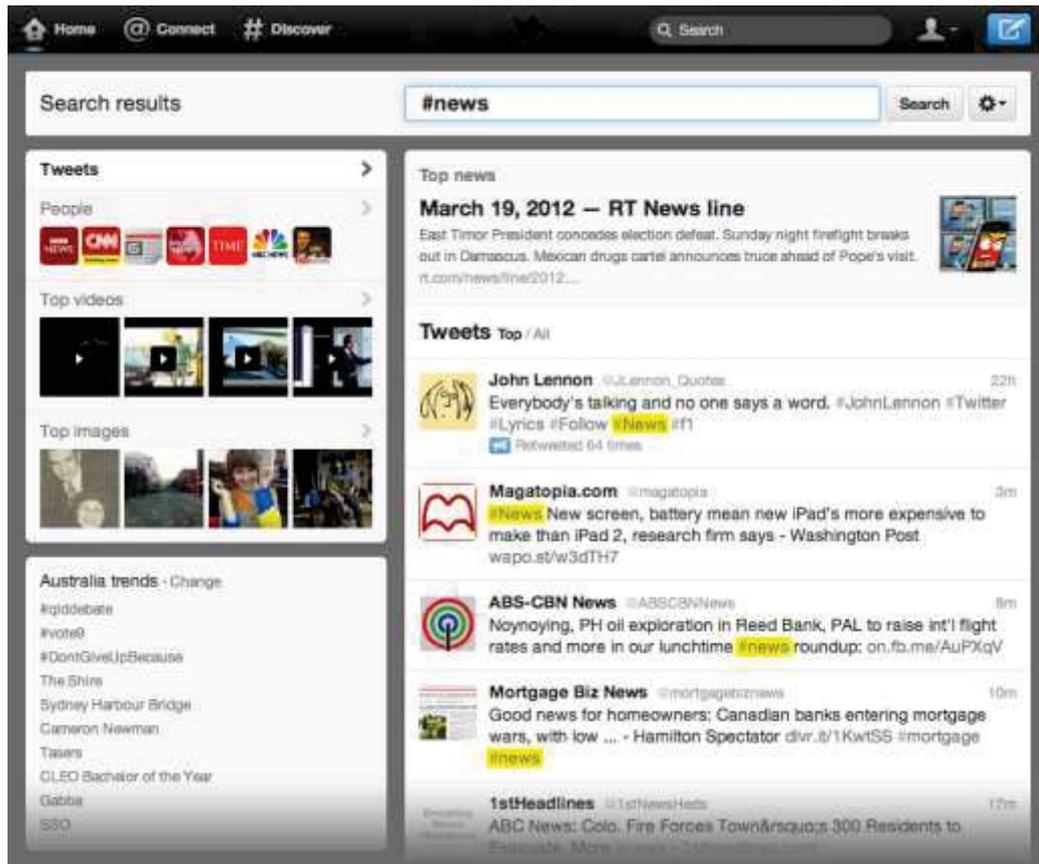


- The “tweets” number is self-explanatory and represents the number of tweets that you have sent
- The “following” number represents the number of people you are following
- The “followers” number represents the number of people following you

c) *How do I search for leads on Twitter?*

As mentioned above, Twitter and search engines index everyone’s tweets which allows for an easy way to find up to date information on any topic you wish. For instance, the Twitter search engine is a powerful tool to search for potential business leads. By using Twitter’ search, you can either:

- Follow common industry topics or brands using hashtags (#) (e.g. #news). The below screenshots provides an example of how to search for a hashtag and the results. The hashtags in red within the post.



- Search for more detailed terms and interest groups that could lead you to potential clients.



Twitter For Tourism

- Other third party applications, such as TweetDeck (www.tweetdeck.com) use an enhanced interactive dashboard, making searching for business leads even easier. Following other Twitter accounts in the tourism industry should allow you to see the people who follow them. This is important if you're looking for potential customers to direct to your own Twitter account.

d) *How do I tweet effectively?*

Once you have sent a few tweets you may wonder what else you could share with the world using Twitter. The trick to effective tweeting is:

- To provide useful content
- To engage in conversation with your followers

Providing useful content

An effective Twitter action plan should concentrate on providing regular informative updates. Remember that one of the key ideas behind business use of Twitter is to initiate a conversation with potential customers.

Potential customers may use a Twitter search to look for information about activities in the region. This may include details on weather, festivals, sporting events, markets, bushwalks etc. as well as a brief history of the region. These should therefore be covered in your Twitter feed's regular updates. For instance you could tweet about today's surf conditions just like @ApartmentsInn did.



ApartmentsInn Apartments Inn

RT [@puredriftcom](https://twitter.com/puredriftcom): Plenty of swell around **Byron Bay** this morning. Check it out at puredrift.com

2 hours ago

The best way to start with Twitter updates is to set up automated reminders about tweeting in your calendar (Outlook, Google, diary or wall calendar). Start with four a week and see how quick and easy it is.

IF YOU HAVE MASTERED THIS YOU CAN MOVE ONTO TOOLS SUCH AS WWW.HOOTSUITE.COM THAT ALLOW YOU TO PRE-WRITE YOUR TWEETS AND AUTOMATICALLY PUBLISH THEM AT PREDETERMINED DATES.

Engage in conversation

This can be a little bit more time consuming – approximately 5 minutes per day! Once you start tweeting you will see that:



- People start to respond (which is fantastic as this is why you are tweeting in the first place)
- You might come across and follow some very interesting people and businesses and might gain knowledge that wouldn't be accessible otherwise. For instance, you could learn about eco-certification and new practices overseas.

Once you reach this level of engagement you will really appreciate tools such as TweetDeck that will beep just like a telephone on your computer and inform you when someone is asking you a question via Twitter (they might want to check if you still have seats available on tomorrow's tour).

3. Time-saving Twitter applications for business

You may want to try the ever-growing number of Twitter applications. The website [Twittereye \(http://www.twittereye.com\)](http://www.twittereye.com) offers a full list of applications, their functions and instructions on how to use them. Three applications with relevance to small tourism business owners are Twitpic, TweetDeck and Hootsuite.

- **Twitpic** (<http://www.twitpic.com>) is a website which allows you to share photos or videos from the site, your smartphone, tablet or email. Tweeting pictures regularly could greatly benefit your business as it should serve to attract more customers to your destination.
- **TweetDeck** (www.tweetdeck.com) and **Hootsuite** (www.hootsuite.com) are both very useful if you run a number of Twitter feeds or would like to integrate other accounts such as Facebook. Keeping accounts updated, monitoring feedback and searching for leads can become cumbersome in this situation. Both TweetDeck and Hootsuite are recommended applications and act as social media dashboards that allow the user to analyse, interact and monitor across a number of accounts.

4. Twitter case study Cairns Holiday Homes

Companies both large and small are now using Twitter to help them advertise their business and control their brand message. An example of the smaller operator using the technology well is the feed run by the Queensland holiday company Cairns Holiday Homes.

A link to the Twitter feed is clearly labelled on the company's website. The account is regularly updated and combines information with specials and available lodging for potential tourists in an accessible, conversational way (<http://twitter.com/#!/cnsholidayhomes>).



Aimed clearly at travellers considering a visit to Tropical North Queensland, the Twitter account engages with its potential visitors in a welcoming and informative manner. The tone and style of the feed is one that could be replicated across a number of similar tourism operations.

5. How to measure my Twitter strategy effectiveness?

There are different tools such as www.Twitalyzer.com that allow you to visualise your tweets, followers and mentions on the Internet. This article reviews a suite of tools available: <http://twittertoolsbook.com/10-awesome-twitter-analytics-visualization-tools/>

Twitter announced in September 2011 that it plans on rolling out Twitter Web Analytics to a group of pilot users and will shortly release it to the Twitter community. This tool is still under development and is yet to be made available to all website owners. <https://dev.twitter.com/blog/introducing-twitter-web-analytics>.

It is recommended that you always focus on simple measures to monitor success on a monthly basis. Start with focusing on the first three below (retweets, @yourusername and visitors to the links):

- **Retweets:** E.g. three tweets were retweeted three times each over a one-month period. That is a total of nine retweets per month.
- **@yourusername replies and mentions** - E.g. “@ATDW yes I agree the tourism ekit is an essential tool for tourism businesses”
- **Visitor traffic to the links you posted in your tweets** - Twitter platforms such as TweetDeck allow you to use different types of URL shortening services (such as bit.ly) to allow you to shorten those character count hungry URLs. If you use such a service you can then access data (e.g. number of times the URL was clicked) to understand how popular your content was

- **Number of followers** – The number of followers isn't always good measure as anyone can follow you on Twitter and they may never wish to interact with you or your content. However, if you have just started to use Twitter it could be a good measure to use at the beginning.

6. Tips and tricks

Once a Twitter account has been set up, many account users look to then attract followers in a cost effective way.

- An easy way to achieve this is to put a **Twitter badge or link on your website**, directing traffic from your site to your Twitter feed. As long as the viewer is signed into their Twitter account, the distance from the site to being a follower of your Twitter feed is a mere two clicks.
- Another good way to make visitors aware of your Twitter page is **to place a sign in your business with your Twitter handle**.
- To increase the chances of your posts being seen by people who are not following you, **use the hashtag (#)** before a descriptive reference name, which follows your post.

For example if you are located in the Blue Mountains you could use # followed immediately by the region and tourism (eg #bluemountains). The hashtag means potential customers searching under this hashtag are likely to find your post.

Used effectively, Twitter could be a powerful marketing tool for your tourism related business. And to end on an even more encouraging note, marketing your business on Twitter is *free*.

7. Key learning outcomes

- Twitter is a great tool to communicate quickly with the world and potential customers
- It takes less than 10 minutes to setup a Twitter account
- Using hashtags (#) will help focus your tweets to your selected audience. You can even search using hashtags to find conversations to join
- There are a number of management tools available for businesses looking to manage multiple accounts or schedule tweets
- Twitter accounts should be promoted both online and in your physical storefront

[All sceencaptures twitter.com](http://All.sceencaptures.twitter.com)

8. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Social media for tourism
- Managing multiple social media accounts



b) Related websites

- <https://business.twitter.com>
- <https://support.twitter.com>

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 45

Online Reputation Management

Managing customer reviews is imperative in order to improve and lift your business' reputation. If you turn a blind eye you risk losing business. This tutorial will provide assistance with assessing and managing your customer reviews.

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: None



1. What is online reputation management and why is it important?

A 2009 NIELSEN GLOBAL ONLINE CONSUMER SURVEY REVEALS THAT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCES ARE THE MOST TRUSTED FORMS OF ADVERTISING: 90 PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY TRUSTED THEM “COMPLETELY” OR “SOMEWHAT.”

Online reputation management (or monitoring) is the practice of monitoring a reputation on the Internet in order to monitor, assess and control the perception of that reputation.

The web has evolved into a giant social community where people interact and exchange ideas. Just as they would do with friends in an offline environment, online users ask peers for advice and trust users more than they trust advertisements.

a) Why manage my online reputation?

In the travel and tourism industry especially, user reviews have taken new dimensions:



Online communities such as TripAdvisor.com, Hostelworld.com, Menulog.com.au feature millions of traveller reviews of cities, hotels, hostels, restaurants, and attractions.



Region-centric tourism and hospitality guides feature reviews of hotel, restaurants and many other products.



Online forums such as the Thorn Tree on LonelyPlanet.com are online spaces where traveller interact 24/7 asking for advice and searching for answers.

It is now common practice for consumers to leave reviews online. They do so on their own blogs, on other peoples' blogs, on Facebook and Twitter, on restaurant review sites, and everywhere they can.

One key implication to the tourism operator is that all this user-generated content is being indexed by search engines. Consequently, people searching for you online have a very large chance of finding these reviews as well. **Staying passive is therefore not an option.** The only solution is to embrace this user-generated content and turn it to your advantage.

b) Benefits of managing my online reputation

There are many benefits to managing, monitoring and engaging in online reputation management which have been listed in order of importance below:

1. You are aware about what is being said online about your business
2. It proves to your potential customer you care about your business and that you want them to have a pleasant experience
3. The majority of the tools are free or have a free version

- Once you have set up the tools and processes it should only take you 30 minutes per week to manage your online reputation and dramatically improve your online strategy.

2. How to get reviews

There are two main ways in which your business will be reviewed online:

- Guests decide to find you on TripAdvisor, Google Places for Business, Facebook or a similar service and leave a review for you
- You encourage guests to review your business across a variety of channels.

As you would expect the most effective way of gaining reviews is to request them and this has become common practice. When requesting a review there are a number of different strategies that you could choose to implement, all of which work well when implemented correctly. The best ways to request a review are:



In person – speak with your guest live on the spot while their experience is fresh in their mind. Ask them to leave a review on your TripAdvisor profile from their smart phone or laptop. Alternatively you could take a quick 30 second video of someone saying how great your tour was or hand out pamphlets or thank you notes with the details of your Facebook, Google Places for Business, TripAdvisor etc accounts.



Via email – Once they have returned home send an email saying how great it was to see them and you hope they enjoyed their time. Request a small favour of them in the form of a review and provide them the direct links to your review platforms. At this time you can also mention that they can like your Facebook Page (www.facebook.com) or follow you on Twitter (www.twitter.com) etc.

To make things easier make sure you create an email template with links to the various sites you find easy to manage! Ensure you remove the “difficult” customers from your email list first of course.



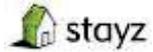
3. Which websites allow reviews?

A vital part of a successful reputation management strategy is to encourage users to review your business on a variety of platforms.

IT IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE TO HAVE A FEW GREAT REVIEWS ON YOUR GOOGLE PLACES FOR BUSINESS ACCOUNT AND EXPECT THAT EVERYONE WILL JUST HEAD THERE AND CHECK THEM OUT.

You now need to have people reviewing you on TripAdvisor, Google Places, your Facebook Page (via a reviews tab), your website, online forums and even on your own blog. A way to achieve this is to change the platform you mention each time you request them, simply request TripAdvisor etc for the first 5 people and then request Facebook, Google Places for Business etc for the next 3 and then switch. Alternatively, you could assess the origin of the bookings and ask people to leave a review on the site they booked (e.g. TripAdvisor, TotalTravel...)

The most common sites and tools for online reputation management have been listed below:

| | Tool | Best for | Website |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | TripAdvisor | Accommodation mainly. Tours, restaurants and other attractions are now accepted but have smaller prominence. | www.tripadvisor.com |
|  | IgoUgo | Accommodation, tours and attraction, restaurants. | www.igougo.com |
|  | Stays | Accommodation - Rental properties | www.stayz.com.au |
|  | Hostel World | Accommodation - Hostels | www.hostelworld.com |
|  | Menu Log | Restaurants | www.menulog.com.au |
|  | Urban Spoon | Restaurants | www.urbanspoon.com |
|  | Eatability | Restaurants | www.eatability.com.au |

Online Reputation Management

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Google Places | All | http://www.google.com/placesforbusiness |
|  | TrueLocal | All | www.truelocal.com.au |
|  | Facebook | All | www.facebook.com |
|  | Pinterest | All | www.pinterest.com |
|  | Cruise Critic | Boating Cruises | www.cruisecritic.com |

Do a search on Google for accommodation reviews *your city* or replace “accommodation” with your product/service type to identify other possible review sites or forums. E.g. accommodation reviews Kangaroo Island.

Kangaroo Island Travel Guide - Kangaroo Island, Australia Review...
www.tripadvisor.com/AllReviews-g255095-Kangaroo_Island_South... 
Kangaroo Island, South Australia Travel Guide: Know **Kangaroo Island** before you go, with TripAdvisor's articles, forums, and 960 **reviews** of **Kangaroo Island** lodging, ...
www.booking.com/Kangaroo-island-Hotels Book your **Hotel** in Kangaroo ...

Kangaroo Island Accommodation - Holiday House & Apartment ...
www.stayz.com.au > SA 
 25+ items – **Kangaroo Island** Holiday **Accommodation** - Find a great deal on ...
 • Western's Rest – Glass fronted holiday house in Penneshaw – Brilliant location ...
 • Blue seas beach house – self contained house in D'Estrees Bay – wildlife and ...
 • Wilderness Valley Studio **Accommodation** – MAGNIFICENT LOCATION & VIEWS

Kangaroo Island Hotels - Reviews & Rates - VirtualTourist
www.virtualtourist.com > ... > State of South Australia > Kangaroo Island 
Kangaroo Island Hotel Reviews: Tips, guest photos, and deals on **hotels** in **Kangaroo Island**, Australia from real travelers and locals.

Kangaroo Island Accommodation: Find Kangaroo Island Hotels ...
www.tripadvisor.com.au > ... > South Australia > Kangaroo Island 
Kangaroo Island Hotels: See traveller **reviews**, photos, and great deals for 9 **hotels** in **Kangaroo Island** at TripAdvisor.

Southern Ocean Lodge - Reviews - Kangaroo Island Resorts ...
www.tripadvisor.com.au/Hotel_Review-g255095-d1064636-Reviews... 
 83 reviews
 Southern Ocean Lodge, **Kangaroo Island**: See 83 traveller **reviews**, 84 photos ...
 Show more results from tripadvisor.com.au

Screenshot copyright Google

4. Tools to monitor feedback

Prior to responding to feedback it is important that tourism businesses have a plan as well as processes in place to monitor and assess feedback.

The best way to monitor online feedback is to set up your TripAdvisor email alerts (refer to the TripAdvisor for tourism tutorial) as well as the two following tools. All three tools are free.

| | Tool | Best for | Website |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Google Alerts | Social media and non social media | www.google.com/alerts |
|  | Social Mention | Social media only | www.socialmention.com |

a) Google Alerts

Setting up Google Alerts will only take you approximately 10 minutes and offers a very easy way to subscribe to what the world is saying about you or about any topic of your choice. Set up as many Google Alerts based on your keywords and any new webpage mentioning them will land in your inbox!



Online Reputation Management

E.g. If you are a bed and breakfast called “Gold Coast Lone Star” on the Gold Coast, create a few Google alerts: “Gold Coast Lone Star”, “bed and breakfast Gold Coast”, “tourism Gold Coast” etc. Set alerts for the name of your competitors, your staff, your State or Territory’s Minister for Tourism...

1. Go to www.google.com/alerts
2. Enter the terms you want to subscribe to. Put the terms inside quotes if there is more than one (so write “tourism marketing” if you want to subscribe to tourism marketing)
3. Confirm your email address
4. Repeat the same process for more alerts
5. Set up a Google account if you want to manage your alerts (however, you don’t need one to set up the alerts)
6. Once the alerts are set up they will go straight to your inbox.

This blog post provides further information on how to monitor your company’s online presence: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4203/How-to-Use-Google-Alerts-to-Monitor-Your-Company-s-Online-Presence.aspx>

This blog post provides information on how to further customise Google alerts: <http://labnol.blogspot.com/2006/11/google-alerts-tutorial-to-help-you.html>

b) Social Mention

Social Mention is a social media search and analysis platform that aggregates user-generated content from across the universe into a single stream of information. It is one of the most popular and free social media aggregators. It is just as quick and easy as Google alerts.

1. Go to www.socialmention.com
2. Enter the term you would like to subscribe to. Social mention isn’t very good at searching for phrases (more than one term) so it is recommended you use only one word
3. Click on email alerts on the right
4. Create the alert to set up your alert
5. Repeat the process as many times as required to receive alerts on other terms
6. Once the alerts are set up they will go straight to your inbox.

5. How can I successfully assess and respond to feedback?

Once the monitoring tools are in place it is important to set up processes for assessing and responding to feedback. Aim to create a short document that meets the Who, What, Where, When, How and How many listed below. One page should suffice. Ensure the document is added to the company’s operations manual and read by all staff. Also ensure that feedback is given in accordance with your processes document.

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Who | Who will prepare the draft response to the reviews, who will sign off on them, who is the person who left the review? |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What | What was the review about, what will be done in the company to ensure this does or doesn't happen again |
| Where | Where did the review appear (which medium?), where will the response be posted |
| When | When was the review posted, when was it "found" and what are appropriate timeframes for response? |
| How | How should the response be structured, what guidelines should be put in place to ensure consistency. |
| How many | How many reviews (if any) are required to move a negative review to page 2, 3 or 4? |

6. FAQs

- **Shall I respond to every review?** If time permits, yes. However, you absolutely need to respond to all the negative reviews. Responding to the glowing reviews is also an excellent strategy.
- **I have received a negative review that wasn't justified, can I get it removed?** In most cases this won't be possible and isn't recommended. The best approach will be to respond to the review (if possible) and to encourage your past guests to leave positive reviews to move the negative one off page 1.
- **Is it a good idea to pay or reward people to leave me reviews?** Paying or rewarding customers to leave reviews is against the terms and conditions of the majority of review sites. The best way is to contact your past guests and ask to be reviewed. Many people will do it as they had a great experience.
- **Do I have to pay to be listed on online review sites?** Most generally you don't. Some sites offer paid listings but the majority also offer free listings.

7. Key learning outcomes

- Monitoring, managing and growing your online reviews becomes part of a routine and quick process once set up
- TripAdvisor is one the most popular online review sites and a basic listing is free
- Google Alerts and Social Mention are two of the easiest and free tools to monitor your online reputation
- You need an action plan to manage your reputation to ensure you address and seek reviews regularly.

8. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing
- TripAdvisor for tourism
- Managing multiple social media accounts

b) Related websites

- TripAdvisor Owner Page: <http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Owners>
- TripAdvisor Getting listed: <http://www.tripadvisor.com/pages/getlisted.html>
- TripAdvisor 101 for your business: www.untanglemyweb.com/language/en-US/About/Blog/articleID/187/Tourism-Strategy-Promote-your-tourism-business-on-TripAdvisor

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 46

TripAdvisor For Tourism

TripAdvisor is an excellent tool for tourism businesses as it allows for strong reputation management. Learn why you should have a TripAdvisor account and how to manage it.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: Online reputation management



1. What is TripAdvisor and how can it help my tourism business?

Originally established in February 2000, TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.com) is billed as the “world’s largest travel community” according to its website. TripAdvisor contains advice, opinions, reviews and information on travel destinations and related products and services throughout the world.

One of the pioneers of user-generated content, the site publishes reviews and travel tips from registered users which is designed for the use of other travellers.



IT IS FREE TO USE AND VERY USER FRIENDLY!

Users who submit a review are asked to rank holiday sites, restaurants, hotels and other travel-related products and services according to a number of criteria. Users can also enter a personal review. The tourism product, service or attraction is ranked on the site within its category and location according to a complex algorithm based on the number of overall positive reviews.

Screen capture copyright: TripAdvisor.com

a) What are the benefits to my business?

A July 2011 study by comScore Media Metrix, Worldwide found that the site has an estimated **50 million unique monthly visitors**, with 20 million members who had collectively published over 50 million reviews and opinions.

There are numerous benefits of monitoring your TripAdvisor listing:

1. It gives your business exposure on one of the largest travel review website allowing you to connect to the 50 million visitors per month who use the site to plan their holidays
2. It is free (unless you upgrade to the paid listing)
3. You can respond to the reviews
4. It is super easy to use
5. It is very quick to set up.

b) In a few words, why is TripAdvisor so popular?

