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Promotion of tourism through social networks

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Abstract

This article analyses the current situation of the use of the Internet and social networks in tourism promotion in Catalonia by the different existing regional tourism boards.

The results obtained from a survey to the managers of Catalan tourism promotion entities and from observations show, on the one hand, that the use of new technologies is very unequal among the different entities, and on the other hand, that in a single year of analysis the use of social media by brands of each region has undergone a significant increase. However, representatives of Catalan tourism brands are aware of the significance of using social networks and the Internet to promote their destination because all of them have a website, and 78% of them have a Facebook profile, Twitter, and a Youtube channel. This study can serve as a tool to promote their destinations with new strategies via social networks that every day increases their popularity among Internet users.

Keywords: tourism promotion, destinations, social networks, internet

1. Introduction

For the active management of any tourism destination tourism agents (government, related companies, employees and associations) are a basic element. They are especially important in the strategies and the actions that should be taken to adapt to current conditions, characterized by new habits in the demand for tourism, in which experience, greater destination-based activity, discovery and self-organization are the keys. According to Merinero and Pulido (2009) “there is a direct relationship between the relational dynamics that are produced between the agents involved in a region’s tourism development and the level reached by this development. Hence, the greater the intensity of the relations the greater the tourism development.

Nevertheless, in the current situation the importance of the relational management of the actors involved is not the only important factor, as the consumer does not let himself be influenced by the company or administration which tries to convince him of the benefits of its product or service, but rather has a need for other clients or users to provide their own opinion, to advise or convince him that a product or a service is a good buy. This does not appear solely in the company-client relationship, but also occurs between people in general. In some cases it is mere inquiry, and in others the desire to be up to date, that guides people towards the Web 2.0.

For authors such as William (2007) - based on O’Reilly’s definition of the

Web 2.0- the Tourism 2.0 model can be defined as a business revolution in the leisure and tourism industry caused by moving towards an ecosystem as a platform, and an attempt to understand the rules of success of this new ecosystem. One of principal rules is to build destinations and companies that project the networking effects in order to improve their productivity when more people participate in them.

2. Justification and objectives

This study pretends to analyse the implantation of new technologies, specifically the social networks of the Web 2.0 (known in the tourism industry as Travel 2.0), in the promotional entities of the different tourism brands of Catalonia, bearing in mind the rapid evolution of IT, the increase in social networking and the current situation in our country.

In the first instance there is a bibliographical review in order to detect the most relevant studies on the subjects of new technologies and tourism interrelating IT and tourism. Hypotheses interrelating new technologies with tourism promotion are then put forward for review.

Subsequently there is an explanation of the methodology employed in the research, the data obtained is analysed and the results of the use of new technologies in tourism promotion in Catalonia are provided. Lastly, the research hypotheses are compared in the discussion of the results, and the work’s conclusions are presented along with its limitations.

3. Tourism and new technologies

We are living in a constantly changing society; a deep, rapid and worldwide change (Gomis, González, Pérez & Rubio, 2005). It is an authentic revolution, which affects all aspects of society (the information society) and in which IT is providing the indispensable material base, which makes it possible (Castells, 2006). Tourism, as Miralbell (2010) states, is undergoing changes caused in part by globalization and by social and economic changes, which also require structural changes in the sector.

The special characteristics of intangibility, perishability and accessibility of the services related to tourism mean that virtualization has strategic importance for the sector and that the sector offers unbeatable conditions for the implantation of virtual organizations to be successful (Buhalis et al., 1999). Sancho, A. and García, G. (2004) underline the importance of new technologies for the siting of companies and the relevance of accessibility.

At present new technologies are already affecting buying habits. The mobile telephone is capable of satisfying the need for information, communication, personalization, entertainment, fun, convenience and efficiency, as well as becoming an alternative shopping channel (Bigné, E.; Ruiz, C. & Sanz, S., 2009).

