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CROATIAN TOURISM WEB SITE AS TEXT TYPE

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present the web site as a new form of the tourist supply. The web sites, as a new text form, show special features when compared with those of conventional, non-electronic texts.

The paper examines diverse aspects of web sites created by the tourism industry, as well as of their layout and linguistic features. The language of tourism is also analyzed on the corpus of the Croatian tourism web site, i.e. on the website of the Zagreb Tourist Board. The results of this analysis will show the tendencies in the creation of the Croatian tourism web sites.

Key words: text type, language of tourism, Croatian tourism web sites.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising and information material as a part of the tourist supply has an important impact on the consumption in tourism. Nowadays, the web sites, as a modern text form, take over the position of conventional texts and therefore it is necessary to identify their role. Tourism web sites do not consist only of texts. Sound, animation, maps, interactive maps, video and pictures are the basic components of the contemporary tourism web site. On the other hand, the Internet is the newest and the most widespread tool used to market tourist products by using the web site as new and easy to use text form.

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Web site as a phenomenon cannot be discussed without taking into consideration the overwhelming impact of globalization and internationalization. Globalization deals primarily with 'global marketing', i.e. with the international marketing of a product, while the internationalization deals with the process of generalizing a product. Contrary to internationalization, localization can be defined as the adaptation of a product to a target local market and to the characteristics of its language and culture.

In this paper the focus is on the analysis of the website of the Zagreb Tourist Board in order to find out the most prominent features of the tourism web site with special emphasis on its linguistic characteristics and content influenced by globalization and localization.

1. WEBSITE LOCALIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

The term of the website localization is firstly closely connected with the globalization and secondly with the internationalization. Globalization refers primarily to the 'global marketing', i.e. the international marketing of the product. The business globalization represents thus an expression from the economic evolution, whereas 'virtual globalization' builds a basic component of the e-commerce. Herewith the entrance to the global market from any point in the world is meant, since the Internet eliminates any geographical separations. Due to the fact that potential customers can be found now everywhere in the world, marketing strategies must be expanded into those markets and/or adapted to these.

The Localisation Industry Standard Association (LISA) defines the term of globalization as follows:

Globalization addresses the business issues associated with taking a product global. In the globalization of high tech products this involves integrating localization throughout a company, after proper internationalization and product design, as well as marketing, sales, and support into the world market.²

Consequently the term globalization includes both – the aspect of the internationalization and localization.

LISA also offers a definition to the internationalization:

Internationalization is the process of generalizing a product, so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design. Internationalization takes place at the level of program design and document development.³

² cf. B. Esselink (2000:4)

³ id. (2000:25)

Related to the software industry, internationalization comprises 'the development of a software product regarding an easy adjustment to other markets, languages and cultures' (Esselink 2000: 37). In other words a product is developed in such a way that it can be adapted to the other markets and their cultural and/or linguistic conditions without larger transformation. Software is arranged for example in such a way that it can be translated into other languages, without a completely new programming being necessary. Furthermore, no firm formats for date or units or state-specific icons and symbols in diagrams are used, so that the concept of the internationalization makes the product localization appropriately easier.

The localization of the product does not only concern the adjustment of the product under linguistic criteria, but also the adjustment and, if necessary, the change of user surfaces as well as their components (icons, menu borders etc.).

We can conclude that the localization deals with the adjustment of a product to a target market as well as at its language and culture, while the globalization deals with the adjustment of marketing strategies to regional and/or local requirements of any kind. On the other hand, internationalization designates the development of a product, i.e. the software, which facilitates its efficient and to a large extent convenient adjustment to the conditions and requirements of a local market.

2. E-COMMERCE

E-commerce is a part of the Internet and/or the WWW (World Wide Web). Internet as an international computer network⁴ interconnects areas of electronic data processing, of telecommunication and multimedia. A system of finding information on the Internet, in which documents are connected to other documents using hypertext links is called the World Wide Web (abbr. WWW)⁵.