Simply put, people believe reviews from peers more than advertising. A Forrester Benchmark Survey has shown consumers place higher faith in reviews from peers than that provided by traditional forms of advertising such as television, radio, newspaper or magazines. A similar survey by the company in 2008 found that 87 percent of respondents said they preferred to read customer reviews before buying.

Therefore having a business listed on the travel site, which generates regular positive reviews, should be a cost effective, efficient and credible way to reach potential customers.

2. How to set up and claim your listing

Having decided that a listing on TripAdvisor is worthwhile you'll now want to go ahead and list your small tourism business on the travel site. It will only take you 5 minutes and is free.

1. First you'll need to go to the business pages of TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.com/Owners)
2. Click through on one of the four categories: Hotel/Accommodation; Vacation Rental; Restaurant or Attraction
3. Enter your small travel business on the site and follow the prompts to add your business as a free listing.



Alternatively you can go straight to the www.tripadvisor.com/pages/getlisted.html page.

Note: travellers can request that TripAdvisor adds your listing to TripAdvisor even if you haven't created it yet. Refer to http://www.tripadvisor.com/help/does_it_need_to_be_listed_already_for_someone_to_review_my_property.

Screen capture copyright: TripAdvisor.com

TRIPADVISOR ALSO NOW OFFERS A PAID BUSINESS LISTING WHICH ALLOWS COMPANIES TO DISPLAY CONTACT INFORMATION AND ADVERTISE SPECIAL OFFERS ON THE SITE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS VISIT THIS PAGE: WWW.TRIPADVISOR.COM.AU/BUSINESSLISTINGS.

a) Optimising your listing to get reviews

While you are setting up your listing it is important to make sure all details entered on TripAdvisor are correct and that customers are engaged by enhancing the listing with:

- photos
- video
- a clear description of the product or service.

TripAdvisor also provides a number of tools in the Management Centre on the site including badges and widgets (little applications to display your listing on your website), email links, custom cards and flyers to assist in reminding clients to write a review of the business once they leave.

To review a few ideas on how to set up your listing to encourage reviews visit your TripAdvisor

owner centre on www.tripadvisor.com/Owners.

b) Additional opportunities with a Business Listing and the Facebook “like” button

Business listing

As well as tapping into the huge number of TripAdvisor site users, a business listing may also give you the chance of being listed in other top travel sites. More information and cost:

www.tripadvisor.com/vpages/business_listings_faq.html and
www.tripadvisor.com.au/BusinessListings.

Facebook “like” button

TripAdvisor is using Facebook to personalise the experience on the TripAdvisor website.

Thanks to this integration, TripAdvisor users can now see which one of their Facebook friends:

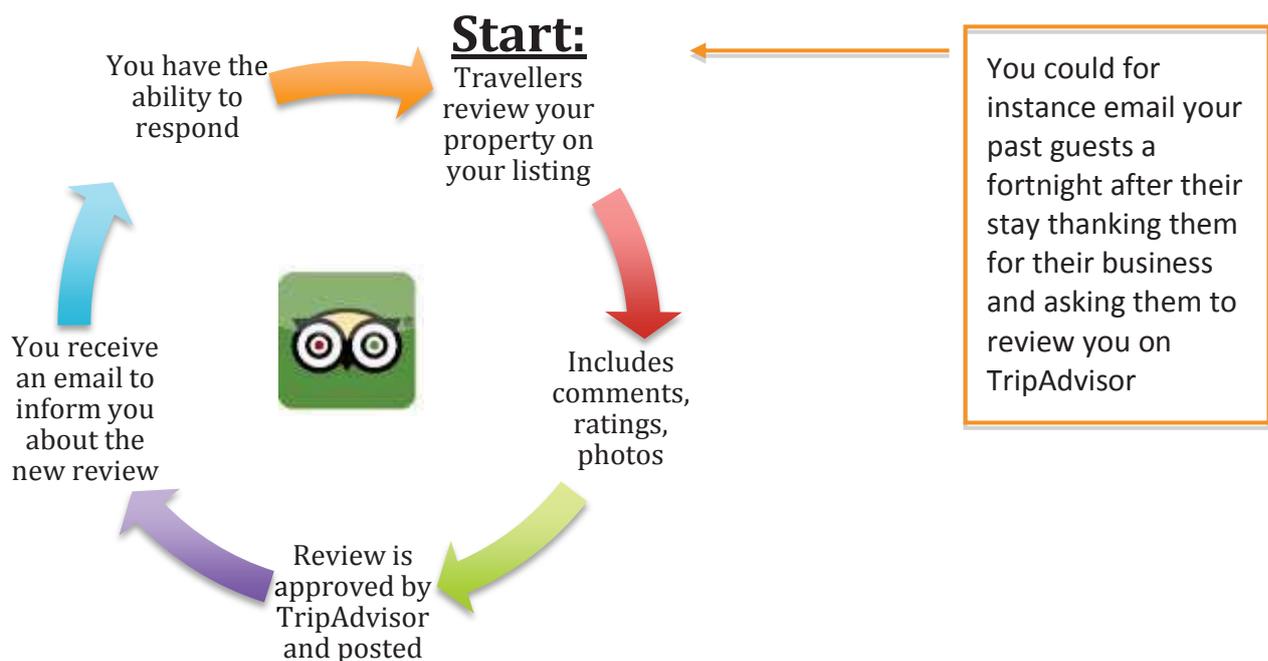
- Stayed/experienced the property/activity/restaurant (see pink highlighted areas on screenshot below)
- Likes the property/activity/restaurant
- Is friend with a reviewer
- Had activities nearby (see pink highlighted areas on screenshot below)
- The properties/activities/restaurants their friends visited/stayed at/or left a review on (see pink highlighted areas on screenshot below)

The screenshot shows a TripAdvisor listing for 'Tyrian Serviced Apartments' in Fitzroy, Australia. The listing features a 5-star rating, 47 reviews, and a recent review by Liz Ward. The review text reads: "Fresh, modern and amazing location". The listing also includes a map, travel options, and nearby attractions like 'Teindos-The Greeks Restaurant' and 'Melbourne Zoo'.

3. What is the process for your guests to leave you a review?

Your listing allows your guests to leave you reviews. The simple diagram below illustrates the process.





4. Benefits of maximising the usage of the simple review process

a) Direct reputation management opportunities

TripAdvisor is great as it allows you to easily monitor your online reviews. The fact that all reviews are located in one convenient place under your business listing will save you a lot of time.

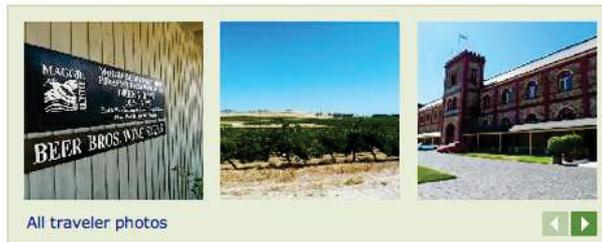
There are a number of tools supplied by TripAdvisor to help track and measure this vital information which include **the ability to sign up to be notified by email whenever a user review is generated**. Close monitoring of negative feedback should alert the business owner to any problems, which can be dealt with to ensure ongoing good service. Good feedback left as reviews should also be followed up, not only to thank the reviewer but also to show other potential customers that management takes its customer relationships seriously.

b) Improved rankings in TripAdvisor

While “controlling the message” is always an issue with social media, having a listing on TripAdvisor which continually generates good customer reviews may be rewarding as well as cost effective.

For example a guesthouse which receives good user reviews and high scores would be given a high ranking by the travel website for the search result for the location in which it operates.

Visiting Barossa Valley, Australia Like



Top-rated B&Bs

All 28 B&Bs

- 1 Blickinstal Barossa Valley Retreat ★★★★★ 23 reviews
- 2 Country Pleasures B & B ★★★★★ 11 reviews
- 3 Collingrove Homestead ★★★★★ 13 reviews
- 4 The Louise ★★★★★ 59 reviews
- 5 Jacobs Creek Retreat ★★★★★ 81 reviews

c) *Increased confidence for website visitors*

A listing on TripAdvisor also gives your tourism business the opportunity to add the site's traveller review badges on your own site, helping to encourage people to book your service as they browse through your site. In a 2007 survey carried out by ecommerce/Bazaar, adding guest reviews to sites lifted conversion rates by 56 percent; increased traffic by 77 percent and increased the average shopping basket by 42 percent.

5. Responding to reviews

MONITORING FEEDBACK AND RESPONDING TO USER REVIEWS, WHETHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, IS MOST CRUCIAL AS IT DEMONSTRATES TO CUSTOMERS THAT MANAGEMENT VALUES CUSTOMER OPINIONS.

TripAdvisor allows company management to add their own reply to a review of their product or service. The reply appears directly under original review. **Only one response is allowed per review so the response should be co-ordinated between company management and well considered before being posted.**

Every review should ideally be responded to if times permits. Every business owner should at least respond to all negative reviews. Remember, you are not only responding to the reviewer but to all the people that are likely to see your response.

Responses to negative reviews should be polite, informative, contain factual original content and be within the guidelines set out in your company's customer relations policy. Make sure you abide by the guidelines: http://www.tripadvisor.com/help/management_response_guidelines or your response may not be published.



Many times a negative review offers the business a chance to clarify the facts and provide a fantastic answer that will totally change the perception given by the negative review (see the

example below for a negative review and a response).



welltrave...
Brisbane
★ 8 reviews
👤 3 helpful votes

"Dirty & Dusty"

⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ Reviewed May 28, 2009

1 person found this review helpful

We didn't have the pleasure of meeting David during our stay, but found Danilella to be friendly and helpful. Upon being led to our cottage the first thing that I noticed were the shabby curtains at the windows. Upon entering the cottage the musty smell was quite over whelming, and upon further inspection found the windows to be covered with dead spiders and cobweds. The chimney was full of dust as was the ceiling fan. The groves in the furniture were covered in a thick grey dust, and there were cobwebs in the bedside drawers. The bathroom was pleasant but far from spotlessly clean. The bed lined was of very poor quality and the duvet cover hadn't even been ironed. The lighting to the paths had still to be fixed, and we had to take a torch when we went out for dinner, to navigate our way back to the cottage. The presentaion of breakfast hamper left a lot to be desired! Milk , yoghurt, butter, jam, mustard all served in the single serve plastic containers napkins weren't supplled. The cottages are in a lovely location, and the concept is very nice. Unfortunately the standard and the cleanliness are not. We won't be returning

Stayed May 2009, traveled as a couple

⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ Value
⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ Location

⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ Rooms
⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ Cleanliness
⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙ Service

Was this review helpful?

[Problem with this review?](#)

[Ask welltravelled039 about Witches Falls Cottages](#)

David Kennedy, owner at Witches Falls Cottages, responded to this review

June 9, 2009

It is a rude awakening when you have a guest whose expectations you failed to meet and while it has not happened before in the 18 months since we renovated it certainly was the case with these guests. We don't much like a lousy review on trip advisor but more importantly it's our guests that we want to enjoy both Witches Falls Cottages and Mount Tamborine.

In this case it was apparent from the beginning that we might not be the right for them and they really had booked at the wrong place. They needed a weekend of being pampered and everything done for them. breakfast made, not a hamper to make your own breakfast, not in an organic, humid, living rain forest but a sterile environment with no spiders, leaves or dusty fireplaces. The concept of our place might have been attractive but the reality certainly was not, being pampered and having everything done for them at Palazzo Versace was what this couple needed and we certainly are not that.

We want everyone to enjoy being with us and for the first time ever Daniela felt it appropriate to offer these guests their money back so they could enjoy somewhere more suited to their needs. They declined this offer. We did get the cleaners to come in again to remove some spiders webs from around the chimney (yes we have lots of spiders here on Tamborine and especially in the forested areas) and like all good spiders they can rebuild their web in an hour! Yes, the curtain had been marked where it gets trapped in the sliding aluminum door. Yes, we had been hit with a storm and the garden pathway lights were not fixed till later that same afternoon. (we do give each cottage a flashlight as our car park and pathways are only softly lit and you need one up here anyway as Mt Tamborine has next to no street lighting, which makes it great for watching the stars but not too good for getting back from the Irish Bar!)

We do meet (and often exceed) most of our guests' expectations as can be seen on other trip advisor reviews both before and after this stay.

We hope this guests critic and our response will help other guests understand we have a living, breathing, rain forest cottage environment and this will help you decide if we are the right place for you to "Relax, rejuvenate and reconnect"

Chief Wizard – June2009

To respond to reviews visit your Management Centre by clicking on "manage my listing" in the top right corner of the window when you are logged in.

6. How do I assess if what I am doing is working?

There are a few ways to assess your TripAdvisor presence:

1. Your number of reviews and their breakdown (positive vs. negative)
2. Your TripAdvisor ranking
3. In your TripAdvisor account you are able to track your property's performance **against your local competitors**. This is located under the Manage your review's section.





7. Key learning outcomes

- TripAdvisor is the most popular reputation management tool for tourism businesses as it allows both sides of the story to be told.
- There are multiple business tools available for those who use TripAdvisor, including badges on your website as well as competitor performance monitoring.
- All negative reviews should be responded to promptly.

8. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Social media for tourism
- Managing multiple social media accounts
- Online reputation management

b) Related websites

- TripAdvisor Owner Page: www.tripadvisor.com/Owners
- TripAdvisor Getting listed: <http://www.tripadvisor.com/pages/getlisted.html>
- TripAdvisor 101 for your business: <http://www.untanglemyweb.com/language/en-US/About/Blog/articleID/187/Tourism-Strategy-Promote-your-tourism-business-on-TripAdvisor>
- Online reviews for tourism organisations and associations: <http://www.untanglemyweb.com/tourism-internet-marketing/social-media-and-online-reviews-for-your-tourism-and-destination-management-organisation>

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 47

YouTube And Video Hosting Websites

Videos should form a key part of your online strategy. This tutorial covers the different sites allowing you to host your videos and market your business online.

Reading time: 25 minutes

Prerequisite: None

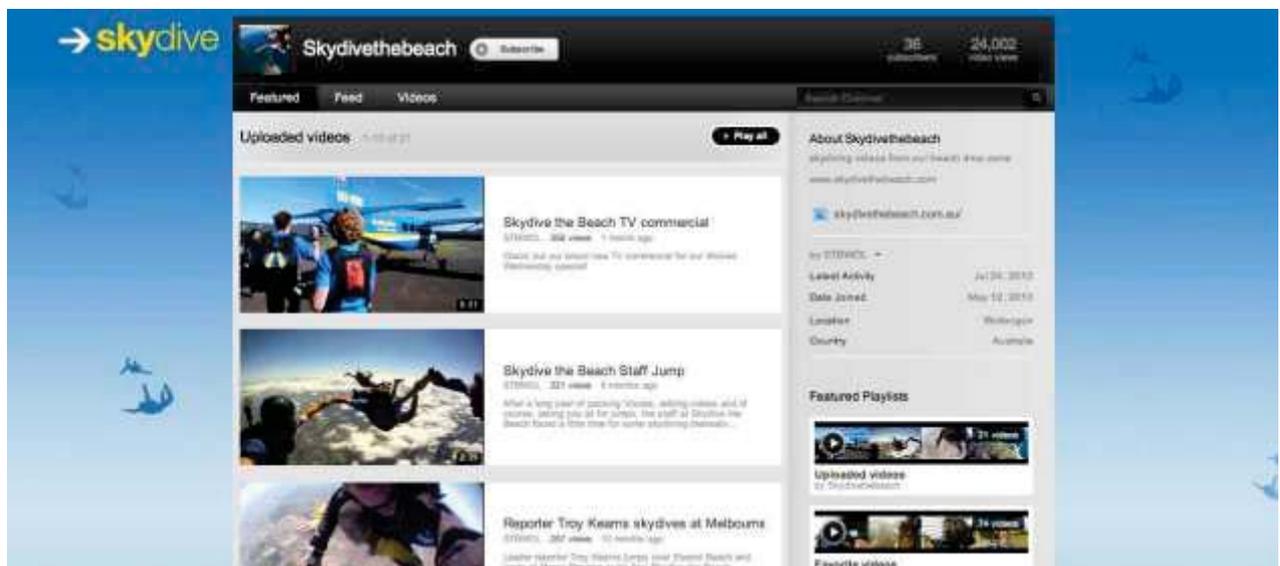


1. How video can help your tourism business and why should you consider it

As a business owner, you have probably found yourself thinking once or twice “If only they could see what it’s really like here”. They now can thanks to video. Images speak a thousand words but videos add an extra dimension as they allow you to show your business, other guests and how great your services are.

YouTube is currently the second most popular search engine in the world which means that people are actively searching for videos every day and your business could be benefiting from all of that traffic.

The example below from the YouTube channel of Skydive The Beach in Sydney illustrates how video can in a few seconds entice your potential client to make a booking.



a) Why is it important?

The answer is simple: video sells and showcases your product and business better than any text or photo could do. Making that personal connection with potential customers is extremely valuable and so easily achieved using videos.

b) *Why is it such an effective marketing tool?*

Let's first do a test. Please read the text below, pay attention to the photo and follow the link to the video. Which one of these media elements grabs your attention and entices you to get your credit card out of your wallet to book your seat?

Text

Take advantage of the magical setting of Undara and the colours of the Outback with a weekend of enchantment and captivating renditions including Henry Purcell's "The Fairy Queen".

Photo



Video



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpn4iewCbrY>

There is no surprise... the video!

Search engine optimisation

Video is also an excellent way to rank in search engines. Sometimes, when Google believes it is relevant, video search results will be displayed within the "everything" search results. Google calls these blended results "Universal Search". However, it is difficult to predict for what keywords Google will display videos on the "everything" search results page.

Google also provides a video specific search results page. Access this by clicking on the "videos" link on the left of the search results.

Let's have a look at the below screenshots:



The above screenshot was taken in the "everything" search results page of Google. There are approx 1.6 million pages competing for a first page ranking on Google.



The above screenshot was taken in the "video" search results page of Google. There are only 105 videos competing for a first page ranking on Google. Note that videos will also appear on the "everything" search results page of Google.

Videos are also an excellent marketing tool because:

- Production costs are now much lower
- It only takes minutes to make and upload a short video with a camera or

YouTube And Video Hosting Websites

smartphone/iPhone

- Hosting is now so easy thanks to all the free video hosting sites.

c) *How to get started*

Before you jump on in and start creating accounts on video media sites you first need to determine which site is best for your business and create a video strategy for the ongoing collection of videos.

Below is a list of **free, purpose-built video hosting sites**.

| Service | Integration | URL | Audience |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|  YouTube | Integrates with most websites and Social Media networks | www.youtube.com | 3 billion + videos are viewed every day |
|  Vimeo | Integrates with most websites and some social media networks | www.vimeo.com | 40 million + monthly users worldwide |
|  Daily Motion | Integrates with websites via HTML codes | www.dailymotion.com | 114 million + monthly users worldwide |

Facebook, Flickr and Photobucket also offer video hosting capabilities but aren't purpose-built video hosting sites.

2. Setting up a video strategy

Once you have decided which video media site you will promote your content on in addition to your website you need to **prepare a video strategy. This will ensure that your efforts are continued long term.** A video strategy doesn't mean you need to decide on every video right now but forces you to consider and plan which types of videos you would like to use for your business. A successful video strategy document will include a section about video standards and a video calendar.



Video standards – What are the standards that you would like your videos to meet:

- this can be as simple as “videos must have good sound quality and contain at least one person”
 - or more complex as to include business’ logo, specific words, an opening and closing shot or particular background music.
- This will set the scene for your video collection and will be handy for anyone that helps out with your website or online marketing.



Video calendar – A video calendar can be combined with your overarching social media conversation calendar to determine:

- times that you would like to create a video. Once you note down a time in your calendar, try to stick to it. The 10-15 minutes it takes will provide great exposure for your business
- what you will film: for instance you could create guest review videos, great event summary videos
- where the videos will be posted: on which video hosting sites and on what page of your website
- who will shoot the video: will you create short videos with your smartphone, iPhone or camcorder? Will you also consider getting professionals to shoot a short video? Will you be using videos made by your guests?

3. Effectively utilising video

To effectively use video and ensure it reaches its maximum potential it is important to ensure you publish your video in multiple locations.

Videos should be included on your website, on the video media site of your choice (YouTube, Vimeo etc) and on social networking sites to ensure you reach the widest audience available.



a) Video applications in social media

While sites such as YouTube and Vimeo are often counted as social media sites, there are a number of other sites that you should publish your videos on such as your Facebook Page and Twitter.

Facebook Page

Adding videos to your Facebook Page can be a great benefit to your business as recent statistics say that videos are one of the most commonly clicked on items on Facebook. Add a video to your

Page by sharing the URL of the video (that you have loaded onto a video media site) as a post, or include a great video from your business in a custom tab on your Facebook page.

Twitter

Another great social media application for videos is Twitter. You can share your video on Twitter by pasting the URL of the video in with your update. People will then be able to click on the link and view it on their smartphone or computer.

4. Video case studies

Tourism Queensland understands the strength and power of videos for Australia's tourism businesses, recently they partnered up with professional videographers and training companies to create high quality videos for a collection of tourism businesses.



These videos have since been uploaded onto YouTube, optimised for search and included on the businesses' websites. Some of these videos have since had thousands of views potentially directing masses of new customers to the business.

The videos have also been shared on social networking sites by viewers and placed on the accounts of many of the businesses as a great marketing tool.

Screen capture copyright: YouTube

5. Tips and tricks

- Once you've set up your account on a video media site don't forget to **monitor your views and statistics**. Many of the sites include an insights or statistics page that will help with this. Otherwise monitor via Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) and the available insights when you share videos on your Facebook Page.
- **Videos should be natural**, don't have to be scripted and unless your video is being professionally created you shouldn't be trying to win an Emmy Award. Be relaxed, take your time and if it doesn't work out the first time you can always try again.
- When you load your videos online video media sites **don't forget to include descriptions and keywords**, as you enter these you are increasing your chances for sites like Google Videos to index and display your video.

6. Key learning outcomes

- Videos should be leveraged by tourism businesses to show off their services
- They are very easy to make and only take minutes to be posted
- Videos should be shared across a mixture of sites to ensure maximum visibility; there are a number of great video media sites available for businesses to upload their videos too.

YouTube And Video Hosting Websites

- Videos should not be a one off activity for your business, build a video calendar to plan for future videos.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Video for your website
- Social media for tourism
- Flickr and photo hosting websites

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 48

Flickr and Photo Hosting Websites

Learn which sites to use to give more exposure to your photos, how to optimise them for search and what an image strategy entails.

Reading time: 35 minutes

Prerequisite: Images 101



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. Benefits to your business

Making your images available online provides many benefits to your business. The first and most commonly recognised benefit is **the impact of showcasing your business and region online to people who might not otherwise know just how great it is.**

Images validate what you are saying using words. Showing quality images as part of your website, social media strategy or business listings may very well mean the difference between people believing or not believing what you are saying.

Let's compare the text and image below for the same product. Which one wins?

Text

Have the little penguins to all yourself on a private, secluded beach. Includes full ranger briefing and commentary through headsets. Use high-tech night vision goggles to watch the penguins in the dark.

Image



The image of course!

In addition to showcasing your product and experiences, images can provide an extra channel in which your website and business can be found online.