3.1. Social networks

Social networks are any kind of platform on which online communities can be built where the users from

different parts of the world can communicate. According to a study of the consultancy Forrester (March, 2012), social networks are not a technology, a tool or a tendency; from the consumers' point of view they signify a new way to connect with people, and from the business perspective not only are they a channel for marketing or public relations, but also a new way of interacting and learning from the clients. According to the report on the results of the Social Media Observatory¹ in 2010, internauts used an average of two "pure social networks" - understanding as "pure" any of the following: Facebook, Tuenti, Hi5, LinkedIn, Spaces, Xing/ Neurona, Fotolog/ Metroflog, Twitter, MySpace, Badoo, Sónico and Flickr. The same report indicated that the average number of active accounts in social networks and communities, platforms or messaging declared was 3.6 accounts per user including, in addition to the pure ones, other options such as forums, blogs, YouTube, Skype or Messenger.

The 2011 report² draws attention to the following aspects:

- Facebook strengthens its leadership with 85% of users, a 7% increase over the previous year.
- Twitter doubles its penetration, going from 14% to 32%.
- Blogs have been revitalized, which is attributed to the Tumblr phenomenon.

¹ 3rd Wave of the Social Media Observatory, based on 1,793 surveys of internauts (aged 16-45) and 8 group meetings with social network users (16-40 years old), carried out between November and December 2010

² 4th Wave of the Social Media Observatory, based on 1,304 surveys of internauts (aged 26-45) and 26 in-depth interviews, carried out in December 2011.

- 91% of internauts have an account and use at least one social network.
- Internauts go from 2 pure social networks in 2010 to 2.31 accounts in 2011.
- Facebook is the social network where the role of brands is the most relevant: 65% of active account holders follow some brand, and the average is 2.3 brands per person.
- In Twitter this following drops 33%, with an average number of brand followings of 2.16.
- The recent report³ underlines:
- Facebook is still the leader among Spanish users but use drops to 83%, and 17% of users indicate that they use it less and less.
- Twitter again shows a significant increase over the previous year, with 42% of internauts.
- New social networks like Pinterest and Ask.fm appear in the report, the former with 4% and the latter with 3% of internauts.

As we can see, social networks are a rapid growth phenomenon and a representative form of the interaction that a normal person provides. They represent the voice of a normal consumer (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Before their implantation companies or entities could largely control what was written about them in the mass media; nowadays they have to adapt to a situation where clients write and express their opinions about them with a click and a direct line (Baker & Green, 2005).

³ 5th Wave of the Social Media Observatory, based on 1,557 surveys of internauts (aged 14-55), 4 focus groups and 8 in-depth interviews, carried out in December 2012 and January 2013.

In the tourism industry the Internet has completely changed the processes from deciding to visit a destination to sharing the experience with others. Everything. It is precisely in the experience part where travellers are seeking greater peace of mind: what is considered most of all is “without a doubt, the recommendations of direct contacts with a high degree of credibility, either because they have been there, they are tourism professionals or because of coincidence with personal tastes” (González, 2008).

As stated in the Social Travel White Paper⁴, information and social relationships reach us more and more through computer and telephone screens, via the Internet. Popularization of the Internet in preparing a journey started at the end of the 90s. Nevertheless, it did not start by influencing inspiration in a massive way, but rather the first main process to which the Internet contributed was to booking and, subsequently, to comparison. Online travel agencies meant an enormous change, an impulse to the industry and a breath of fresh air to a traditional system. But people continued with “offline” inspiration, despite starting to book “online”. Positive recommendations generate inspiration, they are what generate the desire to travel.