From the foregoing definitions of the Internet and the WWW, it becomes clear that in the Internet inconceivably large quantities of information are offered. Contents can be of scientific kind, they can entertain or also inform about certain persons, things or circumstances. Finally there is also the commercial part of the WWW, which provides information for primarily commercial purposes. However, not only information about certain products or services is made available, the product itself can be offered, represented or sold. Even information can be offered against payment. Although no uniform definition is present, within the mentioned features, the e-commerce can be considered as a technical term for 'electronically based trade with goods, services and information supported by modern information and communication technologies, [...] especially under use of the Internet.'⁶

⁴ cf. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005, p. 813

⁵ id., p. 1763

⁶ W. Gora (1999: 1)

Electronic cross-linking by the Internet grows increasingly as well as the digitalization in the world of the economy and trade. The advantage of the Internet in connection with e-commerce is in its network structure that provides innumerable electronic communication possibilities.

3. MAIN FEATURES OF THE TEXT FORM WEB SITE

The most important features of the WWW are integrativity, hypertextuality, non-linearity, interactivity, user friendliness and multimediality.

The integrativity of the WWW shows up that beside hypertext documents also all other information services of the Internet can be called up. Furthermore the WWW integrates computer-assisted information and communication technologies.

The WWW is organized according to the nonlinear hypertext principle. Hypertextuality and non-linear organization form are thus basic principles of the WWW, because the documents contained in it are linked flexibly with one another which enables the user to reach easily any document stored on the server. Each hypertext document becomes thereby identified by its own Web address and the URL.⁷

The term interactivity refers to the user-computer-interaction in the WWW. Users cannot only see and download WWW documents, they can also take an active part in the mentioned interaction, e.g. filling out and mailing forms.

Its popularity owes the WWW especially to its high user friendliness. Technical details like the complex program code of the WWW documents are hidden behind an attractive surface.

As the last important feature of the WWW, multimedia, have to be mentioned here. Multimedia are defined as synthesis from formerly independent information and technical fields: telecommunications, media such as video, sound and language, computer and entertainment electronics. Just the multimedia application is the most prominent feature of the WWW that makes it so very attractive and convenient for users.

Finally it can be stated that the WWW integrates different concepts, which makes it an information and a communication medium of special kind.

4. HYPERTEXT AS A TYPICAL WEB SITE FEATURE

Hypertext is the most important characteristic of www-documents, since it affects all ranges of text production and text reception. As it was already mentioned the hypertext-principle is recognizable on several levels. A website consisting of few web

⁷ URL = Uniform Resource Locator. The URL consists of the protocol type (e.g. HTTP), the domain names and the path name of the file which can be called up.

pages can be regarded as a small hypertext, on the other hand the complete WWW can be understood as a huge hypertext net.

What is a hypertext? A multiplicity of texts and not just one text is meant by hypertext. Thus the prefix 'hyper' determines the concept and/or the organizational function of the hypertext. Hypertext is not an invention, which can be applied exclusively to the medium of Internet. A hypertext can find its application in data bases, too. The following quotations⁸ provide a general definition of the term.

Hypertext is usually defined as the non-linear viewing of information. "Non-linear" means that you can examine information in any order you wish by selecting the topic you want to see next. It provides a new way of accessing and organizing any type of information. Hypertext can make it easier and faster to find things and absorb ideas. (...) you simply browse through a database by "jumping" from link to link.

The core of this definition is the division of the information offered in different components or segments, which are cross-connected and made accessible in arbitrary order.

Very often hypertext is brought with the data base concept in connection:

The most common meaning of a "hypertext" is a database that has active crossreferences and allows the reader to "jump" to other parts of the database as desired. This makes the reading (and writing) process non-sequential.

It is evident that the hypertext is a kind of a data base in comparison with non-linearly organized texts. However, the texts can be regarded as hypertexts which is emphasized in the following definition: "It is the requirements for active cross-references that makes a computer necessary to implement hypertext". Contrary to printed texts, which exhibit only a non-linear organization form with stable units, the genuine hypertexts cannot exist without the computer as medium and a suitable software both for their production and reception.

Also Storrer (1999: 35) points out that only the "operated hypertext system and its presentation [...] on the screen" transform a non-linear text into the hypertext. A hypertext has to be understood as a complex system or network, which consists of knots (*nodes*) and connections (*links*), whereby the knots within a website correspond to interconnected documents (web pages) and the links correspond to connections among the documents or web pages. Theodore H. Nelson, regarded as a father of the hypertext, defines the term as follows: „By 'hypertext' I mean nonsequential writing – text that branches and allows choices to the reader.“

Although clear demarcations between the hypertext and text are not always possible, the differences between them can be summarized as follows:

⁸ cf. Shneiderman/G. Kearsley (1989: 3)

Table 1: Typical text and hypertext features

Text	Hypertext
Text is mono-linear in the printed medium as prototype.	Hypertexts possess multi-linear structures.
The printed text is final.	The information units (knots) are located in non-final form next to each other and are flexibly connected through links.
Hierarchical and centered text structure.	Hypertexts characterized by partly hierarchical, partly by sequential structures.
Text reception in passive way following the given "line".	Open and interactive reception through arbitrary selection of knots.