The lower cost and easier use of cameras makes it more affordable for your business to have video and imagery.

2. The importance of images to search engines

Before you upload your images to your website or to Flickr and/or other photo hosting websites it is important you understand the basic principles of search engine optimisation.

Images used to have one main purpose only: making your website look good. Things have since changed and search engines can now index images.

Flickr And Photo Hosting Websites

THIS MEANS THAT IMAGES HAVE A NEW PURPOSE: IMPROVING YOUR SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS AND DIRECTING VISITORS TO YOUR WEBSITE.

Search engines cannot “view” pictures as such. They rely on text to understand what the image is about. The table below gives you an idea about how image details are used to communicate what your image is about to search engines.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>File name</p> | <p>Use descriptive words in your file name:</p> <p>Uluru-bushwalking.jpg instead of DCM43x9AG.JPG)</p> |  |
| <p>Image “Alt” attribute</p> | <p>Always use the Alt attribute and ensure you are using keywords. You will be able to edit all your images’ Alt attributes in your content management system.</p> <p>A good Alt attribute that uses keywords could be Bushwalking adventure in Uluru instead of John and Jane walking near the lake</p> | |
| <p>Text around the image</p> | <p>Search engines use the text surrounding an image to understand what the image is about.</p> <p>Come and join our 4-day adventure tour at Uluru. Bushwalking at sunrise, feeding the kangaroos and camping in swags are what you can expect at MyUluruAdventure</p> | |
| <p>Tags</p> | <p>These are used by social media sites such as Flickr and Facebook. Ensure you tag all your photos with numerous descriptive tags.</p> <p>Uluru, travel, adventure, camping, swag, kangaroos, morning bushwalk</p> | |
| <p>The general nature of the website</p> | <p>Keep in mind that search engines are proficient at understanding semantics (linguistic meaning) of webpages. Always ensure that your images are very relevant to the content of each of your webpages.</p> | |

Photo Credit http://flickr.com/photos/the_guenni/

3. Permission

Before you can publish your images online it is important that you first ensure that you have permission to use the photos and are abiding by copyright laws.

a) Gaining permission from my guests

If you have taken any photos or videos of your guests or visitors, you will require their permission to use the material in order to promote your business. Below is an example of a picture or video release form. We suggest you make your own and check with your legal advisor.

Insert Your logo

Picture/Video Release Form

I hereby give [YOUR BUSINESS NAME HERE] permission to take photographs/videos of me or use photographs/videos in which I may be involved with others for the purpose of promoting [YOUR BUSINESSSS NAME HERE]. I also give the permission to use both photographs/videos that I took and/or photographs/videos that [YOUR BUSINESSSS NAME HERE] took of me to publish the same, including web and/or electronic usage, without incurring any debts of liabilities of any kind.

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Post code: _____

State: _____ Country: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

(Parent/guardian signature if minor or under 18)

4. Setting up an image strategy

An image strategy is vital to ensure your images are being maximised online. The key part of an image strategy revolves around deciding where and when your images will be posted on the Internet:

- Will you be updating your image gallery on your website each time you take a great photo
- Are your images uploaded to Facebook, Flickr and Picasa ad hoc or do you upload them as part of folders and larger strategies.

Create an image strategy for your business that outlines the when, where and what of loading business images to the Internet.

Your image strategy document or plan could look similar to the below:

Image strategy

Who: The receptionist is in charge of capturing happy snaps of clients once they are about to head on the tour bus. Email also sent to clients 2 weeks post tour enticing them to post images on company's Facebook Page.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): 2 images per week.

What: Efforts should be made to photograph couples only as our target market is couples. Outdoor shots are preferred.

Where: Photos are to be uploaded on Flickr.com using the Flickr Uploadr tool and appropriate tags. Photos from Flickr need to also be added to our website and our Facebook Page.

When: This needs to be done on Fridays.

Why: Because our product is best showcased with images.

How: Please use company iPhone.

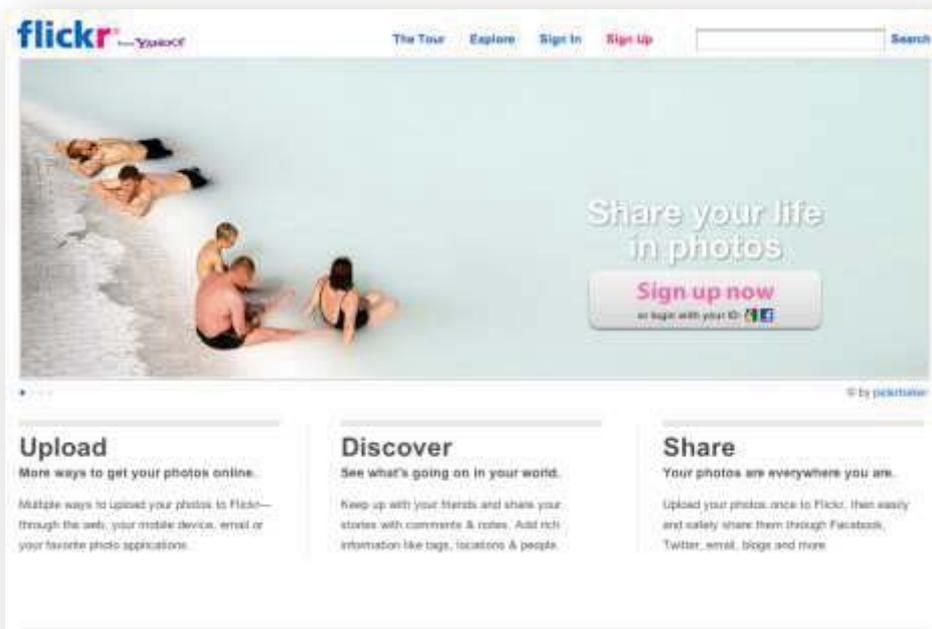
Flickr And Photo Hosting Websites

a) *Photos on your website*

To effectively use images you need to ensure that your website is kept up to date. If your website is built on a content management system (CMS) updating your website with images should be fairly simple. If you have a group of photos relating to a special event you could use the images as part of a blog post to maximise readership and views.

b) *Photo sharing*

Take your beyond your website and post them on photo sharing sites. This will increase your online visibility and it's free.



Screencapture credit: Flickr

There are many photo sharing sites, a few of the most popular ones are:

- Flickr: www.flickr.com
- Pinterest: www.pinterest.com
- Photobucket: www.photobucket.com
- Picasa Web Albums: www.picasaweb.google.com
- Panoramio: www.panoramio.com

If you have photos from a recent event or tour load them on to your Facebook Page and ask the businesses or guests that attended to comment and post photos on your Page as well.

Please keep in mind that your clients can also do the same and post their photos of their holiday at your property or business on their accounts (e.g. Flickr, Facebook). Ask them to tag your business name on their photos when possible (on Flickr for example). It will maximise your

Flickr And Photo Hosting Websites

business' exposure.

c) Photo competitions

Holding competitions on your social media accounts where users can load their favourite photo of their time with you is a great way to increase interaction. Simple competitions like "Upload your funny holiday snaps at My Hotel for your chance to win an extra night stay with us next time you book" are a great way to encourage fan participation and get images of your business online.

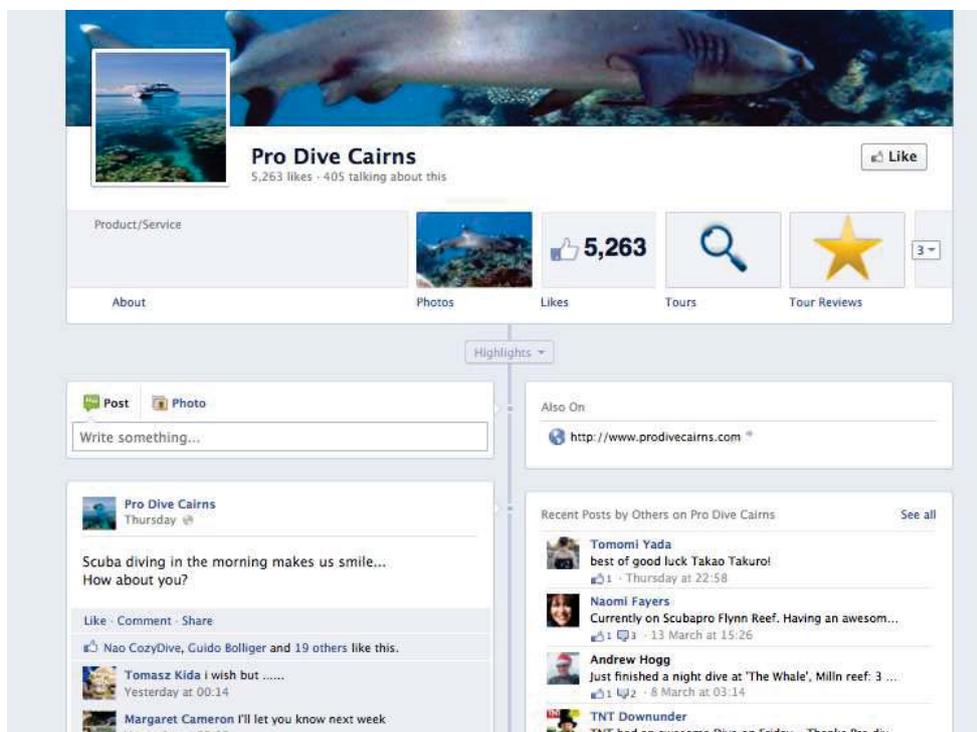
d) Copyright

When you upload images to Flickr and other sites you are often able to choose between two level of copyright: full copyright (standard) and Creative Commons.

- For more information about copyright in Australia, download <http://www.copyright.org.au/admin/cms-acc1/images/8735182134d3cb24174a63.pdf>
- For Creative Commons licence in Australia, visit <http://creativecommons.org.au/learn-more/licences>

5. Images case studies

Pro Dive Cairns (www.facebook.com/prodivercairns) does a great job of utilising images for their social media accounts. They encourage their Facebook "likers" to post their favourite photos and the image with the most "Likes" wins a prize.



This is great for Pro Dive Cairns as it achieves 2 things:

Flickr And Photo Hosting Websites

- **Community interaction and involvement:** by getting their own “likers” to provide images they are improving the feel and ‘image’ of the business
- **Showcase of the business:** while the majority of images don’t include the actual divers, the images show exactly what the majority of divers go in search of – sea life and amazing views. By showcasing these they are giving potential customers an honest account of the services offered.

A similar initiative could be put in place for your business using any of your social media channels or even on your website.

PRO DIVE CAIRNS COULD HOST THEIR IMAGES ON FLICKR INSTEAD OF JUST HOSTING THEM ON THEIR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE. THIS WOULD GIVE THEM MORE EXPOSURE.

6. Using other people’s images

Image hosting sites such as Flickr allow use of some of their photos by people and businesses. This can save you a lot of time!

If you are a business based in Byron Bay, you could for instance go to the Flickr homepage and click on the Search button. Another page will appear with an Advanced Search link. Click on the link and search as per the screenshot:

Advanced Search

Search for
Tip: Use these options to look for an exact phrase or to exclude words or tags from your search. For example, search for photos tagged with "beach" but not "oak"

All of these words:

None of these words:

Search by content type
Tip: Check the boxes next to content you'd like to see come up in searches.

Photos / Videos
 Screenshots / Screencasts
 Illustration/Art / Animation/CGI

Search by media type
Tip: Filter to only display either photos or videos in your search results.

Photos & Videos
 Only Photos
 Only Videos
 HD videos only

Search by date
Tip: Use one or both dates to search for photos taken or posted within a certain time.

Photos taken:

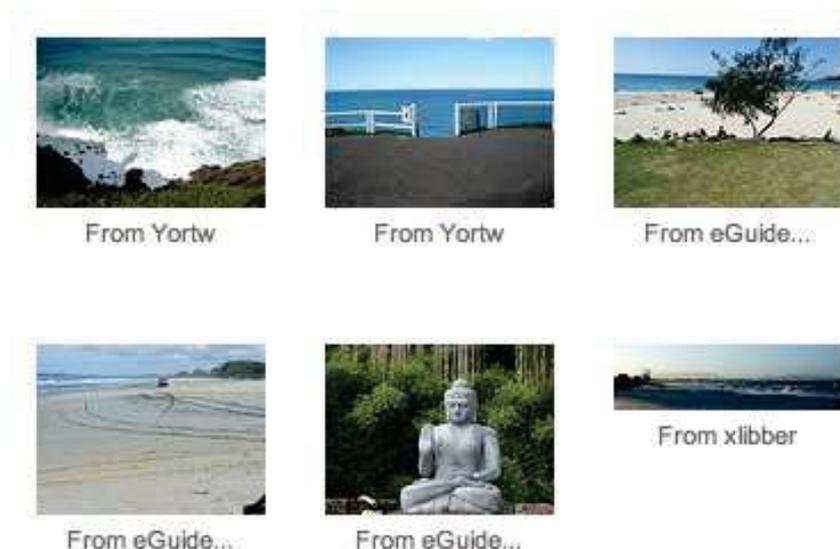
 **Only search within Creative Commons-licensed content**
Tip: Find content with a Creative Commons license. [Learn more.](#)

Find content to use commercially
 Find content to modify, adapt, or build upon

Flickr And Photo Hosting Websites

Note the Creative Commons section at the bottom and the ticks.

Results similar to these will appear:



Check each image individually and read the Creative Commons guidelines to ensure you attribute credit as per the licence.

7. Tips and tricks

- When it comes to publishing images online you need to **be aware of your community's interests**. Do they want to see pictures of the amazing nature around you, pictures of other people enjoying your services or do they want to see 'behind the scenes' images? Mixing up a collection of different image content will increase your interaction
- **People love creative "guess the" games**. You can take a photo on an obscure angle, of a more detailed section of a commonly used item or even the back of one of your tour guides' heads. Send out the challenge for people to guess the rest of the picture
- Online images don't have to be professionally taken. Just make sure your picture is clear and big enough for people to see the details. It's always better to show that amazing view than miss out all together
- You can use images from Flickr if you utilise the ones under a Creative Commons license and credit them properly. Ensure you use the advanced search option to find them as described in this tutorial.

8. Key learning outcomes

- Images are so easy to take and use, every tourism operator should use their smartphone/iPhone to take and share snaps
- Images are not visible to search engines as such. To optimise your images for search you need to give them a keyword rich file name and a keyword rich Alt attribute

Flickr And Photo Hosting Websites

- Consider posting images on sites such as Flickr and Facebook to get more exposure
- Using images as part of a competition or game is often very successful, as people love to provide their thoughts. Don't be afraid to try something new.

9. Related Material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Images 101
- What is a content management system
- Google tools

b) *Related websites*

- Photos to build inbound links: www.smallbusinesssem.com/using-photos-to-build-inbound-links/1073
- Creative commons licenses: <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses>
- Pinterest for the travel industry: www.tnooz.com/2012/03/05/how-to/why-pinterest-works-in-the-travel-industry-especially-destinations

Topic | Social Media

Tutorial 49

Blogging For Tourism

Blogging is one of the most effective forms of e-marketing. This tutorial reviews what blogs are and provides guidance on how to embrace blogging for your business.

Reading time: 30 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

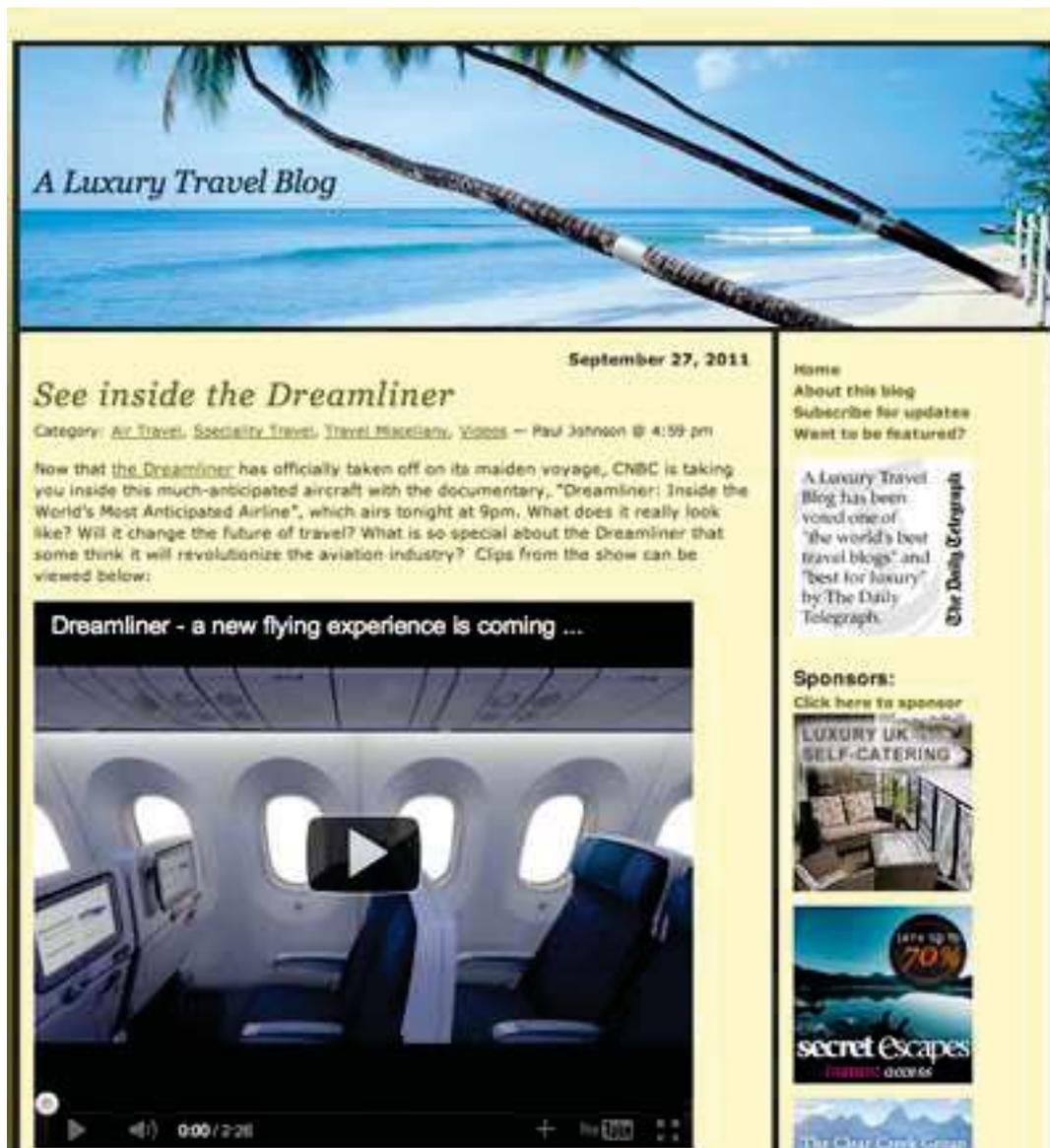
is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. What are blogs and blogging?

A **blog** is a website designed in the format of an online journal. It features many posts or articles. Each article should be complemented by a title, graphics, photos, videos, and often followed by readers' comments. Each blog article has its own web address (URL). Blogs can be maintained by individuals, groups and businesses. Their authors are called "bloggers".

The screenshot below is an example of a blog called "A Luxury Travel Blog".



Screenscapture credit: www.aluxurytravelblog.com

a) Aim of blogging

The main aim of a blog is to share thoughts and communicate with the rest of the world.

Blogging has revolutionised the manner in which knowledge is shared. Recent research revealed that 60% of people now turn to the Internet when they need to address problems and issues.

Blogging For Tourism

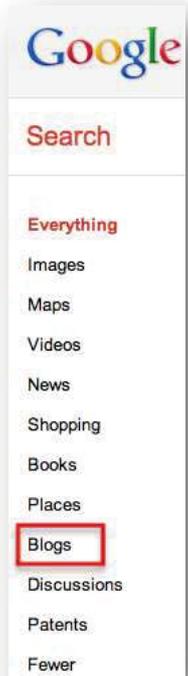
Only 25% turn to traditional media and even less to libraries or other sources.

In an offline environment, one had to rely on encyclopedias and research articles published in magazines.

BLOGGERS CAN OFTEN COME ACROSS OTHER INTERNATIONAL BLOGGERS WHO WRITE ABOUT SIMILAR TOPICS, FORM RELATIONSHIPS AND BECOME INFORMATION SOURCES FOR EACH OTHER.

From a third-party perspective, blogs are perceived as an extraordinary market research tool. They provide **an unlimited source of up-to-the-minute information which conveys what the world thinks, discusses, vets, encourages and bans.**

Blogs are the biggest resource for user-generated content. Just like websites or TripAdvisor reviews, they get indexed by search engines. They even have their own search engines! Users can refine their search to blogs only as per the screenshot on the right.



b) Why is blogging good for my business?

Whether skimming through a favourite blog, reading a news post, or publishing your own thoughts and ideas, blogging has become an everyday part of the lives of many online enthusiasts.

AS WELL AS PROVIDING AN OUTLET FOR NEWS, VIEWS AND OPINIONS, AN INFORMATIVE AND REGULARLY UPDATED BLOG ALSO HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR TOURISM VENTURE.

A blog keep your content fresh and current and helps a lot with your search engine rankings.

Time and money are at a premium for small tourism operators. Even a modest amount of regular time and expense on a blog can pay dividends. Search engine “spiders”, which crawl the Internet, love a regularly updated blog rich with original, updated content and keywords so regular blogging can improve your search engine rankings.



For example a blog located on a website for a company dealing in cruises in Byron Bay may look to include the keywords “cruise Byron Bay” and “Byron Bay holidays” a number of times.

Using keywords regularly should increase the chance of content being picked up by search engines. Over time, the company may be listed higher in rankings when potential customers search these terms. A keyword-rich blog may play a significant



role in the visibility of your website to potential customers.

Despite search engine optimisation playing an important role in a blogging strategy it is crucial not to forget that “content is king.” Posts should always be written with the reader in mind. Blog posts work best when they are concise, relevant, informative and well written. A regularly updated blog maintained in this way may help promote your tourism brand through the building of a community of readers and by increasing the number of search terms that may bring visitors to your site.