3.2. Social networks and tourism destinations

Tourism destination websites are

⁴ Different authors (2011). White Paper of Social Travel. How the Internet and traveller protagonism have revolutionized the tourism industry.: <<http://www.minube.com/libroblanco>>

essential for the development of a destination (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005) and their evaluation has become a new tendency in tourism research (Law et al., 2010). The information provided to the tourist must be true, comprehensible and must provide added value (Martín & Quero, 2004). Website clients are increasingly demanding, therefore companies will have to offer consumers enough choice and flexibility in the channels of distribution and communication for the client to decide on the degree of implication and to be able to create his own experiences (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2000). At present an effective online communication strategy is a key element for reaching the competitive sales needed in the market, and to satisfy the need for information of current and potential tourists, managing to attract new clients (Baggio, 2003). Furthermore, the content generated on websites by social network users helps to inform the website administrators what the users' real concerns are, to improve the destination's marketing, to inform consumers of tourism products and services, and to facilitate tourism transactions (Akeshurt, 2008).

According to Casaló et al. (2011) "faced with the lack of first-hand experience, consumers base their behavioural intentions on the experience of other consumers, on considering that the information provided by similar individuals will be close to their own future experience, and will therefore be useful information for formulating their expectations". The power traditionally in the hands of intermediary companies has largely moved towards consumers, who

are capable of conditioning the behaviour of other travellers by exchanging opinions and recommendations on these kinds of websites. Blogs have been the most analysed and studied social networks in tourism studies (Thevenot, 2007). Studies that analyse the credibility of blogs on tourism (Mack et al., 2008) or real examples of tourism destination websites highlight how they use blogs as part of their business strategy, generating content to improve the tourism industry (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). The Web 2.0 can have an enormous impact on the travel and tourism industry, particularly on the marketing and evaluation of hotels, according to a study on Tripadvisor, carried out in the city of Lisbon, which emphasizes that there is enough information to influence the planning of the trip and the choice of accommodation on behalf of the users (Miguens et al., 2008). Other studies analyse Twitter as a marketing tool, emphasizing the potential benefits which it can provide to the tourism industry and the apparent reluctance of the industry to make use of it, because it is unaware of its potential (Hay, 2010).

Numerous articles analyse the impact of social networks on the destination's image for tourism (Mack et al., 2008, Zheng & Gretzel, 2010, Sheungting Lo et al., 2010, Donaire & Galí, 2011). The latter highlights the transcendental role of the social networks, not only as a source for informing and promoting destinations or planning trips, but also as a tool for obtaining information from visitors by analysing the digital photos of a certain destination (Barcelona) published by tourists on the social network Flickr. The

results show how the irruption of digital photography has transformed the destination's image.

Tourism companies should analyse posts and publications on social networks in order to get to know the tastes, desires and needs of the travellers who interact with them with the aim of identifying the main causes of individual satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Casaló et al., 2009).

The information generated, both positive and negative, can influence the intention of visiting a tourism destination or consuming a tourism product. Sastre et al. (2008) analysed the type of information consulted by tourists planning a trip to the Balearic Islands and concluded that the information generated in forums is important in the decision-making process. In some messages it can be seen how some travellers changed their opinion about places to visit or to stay and the dates depending on other users' comments.

As we can see, there is plenty of literature about the use of social networks and information and communications technology in tourism, evaluating tourism websites (Law et al., 2010), the success factors of destination websites (Park et al., 2007), or the usability of destinations' mobile websites (Stienmetz et al., 2012) among others. However, we have also seen that there is still a long way to go, and that there is also a large gap in the literature concerning the use of social networks on the promotional websites of tourism destinations.

This study describes the different tourism brands of Catalonia to show the tourism division of this autonomous

region, and to analyse the implantation of ICT and social networks in each of them.

The study carried out by the consultancy Forrester highlights the use of social networks as a channel for distributing brand messages, motivating people to get involved with them and to share them, while enabling the construction of more significant and longer lasting consumer relations.

4. Tourism brands of Catalonia

Beside the traditional administrative divisions into municipalities and provinces, Catalonia tourism has divided the region into nine tourist brands which are currently the Costa Brava, Costa Daurada, Terres de Lleida, Costa de Barcelona, Central Catalonia, Pyrenees, Val d'Aran, Terres de l'Ebre and Barcelona.

Costa Brava was the first of these brands created in Catalonia in the year 1909, and the most recent one was the Costa de Barcelona brand, presented in November 2011.