The above listed features are naturally not absolute: Also books as typical printed texts can be opened theoretically in arbitrary places; the conceptional idea is however with text and hypertext different. Thus the hypertext differs from non-linear texts in printed media by its electronic publication form.

5. LINGUISTIC AND CONTENT REGARDED ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES OF WEB PAGES

The Internet is in the comparison to the printing medium a contemporary medium that is getting more and more influential and at the same time its revolutionary influence on the medium can be noticed. The language of the new medium exhibits numerous characteristics: a new vocabulary, an increasing convergence of the verbal and written way of expression, the mixture of linguistic and non-verbal communication, the implementation of special orientation and navigation aids and use of specific WWW metaphors.

5.1 Vocabulary

The vocabulary of the WWW is in particular characterized by the use of the English, since this language does not only serve the international communication, but also considerably affects the technical language of the electronic data processing (EDP). Also the Internet use systems exhibit numerous English language elements, e.g.: the Netscape Navigator offers the function Guide, the Internet Explorer the option Channels.

Furthermore, the examples like file, server, Player, Plug-ins, emerging also on Croatian web pages, clarify the influence of the English and the computer language on the linguistic characteristics of the Internet. Function names, are expressed frequently with anglicisms such as *Print* or *Go*. The consequence is a new linguistic development with jargonized verbs as *daunloudati* (from English *to download*), *brauzati* (from English *to browse*), *četati* (from English *to chat*) or *meilati* (from English *to mail*).

The Internet user is called *user*, contacts by electronic post are expressed by the world-wide admitted expression *E-mail* or simply *mail* as a short form of electronic mail referred. Shortened words, acronyms and other abbreviations are a further characteristic of the language of the Internet, in particular in the range of communication as for instance 'over e-mail'.

5.2 Convergence of verbal and written forms

The Internet offers special communication possibilities, which are characterized by interactivity and a particularly fast data communication. It results with the tendency for approximation between verbal and written structures. Although any form of communication in the Internet appears in the written way – is it by means of web pages, e-mails or chat areas, texts in the internet exhibit other characteristics than typical written texts. Also Storrer (2000) stresses the fact that the Internet changes writing as a communication medium in the way that written and spoken language get closer.

Some features of verbal communication like implementation of the interactive language apply also to web pages. Thus the internet user is requested for example to certain actions: *We moved. Visit our new homepage under [...]*. Later thanks for the reactions to it are expressed: *Nice that you visit us*.

5.3 Language in the multimedial setting

Written texts within web sites are a part of multimedial contexts, i.e. they are accompanied by pictures and other graphic elements and supported by sound and video sequences. Dürscheid (2000:12) calls it a “multichannel information transmission” whereby various sign systems (language, sound and picture) get combined. A multichannel information transmission is the main principle of the language in the multimedial setting.

Besides the actual text also pictures and diagrams can contribute to the communication. This is proved by text-pictures-compositions, which represent together a certain sense and metaphors referring to certain functionalities. A little house symbol with the label *Home*, for example, refers to a link to the initial side (homepage). A small CD player icon indicates an audio function. The text with explanations is not needed. Similarly as in advertising publications, writing loses its prevailing position, but it does not always take a subordinate position.

5.4 Metaphorising in the WWW

As an inevitable part of web pages metaphors rank in the WWW among the most important aids and contribute substantially to orientation and navigation. They refer to items and functions and manage the actions performed by Internet users.

Their effectiveness is based on the illustration of areas taken from the material world transmitted into the virtual world of the WWW, which consists actually only of computerized data; e.g. the expression *homepage* shows precisely the visitor's position regarding the respective website within the entire WWW.