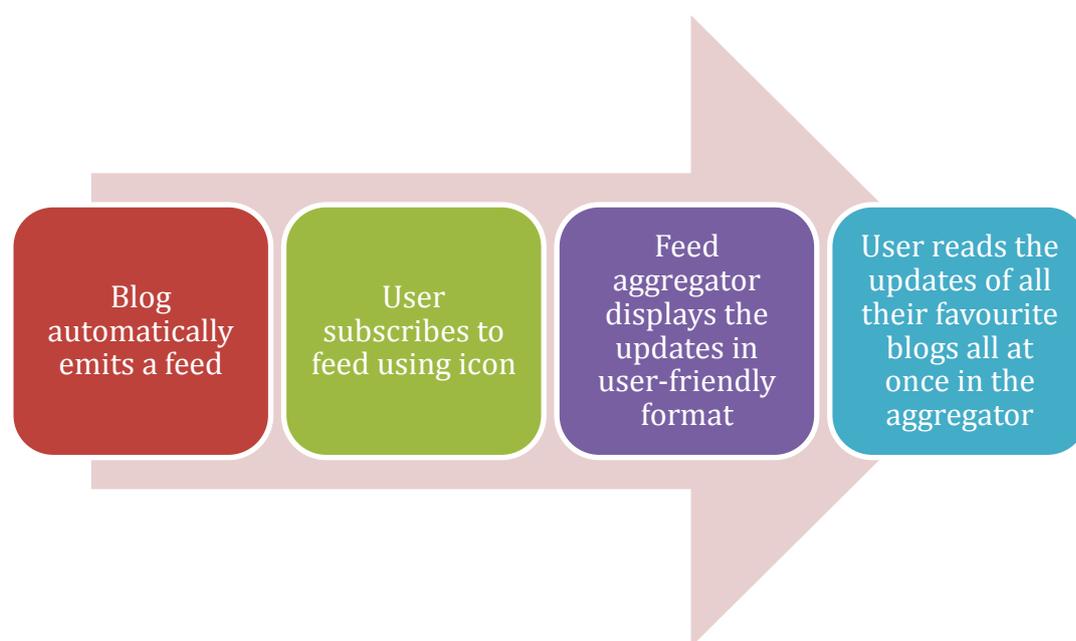
2. How people access blogs

Since blogs are indexed by search engines you need to ensure your blog is search engine friendly so that potential guests can find it on Google or search engines. Readers will also be able to subscribe to your blog using what is called a feed:

a) *RSS and ATOM feeds*

If people visit your blog and are interested in the content, they may wish to subscribe to receive regular updates using the universal feed icon (see subscribing section for image).

A feed simply is a list of recent articles transformed into a machine-readable format. A program known as feed reader or feed aggregator will go and collect the updates on behalf of the user and present the content in a user-friendly layout.



Subscribing to feeds



When a reader wants to subscribe to a blog, they look for the universal feed icon (orange button with a dot and two curves) or the words “rss feed”. They are then provided with a feed address (it looks like a web address e.g. <http://tourisminternetmarketing.com/feed/>).

Sometimes the browser will ask which feed the reader would like to subscribe to. RSS 2.0 is a safe choice.

Once the reader has clicked on the feed icon, they will need to copy and paste the feed address into their feed aggregator. A feed aggregator is similar to an email inbox.

If you do not yet have a feed aggregator, there are many to choose from:

- Google Reader (www.google.com/reader) is a very good free web-based reader.

If you prefer a program that resides on your computer:

- FeedDemon (www.newsgator.com/individuals/feeddemon) for Windows is excellent and free.
- NewsFire (<http://www.newsfirerss.com>) for Mac is excellent and free as well.

Why not start searching for tourism-related blogs right now and subscribe to a few relevant ones? Check your feed aggregator when you check your emails and learn from the experts for free!

b) Google Alerts

Google Alerts is a very easy way to subscribe to what the world is saying about you or about any topic of your choice! For instance, if there is a new blog post or comment on a blog post about your business Google Alerts will pick it up.

Set up as many Google Alerts based on your keywords and any new webpage mentioning them will land in your inbox!

E.g. If you are a bed and breakfast called “Gold Coast Lone Star” on the Gold Coast, create a few Google alerts: “Gold Coast Lone Star”, “bed and breakfast Gold Coast”, “tourism Gold Coast” etc. Set alerts for the name of your competitors, your staff, your State or Territory’s Minister for Tourism...

1. Go to www.google.com/alerts
2. Enter the terms you want to subscribe to. Put the terms inside quotes if there is more than one (so write “tourism marketing” if you want to subscribe to tourism marketing).
3. Confirm your email address
4. Repeat the same process for more alerts
5. Set up a Google account if you want to manage your alerts (however, you don’t need one to set up the alerts)



6. It is free and you don't even need a Google account.

This blog post provides further information on how to monitor your company's online presence:
<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4203/How-to-Use-Google-Alerts-to-Monitor-Your-Company-s-Online-Presence.aspx>.

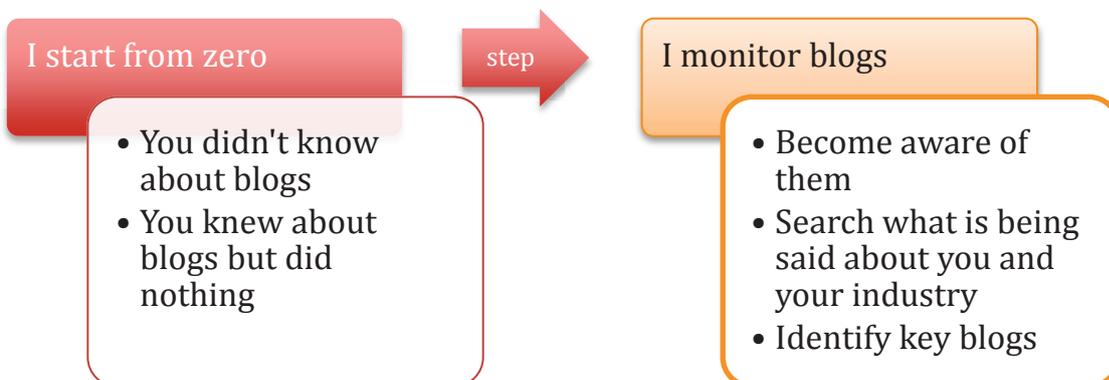
This blog post provides information on how to further customise Google alerts:
<http://labnol.blogspot.com/2006/11/google-alerts-tutorial-to-help-you.html>.

3. Identifying my current blog-awareness level

Blogs are such a powerful marketing tool that it is worth getting involved. Start by first identifying which of the below two categories you belong to and work towards reaching the next level.

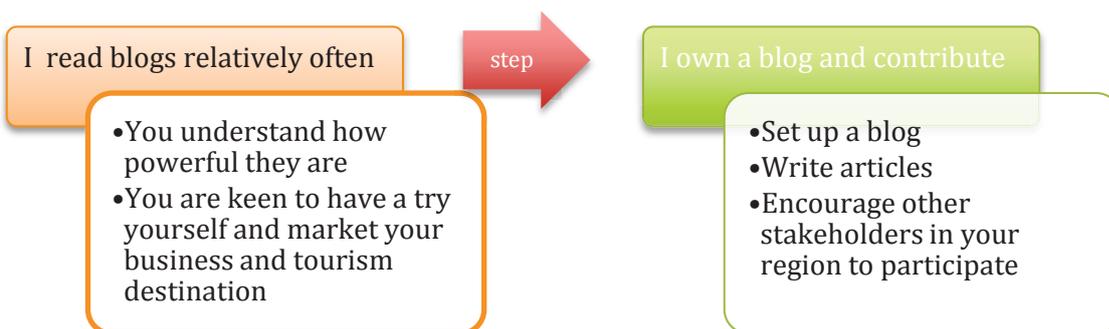
Category: Beginner

Level to reach:



Category: I want more

Level to reach:



I belong to Category and I will reach the level of

4. Monitoring blogs and comment (beginner category)

If you don't feel you are ready to blog yet, start by increasing your blogging awareness. First

search for blogs you are interested in (it doesn't have to be about tourism, but about any passion of yours) and participate by leaving comments. Use the feed button to subscribe to updates and set up Google Alerts.

a) *Examples of tourism blogs*

Below are listed a few tourism blogs. Have a read through and see for yourself if this is something you are willing to consider for your business.

- Blog about Hervey Bay: <http://herveybaygossip.com>
- Blogs about the renovation of a bed and breakfast. A great way to build a brand before going live with a website: <http://makingbandb.blogspot.com/>
- Blog about Cape Town in South Africa. One new photo daily. www.capetowndailyphoto.com

Consult blog search engines such as <http://blogsearch.google.com> and <http://technorati.com/blogs/directory/> (use the search box) and search for your passion or your industry sector's keywords:

- Bed and breakfast blog
- Tourism blog
- Wine making blog
- Adventure tours blog
- Etc.

Subscribe to the ones you are interested in using the feed button and interact with the author by leaving comments.

5. Setting up a blogging strategy (I want more category)

Possibly the most effective way to start a blog is to integrate it with your current website. A regularly updated section headed "news" or "blog" containing points of interest to readers should have the benefit of being easy to find and also have the advantage of helping to drive traffic to the rest of your site.



However if your site isn't set up to include a blog, there are a number of blogging platforms that are free and easy to establish. One of these is WordPress (www.wordpress.com and www.wordpress.org for the self-hosted version). Other popular platforms include:

- Blogger (www.blogger.com)
- Tumblr (www.tumblr.com)
- Posterous (www.posterous.com)

Posts published on a separate platform should always contain a link back to your website.

Using Real Simple Syndication (RSS) is an effective way of extending your readership. Setting up an RSS feed for your blog simply means giving readers another way to access your blog updates through readers such as Google Reader. Instead of clicking on a number of sites to read their favourite blogs, RSS gives the option of adding links to updates in one central location.

Feedburner (www.feedburner.com) is a free service that transforms your content into an easy to read "feed".

Screencapture copyright SmartAccommodationWebsite.com

a) *Setting up a blogging strategy*



Having decided to set up a blog, it is important to plan (and adhere to) a blogging strategy. Remember, blogging for your business is free and it will help you with your search engine rankings. Make sure you check your Google Analytics to see if your blog posts (articles) have generated visits.

Create a one-page blogging plan that includes the following:

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What | <p>Which topics would interest your readers? How can these be related to your tourism business? Topics might include updates on festivals held in your local region, giving times, dates and agenda where available. Also blogging about items of historical interest in the area may help encourage readers to plan a visit. An important goal of blogging is to initiate a conversation or to encourage the reader to take a particular action. Posing a question, inviting opinions, or finishing with a call to action are ways of doing this.</p> <p>Other relevant topics might include interviews with the owners of the company, how-to articles slanted towards your product or service, recipes based on local produce, as well as staff and business news.</p> <p>Using videos and images in blog posts is a recommended way of attracting visitors and getting them to return. A standard video camera, YouTube account and free video editing software such as Windows Movie Maker or iMovie are often all that is needed to produce quality material. Once uploaded to a free YouTube account, these can be embedded into the posts.</p> |
| When | It is important to decide when and how often you intend to post. Is it once a fortnight, once a month? |
| Where | Where will you blog? Do you currently own a blog or can one be integrated to your website? Will you be commenting on other blogs that your Google alerts made you aware of? |
| Who | <p>If there are a number of people on your team, ask them to create posts or suggest topics.</p> <p>Also ensure you keep in mind who your target audience is. Ensure you are writing to attract the type of guests that you want.</p> |

How How can the blog be both informative and create a conversation?

b) Top blogging strategies

Having established the blog and begun adding content, you'll need to promote it effectively. This could include:

- adding the URL address to your email newsletter
- placing a link to the blog prominently on the front page of your website
- reaching out and creating a conversation by adding comments on other similarly themed blogs.

By adding regular, relevant comments which further the discussion, you may encourage links back to your own blog in a cost effective way. As with all social media, the goal is not to spam other blogs with advertising content, but to contribute to the conversation in a meaningful way.

Some small tourism blogs may also benefit from guest posts from other bloggers and writers. This will have the benefit of keeping the blog fresh while adding new content and new views.

Should you lack the time or number of staff, you may even consider outsourcing your writing altogether and allow your blog posts to be written by professional writers according to the subjects you stipulate. This has the advantage of freeing you up for the management of your business while ensuring the blog is regularly updated and the quality of writing maintained.

c) Marketing your blog through social networks

Consider linking your blog posts with your social media sites to create a wider audience. If you have a Facebook or Twitter account, add your individual blog posts to allow your Facebook or Twitter followers to like or re-tweet the posts. This can be done manually or your blog can be set up to automatically publish to these sites. If you have a LinkedIn Profile, list your blog there as well. If not present in your blog theme or template, add social bookmarking buttons to your blog posts as well.



Also consider using networking facilities such as Networked Blogs (www.networkedblogs.com) an online community of blogs which can be linked to social media sites such as Facebook. As well as connecting with Facebook Pages or Twitter accounts which also blog on small tourism issues, consider looking to join other bloggers interested in reading about the topics on which you blog.

By engaging with social networks, you gradually build your visibility and credibility which could help increase your blog's following. Make sure you actively participate in these sites as well as any communities which potential customers may use. Starting a conversation to promote your business has probably never been easier!

6. Key learning outcomes

- Blogs are a great way to increase your knowledge on topics you are interested in and to

further improve the online visibility of your business thanks to their coverage by search engines

- If you would like to setup your blog you can start by using free blogging platforms such as Google Blogger or WordPress.
- Setting up a blogging strategy is the best way to ensure your blogging is an ongoing commitment and successful for your business.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Social media for tourism
- Managing multiple social media accounts
- Online tourism communities

b) *Related websites*

- RSS Feeds in plain English: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0klgLSxGsU
- Blogging resources: www.searchengineguide.com/blogging

Topic | Working Digitally In China

Tutorial 50

Online in China - Introduction

This tutorial provides an overview of online behaviour in China and offers strategies to effectively engage with Chinese consumers online to take advantage of the huge potential of this rapidly growing market. It will help you determine whether you should be considering an online strategy for China and provides some general information including brief profiles on key Chinese travel websites.

Reading time: 35 minutes

Prerequisite: None



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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1. Importance and Travel Trends of the Chinese Market

There is a great deal of interest in China at the moment due to the enormous potential it holds for the Australian tourism industry. And the spotlight is firmly on how to engage with Chinese Internet users (who number more than 500 million) in order to build awareness and, ultimately, bookings. Many tourism operators are no doubt wondering if they should be targeting this growing market and if so, how to go about it. This tutorial will provide some background on the Chinese market, help you determine whether it might be a suitable market for your business and give you some tips on how to reach Chinese consumers online.

a) Market performance and projections

China is already an important market for Australia and this is set to continue. Australia is the tenth most popular outbound destination for Chinese who are travelling beyond their own region. In 2011, China was already Australia's third largest international source market for visitor arrivals and the largest market in terms of overall expenditure and visitor night. With estimates of strong further growth, the potential worth of the China market is estimated to reach \$7.4 - \$9.0 billion by 2020 (Tourism Australia China Market Profile, May 2012).

b) Online environment in China

With such a high number of Internet users (538 million as of June 2012) and 92% social media engagement, the Internet has become an extremely influential medium in China – but the Chinese Internet is different. Many popular sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are not available to Chinese Internet users due to the “Great Firewall of China” (government Internet censorship). Consequently local Internet companies and their Chinese equivalents of these platforms (such as Youku, Weibo and Renren) rule the digital space, and the number of websites and platforms is staggering. Based on Nielsen's Outbound Travel Report 2011, Chinese consumers use the Internet as a research tool more than any other medium, and e-commerce, while still small, is growing rapidly in many sectors, including travel.

Clearly any organisation looking to reach Chinese consumers needs to leverage the Internet and social media landscape in China. Given the size of China and its population, a digital presence is far more important (and potentially also more effective) than a physical presence. Chinese travellers are very likely to get their information online - especially through social media of one kind or another. Chinese versions of destination websites provide a solid base of content and information, while online video-sharing sites (such as Tudou and Yokou) offer videos of tourist destinations. Blogs and micro blogs recount good and bad travel experiences, and traveller review websites like Daodao.com (Chinese version of TripAdvisor) are very popular and influential in decision making processes before booking hotels or choosing holiday destinations.

In order to enter the Chinese market, it is important to understand the trends, and how to leverage them. Here are some tips to consider:

10

TIPS

Top 10 China travel trends

1. **Chinese outbound travel continues to grow** in travellers number and trip frequency.
2. **Leisure travel drives Chinese outbound travel demand.** Sightseeing and shopping are key purposes of leisure trips. It is highly seasonal with peak periods in May, October and December.
3. **Chinese outbound travellers are travelling further** for destinations beyond Hong Kong and Macao.
4. **Young professionals with high income** is the major consumer segment driving outbound travel demand in China.
5. **80% of travellers are searching for information** about destination prior to their travel, and the major information channel is online.
6. **Travel agency is still dominating the booking channel**, while online agents are growing quickly, especially for long haul trips.
7. **Average spending per visit shows double-digit increase**, with 35% of budget spent on shopping.
8. **Sharing of travel experience through online platforms is increasingly popular**, especially among young generations.
9. **Chinese consumers are moving towards an experience-based choice** model from a price-based choice model.
10. **The new Chinese tourists are demanding higher quality services**, and moving from traditional tour groups to individual experiences.

Source: 2012 Dragon Edition – China Travel Trends Book (www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com)

c) *A note about China's Tiered City System*

When reading the tutorials on doing business online in China you may note that there is mention of tier one (or two or three) cities. China has a tiered city system that categorises cities into different levels, depending on factors such as GDP and population. Essentially the largest and most affluent cities (such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou) are classed as tier 1 and there are about 15 of these. Tier 2 cities are either other provincial capitals or other large cities and there are more than 30 of these. There are about 200 tier 3 cities and 400 tier 4 cities.

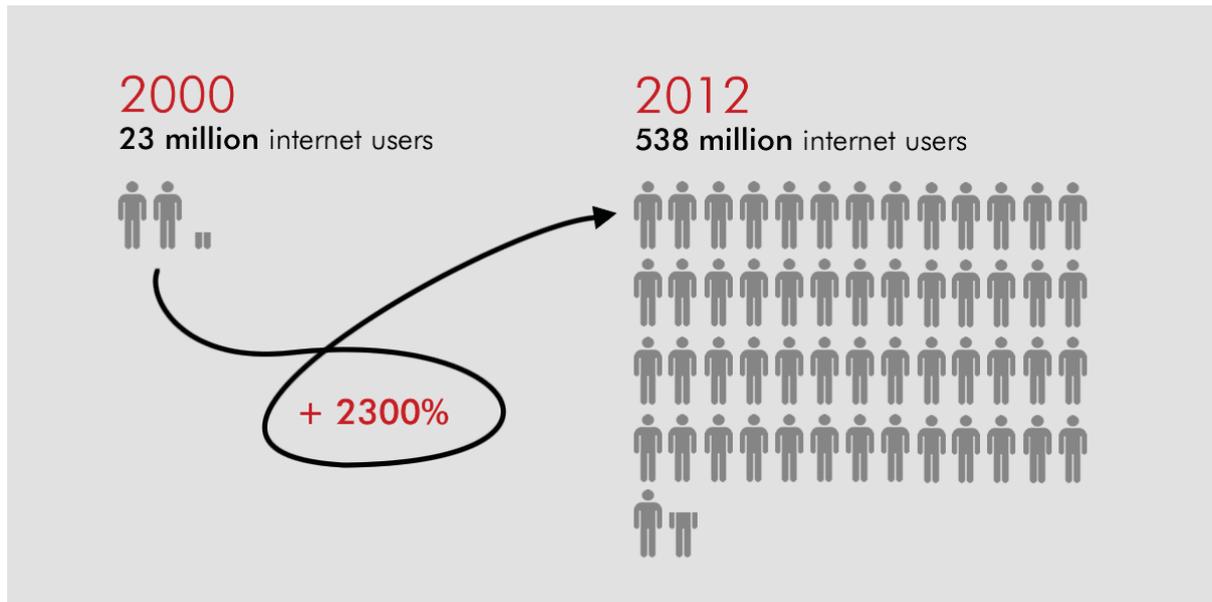


Source: 2012 Dragon Edition – China Travel Trends Book (www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com)

2. Digital Trends in China

a) *Internet use is prevalent and growing quickly*

As published by the Boston Consulting Group and other research institutes, the number of Chinese Internet users is more than 500 million – more than the European Union’s whole population. Compared to an online population of merely 23 million in the year 2000, this means an accumulated growth of around 2300% till 2012. This enormous growth obviously holds a key implication for businesses: with a forecast of more than 700 million Internet users by the year 2015 (which is double the US and Japan online population combined), China is projected to become the largest online retail market in the world with close to 10% of retail sales done on the Internet.



Source: Dragon Trail Interactive, 2012

b) Chinese Internet use is dominated by social media

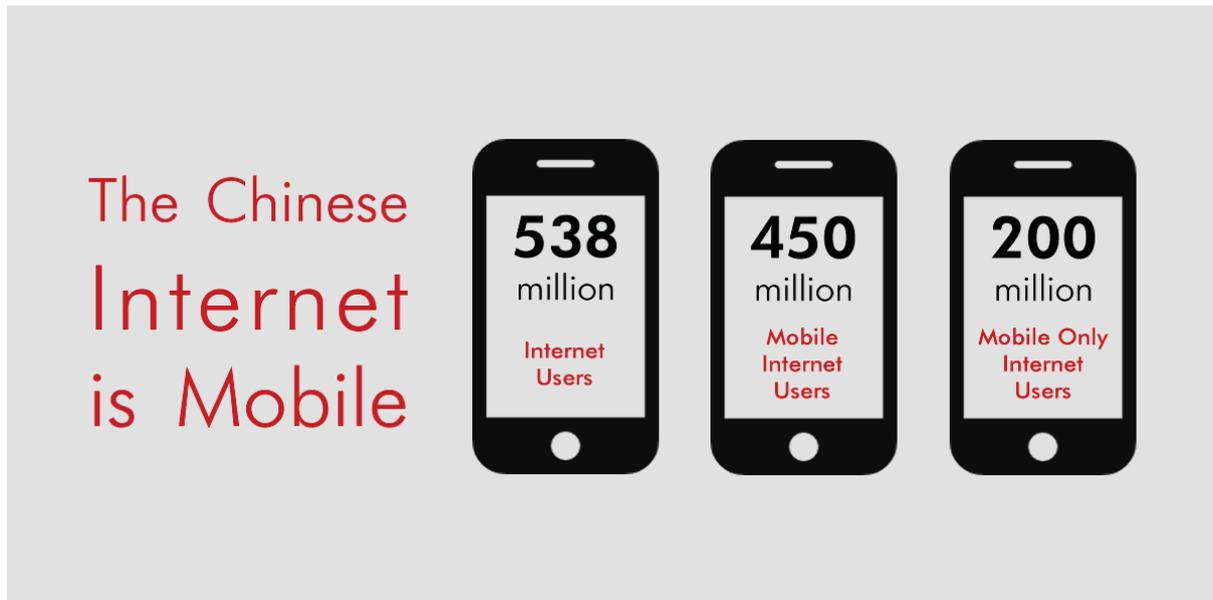
In addition to search engines – basically represented completely by Baidu – Chinese Internet users heavily rely on social media platforms for their online travel information research. In a country where Internet content is otherwise tightly controlled, social media has developed as a trusted source of independent information.

Not only is one out of five global Internet users from China, more than 90% of Chinese Internet users (tier 1, 2 and 3 cities) are registered on social media websites with about 80% of them having accounts on more than one of these platforms. Regardless of its gigantic dimension, the Chinese social media landscape is not an easy one to be successful in. There are certain things which need to be taken into consideration in order to successfully access this mass medium.

Further information can be found in Tutorial 53 – Online in China – Social Media.

c) Chinese Internet is mobile

According to the statistics from iResearch, China's mobile Internet revenue reached 15.87 billion RMB in Q1 2012, an increase of 167.2% from the same period last year, and 18.7% from last quarter. The popularity of smart phones contributes to the tremendous growth.