The Val d'Aran was not until the early 1990's that this tourism lure found enough support to promote itself. This coincided with the creation of Val d'Aran Tourism, a dependency of the Conselh Generau d'Aran, which is the entity which directs the public promotional campaigns of this valley (Ricou, 2011). The tourism brand Terres de l'Ebre appeared in the year 2003, promoting itself as a separate brand from the Costa Daurada, created much earlier. The Pyrenees brand came into being in October 2003; this is the most extensive

brand and covers area in the provinces of Lleida, Girona and Barcelona.

Each brand is managed by a public or public-private entity, and in some cases a single entity manages several tourism brands, as can be seen in Table 1.

5. Research hypotheses

The review of the literature makes it clear that, in the eyes of the consumers, the renown, reputation or popularity of a tourism service product or place not only depends on the service, product, or place itself, but also on the way in which it is communicated, and that its promotion is strongly influenced by the methods employed (Reid *et al.*, 2005).

Therefore the first hypothesis that will be investigated is:

H1: Catalan tourism brands use information and communications technology, including social networks, for the promotion of tourism destinations.

Likewise, it is noted that technological innovation and new technologies are related to functionality, accessibility and usability, which leads to greater tourist satisfaction. Therefore the next hypothesis is:

H2: Social networks play an important role in the activity of the Catalan entities of tourism promotion.

Lastly, there has been a significant increase in internauts' use of the social network Twitter, which leads to the hypothesis:

H3: Catalan tourism brands increase the use of the social network Twitter for the tourism promotion of their destinations.

6. Methodology

This study was carried out in several stages from the gathering and analysis of primary and secondary data.

The secondary data relating to the use of social networks was obtained through the reports of the Social Media Observatory were consulted and using the API of Twitter.

To gather the primary data a survey was elaborated about the use of the Internet and social networks in the promotion of the different Catalan tourism destinations. The aim of this survey was to analyse the use of the Internet by the different tourism brands of Catalonia and the different local tourism promotion entities, such as municipal and local tourist information offices.

In Madrid between the 18th and 20th January 2012 representatives of the different Catalan tourism promotion entities were surveyed at the stand of Catalonia, at the International Tourism Fair (Fitur), which was in its 32nd edition at the Trade Fair Institution of Madrid (IFEMA).

The entities selected represented the nine tourism brands of Catalonia and the Catalonia brand itself, the umbrella brand covering the rest of the brands.

Lastly, in February 2012, it was checked to see whether the websites and profiles of the social networks that had been given in the answers were really active and functioning correctly.

A year later, between February and March 2013, all of the websites and the social networking profiles of the tourism promotion entities were checked again, to

find out whether any new tool had been used, and if in doubt the directors of the Catalan tourism brands were contacted by phone.

The survey model was subsequently analysed from the different responses from each brand and the different local entities and each element related to the new technologies and used for tourism promotion was assigned a point.

Hypothesis 1 was tested, with the assignation of one point to each social network or platform used, and was compared to the results of the Social Media Observatory (3rd and 4th Wave). Hypothesis 2 was compared in the same way as the first with the results of the different reports of the Social Media Observatory, and lastly hypothesis 3 was demonstrated with the information from each entity using the API of Twitter.

The main results are shown below.

7. Results

To a greater or a lesser degree all of the tourism brands are present in social networks, in areas of relation and participation.

Below are the results, separated by tourism brands and entities consulted, following, in part, the guide of social networking uses and styles of the Government of Catalonia, which enumerates different social networking tools, their different uses and objectives, and the recommendations for a suitable presence.

7.1. Results of the tourism brands

The answers from the tourism brand representatives indicated that their main objective with the incorporation of social networks in their activity is publicity and promotion; secondly, it is the opening up of new markets, followed by improving attention and service to the client, improving client understanding, generating comments and opinions and, lastly, the marketing and selling of services. In this sense one of the brands consulted stated that for them it is also of utmost importance to provide quality contents about the area on the social networks.

