

internet site review

<http://whatabout.travel/>

UNWTO SOS.Travel

Tourism is currently one of the most important economic activities in the world but at the same time it is very sensitive to various natural and man-made crises. Given the high sensitivity of tourism industry, it is usually among the first to be affected in the case of natural disasters, health threats or political turmoil. In order to address this important issue, UNWTO has launched a web portal named SOS.Travel, whose main goal is to provide crisis management support to member countries in the case of emergency situations and minimize potential negative impacts for tourism destinations.

According to information published on this web site, SOS.Travel is designed to serve as a unique web resource or web portal where different users can access latest informa-

tion and updates in anticipation of or in response to various natural or man-made disasters with the potential negative impacts on tourism. Users of the SOS.Travel web portal are travelers as well as tourism destinations. Travelers can use information published on this web site in order to make informed decisions about their own safety and security during their trip to a certain destination. At the other hand, tourism destinations, through a SOS.Travel web site, have a powerful communication platform which can be very useful to facilitate their crisis management activities and to minimize negative impacts for the tourism destination. To achieve this, UNWTO through SOS.Travel web site, offers to the member countries creation of so called "Stand-By" web pages that are ready for publishing in the case of the crisis.

The screenshot shows the homepage of WhatAbout.travel, a UNWTO initiative. The main content area features a large banner for 'Stay Informed Pandemic (H1N1) Influenza A(H5N1)' with links to maps, links, news, and photos. The page is organized into several sections: a top navigation bar, a central content area with a large banner, and sidebars on both sides. The right sidebar includes 'Global Events' with a link to 'Influenza A(H5N1) Pandemic (H1N1) 2009', 'Country Pages' (stating no pages are currently activated), and 'More Information on:' with links to WHO: Influenza A(H1N1), Airline Travel, Preventing The Flu, Airports, Health Advisories for 2010, FIFA World, Outbreak Notice: Cholera in Haiti, and Recommendations: Hajj. The left sidebar contains links to TERN, Pocket Guides for Travellers, Watch SOS.travel Videos, GLOBAL CODE OF ETHICS, U.N. Millennium Development Goals, and International Travel and Health.

These web pages, which are prepared in advance, are published and viewable to the general public only in the case of emergency situations.

SOS.Travel web site consists of eight logically divided sections: "Home", "About", "Emergency Response", "Press Releases", "RSS Feeds", "TERN Network", "Travel Tips" and "Contact Us".

Home page of the SOS.Travel web site provides a brief description of SOS.Travel initiative and most recent news and updates concerning potential crisis situations around the world. This page aggregates news and updates from different sources which include world's best known broadcasters (such as CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera) but also various agencies specialized for emergency situations such as World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS). The latest news update, that was available on this web site at the time of writing this review, was the news concerning Cholera outbreak in Haiti. Web page named "About" presents a detail description of the UNWTO SOS.Travel initiative. Here are described the main reasons for launching this initiative as well as its practical role in managing crisis situations. Section of the web site named "Emergency Response" is divided into three subsections, each devoted to specific topics such as Pandemic Influenza (H1N1), Influenza A (H5N1) etc. The purpose of this section is to inform general public about main characteristics of specific threats (such as influenza) and to give directions concerning possible course of actions in the case of crisis outbreak. "Press release" section of this web site provides access to the most recent press releases from the area of crisis management, while section named "RSS Feeds" allows travelers and tourist destinations to subscribe and receive notification of the latest development from this area. Web page named "TERN Network" provides an overview of the TERN network activities. TERN is an acronym that stands for Tourism Emergency Response Network, which is the network of leading tourism

associations of the world which was founded in 2006 in Washington DC with the specific purpose of dealing with influenza pandemic. Over the last few years, TERN network has evolved into organization that encompasses all threats to tourism industry. The ultimate goal of the TERN network is to make travel and tourism destination safe for tourists. Section of the SOS.Travel web site named "Travel Tips" is the section focused on providing advices and information to tourists that are traveling to destination that are facing some kind of threat, whether it is natural disaster, health hazard or political uncertainty. This section covers wide variety of travel tips such as general health advices, health advices specific for particular destination, tips about personal safety in destination, advices concerning various natural hazards such as tropical storms, tsunamis, floods, earthquakes etc. Last section of the website, named "Contact Us" provides contact information about SOS.Travel web site that include mailing address, phone and fax numbers, email address and web site address.

From a technical point of view, the SOS.Travel web site is not overly sophisticated since it is made exclusively in HTML and does not feature any of the new web 2.0 functionalities, such as Google maps mash-up, Google calendar, YouTube channel etc. However, the web site loads very quickly, the design is clean and simple, the navigation is, thanks to nicely done drop-down menus, very simple, intuitive and user oriented which makes this web site very pleasant for browsing. SOS.Travel web site also features some social networking functionalities that enables visitors to share information published on this web site among their social network contacts. Finally, it can be concluded that SOS.Travel web site, even though not a very sophisticated one, is very interesting and informative. It is a very good web resource for travellers who want to make informed decisions about their own safety and security during their trip as well as for tourism destination who want to be successful in facilitating crisis management activities.

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