Source: Dragon Trail Interactive, 2012

Chinese leading market research firm Analysis International indicates that smart phones will make up 50% of China's total mobile phone market by 2013, and the number of China's mobile Internet users will reach 600 million by the end of 2012, surpassing the number of PC Internet users. According to data released by Analysys International at the end of the first quarter of 2012, the number of the mobile Internet users in China has reached 450 million. China has an enormous number of mobile only Internet users (around 200 million) - especially important in rural areas (45 % of Internet access mobile-only vs. 29 % in urban areas).

Given this trend, mobile apps have strong prospects. The download of mobile phone apps in China already reached 863 million in 2010, and it is expected to surpass 20 billion by 2013. The app market in China is quite different as it is dominated by third party app stores. The Next Web (<http://thenextweb.com/asia/2012/08/12/startup-guide-china/>) reports that apps can be sourced through unofficial pirate stores, licensed independent app stores, those run by operators, those run by handset makers and, of course, the official stores. Third party stores often provide reworked apps which for developers, means relinquishing control of content. The benefit is that more people see it than limiting to just official Apple and Android stores.

Mobile Internet brings travellers a lot of freedom and convenience during their journey, and is becoming increasingly essential for travellers. iResearch data also stated that the size of China's online travel market reached 100 billion RMB in 2010, with a year-on-year growth of 58%.

A mobile web success story and leader is the travel platform Qunar Mobile, a full-feature app that covers information on flights, hotels, train tickets, packages, and group-buying deals. It supports product search, payment, booking, and LBS (location based services). Search volume via

Qunar Mobile has reached 10% of PC search volume, and airline bookings grow more 100% every month.

3. ATDW's Chinese Translation Project

Translating the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse's (ATDW) database of more than 26,000 Australian travel products and experiences in simplified and traditional Chinese will create a ground-breaking opportunity for tourism operators to access the important China tourism market via the extensive distribution network that ATDW has put in place. This distribution network includes state/territory websites and Tourism Australia's websites. Chinese consumers will be able to research and plan their trip to Australia by taking advantage of the authoritative content.

For more information, please see the press release at:

www.atdw.com.au/media/3913/mr_240412_chineselanguage.pdf

4. Is my product or service suitable for the Chinese market?

Before developing an online marketing strategy for China, a key issue for every business is to determine is whether their products and services are suitable for the Chinese market. Tourism Australia's 'Knowing the Customer in China' report is helpful as it describes how Chinese like to travel, the experiences they are seeking in Australia and how they research and book travel. It can be found at www.tourism.australia.com/China2020-Building_the_Foundations-Online-version2.pdf. Tourism Australia's 'Planning for Inbound Success' is also a useful guide for preparing for the inbound market generally and can be found at www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/industry/TNLA_5575.aspx.

A few key considerations include:

- Do products and services offer an experience a Chinese visitor would be interested in? Australia's target customers are seeking nature and laid back lifestyle with the comforts of a developed country. Safety and value for money are important, as is the ability to see iconic and famous attractions.
- Is your pricing structure suitable for the Chinese market and does it allow for commission-based distribution in China? Remember that the Chinese travel distribution system is still a very traditional model with Inbound Tour Operators, Wholesalers and Retail Travel Agents handling the majority of bookings.
- Does it meet the preferences of a Chinese visitor? For example, access to Chinese food, ideally once per day and particularly for breakfast.
- How are language difficulties addressed? For example, Chinese speaking staff, translated / localised Chinese versions of printed materials such as menus and guides.
- Are the products and services suitable for consumption by tour groups? Chinese will often travel in a structured group with a Chinese speaking guide when travelling somewhere for the first time. Travelling as part of a less formal group (for example

made up of family and/or friends) with a Chinese speaking guide is also common. Return travellers will travel with some more independence and free time, however still often opt for a Chinese speaking guide.

These considerations are important because Chinese travellers follow certain patterns and ways in their travel organisation, which are different from travellers from other origins. These behaviours and preferences carry some important implications for the travel industry. For example, the strong prominence of tour groups (whether large fully structured or less formal) makes it very difficult for small businesses and service providers like B&Bs to receive Chinese tourists. Also, the very compressed travel time and tight schedule often doesn't allow for Chinese travel groups to visit places far off the major tourist tracks or further out of the large main cities.

These examples show that the Chinese market, with all its giant potential, currently has some limitations. Opportunities for a wider variety of tourism operators to become involved will increase as Chinese travellers gain more travel experience and language skills, and develop a stronger thirst for individuality and 'different' experiences over their current need for security and safety. These changes will lead to a Chinese traveller more like other international travellers, who then can be more easily targeted as potential individual visitors.

For now businesses and travel operators need to first carefully assess their suitability for the market before attempting to develop an online strategy in China – where it often makes more sense to market on a destination basis rather than on an individual business level.

5. Getting Started

As China is becoming one of the largest markets for international tourism it offers enormous potential for the global tourism and travel industry. One of the key questions for businesses is what needs to be done in order successfully reach out to this market.

A good starting point is to consider how your brand and products/services should be ideally perceived online in China. The ideal perception in China is often somewhat different from what it is in European or American markets. Here it is important to capitalise on similarities, differences and novelties. It also pays to look at what other brands have been doing and are currently doing and to see what lessons can be learned from successes and mistakes. In order to better understand the Internet in China, trends and developments can be monitored easily (by those with Chinese language skills) through Baidu (simply by doing searches and taking a look at what is advertised). A good English language source is ChinaSmack (www.chinasmack.com) which allows monitoring of the Chinese Internet vocabulary, Internet trends and viral content such as videos.

China is already a hugely valuable market and one which is still growing at an incredible pace. One of the admission prices Western companies must pay for access to this burgeoning market is being ready to adapt to regulatory conditions which can change from one day to the next, depending on the political situation.

In order to succeed in China, it is critical to be able to adapt to the culture and ways of business as being done in China. Some of the key tips below will help to prepare an entry strategy.

10 TIPS

How to position international travel companies in China

1. **Avoid being seen as applying 'double-standard' to China**, for example, not adhering to the same high standards on service, environmental or safety in China as you would in other markets.
2. **Tell your corporate story on how you are supporting China's development**. Make it real – with examples that demonstrate an understanding of China's development goals and development stage. A China-focused sustainability report is an excellent platform to tell such a story holistically. Engage stakeholders when telling your story.
3. **Build or strengthen partnerships with credible local stakeholders** that contribute to Chinese development needs and goals. Corporate responsibility programmes are an excellent platform for this – as long as they are sustainable, relevant to your company, make a real impact and are communicated in a measured way.
4. **Educate your company leadership and key departments** on the evolving China context (or get educated if you are the leader), through research and analysis, reporting, training or other programmes. A dedicated seminar with presentations from external and internal stakeholders and experts can be great way to focus the top minds of the company on this fast evolving country.
5. **Create a China advisory board**. Bring together Chinese experts with in-depth knowledge and experience to help your company navigate and understand China.
6. **Make sure you have the right people with the right resources**, knowledge base and tools to manage issues and a crisis. Many international companies have learned the hard way that there is no substitute for preparation and experience in managing a crisis. Nowhere is this truer than China – where the handling of the crisis can so often become a crisis in itself. Knowing how the media work and influence each other in a crisis in China is just one example of essential crisis communications knowledge.
7. **Map your key Chinese stakeholders around the core issues** – and proactively develop relationships with them. It's too late to call many of them if the crisis has already hit. In China's relatively opaque operating environment it often takes time to work out who to call in the first place.
8. **Develop an integrated communications and public affairs plan** specifically for China – that is based on substantive research and analysis (as opposed to guess work and outdated assumptions). An integrated plan addresses your core stakeholders through various channels and programmes – with clearly defined goals that align with and support long-term business strategy.
9. **Redouble your focus on compliance and corporate ethics**. Corruption and ethical issues are damaging for reputation and business prospects, especially when the government and media are zeroing on these issues. Apart from corruption, other focus areas include pricing fraud, labour rights violations, environmental pollution.
10. **Go digital**. China has the most internet users in the world and is one of the most engaged countries on social networks. Chinese companies are quickly catching up to Western companies in using social media. According to Digital Influence Index, 85% of Chinese consumers view the internet as the most influential channel, and 95% of Chinese consumers trust a company more that is engaged and active on *weibo* (micro-blogging). Digital strategies need to be woven into your communication capabilities and be part of your institutional radar system.

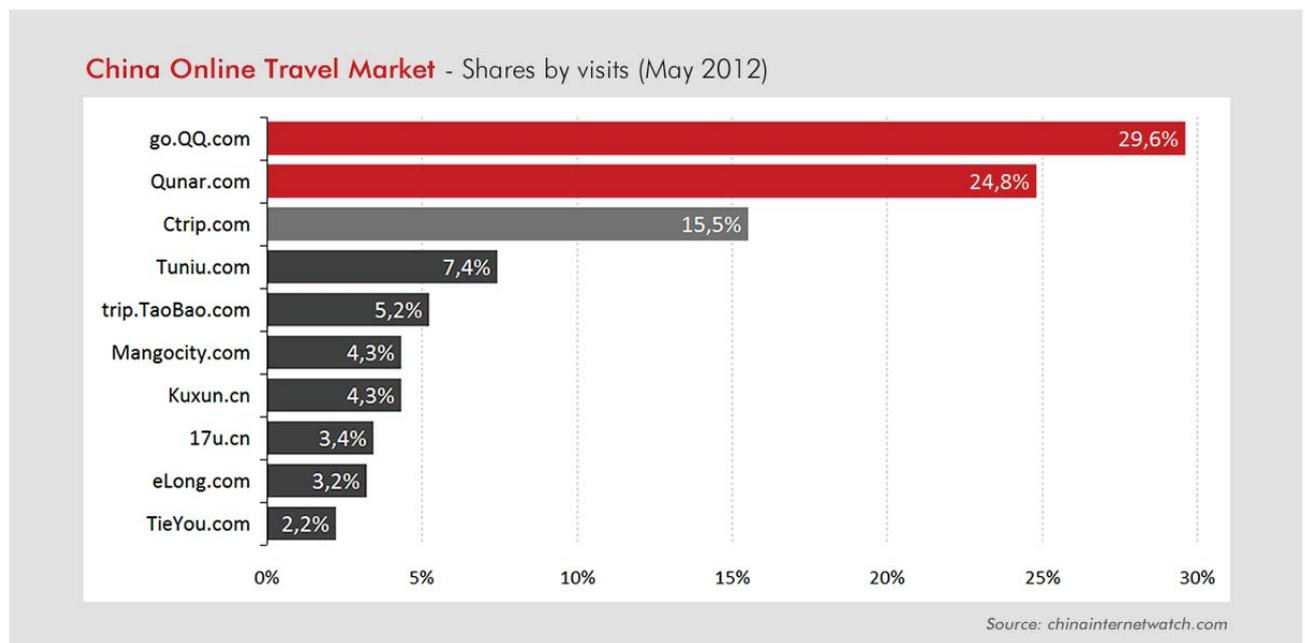
Source: 2012 Dragon Edition – China Travel Trends Book (www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com)

To get the best advice for your situation, and to ensure you are positioned well going forward, we recommend you speak to companies with local expertise.

When it comes to travel, the China office of the Pacific Asia Travel Association, PATA China (www.pata.org / www.patachina.org) is a good starting point. China Travel Trends (www.ChinaTravelTrends.com) provides free information on changing trends and how to enter China and market to Chinese consumers.

6. Key Travel Sites in China

China's online travel landscape is dominated by online travel agents, but there are also other relevant travel related websites of note, which are not exclusively dedicated to travel sales. Potential Chinese customers may also be reached through more generic platforms that have some travel content. Examples of all are provided in this section.



The following examples are essentially online travel agents but they also incorporate certain travel blog characteristics such as feedback, recommendations and ratings as well as features for users to share their travel experiences and content such as pictures and blogs. Popular platforms of this type are:

- **go.qq.com** is a new player currently leading in terms of website visits, outperforming the established websites such as Qunar, Ctrip and Tuniu. This travel website has investment from Tencent (QQ, QZone, Weixin, Soso, Tencent Weibo).
- **Ctrip** is a comprehensive travel website for hotel, flights and tour packages booking as well as other travel services in China.
- **eLong** is a professional website for booking hotels and flights in China and is part of the Expedia group. It is strong especially in the hotel sector with thousands of hotels from luxury to budget category. eLong has become one of the biggest hotel booking providers in China.
- **Qunar** is one of the most popular travel websites for deal hunters. Those who are looking for great discounts on flights and hotels will usually find their way to Qunar. This website often provides the lowest discounts compared to other travel websites.



As mentioned, online travel agencies and booking websites are the most popular ones in terms of revenues generated as well as visitor numbers in that category. Still, this does not represent all the websites to be considered in travel destination marketing in China. Other examples of travel and travel related websites and platforms (not online travel agents) are:

- **Lvmama.com** is a very popular website for those who want to travel independently, without travel agencies or tour groups. The site is a great resource for travel tips for self organised travellers including info on scenic spots and some entrance tickets booking to popular attractions - also at good discount and in group deals.
- **Mafengwo.com** is also a focused on the independent traveller. This website includes especially valuable information on more remote travel destinations – structured in destinations guides, attractions tips and many more useful resources.
- **Baidu travel** is one of the best travel guides – structured as a wiki and filled with various travel information and guides for places all over China.
- **Lvping** is a travel forum which mostly focuses on tourists’ reviews and comments on different travel destinations, hotels, flights and sights. Lvping is sometimes compared to Tripadvisor.com in terms of content and functionality.
- **QiongYou** (qyer.com) is a portal with a certain focus on international travel – on a budget. It provides information on travel destinations, visa, travel guides, pictures and

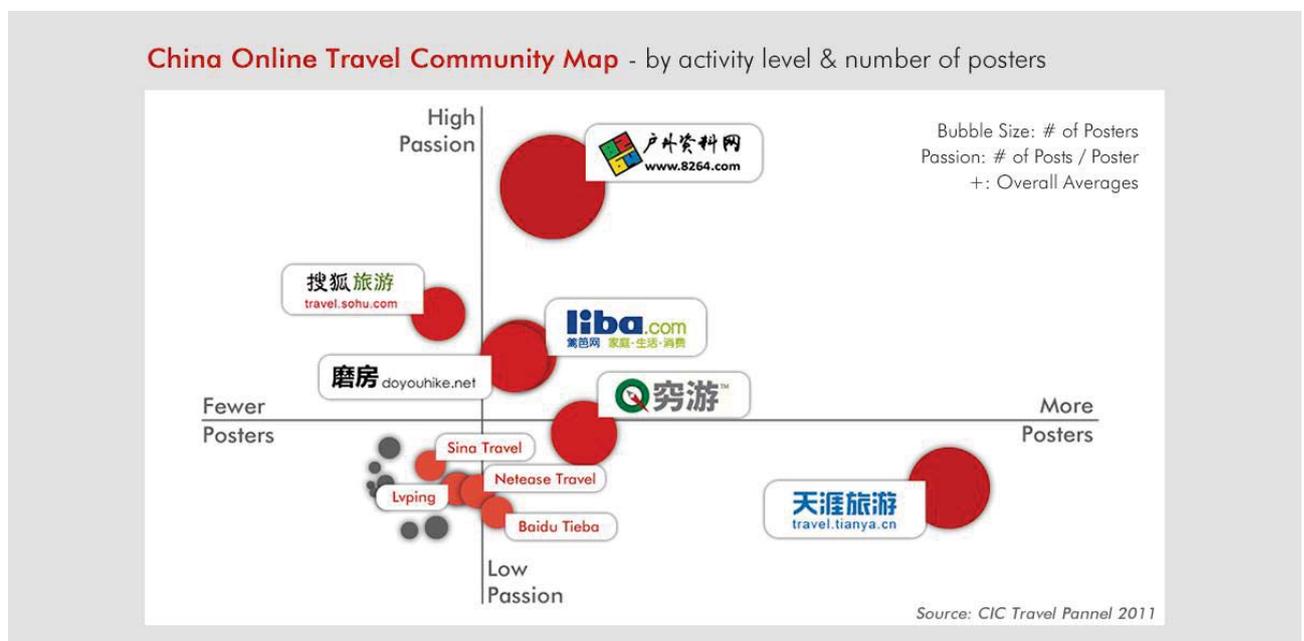
Online in China – Introduction

other related content like shopping, restaurants and so on to help users plan their trips and share their travel experience afterwards.

- **Daodao** is the actual Chinese version of tripadvisor.com. Daodao provides actual ‘real’ feedback, experiences and comments of travellers on their trips.
- **Yododo** is like a supermarket for travel products and services, which sells train tickets, hotels, insurance, car rentals and other travel services. There are also comments and feedback on travel destinations and the website also helps users to find travel buddies.
- **Other platforms** to mention include travel.sina.com, aoyou.cn and lotour.com.

Different Platforms have different user behaviour

Different platforms within the travel and tourism market have different types and levels of user activity. While some have more active users with more posts, others have more passionate users.



Here are some of China’s most popular online communities (not directly related to travel):

- **8264.com** is one of the largest websites dealing with everything related to outdoor activities, categorised by regions as well as by activities (different types of outdoor sports) and also offers forums, daily photo and group purchasing. Travel is obviously a big component here, thanks to a dedicated section with a travel forum.
- **Tianya.cn** is not a dedicated travel platform, but one of the most popular social web sites in China - a collection of simple forums, blogs, and groups with very high popularity among Chinese Internet users, which makes it the best place in China’s web to find public opinion on social issues, cultural experience and original fresh content from millions of Chinese users. The Tianya community meets the need for personal interaction, creation and expression.

- **Liba.com** is China's largest e-commerce website for household consumption. Since its foundation in 2003 the former group-purchase website for family decorations has expanded its online businesses to include wedding ceremonies, driving lessons and social networking – also including travel related categories.
- **Tieba.baidu.com** is similar to Tianya. It focuses more on chatting, entertainment and interest groups, and has a generally more friendly and family style character than Tianya. The main page of Tieba shows an extensive list of its categories with lower levels featuring groups where users can create topics and leave their comments. Tieba is rather simple and direct in comparison to Tianya which is more in-depth and informative.

2. Getting Noticed Online in China

With around 540 million Internet users now in China, getting noticed online is obviously going to be tough, and it's even tougher if you don't understand online PR and content marketing in China. With the "Great Firewall of China" blocking many of the English social media sites, Chinese users are restricted in how they can access some of your content; not to mention that the vast majority of searches are done in Mandarin Chinese. It's therefore vitally important that you get your messages out through as wide a variety of channels as possible, and this includes both traditional and new media.

Here are 5 tips for getting noticed online in China

1. Optimise your website in Mandarin Chinese

Most people in China only speak Mandarin and if your website is only in English, it's not usable. If you are serious about getting noticed in China, you should consider an optimised Chinese website. One of the main goals of your online PR will be to drive traffic back to your website. You could have a large following on social media platforms for example and issue some really great Chinese content, but ultimately, if interested readers visit your website only to find they need to stumble their way through an English site, you're going to lose a lot of people that will never return. The main premise of a great website is to give people what they want and to provide truly engaging and useful content. You are not doing this if you provide potential Chinese travellers with an English only site. It is critical to have your Chinese website hosted in China, and not simply translate the website from English to Mandarin, but to focus on localisation instead.

See Tutorial 51 - Online in China – Developing a Chinese Website for further information.

2. Remember the importance of online search; create SEO-friendly content

Search remains a key tool for both consumers and journalists, so ensure content is SEO-friendly, remembering Baidu.com dominates the search engine market and has its own unique search rules – don't presume Google's search rules work as well for Baidu. Baidu is the first port-of-call for about 95% of all online searches in China, so it's impossible to ignore. The vast majority of

searches are in Mandarin Chinese, so Chinese messaging is essential to any success you hope to have.

See Tutorial 52 - Online in China – Search Engines for further information.



3. Don't forget traditional media remains influential

There has certainly been a convergence of traditional and new media in recent years, but traditional media remains important and influential. Of course, this doesn't mean you need to appear in the printed versions of the China Daily or People's Daily (though it helps), as many of China's traditional media have already successfully migrated online, with newspapers and magazines also becoming more actively involved in social media and mobile entertainment platforms as they look for new ways to expand their readership. It's also important to note that China's major portals – SINA, SOHU, Tencent and NetEase – have to acquire news from known print media sources and that's one reason why the online versions of the traditional print media have the upper-hand, as there are still restrictions that prevent websites from producing their own news. It's therefore important to build relationships with these kinds of media or use services that already have established relationships. Getting your content picked up by traditional media provides the opportunity for your content to be aggregated by the major portals and other news sites, so they present the best return on investment.

4. Don't underestimate the power of images and videos

Not only are journalists more likely to use your press releases if they contain multimedia elements, but your content is much more likely to be shared among online communities if you can provide interesting photos and videos. Such content should also be archived on the major Chinese platforms like Youku, Tudou and ImagineChina. It doesn't matter whether you're issuing

a press release or posting a tweet on Sina Weibo, images and videos should play a key role in your content marketing strategies.



5. Make use of Chinese social media platforms and blogs

There are a number of reasons why social media and blogs are important, and many of these are the same reasons they are so influential in the US and other developed markets. If you are serious about communicating and engaging with Chinese stakeholders – be they tourism industry professionals, journalists or the general public – a sound social media presence is vital. The major blogs and social media platforms also carry a lot of weight with search engines, and such content can be easily searched, so make sure you are on them. With Baidu.com recently agreeing to provide Sina Weibo tweets in their organic search results, the importance of this platform has increased.

With hundreds of millions of social media users in China, social media platforms offer widespread exposure. You need to find a way to listen, monitor and engage with your Chinese stakeholders via these platforms.

See Tutorial 53 - Online in China – Social Media for further information.

7. Key learning outcomes

- Before targeting the Chinese market ensure your business is suitable and ready.
- Social media is even more important in China than in western markets due to the reliance of Chinese travellers on feedback from others.
- Search engines are different in China – you will need to develop a strategy specifically for this market.

- If you develop a Chinese website, ensure it is hosted in China, the content is localised (not simply translated), and that the site is search engine friendly.

8. Related material

a) *Related websites*

- Tourism Australia's China profiles, plans, reports and research
www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/markets/North-Asia.aspx
- Free Essential China Travel Trends Booklet - Dragon Edition 2012
Latest trends & developments in the Chinese travel market
www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com

b) *Recommended videos*

- Michael Anti: Behind the Great Firewall of China
www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china.html

Topic | Working Digitally In China

Tutorial 51

Online in China – Developing a Chinese Website

This tutorial explains the differences between websites in China and Western markets. It outlines considerations that need to be taken into account when developing a website suitable for the market including design, hosting and domains.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Website topics, Tutorials 8-18

Online in China - Introduction



1. Assessing the need for a Chinese Website

Tourism Australia's recent research (see www.tourism.australia.com/China2020-Building_the_Foundations-Online-version2.pdf) confirms that the Internet plays an important role in planning and researching holidays in China, but that most of Australia's target customers (who prefer group travel) rely on travel agents to book offline. Online travel agents also play a role in the Chinese travel distribution system (mainly servicing independent travellers), although this sector is relatively small (but growing).

So to meet this demand for online research and planning is it worth investing in a Chinese website?