With regard to the use of social media, in the consultation in 2012 the platform Facebook was the most widely used, with 67% of the brands having a profile, some of them in different languages. Twitter was being used by 56% of the brands, 22% had a profile in the LinkedIn network and only 11% had an account in Instagram. None of the brands consulted used Foursquare to offer promotions.

In the year 2013 the platform was different, as Facebook was no longer the most widely used, although it had increased to 78% of the entities with an account. Twitter had gone from 55% to 89% of use. Two entities had accounts with Instagram and Pinterest.

All of them had a web page with different contents on the tourism resources and products of their area. 56% of the web pages were adapted to mobile devices although some of those that were not stated that they were working on the implementation of mobile applications in the near future. Only 11% allowed the visitor to make comments, and with regard to the marketing of services and

products through their own website 67% offered the possibility of booking accommodation online, all except one doing this through external providers. 22% permitted vehicle hire, also through external providers.

67% of the brands had photo galleries, either their own or with Flickr or Picassa. 78% of the entities (3 more than in the previous year) had a Youtube channel with videos of their destinations. The use of QR codes was still very incipient, most of the brands stated that the first time they had used them in a fair had been precisely in the last edition of Fitur, although there were three brands which had been using them before that in their catalogues.

Only one brand had routes with Wikiloc and only two had a corporate blog (one more than in the previous year). All of the entities consulted had participated in or organized a blogtrip to promote their destination, compared to the previous year when only four had participated.

As shown in Table 2, a value of 1 was assigned to each pure social network used (Facebook, Tuenti, Hi5, LinkedIn, Spaces, Xing/Neurona, Fotolog/Metroflog, Twitter, MySpace, Badoo, Sónico and Flickr), to each social network and other platforms (beside the pure ones other options like forums, blogs, YouTube, Skype or Messenger), and to other promotional actions through ICT (blogtrips, QR codes, online reservations via websites or websites adapted to mobile devices) (See Table 3).

7.2. Results of the use of Twitter by tourism brands

The use of social networking profiles by entities of tourism promotion is obviously to generate or stimulate the interest of potential visitors towards the destination.

Because of the very nature of social networks measuring influence is a good indicator of the reach of the information generated by someone on the networks. The first and foremost indicator is the number of people following an account or profile. In the network studied, Twitter, the number of Twitter users who directly receive messages from the entities of tourism promotion is the number of people who have subscribed to them, called “followers”. The more followers a Twitter user has the more users will read his/her messages.

Table 4 shows the username used by each Catalan tourism brand to promote itself on Twitter, preceded by the @, the date its Twitter account was created, the number of followers and the number of Tweets performed.

It should be noted that the Costa Brava brand is that which shows the highest indicators of use, both for the number of tweets as well as for the number of followers, followed by the Terres de Lleida brand, which is the only one which has different usernames to communicate in Catalan or in Spanish with its followers. It can be seen that it is more active communicating in Catalan

Table 5 shows the number of tweets sent by the brands every year. The data was obtained on the 28th April 2013, so that for the Costa Brava and the Terres de Lleida in Catalan, the most active brands, the number of tweets sent in previous years cannot be displayed separately, as

Twitter only provides information on the last 3,200 tweets. For the Terres de Lleida the data obtained individually covers the years 2013 and 2012, while the other years since its creation in 2009 are shown as aggregates. Meanwhile, for the Costa Brava, with greater activity, it is only possible to go back to 2012 (See Table 6).

In general the brands have gradually increased the daily average of tweets since creating their Twitter account, except in the cases of Barcelona and the Val d'Aran, which show a slight decrease in the average number of tweets in 2013. This is also the case of the Terres de Lleida in Spanish in 2013, while the Terres de Lleida in Catalan show a steady increase.

8. Testing the hypotheses

The special characteristics of tourism services, such as intangibility, perishability, and inseparability of production and consumption mean that they are marketed in a different way from other tangible products. Furthermore, the uniqueness of tourism, whereby in order to enjoy the service one must move towards the centre of production of the service means that there are more elements to be marketed on the Internet.