Metaphor is an illustration of a lexeme from a certain area applied in another area; the two involved areas are called the original and target area. Popular original sources for metaphors in the Internet can be found particularly in the display spaces of the everyday life. Such metaphorical references to well-known and familiar items or circumstances facilitate the linguistic access to new items or circumstances. Complex technical details are hidden behind attractive metaphors.

Some metaphors in use are loan words taken over from English together with their metaphorical value. Also metaphors from two different areas can be used. Thus the expression *homepage* combines the concept of the Internet as a virtual area, on the one hand and on the other hand *page* evokes the traditional printed media.

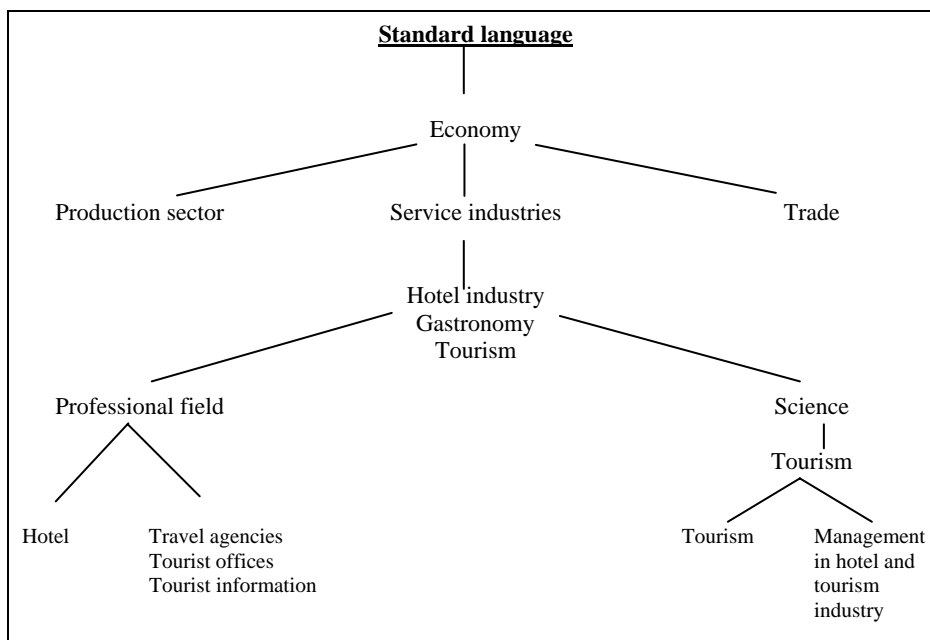
6. LANGUAGE OF TOURISM

Tourist information within the tourism industry can be found in printed publications, in verbally - for example at the telephone - conveyed information and on-line publications. Within the mentioned areas adverts, travel folders, posters, travel guides and regional literature (print works) or however the different texts of the web tourism or e-tourism represent typical text types.

The language of tourism is very often not regarded as a specialist language - in particular by laypersons - it contains nevertheless many elements and structures of the informal standard language. However, Christiane Brown (1993:193f.) presents a classification and a further differentiation of the technical language of tourism on the basis of different communication models. The chart that follows proves the existence of the specialist language of tourism and can serve as the basis for the research of tourism text types.

Although the verbal specialized communication takes the central position, both kinds of information in printed materials and on-line publications, are to be assigned to the total range of the tourism. Further it comes out that the limits between specialist and standard language are flowing.

Table 2: Classification of the specialist language of tourism (Braun 1993:193 f.)



Within the specialist language of the economy the specialist language of service industries can be picked out as its sub-group. The specialist language of the tourism is again a part of the subordinate specialist language of service industries. Purely intuitively, laypersons consider the language of tourism not as a specialist language, but rather as the part of a standard language. The reason may be in the fact that the level of specialization of the language of tourism is much lower than in, for example, the specialist medical language. Level of specialization refers to incomprehensible specialized linguistic terms or idioms.

Hoffmann (1987:53) defines the specialist language as follows:
(...) the whole of all linguistic means, which are used in a limited specialist communication area, in order to establish and ensure the communication among the specialists in the respected field.

It can be concluded that if one regards the tourism sector or better the range of the tourism information as an independent communication area, the language used in the field of tourism has to be defined as a specialist language. In our case tourism sector is a communication area of its own and accordingly, the language used in the respective area is a specialist language. The same refers to the text types used in the mentioned area, so that they can be defined as specialist text types which include the elements of standard and specialist languages in accordance with the subgroups belonging to the subordinate group of the hotel and tourism industry.