Firstly, consider the fact that the likelihood a Chinese Internet user will use an English site is very low. Good English language skills are the exception rather than the rule so this is a big issue and the site would also be difficult to find given English sites are not favoured by Chinese search engines. So if you are hoping to have potential Chinese visitors use your website, it is important to develop a Chinese version. Note however that it won't hit the mark if it's simply a translation of your current site – the content needs to be relevant to the market.

Benefits of a Chinese Website

A Chinese website gives a company a 'home', where people can get more information about products and services. For the operator, it is an important way to build relationships and capture data, which can be used for e-newsletters and campaigns, especially to reduce advertising cost.

Limitations

Chinese Internet users prefer to research their information on comprehensive platforms which offer more information than just one particular business or site. Travel information research is also strongly based on social media and user generated content. This results in most users remaining on those platforms they already commonly use, where they connect with fellow travellers through special dedicated travel sections, which many of the large Chinese social media platforms provide.

So the chances a Chinese Internet user will visit your Chinese website after an initial search for your type of product/service using a search engine (as they might in Australia) would be small. But if you have a substantial online presence in China (for example active on social media platforms, undertake search engine advertising and are sold through online travel agents) then these things would help to feed people through to your site.

Developing a Chinese website is not in itself an effective online strategy. It needs to be part of an overall online presence in China, linking in with search engine marketing and social media. A stand-alone site without these other things will not generate much, if at any, traffic.

Online Bookings

As mentioned, Australia's current target market in China prefers group travel and the majority of travel bookings to Australia are made through travel agents. Tourism Australia reports that the Chinese travel distribution system is still a very traditional model, with Inbound Tour Operators, Wholesalers and Retail Travel Agents. Many Chinese travel to Australia as part of an organised tour group and these are quite heavily regulated by the Chinese government. One requirement is that their travel arrangements are made by an authorised agent (see www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/58china.htm for more information).

Also, apart from these requirements, credit cards that are widely accepted in Australia (such as Visa) are not common in China. They are becoming more prevalent but for now alternate payment methods are required (e.g. China UnionPay).

So while you can communicate and influence Chinese consumers online, the key to securing their bookings is to ensure your product is available through the distribution system (both offline and online).

If you decide that having a Chinese website is the right thing for your business there are things you will need to be aware of.

2. Key Considerations in Developing a Website for the Chinese Market

Developing a Chinese website, it is critical that the content will not merely be a translated version of the website you use in your home market. Your new website needs to be created from scratch; completely customised to your company with full Chinese language, design and Chinese SEO. Websites that Western companies attempt to translate directly into Chinese rarely function as intended due to cultural and linguistic differences. You will need to arrange a full cultural translation of the relevant search terms to ensure the site is optimised with terms that Chinese people are using to search for a given product or service. Due to the importance of Baidu.com in the Chinese market, your website must be predominantly optimised for Baidu, though the SEO will also be beneficial for other search engines, including Yahoo.cn and Sogou.com. PPC services (i.e. paid listings) are also available for these search engines.

When developing a Chinese website, the following things are important to consider:

- Chinese language website optimised for search engines

- Native Chinese website design
- Content written for relevance and not a straight translation
- Chinese social media integration (not Facebook, Twitter, YouTube links and logos)
- Chinese domain (subject to status)
- Own Chinese ICP (Internet Content Provider) licence - issued by the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology
- Hosting in mainland China (not Hong Kong) for the Chinese market

A truly successful Chinese website has to be hosted in China for speed and search engine rankings. Also, a simple direct translation of existing web site content into Chinese won't do the trick. Content needs to be written for user relevance and with search engines in mind. Content gaps in the Chinese version (with English pieces in between the Chinese due to global templates) must be avoided just as links to non-Chinese websites should be avoided too. Key content for travel related sites such as DMOs (destination marketing organisations) includes information on visas, availability of Chinese restaurants, plentiful destination information with distance to China, maps in relation to china, information regarding safety and so on. Links to foreign social networks should also be avoided and replaced with the Chinese ones respectively.

3. The Right Chinese Language Version

China is a huge country with a large variety of different dialects across many different regions.

Spoken Chinese

Standard Putonghua **Mandarin** Chinese (as spoken in Beijing), is by far the most commonly understood (as this is what is taught in school). Mandarin is the main language not only in mainland China but also in Taiwan.

Cantonese is spoken in southern mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau.

Written Chinese

Simplified is used in mainland China.

Traditional is used in Taiwan and Hong Kong (could also be Hong Kong colloquial which is basically Cantonese written in traditional Chinese characters).

The best way to start is a simplified Mandarin version of a website, but other varieties might be considered depending on the geographical target market.

4. Chinese vs. Western Web Design

While simple and clean looking websites are very much in fashion in many parts of the world, China is different. A large number of Chinese websites follows a ‘click more, type less’ approach, which usually means larger, heavier (often fully visible) navigations and a lot of information (in text or animations) on homepages. This allows an easy way of displaying large amounts of content to users who then can quickly scroll through and move on with a click without the need for typing in order to find the right information. In Asian languages which use characters it is a much easier way to navigate through a website to click through than to type a search query. Consequently page layouts that are often perceived by Westerners as very crowded make sense and work very well for Chinese Internet users.

Here are some differences between Chinese and Western websites, and the reasons why they matter so much:

Page Layout



In China, the preference is for presenting huge amounts of information on the landing page rather than have the user navigate to relevant content.

Chinese Internet users are used to this format, so are less susceptible to information overload than Western users. Although this content-heavy approach might cause Western users to leave a site, in China the reverse is true; if a landing page doesn't contain enough information they are more likely to think the site has little value and dismiss it.

Animated / Flashing Graphics

Animated graphics are extremely common on Chinese websites. To Western eyes this may seem distracting, but it suits Chinese users.

Interestingly, Western Internet behaviour studies have shown that users now actively screen out page elements like animated graphics as they have similar characteristics to adverts. Whether this eventually becomes the case in China remains to be seen.



Bright Colour Schemes



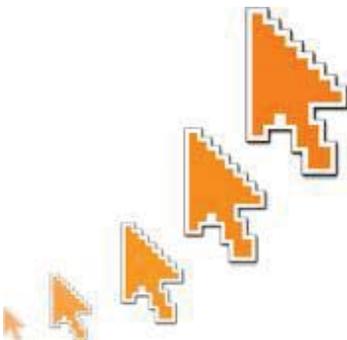
Use of colour on Chinese websites can be a little less conservative than on their Western equivalents. Use of strong colours, often in contrasting schemes, is commonplace.

Bright colours are a chief tool in attracting visitor attention. Unfortunately, it means usability is frequently sacrificed in Chinese websites, with text that can be difficult to read. The range of palettes used also reflects the lower average age of Internet users in China.

Scrolling Text

Although scrolling website text is no longer common on western websites, in China the practice is still immensely popular. Not only is it an excuse to get some more movement on the page, it is a valuable means of displaying more information in the same space – useful considering the Chinese preference for lots of page information.

Decorative Java / Flash



It's common to see many decorative design features used in Chinese websites. Whether the site belongs to a teenage blogger or a large corporate company, Flash or Java Script elements that have a purely decorative purpose are popular.

Examples might include background music, falling snowflakes and trailing cursors. Again, these would not be received well on a Western site but are the norm in China.

Chinese website design

Although these are possibly the most obvious, there are also many other nuances you must take into account when creating a website for a Chinese audience. For instance, using language and concepts acceptable to both Chinese culture and law are vitally important, as is a design that will help your site rank highly in Chinese search engine results.

Design with the mobile user in mind

With a large number of Chinese Internet users being mobile-only internet users (around 200 million of the current total of 538 million), web design for the Chinese market should especially focus on mobile usability, giving common issues like contrast, colours, list and form elements (dropdowns, field-types, auto completion) as well as responsive design special attention.

5. Chinese Domain Names

Domain name extensions (.cn, .com, .net etc.) are also an important consideration for any new website. Although the country code domain extension for Chinese websites is .cn, many Chinese companies opt for a .com extension for international recognition. Non-Chinese companies mainly tend to prefer a .cn extension for their Chinese websites as this indicates that the site is designed exclusively for this market (demonstrating commitment) and because .cn domains rank more highly in search engine results.

Chinese .cn domains were once freely available for anyone to buy but they are now restricted to those with a legal presence in China. In light of this, it is important to work with a company with a legal presence in China to secure a Chinese domain name.

6. Local Hosting Providers

If you are serious about targeting Chinese Internet users, securing a good web hosting provider in the region is essential; money spent on Chinese search engine optimisation and website design can be wasted if your website hosting is not set up correctly.

The effects of Internet regulation in China – sometimes known as the 'Great Firewall' - mean that unless your Chinese website is hosted in China your website may:

- be blocked altogether
- be blocked some of the time
- be extremely slow loading
- not get indexed by local search engines
- result in a longer process to secure an account for search engine campaigns (PPC) on Baidu.

The government managed firewall, officially termed the Golden Shield Project, is designed to monitor and control the content viewed by Chinese Internet users. If a website contains any content deemed inappropriate by the Chinese government it faces being blocked.

Worse still, if another site hosted on your server is banned, the whole server - your site included - is likely to be blocked. If you are hosted on a shared server outside the Chinese firewall, the very real potential for your site to be banned at any time might be beyond your control.

You can check to see if a site is blocked using the following sites – www.blockedinchina.net and www.websitepulse.com/help/testtools.china-test.html.

Ensuring your hosting is suitable for the Chinese market is vital to provide visitors in China with good access to your site. Sites hosted outside China risk being inaccessible, or are likely to load so slowly that Chinese users will give up and go elsewhere; it is equivalent to a two-tier Internet, where Chinese sites are ultra-fast and many of those outside are rendered so slow loading as to make them useless. SEO in Chinese has little chance of benefiting your company if your Chinese website cannot be accessed properly - by the search engines and by visitors.

Chinese search engines, such as Baidu, also favour websites hosted in China and give higher rankings to these sites. At least part of the reason for Baidu's success is that they give priority in their search results for fast loading, Chinese hosted sites, producing a better experience for their users. The implications for good Chinese SEO are obvious.

It would be difficult for an average Australian tourism operator to find and do business with a Chinese hosting company. It would be better to engage the services of a reputable digital marketing firm with a strong technology background that has existing relationships with secure hosting providers in China.

Chinese Website Hosting - Restrictions

In order to host a website in mainland China, you must first have an Internet Content Provider (ICP) licence, which is issued by China's Ministry of Information Industry (MII). In turn, to get an ICP licence you need to have a legal presence in China. Having your own ICP licence will allow you to host your website legally in China and eliminate the problems associated with licence sharing. There are companies in China that will act as your agent, hosting and taking care of government registrations, including ICP filings for your own licence.

Sharing an ICP Licence

Several companies have attempted to share ICP licences with Chinese partners, leading to problems with the regulators. In 2006, Google's Chinese service got into trouble after MII took issue with their sharing of local firm, Ganji.com's licence - the rules are strictly enforced regardless of whether you are an SME or a multi-billion dollar multinational.

Sharing an ICP licence like this is against government rules, meaning the provider (and the websites hosted with them) could be shut down at any time, without any notice whatsoever. Also, if you share an ICP licence like this then your entire online presence in China - your website, its hosting and the domain name itself - is owned and controlled by another company who may go bust or simply choose to pull the plug at any time, leaving you with little or no legal recourse.

So you need to engage the services of a reputable agency that will essentially be your legal representative in China and arrange your own ICP licence, not just share theirs.

7. Alternatives to developing a Chinese website

The ideal may be to have a Chinese website that has localized content, is hosted in China, has Chinese social media integration, and is designed specific to Chinese cultural nuances. However, not every operator has the funds to develop, maintain, and market a Chinese website. In this case it is important to be creative and look at other options.

One way is to investigate opportunities to partner with your state/territory tourism organisation or regional marketing organisation (e.g. get involved in campaigns, support relevant Chinese familiarisations).

Another way is to develop a presence on key social media platforms so people can at least find information on your company if they are looking for it. Consider a Weibo Pages app, which is essentially a mini-site on Sina Weibo (similar to Facebook pages). This is a fairly low-cost way to get a mini-website in China. See Online in China – Social Media tutorial for more information.

A supporting activity that will also help your overall online presence in China is to partner with online travel agents such as Ctrip and eLong. A presence on these and other such sites will greatly increase exposure.

8. Key learning outcomes

- Having a Chinese website is an important part of an overall online strategy for China but it is a significant ongoing commitment of resources so ensure you are fully prepared.
- Developing a website for the Chinese market entails more than just translating your current site.
- Chinese domain names (.cn) are important as is hosting the site in China.

9. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Online in China – Introduction
- Online in China – Search Engines
- Online in China – Social Media

b) *Related websites*

- Essential China Travel Trends Booklet - Dragon Edition 2012 (free)
Latest trends & developments in the Chinese travel market
www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com
- Portal about the latest travel and tourism trends in China (free)
www.ChinaTravelTrends.com

c) *Recommended videos*

- Michael Anti: Behind the Great Firewall of China
www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china.html

Topic | Working Digitally In China

Tutorial 52

Online in China – Search Engines

This tutorial provides an overview of the key search engines in China and how to undertake search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM) activities in this market.

Reading time: 15 minutes

*Prerequisite: Online in China – Introduction
Search Engines 101
Critical Components of Optimising a Website
Keywords
Understanding Inbound Links to my Site
Sourcing Inbound Links
Travel and Tourism Links*



Just like anywhere in the world, search engines play an increasingly important role in how content, news products and services are found online in China. As online content is growing at enormous speed, search engines continue to gain importance and are therefore an essential component of any online strategy. With more than 540 million Chinese Internet users, it is obvious that there are a lot of people searching for content – so a solid search engine optimisation (SEO) strategy is vital for international companies to gain online visibility in China. Press releases and news articles, multimedia content and engagement in Chinese social media platforms are the best ways to improve search engine visibility.

1. Key Search Engines in China

Baidu is by far the strongest player in the Chinese search engine market: it has almost 80% market share and is the starting point for 95% of all Chinese searches, according to statistics from the China Internet Network Information Center.



Global search leader Google in comparison has less than 6% market share in China and has actually withdrawn from the Chinese market altogether (due to limitations set by the Chinese government), relying on a Hong Kong presence instead. Still, Google ranks the most popular second choice and so targeting both Baidu and Google is clearly a solid approach for Chinese SEO.

In the wake of Baidu's success, other search providers have made very limited impact, with services from the likes of Yahoo.cn, Sogou.com and Zhongsou.com making up the rest of the Chinese search market.

Due to Google's withdrawal from the mainland Chinese search market and a loyal consumer base, Baidu was able to establish very strong search engine dominance, reaching hundreds of millions of Chinese Internet users. In terms of online marketing and advertising, Baidu offers a pay-per-click bid model which is similar to the AdWords program of Google but only available in a Chinese language version.

What also needs to be taken into account when it comes to search engine marketing (SEM) on Baidu is that China's dominant search engine is heavily censored by the Chinese government to ensure politically sensitive material is not able to be viewed inside mainland China. For much of the regular travel related content this is not really an issue, but areas like spas and massage services sometimes face difficulties advertising on Baidu (a licence from the Chinese government allowing to advertise these services is required, otherwise this type of content might need to be removed in order for websites to be accepted).

How Baidu differs from Google

Comparing the Chinese Baidu and the Global platform Google, there are certain similarities as well as differences. It's basically two different ideologies which determine the different development paths of these two search providers.

Google has long expanded widely beyond search: with its own web browser, mobile operating system, cloud-based office software, an operating system and cloud computing it has reached many fields through pushing technological possibilities and introducing new products through continuous innovation.

Ever since the introduction of Baidu Tieba in 2003, Baidu has followed the same strategy as Google of introducing new Internet services to attract and retain users. The company has launched products with distinct local attributes in order to keep the users in Baidu platforms.

Baidu offers a multitude of services, trying through many different channels (see a list of Baidu services on Wikipedia – www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baidu) to keep the users on Baidu platforms. While Google does have its own set of platforms beyond search (e.g. Google+ for social networking, Gmail free web mail service) it also has a strong focus on developing Internet related products and services that enhance the functionality of other non-Google platforms (e.g. Google Wallet, a mobile payment system).

2. How is Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) different in China?

As it is so widely used in China, ranking highly on Baidu must be the key aim for any website undertaking Chinese search engine optimisation. It is therefore essential for Western companies

to implement a Chinese website complete with Chinese SEO. You should be aware of the following:

- Baidu's search results, unlike Google's, mix paid (or sponsored) results in with organic listings. This means it is essentially possible to pay your way to the top for your keywords on Baidu. For Chinese users, this is perfectly normal, with the general opinion being 'if they're willing to pay for the clicks they must be offering something worthwhile.'
- Even if you choose to pay for high ranking in Baidu, natural Chinese search engine optimisation is still important. This is because your natural ranking is part of the formula that determines just how much you will need to pay.
- Baidu also offers separate sponsored listings (advertisements), similar to that of Google.com, with spaces that can be rented for a given period.
- In addition to paid search result listings and banner advertising, Baidu also offers something called 'Brand Zone' which is quite unique in the world of search engines. This provides big, well-known brands with the opportunity to own the 'above the fold' space on result pages (this is the part of the page that is visible without scrolling). Advertisers can bid on core brand keywords so that if someone searches for their brand, they receive a significant amount of text and graphical content about that brand which is good for the advertiser's brand awareness and encourages users to click through to their website. Brands can also 'own' their brand related keywords which means no other advertisers can use their keywords.
- As you might expect, Baidu is particularly China-centric. To rank highly on Baidu a website needs to be in the Chinese language and ideally hosted inside China.

Top Search Engine in China - Baidu's Search Results Listing

The screenshot shows a Baidu search results page for the keyword '电脑'. The results are organized into several distinct sections:

- Right-hand column:** Labeled 'Yearly advertisement listings (百度火爆) are listed on the right hand column.' This section contains large, prominent ads for various computer products.
- Below the right-hand column:** Labeled 'Pay-per-click ads are listed on the "natural listings" side which are defined by the characters "推广" (Ad)'. These are smaller ads that include the characters '推广'.
- Main search results area:** Labeled '"Natural" listings begin here, defined by the characters "百度快照" (Organic searches)'. This area contains the standard organic search results, each with a title, URL, and a snippet of text.

The search engine results page (SERP) shown in this example is a typical Baidu SERP. The most obvious difference between what we recognise as a traditional SERP on say, Google and Baidu are that there are pay-per-click results on the left side of the page which in the West is used only for organic or natural listings. The keyword entered in this example is 电脑 (computer). As it is quite a competitive keyword there are already advertised listings above the organic listings, defined only by the characters 推广 on the bottom right corner of each link.

Instead of pay-per-click listings on the right hand side, there are yearly fixed price listings instead, where the first three listings are rotated amongst themselves. Fourth to tenth listings cost less and are rotated in order on a day-to-day basis. The price depends on how competitive the keyword is and the amount you are bidding. Baidu states that in the situation where two companies have bid for the same place for the same keyword, the company who pays first will get the position. Factors such as the quality of the landing page will also affect these positions.

Occasionally, a grey section, similar to Google's blue 'Sponsored Results' section will pop up on the search engine results page. However, these are links that are put up by Baidu when someone searches for a search term that has no paid links. Instead, links with keywords similar to the search term will be displayed.

In order to make sure that you are not listed beneath the paid advertisements, which could be the first ten or more listings on the first page of Baidu, you need have a targeted keyword strategy so that your site will be visible on the front page of Baidu. There are a few tools which can be used for keyword research, such as the Baidu Index (<http://index.baidu.com/>) which provides insights on search behaviour and popularity of certain keywords.

Baidu Index - Keyword Insights for Australia (澳大利亚)



Within their Baidu PPC advertiser account, registered users can also use a dedicated keyword tool similar to the ones from Google. All of these (just like any other Baidu service) are exclusively available in Chinese language and thus require in-market experts with the necessary linguistic and cultural insights.

In a market where mobile use is so prevalent, it's important to consider mobile paid search marketing activities. Just as in Western markets, there are some strategies for mobile search that differ from those employed in traditional search campaigns. For example, consider the fact that search queries are likely to be shorter (important for keyword selection) and only the top few ads will show on a mobile screen so it's important to pay what is necessary to secure these spaces.

3. Strategies for Improving Ranking

Unless you have in-market support and Chinese language/cultural expertise, a professional media agency in China that specialises in developing and managing SEO and PPC activities is recommended in order to successfully reach Chinese consumers online.

Many aspects of the Chinese Internet are unique and require different treatment than similar activities in the rest of the world. Also in terms of SEO the Chinese web presents some unique challenges. Simply following the same tactics which are applied for SEO on Google will usually not work, as the two search engines have some very distinct differences. Baidu's search algorithm for ranking pages follows a unique system and there are certain tricks which are uniquely applicable to this algorithm. In a nutshell, Baidu:

- allows for greater keyword density than Google
- does not give weighting to links based upon the ranking of the site which holds the link
- prefers locally hosted sites
- still places a high value upon meta-data.

Important points to consider for SEO on Baidu and the Chinese web include:

- **A domain name in Chinese Pinyin** is preferred by Baidu over English domain names. Pinyin is the system of transcribing Chinese language sounds and pronunciations into Latin script (see www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin). It is recommended to register a Chinese Pinyin domain name before creating a Chinese website. Having a Chinese domain extension (.cn) is also believed to improve search engine rankings.
- **Chinese hosting** in mainland China is given more weight to by Baidu than websites hosted abroad. Hosting abroad also causes stricter content filtering and slower display speed and should be avoided.

- **Chinese made website scripts** (e.g. Dede or Empire) for CMS are preferred over global ones (such as WordPress or Joomla). For static websites, flash, javascript and iframes should be used with care or avoided if possible (even though they are common on Chinese websites), as these script elements can slow down page load times and can cause display errors on mobile browsers.
- **Website URLs using Pinyin** for the content and directory structure is important as this is (like the domain name itself) preferred over English or other language versions.
- **Original and updated content** will help with rankings and should have a minimum length of no less than 700 words for each individual page.
- **Links** from and to well selected link partners, where inbound and outbound links should be balanced and only point to and from related sites with relevant content.
- **Meta tags** including title, description and keyword tags need to be filled up for each pages, as Baidu still gives these a great deal of relevance.
- **301 redirects** for moved content and changed domain names should be provided in order to make sure all content can still be found and be correctly linked.

Local Linking Strategy

Creating a local linking strategy (i.e. getting Chinese sites to include hyperlinks to your site) is probably the most challenging part of any Chinese online marketing strategy. As a crucial success factor in terms of ranking results for Chinese language searches (in any search engine) knowing the language and finding the right link partners is essential. As China's online travel universe is strongly dominated by Online Travel Agents such as Ctrip and eLong, getting direct links back a company website can be a tough and time consuming. Even more than in the rest of the world, SEO rankings in China need a lot of time to build up and newly launched Chinese language websites will need to take their time to slowly gather prominence. Making extensive use of social media and user generated content - off the company website and linking back and forth between website and this content can be a good start.

4. Importance of Translation in Search

As outlined in Tutorial 51 (Online in China – Developing a Chinese Website), providing a localised Chinese language version of a website (not simply translated) is one of the keys to success on the Chinese web. This not only ensure the content is relevant to the target market, but search engines such as Baidu also favour content that is really developed for China, evidenced through:

- creating a linguistic equivalent, not a literal translation of each page
- assessing colours of fonts and backgrounds for cultural implications
- changing telephone number formats
- changing time, date and measurement formats.