With regard to the first hypothesis - *Catalan tourism brands and tourism destinations in general use information and communications technology and, among them, social networks, for the promotion of tourism destinations* – we have verified that, effectively, this hypothesis is fulfilled in most cases because all of the entities of tourism

promotion, however big or small, have at least one website which offers information on the activities and services which the visitors can enjoy. In fact, the average number of ICT-based resources used by the tourism brands is 6.89.

With regard to the second hypothesis - *social networks play an important role in the activity of the Catalan entities of tourism promotion* – we can affirm that most of the entities consider that it is important as they make efforts to promote themselves in this medium. Other entities go further still and are users of all kinds of social networks (Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.). The number of pure social networks and other platforms participated in by the tourism brands is an average of 2.44 for the former and 4.44 for the latter, and hence it is greater than the use of these networks by internauts themselves. Seeing that 85% of internauts use Facebook, it should also be noted that most tourism brands (78%) also use this platform.

Finally, for the hypothesis *Catalan tourism brands increase the use of the social network Twitter for tourism promotion of their destinations*, it can be highlighted that Twitter is used by 89% of the brands, a percentage that has increased significantly in just one year. Moreover, we can see that most of the brands using Twitter have increased their activity year after year, both in the daily average of tweets as well as in the increase in the number of followers.

9. Discussion of the results

Although hypothesis 1 is fulfilled, the use of new technologies by the different tourism brands and destinations is quite unequal (ranging from 3 to 18 resources used), and we have observed that only one tourism brand uses most of the options currently available on the Internet for the promotion of tourism, with tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Youtube, photo galleries, Wikiloc routes, QR codes, Instagram, Pinterest, among others. Among the resources available it can be seen that Twitter, Facebook and Youtube are the most widely used platforms (7 out of 9 brands analysed are registered on the three platforms). Among the remaining resources, the most widely used is obviously the website, followed by a photo gallery, a very useful resource for tourism destinations.

With regard to hypothesis 2, it is worthy of note that there has been a significant increase in the use of social networks since the previous year, and that this use is greater than the population average. This improvement was sensed last year when the tourism brand representatives valued their importance, responding that their main objective with incorporation of social media into their activity was publicity and promotion, followed by opening up to new markets and improving attention and service to the client.

A special mention should also go to the Pyrenees tourism brand, which is the brand with the least development of implantation in the social networks for tourism promotion, which on one hand may be due to the brand's youth, and on the other due to the fact that it includes

areas from the provinces of Lleida, Girona and Barcelona and, therefore, there must be coordination between several public bodies to promote this brand.

Lastly, the third hypothesis is also fulfilled, as the brands have increased the use of Twitter, both with the incorporation of new brands into this social network, as with the increase in the activity of brands which were already there. This stands true for numbers of followers as well as the average number of daily tweets.

It is noteworthy that, according to the reports of the Social Media Observatory, Twitter is not the social network most widely used by internauts, however it is gaining users year after year, with 14% of those surveyed in 2010 belonging to this network, 32% in 2011, and 42% in 2012. Therefore, the tourism brands are realizing the importance that users give to this social network and are adapting to it, carrying out actions of information, communication and promotion of their destinations through Twitter.

10. Conclusions

This study shows that the tourism brands are aware of the importance of the ICT for the promotion of tourism, with a widespread use of websites, although not all have developed the implantation of other tools, such as social media, to the same degree. The increase in the use of social networks is considerable compared to the previous year, with a significant increase in the use of Twitter and in the participation or organization of blogtrips.

The wording used in the websites of different destinations is repetitive, with too many words extolling the virtues and wonders of the destination, this could cause the tourist suspicious of the message truthfulness.

We propose incorporating social media in tourism promotion, and to introduce mechanisms in the destination website allowing tourists to generate content, explain their own experiences, and provide recommendations, to enable positive interaction and provide content to inspire decision of other potential destination visitors. By transmitting personal experiences destinations will be more influent for potential visitors than through destination provided pre-packaged content.