7. ANALYSIS OF THE TOURISM WEBSITE

Within the range of the tourist offer there is an increasing number of different text types, which find their way in the World Wide Web.

The example chosen for the following analysis is the Internet presentation of the web site of:

Zagreb Tourist Board – Turisticka zajednica grada Zagreba;

URL: <http://www.zagreb-touristinfo.hr>

The aim of the following analysis is to find out the most prominent linguistic features of the tourism web site. The analysis is focused on the content of the website, i.e. on its sections. Only the basic formal features are taken into consideration.

7.1. Formal features of the tourism web site of Zagreb Tourist Board

The influence of globalization and internationalization is evident in the welcome page already, which shows the remarkable presence of English borrowings. On the other hand, localization is expressed through the typical symbols of Zagreb, e.g.: In the slogan '*City With Million Hearts*' instead of the word *hearts* the photo of typical gingerbread hearts is inserted.

If one regards the total structure of the examined web site, the welcome page contains also the menu page with various sections offering an extensive series of information. From the welcome page all further sides can be accessed. Since the columns themselves are arranged into subcolumns, it results in several structure levels, which are outlined here:

Startpage (=Menupage; *English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Croatian option can be chosen*)



The position of the welcome side within the metaphorical landscape of the virtual area of WWW can be regarded as an independent 'input area'. Referring to the metaphorical level, it becomes clear that the visitor can "jump" directly into the house. From here he/she can open different doors (menus and submenus). The reference starting or welcome side offers the possibility to the visitors to return to the welcome side any time he/she wants.

We can state that the individual pages within the site - regarded under the aspect of their organization into different frameworks - exhibit a quite uniform structure, whereby the arrangement of the text blocks and possibly existing pictures varies. There are individual pages with a larger information volume, which express themselves in a more extensive text quantity, and pages of smaller extent. An example of the latter are the initial pages of the respective sections. Although the pages estimated altogether can be regarded as rather text-dominated, the initial pages of the sections already addressed contain rather little text and more pictures. Additional audio-visual functions are offered in the section on multimedia, in the virtual walking tour through Zagreb.

The web site contains about 200 photos presenting sites of interest in Zagreb and its tourist supply. Besides photos, also numerous other diagrams are used, serving the illustration and facilitation of orientation and navigation.

7.2. Linguistic features of web site columns

Between contents of the columns and existing expectations of the visitors a predominant congruence exists. The web site offers an extensive collection of information, whereby sometimes the danger of the vagueness could exist. However the information on offer can be successfully mastered through the navigation aids. Furthermore it can be stated that also the most interesting and relevant topics can be found on the Website. The web operational level offers information on sites of interest, culture and history, events and accommodation, whereby however it must be pointed out that the information in the respective column can deviate partially from the selected titles.

In the analyzed example the visitor is welcomed on the starting page: the formula "Dobro dosli u Zagreb" is an almost typical greeting form on web sites of this kind. A further characteristic is also the direct address of the visitors. For example the sentence "*Ovdje mozete rezervirati smjestaj*"... can be understood as an invitation: "you can plan your journey here, book the accommodation [...].."

The titles of columns have a quite descriptive character. Furthermore almost a half of them presented in Croatian are anglicisms/americanisms. Anglicisms/americanisms are implemented in order to attract potential customers. Through them recognizability, a high quality supply and service as well the profit ability on the very competitive tourist market is tried to be achieved.

The registered anglicisms can be divided into two groups:

- the new non-adapted ones:
Site Map, Lifestyle, Shopping, Newsletter, Tickets online, Zagreb card, Rent a car, Events
- the adapted ones:
Multimedija, Linkovi, Kampovi

It is evident that the frequency of the non-adapted anglicisms/americanisms is much higher than of the adapted ones.