If translated material does not meet the needs of the local culture, it has not been properly localised. This is no trivial task, and may go a long way in explaining why localisation is costly.

5. How can I run a search campaign if I don't speak Chinese?

As for many things in China, Chinese language is the key, not only to assist the Chinese Internet users who are generally not confident with English, but also in order to manage online activities and content professionally. Many online tools, such as Baidu's PPC Ad campaign management, are only available in Chinese and make it very difficult for non Chinese speakers to work with these tools. Consider engaging an individual or company with Chinese language and cultural expertise to assist you.

Top Search Engine in China - Baidu's Ad Campaign Administration



Source: China Internet Watch online.

6. Key Learning Outcomes

- Baidu may be the equivalent of Google for China, but it's a mistake to assume that SEO and SEM activities that work with Google will work with Baidu.
- A site that is simply a translated version of your current site will not rank well (if at all) in search results.
- SEO and PPC/SEM activities will be impossible without Chinese language and cultural expertise – if you do not have this expertise yourself you will need to engage a professional.

7. Related material

a) *Related tutorials*

- Online in China – Introduction
- Online in China – Developing a Website
- Online in China – Social Media

b) *Related websites*

- Essential China Travel Trends Booklet - Dragon Edition 2012 (free)
Latest trends & developments in the Chinese travel market
www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com
- Portal about the latest travel and tourism trends in China (free)
www.ChinaTravelTrends.com

c) *Recommended videos*

- Michael Anti: Behind the Great Firewall of China
www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china.html

Topic | Working Digitally In China

Tutorial 53

Online in China – Social Media

Social media in China is so different to Australia and other Western markets that it deserves its own tutorial. This tutorial covers the trends, main players and tips for connecting with Chinese consumers using social media platforms.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: Online in China - Introduction



The Tourism e-kit has been produced by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse,

is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee, and is funded by all the Australian States & Territory Tourism Offices.

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Chinese Internet users are actively engaging in social media—especially home-grown social media platforms that differ in various ways from Western platforms. Australian tourism businesses would benefit from learning how Chinese consumers use social media and taking advantage of the platforms to conduct consumer research, launch products, manage public relations crises and shift brand preference. Even just monitoring online conversations and responding when appropriate can yield striking results.

Content about brands and products needs to be spread all over the web – not only on a company website, otherwise the users will simply not find the content unless they specifically search for it. This obviously points at utilising the various social media platforms.

1. Prevalence of Social Media in China

One out of five global Internet users is from China. In urban China being online essentially equates to being on social media, with more than 90% of Chinese Internet users visiting social media sites regularly (compared to 67% in the United States). About 80% of them have accounts on more than one of these platforms. Regardless of its gigantic dimension, the Chinese social media landscape is not an easy one to be successful in. There are certain things which need to be taken into consideration in order to successfully access this mass medium.

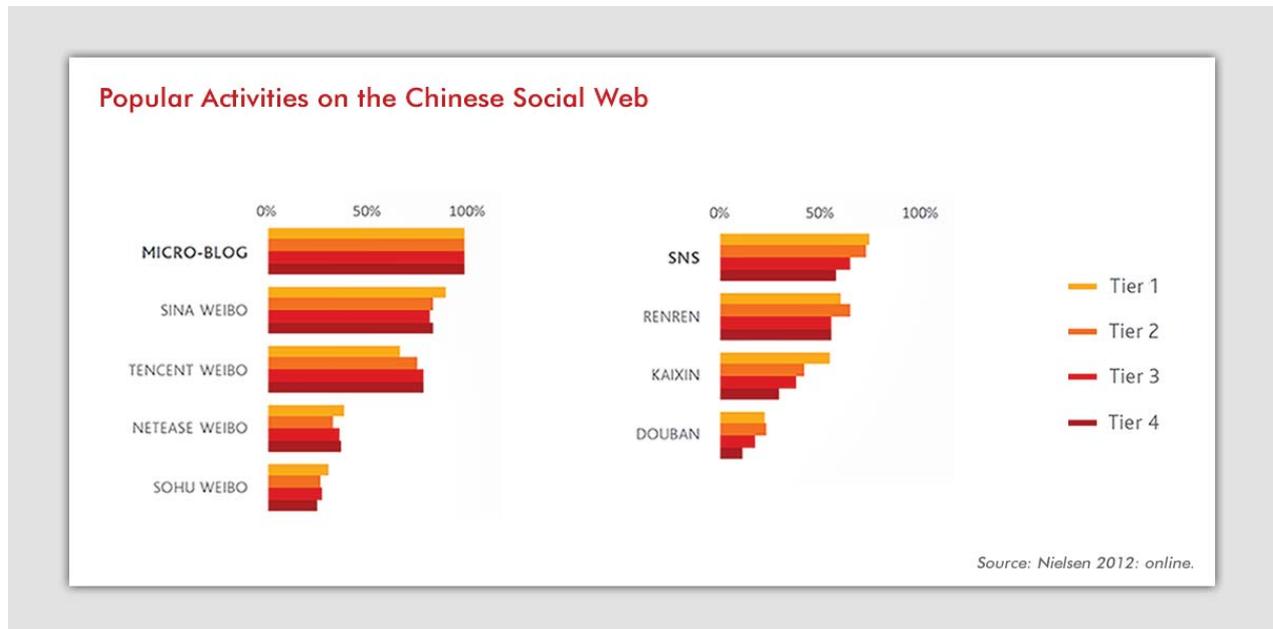
An impact of China's deep involvement in social media is that some Internet users only experience the Internet through social media platforms. When new users start using the Internet, a friend will often introduce them to one particularly relevant service, such as how to communicate with friends for free via Sina Weibo or buy goods via China's e-Bay equivalent Taobao, so that service becomes their main or sole experience of the Internet.

The latest China Social Network Report 2011 (China Internet Network Information Center) indicates that roughly 54.7% of Internet users in China today own or visit blogs, and 47.3% have a page on one or more social networking sites (SNS). More than 25% write 10 or more posts on forums, blogs or SNS every day, and 92.3% visit social media pages at least three times a week, while 27.1% have pages on five or even more different social networks.

2. How Social Media is Used

Based on research by McKinsey (comparing hours spent on certain activities each week) videos and games strongly dominate the entertainment category of the social web, followed by music, e-reading, and music/game downloads. Within the information category, news and search are the most popular activities followed by e-learning, navigation and mapping. When it comes to community related activities, instant messaging leads by far, followed by emailing, social networking, bulletin boards, blogging and micro blogging, with roughly similar amounts of time

spent. The leading activity in the category of eCommerce is online shopping, followed by stock trading, banking/bill payment, group purchasing, with travel bookings in fifth place.



3. Why Social Media is so Popular in China

Web marketing and social media opportunities are booming due, in part, to the increasing purchasing power of the Chinese consumer. Also, broadband Internet connection has become very affordable in most places in China. Once users are online, creating profiles and representing themselves (through a Sina Weibo account for example) is free and easy. Engaging with others through social media is commonly one of the first activities carried out online – some believe this desire to interact with others may be because the majority of young Chinese do not have siblings (due to China’s one child policy). With an increased level of education and international orientation Internet users are seeking independent (as opposed to government controlled) content - social media offers this type of content with various image, video and music sharing platforms as well as a vast amount of user generated content. As a consequence of all these developments popular platforms have all grown a strong user base within the world’s largest Internet population. This high demand for and heavy adoption and consumption of social media in China have created plentiful opportunities for social media marketing for many industries – travel and tourism being one of them.

4. Key Social Media Platforms in China



Source: Dragon Trail Interactive 2012

Online Video Sharing (Major Western Equivalent: YouTube)

The Chinese use online video platforms quite differently from how Westerners use YouTube. Rather than the short (often amateur) videos popular among YouTube watchers, Chinese platforms are filled with longer form content, up to 70% of which is professionally produced. Much of this content consists of foreign programs pirated, subtitled, and uploaded just hours after broadcast in the United States.

The most popular video sharing platforms in China are Youku and Tudou, both of which have around 100 million registered users throughout China. As the platform's main benefit (watching videos) is largely accessible without registration, the number of registered users differs highly from the number of visitors / active users, which is stated for both portals from 200 million upwards. Other popular platforms include Sohu TV, Tencent Video, iQiyi and Ku6.

Micro Blogging (Major Western Equivalent: Twitter)

Launched in 2009, just about three years after Twitter, Sina Weibo is by far the most popular micro blogging platform in China with over 320 million registered users, roughly 60% of which are active users. Similar to Twitter, Sina Weibo allows users to post 140-character messages, and

users can follow friends and find interesting comments posted by others. Unlike Twitter, Sina Weibo allows users to post videos and photos, comment on other people's updates, and easily add comments when re-posting a friend's message. Nearly half of Sina Weibo's updates are sent via mobile phone. Sina Weibo is most popular among white collar workers and the urban online population.

The next most popular platform is Tencent Weibo with roughly 100 million registered and 25 million active users who are mainly in lower tier (i.e. smaller) cities. Other less popular platforms include Sohu Weibo, and 163 Weibo.

Instant Messaging (Major Western Equivalent: Skype & Live Messenger)

Personal communication through chat and instant messaging tools is one of the main activities online – globally as well as in China. Here a strong trend to media convergence is happening with mobile penetration growing and access to the internet through mobile networks getting cheaper. As Skype, Live Messenger, Line, WhatsApp and other tools and apps are booming globally, China also has its own popular versions.

The most popular platforms in China are WeChat (former Weixin, by Tencent) and QQ messenger, which allow users to manage their contacts between computer, tablets and phones through nicely developed apps for apple, android and symbian. They also offer integration with other networks such as Weibo or even Facebook to access contact lists and connect to people in existing networks easily. Based on TechRice figures, WeChat currently has more than 200 million registered users.

Social Networking (Major Western Equivalent: Facebook)

Throughout much of the West Facebook holds sway as the default social network, covering all demographics. The same does not hold true in China, where a handful of social networks attract segmented audiences, ranging from upmarket urban youth to university students and migrant workers.

The most popular platforms in China include QZone, Renren, Pengyou, Kaixin001, 51 and Douban:

- **QZone** (qzone.qq.com), the first and (with close to 500 million registered and about 200 million active users) largest social networking site in China attracts youth from teens through to age 25, often from second and third tier cities. A sizable portion of migrant workers, many of whom share personal diaries in a blog-like format, use QZone.
- **Renren** (renren.com), the platform in China most similar to Facebook, attracts university students who use the platform to connect and interact with classmates. The site is organized around users' school and graduation class. Many users upload videos and

photos of their activities to the platform which has reached about 150 million registrations out of which about 100 million are active users.

- **Pengyou** (pengyou.com), is similar in size and popularity to Renren, but more popular among second tier city social media users who are slightly younger. Pengyou is part of the many services of the Tencent group.
- **Kaixin001** (kaixin001.com), a platform designed for a more mature audience of young professionals, has a membership that is heavily dominated by white collar workers in Beijing; Guangzhou, Guangdong; Shanghai; and second tier cities. Users do not upload personal content but rather share information they find elsewhere, often relating to health, relationships, and professional advancement. Kaixin001 currently has 120 million registered users with about 40 million active ones.
- **51.com** is a simple online network and was an early favourite but is now struggling. Growth has slowed and it has rather low traffic rankings among the popular social networks. After the site had been temporarily blocked due to some 'objectionable' content, many urban and educated users have turned to other networks and 51 is now trying to maintain its core user base in lower tier cities. Registered user numbers are around 200 million with roughly 40 million active ones.
- **Douban** (douban.com), a more specialized social networking site, attracts art students and those passionate about books, cinema, culture, and music. Users connect according to their interests and often hold offline activities, such as trips to local art exhibitions. The smallest of the leading social networking sites has more than 50 million registered and 25 million active users, mostly in first tier cities and 25-30 years of age.

Besides these key social networks, there are various niche SNS that attract very passionate and loyal followings. P1.cn has established itself as having a focus on the luxury lifestyle and with its 'invitation only' approach is somewhat similar to ASW (asmallworld.net) in the West. On the business social networking side, Ushi.cn is working to become the LinkedIn in China, and is backed by influential Chinese business leaders.

BBS - Bulletin Board Systems (Major Western Equivalent: Forums)

Beyond these sites that have more modern Internet functionality, some original forms of social media still flourish in China. Bulletin board systems (BBS), which were a feature of the early Internet, are forums that allow people to post basic messages online.

In contrast to many countries, a wide range of BBS still flourish in China today, with users relying on them for critical consumer comments about products and services from clothes and cosmetics to restaurants and cars. Postings are anonymous, which encourages users to give unvarnished views. Writing under pseudonyms, many users that frequently post on BBS build reputations and sizable followings. Anonymity does, of course, also open the system to abuse by competitors writing negative comments.

The most popular platforms in China are Baidu Tieba and ClubSohu, with Baidu Tieba (as part of China's main search engine) being the leader.



Location Based Services - LBS (Major Western Equivalent: foursquare)

Also on the rise recently are location based services for check in and location sharing. The global leader here is foursquare, which offers users the ability to sign in or check in at their current location, which helps them let their network know where they currently are and find out who of their friends might be close by. Checking in and tagging of locations is also increasing within facebook. This type of activity is of course strongly dependent on mobile use, which has been growing rapidly in China.

The most popular platforms in China are Jiebang and Kaikai. The leader in this relatively young sector is Jiebang with about 1 million users – growing rapidly through partnerships with other networks such as QQ and Renren. Even tiny stores make use of this network and encourage visiting customers to share their location in return for a small discount coupon.

eCommerce Platforms (Major Western Equivalent: eBay)

Online platforms such as eBay, where anyone can open their own online store, also exist in China. All imaginable kinds of products, ranging from fashion, DVDs, food and pets, to software downloads and many more categories – Chinese leading platforms like Taobao cover them all.

Thanks to a smart and secure payment routine, where payments are made to the platform which passes the money on to the seller only after the products have been delivered and confirmed by the buyer, users are not afraid to buy online – even if it's just to try. Delivery is usually quick and cheap and many of the store owners spend excessive time online helping their potential customers through a live chat system.

The most popular platform in China is Taobao with around 400 million registered users, offering more than 800 million products for sale online. Most of the leading cities in terms of revenue are first and second tier cities along China's east coast, lead by Guangdong, Zhejiang and Shanghai.

Image Blogging (Major Western Equivalent: Pinterest)

A relatively new type of platform recently evolved around posting, sharing and 'pinning' of image content along with some text and link information. These types of photo-curation services allow users to share their content in specific categories including one image per post with some additional content, such as explanations, links, comments etc. These platforms have been cloned excessively in China under the category name of Pubuliu (waterfall stream) which refers to the fluid design characteristics.

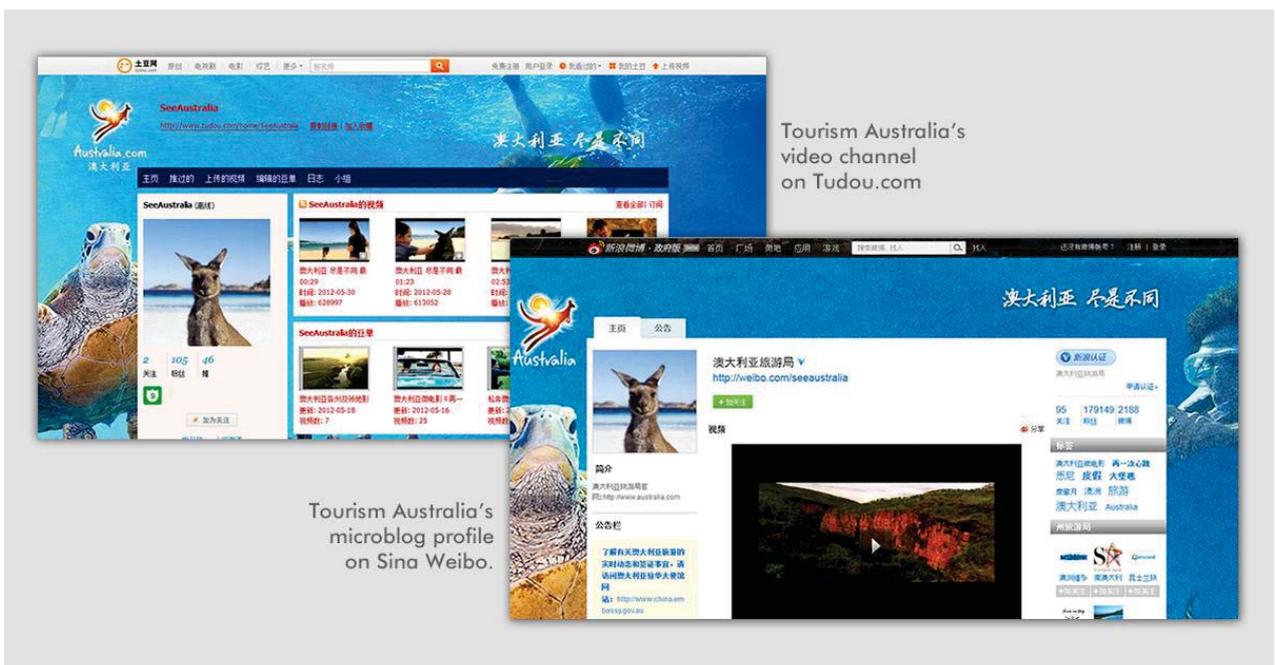
The most popular platforms in China are PinFun (Images) and Huaban (Videos). Other emerging players are Meishixing and LSKong for snacks and food as well as Meilishuo and Mogujie for the field of fashion.

5. Australia's presence on Chinese Social Media

Australia as a destination has a presence on China's social media platforms through the activities of the State and Territory Tourism Organisations and Tourism Australia. Some of Tourism Australia's recent activities include:

Tourism Australia's social web profiles (as at September 2012):

- Sina Weibo with 180,825 followers (<http://www.weibo.com/seeaustralia>)
- Tudou Video Channel with 108 followers (<http://www.tudou.com/home/SeeAustralia>)
- Tencent Weibo with 224,188 followers (<http://e.t.qq.com/seeaustralia>)



Tourism Australia's social web campaigns:

The 'Trip in a Minute' campaign was launched in July 2011. Tourism Australia sponsored a Chinese couple to travel to Uluru, Canberra and Sydney and film their holiday. The video was then edited and promoted as a one minute film clip on Sina Weibo and Tudou.com. As at May 2012, the video had 870,000 views. Sina Weibo is a micro blogging website like Twitter and Facebook that has 300 million registered users. Tudou.com is one of the largest video sharing websites in China. It attracts up to 300 million monthly unique visitors.

‘Dream Come True’ was a joint initiative by Tourism Australia, Travel Channel TV (China’s leading travel channel with an audience reach of 400 million) and Sina.com (one of the biggest online portals in China). Chinese consumers were asked to share their Australian dream holiday, with the chance to win a holiday in Australia.

**Discover Your Australia
Online Drama**

with Show Lo & Rainie Yang



Source: <http://sydney.forseasons.com>

‘Discover Your Australia’ online drama: Tourism Australia launched the Discover Your Australia online drama with Show Lo and Rainie Yang at an event in Beijing, which attracted over 200 guests from media, industry, government stakeholders and airlines. Guests enjoyed videos featuring the online drama and Australian destination experiences. Celebrities Show Lo and Rainie Yang also shared their unforgettable feelings and Australia travel stories. Show Lo and Rainie Yang have a combined social media following of 25 million fans throughout China. Significant media exposure was generated from the campaign across Asia. The “making of” promotional videos of the show were broadcast over five weeks from April 2012.

To date these promotional videos have generated over 90 million views in Greater China across major online viewing platforms. Three music videos featuring Show Lo and Rainie Yang were also filmed and promoted on Asia’s major TV channels. Two out of five episodes of the drama have been shown in China at australia.tudou.com and in Hong Kong at youtube.com/AustraliaHK.

For information on how your state or territory is represented on China’s social media platforms and whether there are opportunities for you to contribute content, please contact your relevant State or Territory Tourism Organisation.

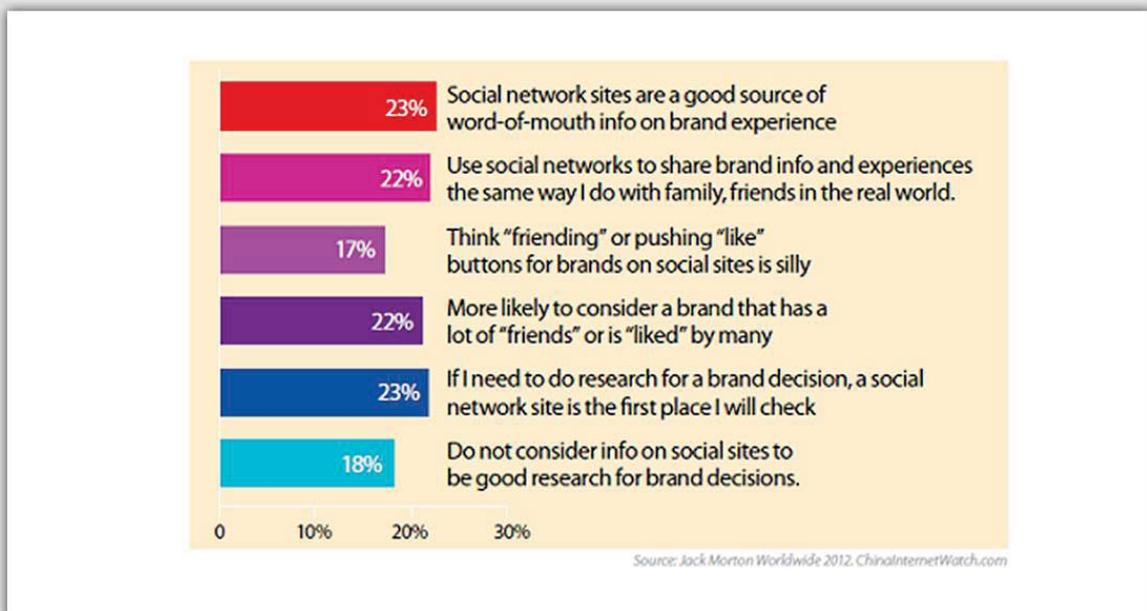
6. Advertising on Chinese Social Media

According to the 2010 TNS Digital Life Report, China is the highest ranked country in the world for the number of Internet users who join social networks to find information about brands. And the Internet is a trusted source - 2010 Global Web Index indicates that users trust reviews and insights on social media three times more than a recommendation from an acquaintance.

With a view to meeting the demand for information and consumption of Chinese Internet users, international brands are entering the Chinese social media space. Until recently it was not unusual for even internationally recognised brands to lack a Chinese-language version of their website. Today, many such brands have a branded page in SNS like Kaixin001 or Renren, as well as Sina, Sohu, or Tencent Weibo, from which they broadcast tailored messages for their Chinese audiences. This is true for multinational corporations with a huge retail presence in China such as KFC or Coca-Cola, which have been active on social media platforms since early times and now have communities of hundreds of thousand fans on Chinese SNS. However, it is also true for brands that have been slow in penetrating the Chinese market or that have lagged behind in terms of brand definition in China.

