

internet site review

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

New media trend watch

In the last decade Internet has profoundly changed the way in which consumers make their travel related decisions. Web 2.0, social media and user generated content (UGC) are becoming increasingly important for tourism consumers during their decision making process. With this in mind, it comes as no surprise that European Travel Commission (ETC) has launched a new web site, named New Media Trend Watch, which is dedicated to monitoring latest trends in this area and which will be briefly presented in this issue of journal Tourism. Main purpose of New Media Trend Watch web site is to provide help to European tourism marketing professionals and to keep them up to date with the latest trends in internet usage in travel and tourism industry worldwide. The web site provides latest stories from travel and tourism industry related to e-commerce and on-line marketing; it offers research reports and white papers, a free newsletter and a unique graph service for comparing data across different countries. All these information are provided free of charge, which is courtesy of the European Travel Commission.

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is one of the leading international tourism organisations. It was established in 1948 in Norway as a non-profit voluntary international organisation, when nineteen European national tourism organizations joined

together to promote Europe as a tourism destination to long haul markets outside Europe. Its initial membership, composed of 19 European national tourism organisations (NTO), has doubled nowadays to 37 NTOs (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom). Therefore, New Media Trend Watch web site provides loads of useful information for majority of its member countries.

The web site itself is divided into seven main sections – *Home*, *Latest News*, *World Overview*, *Regional Overview*, *Markets By Country*, *Graphs & Statistics* and *Miscellany*. Each section of the web site provides useful information relevant to the area it covers.

The initial home page, titled simply “Home” provides brief introduction of the ETC New Media Trend Watch web site and it is also linked to most important statistical information and latest news from the area of new, Internet based media application in the tourism industry.



Web page titled “*Latest News*”, obviously enough, provides links to the most recent news from the area of Internet application in the tourism and hospitality industry. On this web page users can find different news and information, covering entire range of topics, from on line booking, across broadband Internet penetration, to the application of new social networking sites (such as micro blogging site Twitter) to boost hotel sales or to promote tourism destination. All news published on this web page are very recent, relevant and informative and they come from trusted and well established sources such as Eye for Travel, eMarketer, Travelmole, Hotel-marketing.com etc).

The section of the web site titled “*World Overview*” provides overview of the major global trends that are important for the success of any on-line tourism marketing activity. Trends that are monitored and presented in this section of New Media Trend Watch web site include seven major areas: world usage patterns and demographics, online travel market, languages on the web, interactive TV and mobile devices, broadband access and social networking and user generated content (UGC). This section of web site provides very important data, since monitoring of those trends allows tourism marketing professionals to answer important questions related to broadband Internet penetration, to use of Internet for trip planning, to use of mobile device for internet access etc. and to adjust their e-marketing plans accordingly.

The web page titled “*Regional Overview*” provides similar information as the previously described section (“*World Overview*”) but it focuses more closely on specific regions of the world. There are five regions that are covered by this section and those include: Europe, Latin America, Asia Pacific, Canada and USA. Trends monitored in this section are the same as those monitored in “*World Overview*” section although not all data are necessary available for every region, since the data availability may vary depending on the sources of data used.

Another interesting section of this web site is located on the web page titled “*Markets By Country*”. It provides detailed information on trends in Internet based media application in tourism and hospitality industry on the individual country level. Trends that are monitored in this section of web site include usage patterns and demographics, online travel market, languages on the web, interactive TV

and mobile devices and broadband access. All countries that are covered by this section of web site are, for most convenient usage, divided in two groups, European countries (34 countries) and long-haul countries (22 countries).

One of the most interesting and most innovative sections of the New Media Trend Watch web site is section titled “*Graphs & Statistics*”. This section provides useful statistical information about trends in Internet usage in tourism and hospitality industry around the world. The most innovative part of this section is the fact that users have the opportunity to create their own graphs, to make comparison between different countries and to export those graphs as images for further usage.

The web site design is clean and simple and yet attractive and visually appealing. The web site is very easy to navigate since there is a link to the sitemap, located in the bottom of the screen, a path shown on the top of the screen which is informing users about their current position on the web site and there is also a “*Search*” functionality which is also contributing to easier navigation and better user experience. The top, right and bottom section of the web pages are static and they do not change during the web site browsing. On the top static section of the web site there are links to the main pages of this site described earlier in the article. The right and bottom static sections of the web site contain quick links to different useful functionalities such as subscription to a free monthly newsletter, report and document browsing, information about upcoming events, instruction on how to use the web site etc. The web site loads very quickly which also contributes to the better visitor experience.

Overall, it can be concluded that New Media Trend Watch is visually appealing as well as technically very sophisticated web site which provides very pleasant browsing experience for its visitors. The web site is very informative; content published on the web site is coherent and logically divided into meaningful parts. The web site also provides lots of information and materials for download free of charge, which is courtesy of the European Travel Commission. Hence, this web site can be very helpful to tourism marketing professionals as well as to the academic community since it provides load of information that can be of assistance in tourism research activities.

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