The advertising slogan for the shopping centre *City Center One* registered in the submenu of the Shopping menu provides an interesting example of word games combining English and Croatian word elements:

City Center One – onetastican shopping centar

The style used in the texts can be described as a rather impersonal and sometimes the text paragraphs use a colloquial style with style figures as *to fall in love with Zagreb* or *to stay in love with Zagreb*. An example of a style characteristic for the analyzed text type follows here:

Dolazite u Zagreb, glavni grad Hrvatske? Dolazite u srce Europe, u jednu od najljepših zemalja Mediterana? Pojedinačno ili grupno, poslovno ste ovdje ili u turističkom obilasku? Zagreb vam u svakom slučaju zeli dobrodoslicu i otvara svoja vrata Turistička Zajednica Grada Zagreba i tvrtka Five Stars Ltd., pripremili su za vas, drage nase goste, karticu ZAGREB CARD, koja je namijenjena svim posjetiteljima Zagreba te vam se njenom kupnjom otvaraju mnoge mogućnosti, popusti i iznenađenja Besplatna vožnja gradskim prijevozom, popusti u gotovo svim gradskim muzejima, mnogim restoranima, dućanima, uslužnim djelatnostima te još mnogo drugih pogodnosti, razlozi su zbog čega je ZAGREB CARD vas nezamjenjiv suputnik kroz Zagreb. Za kompletan popis mjesta s popustom molimo kliknite ovdje Od trenutka upisanog na karticu, ona vrijedi 72 odnosno 24 sata i neprenosiva je na drugu osobu. Kupnjom kartice dobivate i posebnu knjižicu u kojoj su navedeni svi davatelji usluga i popusti koje kod njih ostvarujete. ZAGREB CARD možete kupiti online, u svim turističkim informativnim centrima grada Zagreba te na recepcijama većine zagrebackih hotela. Za kupnju kartice putem Interneta molimo kliknite ovdje.

This typically tourist style uses linguistic formulations through which the potential guest is tried to be attracted: '*pripremili su za vas, drage nase goste*', '*Zagreb vam u svakom slučaju zeli dobrodoslicu i otvara svoja vrata*'

The remarkable casualness of the linguistic formulations is expected to provide a pleasant feeling of reading without a larger recipient's cognitive input. In this text the target recipients are directly addressed, which is closely connected with the appellative function of the text passage.

On the other hand the information is presented in a very short and concise way, so that it has not the form of the text that flows. In the analysis performed this tendency was found out particularly in the subsection on a hotel list or a list of events.

Considering the aspect of the word formation, some characteristics can be pointed out: Simple nouns are used mainly in the titles of columns. However, the number of compounds is quite remarkable, especially in the English loan words: *Newsletter*, *Site Map*, *Lifestyle*, *Multimedija*, *touristinfo*. The examples prove that there are no compounds registered that are written with a hyphen.

The example of *'touristinfo'* is a result of stringing together the element 'tourist' and the shortened form of *information* – '*info*'. It is of course not a standard language form, but such constructions on tourism websites are not by any means unusual, because the linguistic correctness in tourist as well in advertising text types follows primarily the criteria of a good sound or of an appropriately concise, attractive and economic form. In the web site characteristic short or abbreviated forms and/or word shortenings are used in tables or in the additional information to the representative columns. The most frequently used among the acronyms is '*B&B*' and among shortened words, in the submenu on hotels, it is '*info*'.

8. CONCLUSION

In this paper the analysis of the web site as a special text form with its prominent features was performed and the basic differences in comparison to conventional texts were found out.

The analysis was focused on the representative linguistic features regarding the respective text type of the web site, as well as its localization. It was found out that the web sites are organized according to the nonlinear hypertext principle. Hypertextuality and non-linear organization build the basic principles of the web site, because the documents contained in it are flexibly linked. The influence of multimedia on the text production shows that the web site does not contain 'absolute' texts but rather a potential on texts, where from arbitrary the parts can be selected. The texts within web sites are presented in short form, in order to find the information needed as quick as possible.

Metaphors as a further element of web sites were mentioned. They refer to items and functions and so manage the actions performed by Internet users. Their effectiveness is based on the illustration of areas taken from the material world transmitted into the virtual world of the WWW.

As a last important feature of the WWW, the impact of multimedia was taken into consideration. As multimedia defines itself as synthesis from formerly independent information-technical fields of telecommunications and media such as video, sound and language, computer and entertainment electronics, it is regarded as the feature of the WWW and also of web sites that makes it so very attractive and convenient for users.

Finally the analysis of the Internet presentation of the web site of *Zagreb Tourist Board* was carried out, which proved that the web site integrates different concepts influenced by globalization and localization trends, and makes it an information and a communication medium of special kind.

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