Rather than eliminate social media, restrictions on foreign websites and social media have resulted in a flourishing home-grown, state-approved ecosystem in which Chinese-owned platforms thrive. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are blocked in China, but their Chinese equivalents are expanding.

Chinese netizens' attitude towards interacting with brands online



Source: Dragon Trail Interactive 2012

7. Some Social Media Tips for China

Register to protect brands and trademarks

To ensure companies are not being represented online by unauthorised parties, it is important to protect trademarks by registering as early as possible on the most popular networks such as Sina

Weibo, Tencent WeiBo, Renren or Kaixin as well as Tudou, Youku and Tianya. Registration alone is of course not enough – the right type of content to start engaging should already be at hand and the necessary resources for staying connected, updated and engaged need to be allocated from the beginning.

Engage with users but avoid certain controversial content

Like online communities in Europe and the United States, Chinese Internet users love to engage – this is what the social web is all about after all. Finding ways to make a brand fun and interesting by creating interesting pictures, videos and interactive content and presenting this content to the various Chinese online communities helps spread the word, stay in the users' minds and is consequently key to success. While engaging the users is vital in the social web, it's also important to be aware of the risks of some forms of content in China. It's generally recommended to avoid politics, religion, criticism, overt sexuality, gambling and extreme violence as these are themes that can put websites and profiles on a wrong footing with the Chinese authorities and Chinese Internet users. This can even lead to content and profiles being removed and whole websites being blocked in mainland China. Instead it is better to look for ways to associate a brand with fun, happiness, good-living and either China or the West, depending on the desired brand image. Often paraphrasing or re-wording can do the trick (e.g. presenting gambling with the use of different wording as some other type of entertainment).

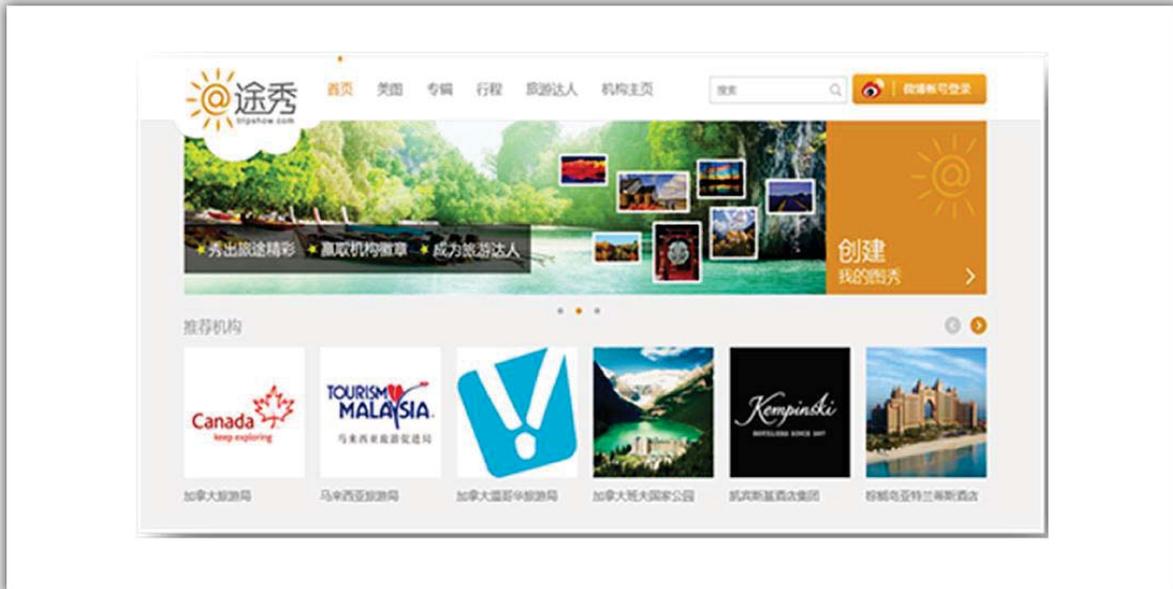
Watch out for new / emerging platforms and services

A new travel website for example, TripShow.com, is launching in September 2012. TripShow.com is built on top of Sina Weibo, the most engaging social media platform in China, and already the second most active social media platform in the world, behind Facebook. The site aggregates images and videos posted by travellers on their Sina Weibo accounts.

Travel organisations, from tourist boards to small lodges and tour operators, can also develop their own mini site on Tripshow to showcase their destination, products, and services. Further, travel organisations can create itineraries that can be booked via tour operators, and hotels and airlines can integrate booking engines, or link to preferred online travel agents. The travel and tourism organisations can also engage with members by giving out branded 'badges', and can track their most influential brand ambassadors.

For the first time, even organisations with smaller budgets can get a relevant and performance-based online presence in China that engages with Chinese consumers, without having to invest a lot of money. This revolutionary platform has the potential to change how travel brands market in China, and how Chinese consumers plan and share their travel experiences.

New emerging travel web site Tripshow.com



Consider Weibo Apps

Distributing travel products through social media is the holy grail of social media marketing, not only in China, but all over the world. For a long time, booking call-to-actions on social media profiles have lead fans to other sites to complete the booking. With the release of Weibo Enterprise 2.0, it is possible to build complete booking functionality into a weibo profile. Fans no longer need to leave weibo and will be able to complete a booking right where they are.

Recently Sina Weibo has begun allowing custom-built apps to be integrated into business profiles in order to add more enriched features (such as booking functionalities). Such apps are another very interesting marketing opportunity on the Chinese social web. These apps basically function like a mini-site on established platforms but offer more engaging and customized functionality than regular profiles (comparable with custom Facebook pages).

For businesses that want to have an online presence in China but don't have the resources or budget to develop, maintain, and market a relevant and engaging Chinese website, Sina Weibo apps might be the answer. While developing a China-hosted, localized (not simply translated), and relevant Chinese website is ideal, this is not accessible for everyone. Weibo apps allow for a Chinese web presence on the most engaging and active social media platform in China. These apps simulate some of the key functions of a website, such as providing information, engaging via visual content, promoting offers, interacting with users, booking engine integration, and enhancing loyalty. Weibo apps are also a fairly low-cost way to enhance the Sina Weibo presence. This will provide more information to users without having to link to a brand website, as well as increase fans and followers and drive 'retweets' and engagement.

Canada Sina Weibo App



Creating and maintaining a weibo app without Chinese language and cultural expertise would be impossible – you would need to engage the services of a reputable digital marketing firm or individual.

8. Key learning outcomes

- Chinese Internet users heavily rely on social media platforms for their online travel information research.
- Avoid content that the Chinese authorities may deem inappropriate.
- Social media activities can be a good (and cost effective) first step in developing an online presence in China.

9. Related material

a) Related tutorials

- Online in China – Introduction
- Online in China – Developing a Chinese Website
- Online in China – Search Engines

b) Related websites

- Essential China Travel Trends Booklet - Dragon Edition 2012 (free)
Latest trends & developments in the Chinese travel market
www.ChinaTravelTrendsBook.com
- Portal about the latest travel and tourism trends in China (free)
www.ChinaTravelTrends.com

Online in China – Social Media

- Sina Weibo Apps – examples developed for travel industry
www.dragontrail.com/en/socialmedia/socialapps
- Examples of Sina Weibo travel apps
www.weibo.com/canadatravel and www.weibo.com/ctrip

c) *Recommended videos*

- Michael Anti: Behind the Great Firewall of China
www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china.html

Glossary

This glossary will assist you to understand the acronyms and jargon used in the Tourism e-kit tutorials.



1. GLOSSARY TERMS

We have put together a glossary to help you understand key terms.

However, you can also use Google as a glossary: simply key in “define:your search term” (without the quotes and no space after the colon) in Google.

For example, if you would like to know what a website is, Google: define:website

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Absolute unique visitors: | <p>The number of unique individuals who came to your site in a given time period.</p> <p><i>If John comes to your site 20 times in a week, he still only counts as a single unique visitor.</i></p> <p>This statistic is important because it tells you your reach, or the total size of the audience coming to your site.</p> |
| 301 redirect: | <p>Search engine friendly manner to redirect a website address (URL) to another one.</p> |
| Accessibility: | <p>Accessibility encompasses the recommendations and best practices to ensure the web is accessible to all, including people with disabilities.</p> |
| Add on sales: | <p>Products or services that complement a sale. This includes meeting and conference rooms, restaurant, packed meals, gift vouchers, and visitor sightseeing tours.</p> |
| Affiliated online booking networks: | <p>An online network of operator websites coming together through a central coordinating website (e.g. for accommodation in a district or tourism region).</p> |
| Alt tag: | <p>Symbol used in HTML to describe what an image is about. Alt tags are essentials and help with search engine optimisation.</p> |
| Analytics: | <p>See Website analytics and tracking.</p> |
| ATDW: | <p>See Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.</p> |
| Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW): | <p>The ATDW is the only government recognised nation-wide distribution facility for Australian tourism content www.atdw.com.au.</p> |
| Back office: | <p>Includes functions such as accounting, finance, and housekeeping.</p> |
| Backlink: | <p>See Inbound link.</p> |

Glossary

| | |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Backup: | Saving your website's and computer's content in order to be able to recover it. |
| Blog: | Website built in the format of an online diary. Blogs are very popular and are used by many businesses as a form of online marketing. |
| Bing | Bing (formerly Live Search, Windows Live Search, and MSN Search) is a web search engine from Microsoft. |
| Bots: | See Robots. |
| Cap | See Limits/Cap |
| Cascading style sheets: | A programming language used to define the style (such as font, size, colour, spacing, etc.) of web documents. It is recommended by the WC3 (World Wide Web Consortium). |
| Channel / distribution channel: | A means for operators to distribute their product to a wide customer base (e.g. through an affiliated online booking network). See also Channel manager. |
| Channel manager: | A web-based system used when an operator is linked to a number of distribution channels (such as last minute booking sites). The channel manager software automatically updates room inventory or tour numbers to ensure there is no overbooking. |
| CMS: | See Content management system. |
| Code: | The background code that runs a website. As well as HTML and XHTML, this can include, CSS, JavaScript, ASP, PHP, JSP, Coldfusion, and more. |
| Content management system: | System that allows a website owner to edit their content without requiring any knowledge of web programming. Also known as CMS. |
| Crawler: | See Robots. |
| Creative commons licence: | Flexible media licencing designed to facilitate and encourage more versatility and flexibility in copyright. |
| CRO: | Conversion Rate Optimisation. Optimising the content of your website to transform a prospect into a guest. |
| CSS: | See Cascading style sheets. |
| Data import / export: | The ability to input or output a file of data to or from another system (e.g. from an online booking system to Excel). |

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| Database: | Structured collection of records or data that is stored in a computer or on a server. Content management systems save website's content in a database. |
| Description tag: | The description META tag is used to write a short description that is should be unique to each webpage. |
| Directory: | Directories are websites built from submissions made by website owners, and generally arrange site listings hierarchically. |
| Distribution channel: | See Channel / distribution channel. |
| Distribution commission: | Fee a third party charges for bringing the consumer to your product. This third party may be a travel agent, wholesaler or inbound tour operator. |
| DMOZ: | See Open directory project. |
| Domain name: | A domain name (like mytrendyhotel.com.au) is the address used to find you on the Internet. Domains are hierarchical, and lower-level domains often refer to particular websites within a top-level domain. The most significant part of the address comes at the end - typical top-level domains are .com, .com.au , .net, .edu, .gov, .org. |
| E-marketing: | Activities that can be used to promote your business online. |
| Facebook: | Extremely well known social networking site www.facebook.com . |
| Flash: | Technology used on websites that allows for image animation. Not search engine friendly. |
| Flickr: | Well known online photo management and sharing application www.flickr.com . |
| Forum: | Online discussion spaces in which anyone can participate. |
| Frames: | An old and non-search engine friendly manner of programming a website in HTML. Some sites have pages that are made up of multiple HTML pages. Typically the navigation will be on one page and the content on another. |
| FTP: | Stands for "File Transfer Protocol". A protocol, or program, used to transfer files from your computer to your server on the Internet. |
| GIF: | A standard file format for images that is used to display graphics and illustrations on the Internet. It allows transparent backgrounds. |
| Google: | The most used and popular Internet search engine www.google.com.au . |

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| Google AdSense | Contextual advertising by Google. Website publishers earn a portion of the advertising revenue for placing Google sponsored links (ads) on their site http://adsense.google.com . |
| Google AdWords: | The Pay Per Click advertising program offered by Google http://adwords.google.com . |
| Google Alerts: | Handy tool offered by Google that allows the user to subscribe to any keyword or keyphrase and receive a daily email listing all web pages on which the keyword (keyphrases) was (were) mentioned www.google.com/alerts . |
| Google Analytics: | Tool by Google that provides statistics about the visitation to a user's website http://analytics.google.com . See also Website tracking and analytics. |
| Google Maps: | Interactive maps http://maps.google.com . |
| Group Buying Code Member | Indicates whether the company is a signatory to the Australian Group Buying Code of Practice established by ADMA (Australian Direct Marketing Association) and AIMIA (Australian Interactive Media Industry Association). The Code establishes industry benchmarks for group buying sites and introduces standards that will increase consumer confidence. www.adma.com.au/regulatory/group-buying-code-of-practice/ |
| Hard drive: | Component of a computer that stores all the files and data. External hard drives are used to backup the contents of the computer's built in hard drive. |
| Headings: | A symbol used in HTML to inform browsers that the text displayed is a heading and not plain text. The look and feel of the text in the headings can be set using CSS. |
| Hoax: | An attempt to trick an audience into believing that something false is real. Hoaxes are generally sent via email. |
| Homepage: | The main page of a website. Generally called index.html. |
| Host: | A third-party company that provides a server (customised computer that is on 24/7) to host your website and its files. |
| HTML: | Stands for "Hypertext Markup Language". The coding language that all websites use to exist on the Internet. |
| Hyperlinks: | Hyperlinks are links assigned to words and therefore make these words clickable and will direct the user to another document. |
| Impression: | Relates to Pay Per Click. A single display of an online advertisement. |



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| Inbound link: | Links that direct users to another website. When a user arrives on a site from another site, the hyperlink they clicked on is an inbound link to your website. You need a reasonable amount of great quality inbound links to increase your search engine rankings. |
| Internet: | The Internet is a network of computer networks, which anyone can access and participate in using a web-enabled computer. |
| Inventory: | Details of rooms, vehicles, tour places or venues stored in by the database in an online booking system. Details will include, for each date, total places available, number of places sold etc. Inventory will be kept up to date automatically and inventory reports can be requested at any time. |
| JPG: | A standard file format for images that is extremely well suited to display photographic images on the Internet. |
| Keyphrase: | A combination of keywords used to find pages when conducting a search. |
| Keyword: | A word used to find pages when conducting a search. |
| Keyword META tag: | Keywords META tags were used to tell search engines what each web page was about. They are not used anymore as search engines can now read the content of websites. |
| Keyword research / analysis: | Researching the most relevant and popular keywords for a given site so that the website has better chances of ranking on search engines. |
| Keyword spamming: | Deliberate repetition of keywords in a page by using invisible or tiny text to increase keyword density. Search engines ban this practice. |
| Limit/Cap | Group buying and daily deals websites. Operators may decide to limit the number of deals they are prepared to sell to ensure they can handle the bookings in the redemption period. The maximum number of deals they are prepared to sell is called the limit or cap. Once this number is reached no more deals will be sold. |
| Link farms: | Websites that are created and maintained solely for the purpose of constructing links between member sites. You should avoid listing your website on these sites as it could result in your website being banned by search engines. |
| Link popularity: | Search engines often use link popularity as part of their ranking criterion. Link popularity is the measurement of the number of other websites that include a link to your website on theirs. Each search engine, depending on their specific algorithms, determines it differently. |

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| Links analysis: | Measure of the relevance of the set of links pointing to a given site. |
| Google Places (Google tool): | Tool developed by Google to allow business owners to list their business and make them appear on Google maps. |
| Markup: | See Code. |
| Merchant | Group buying and daily deal websites. In this context the merchant is the tourism operator who is offering the deal and who will provide the services to the customer |
| META tag: | An HTML symbol located in the header section of a web page which offers information to search engines. There are 3 types of META tags: title tag (very important to search engines), Description tag and Keyword tag. |
| MySQL: | Type of database that is open source and free to use. |
| Newsletter: | Type of email marketing that consists of sending a newsletter to contacts via email. |
| OBS: | See Online booking system. |
| ODP: | See Open directory project. |
| Online booking system: | A web-based booking system (i.e. connected to the Internet or on your website) which performs booking functions in one of two ways using the operator's website or a 3 rd party website. |
| Online distributor: | Tourism entity or business whose objective is to represent many individual tourism businesses on their website, shop front, and/or database. |
| Online marketing: | See e-marketing. |
| Open directory project: | The largest human edited directory on the Internet. The Open directory provides listings for free but only for qualified sites and because editors are volunteers, wait times can be lengthy www.dmoz.org . |
| Open source: | Refers to computer programs whose source code is freely available for use or modification. |
| Optimisation: | See Search engine optimisation. |
| Outbound link: | A link to a site outside of your own. |
| Page rank: | A numerical rating of a site developed by Google as part of its algorithms for determining search engine listings. |

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| Page views: | <p>A website statistics measure that lets you know you how many pages of your site are viewed in a given period.</p> <p><i>If John comes to your site 20 times in a week, viewing 3 pages each time, John's visits count as 60 page views.</i></p> <p>Page views are an indication of just how interested people are in your site. A high ratio of page views to visits likely means an interested audience.</p> |
| Pay Per Click: | <p>A form of e-marketing in which the advertiser has typically a small textual ad on a search engine site and pays only if a user clicks on the link in the ad.</p> |
| Phishing: | <p>Attempts (generally conducted via email) to fraudulently acquire sensitive information such as logins, passwords, and credit card details.</p> |
| Photobucket: | <p>A well known photo sharing site www.photobucket.com.</p> |
| PHP: | <p>A freely available programming language used to create dynamic webpages (used by content management systems).</p> |
| Picasa web albums: | <p>A well known photo sharing site http://picasaweb.google.com.</p> |
| Pixel: | <p>Single point of a graphic image. Pixel stands for picture element.</p> |
| PNG: | <p>A relatively new standard file format that is suited to display photos, graphics and illustrations on a website.</p> |
| Podcast: | <p>Digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar (such as interview) made available online.</p> |
| Point of sale: | <p>Refers to the hardware and software used to allow a monetary transaction to occur.</p> |
| POS: | <p>See Point of sale.</p> |
| PPC: | <p>See Pay Per Click.</p> |
| Real-time booking: | <p>An online booking that is performed immediately (e.g. payment and confirmation occur while you wait).</p> |
| Reciprocal link: | <p>An exchange of links between two sites. This technique is used to improve your search engine rankings but you have to be careful to only exchange links with websites that are relevant to your audience otherwise both websites risk being penalised by search engines.</p> |

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| Remote hosting: | Having your online booking system and other software systems running on the vendor's server at the vendor's location. |
| Resolution: | A measurement of the quality of an image based on the number of pixels that make up the image. For web images, a resolution of 72 PPI (pixels per inch square also called DPI for dots per inch square) is the norm. |
| Robots: | Software programs used by search engines to crawl websites, store their addresses, and index the keywords and text of pages. Also referred to as spiders or crawlers. |
| Search engine: | A search engine is a database system designed to index and categorise Internet addresses, otherwise known as URLs (for example, www.mybeachholiday.com). |
| Search engine marketing: | A form of marketing that allows promoting products or services on the Internet through management of information presented by search engines and directories. Example: Pay Per Click. |
| Search engine optimisation: | Techniques used to improve a webpage's results in a search. You do not need to pay the search engines for this. |
| Secure payment page: | Credit card details are entered by the customer on a secure payment page. A secure page receives and sends information to the bank in encrypted form (so it cannot be read by 3 rd parties). The credit card information is never sent to the operator's computer. |
| Secure socket layer: | See SSL. |
| SEM: | See Search engine marketing. |
| SEO: | See Search engine optimisation. |
| SERP: | Stands for "Search Engine Results Page", the page of site listings that a search engine returns in response to a user's entry of a search query. |
| Server: | Customised computers that process requests for data, e-mail, file transfers, and other network services from other computers. |
| Social media: | The various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos, and audio. |
| Social networking: | Form of communication that users do using social medias. |
| Spam: | Unsolicited e-mail or content on the Internet. |
| Spiders: | See Robots. |

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| SSL: | An SSL certificate is an electronic key that will ensure an online transaction is secure. |
| Tag: | Symbol used in HTML to identify the type, structure, and format of a webpage's element. |
| Third (3rd) party online booking networks: | See Affiliated online booking networks. |
| Title tag: | Symbol used in HTML to identify the title of a webpage. |
| Tipping point: | Group buying and daily deal websites - Operators may decide they only want the deal to become active once a certain number of people have committed to buying the deal – that minimum number is the tipping point. |
| Tourism Exchange Australia: | The TXA is Australia's inclusive booking platform. |
| TripAdvisor: | Website that allows users to review and comment about tourism-related experiences www.tripadvisor.com . |
| TXA: | See Tourism Exchange Australia. |
| TXA enabled: | Tourism Exchange Australia – an online network allowing customers to search and display the inventory and prices of linked operators via the TXA's website. |
| URL: | Stands for "Uniform Resource Locator". This suite of letters (e.g. http://www.mysite.com) is used to specify the address of websites and web pages. |
| Usability: | Refers to the elegance and clarity with which the interaction with a website is designed. |
| Vendor: | The seller or distributor of an online booking system or other software system. |
| Visits: | The number of times people open your site in their browser. <i>If John comes to your site 20 times in a week, he counts as 20 visits.</i> A high ratio of visits to visitors means you've got a loyal audience. |
| W3C: | See World Wide Web consortium. |
| Waiting list management: | A booking system can record customers who have requested a booking after all places have been taken. The system will then alert the operator when a suitable place becomes available. |

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| Web 2.0: | Web 2.0 describes a growing trend online towards content made by web users, rather than traditional publishers. It is an umbrella term used to describe online technologies that facilitate interaction and exchange of information online. |
| Web developer: | Person who knows how to program websites using HTML, CSS and programming languages such as PHP and ASP. |
| Web form: | A form displayed on a webpage on which customers can enter their details. |
| Web graphic designer: | A graphic designer who specialises in designing web-friendly illustrations and website layouts. A web graphic designer is not the same profession as a print graphic designer as web and print graphics have different requirements. |
| Web host: | See Host. |
| Web page: | A web page is a single page of a website. A website is made of many web pages. |
| Website: | Online profile of a company that consists of interrelated web pages. |
| Website analytics and tracking: | The use of 3 rd party software on a website to track web pages visited, time spent and functions performed by customers while visiting the website. This is invaluable to understanding what customers are interested in, and how your website can be improved. |
| Website developer: | See Web developer. |
| World Wide Web consortium: | The group that is steering standards development for the World Wide Web www.w3c.org . |
| XHTML: | A reworking of HTML 4.0. |
| Yahoo!: | A popular search engine www.yahoo7.com.au . |
| YouTube: | YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips. |