It is important for the entities of tourism promotion to incorporate social networks so that they themselves and the community of virtual users can generate content, enabling interaction and providing positive content to inspire the decision-making of other potential visitors to the destination.

Twitter is used by all tourist brands except Pyrenees, although some brands have just started their promotion using this social network and, therefore, have a very low level of activity, both with respect to number of tweets sent and follower count, continued observation of these brands will be necessary to see if the use of this social network consolidates in their tourism promotion activity.

It is more difficult to manage a brand amongst different tourism promotion entities, such as happens with the Pyrenees brand, which due to this fact is

the one presenting lower activity levels in social networks. The authors recommend tourist boards responsible for promoting this brand to work co-ordinately to effectively use social networks.

This study can serve as a tool for drawing up new strategies for destinations through the different social networks. Given the importance of images in tourism promotion, the authors recommend the use of social networks like Pinterest, Instagram or Youtube, which are based on the sharing of images and are widely used with mobile devices, the use of which is becoming increasingly important for tourism-related activity. Likewise, adapting websites to mobile devices and the creation of applications for mobiles is also recommended.

However, it should be noted that the study analyses the nine Catalan tourism brands, thus the results obtained cannot be extrapolated to other areas, as they are not statistically significant.

Lastly, it is expected that the researchers will continue with this investigation, analysing the results of the tourism brands to see their yearly evolution and to expand their research to other entities of tourism promotion.

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Table 1

Directing bodies of each tourism brand and websites

Tourism brand	Directing body	Web
Costa Brava	Diputació de Girona	http://www.costabrava.org
Barcelona	Barcelona Tourism	http://www.barcelonaturisme.com
Costa Daurada	Diputació de Tarragona	http://www.costadaurada.info
Terres de l'Ebre	Diputació de Tarragona	http://www.terresdelebre.travel
Central Catalonia	Diputació de Barcelona	http://www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat
Costa Barcelona	Diputació de Barcelona	http://www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat
Terres de Lleida	Diputació de Lleida	http://www.lleidatur.com
Pyrenees	Catalan Tourism Board, Department of Regional Policy and Public Works of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Diputació de Lleida, Diputació de Girona, Diputació de Barcelona and Conselh Generau d'Aran	http://www.visitpirineus.com
Val d'Aran	Conselh Generau d'Aran	http://www.visitvaldaran.com

Source: The authors

Table 2

Use of new technologies by Catalan tourism brands 2012

Tourism brand	Pure social networks	Social		Total
		networks and other platforms	Other actions	
Costa Brava	4	8	4	12
Costa Daurada	1	1	2	3
Pyrenees	1	1	1	2
Central Catalonia	0	1	2	3
Costa Barcelona	3	3	2	5
Terres de Lleida	3	4	2	6
Barcelona	3	3	3	6
Terres de l'Ebre	1	2	2	4
Val d'Aran	2	3	2	5
Average	2.0	2.89	2.22	5.11

Source: The authors

Table 3

Use of new technologies by Catalan tourism brands 2013

Tourism brand	Pure social			Total
	Pure social networks	networks and other platforms	Other actions	
Costa Brava	4	10	4	14
Costa Daurada	2	2	2	4
Pyrenees	1	1	1	2
Central Catalonia	0	2	2	4
Costa Barcelona	3	4	2	6
Terres de Lleida	3	7	2	9
Barcelona	3	4	3	7
Terres de l'Ebre	3	4	2	6
Val d'Aran	3	5	4	9
Average	2.44	4.44	2.44	6.89

Source: The authors

Table 4

Use of Twitter

Tourism brand	Username	Account created on	Followers	Tweets
Costa Brava	@costabrava	September, 3 rd 2009	6,909	9,228
Costa Daurada	@costadauradatur	January, 17 th 2013	214	256
Pyrenees	Not used	-	-	-
Central Catalonia	@bcnmoltmes	January, 27 th 2013	158	181
Costa Barcelona	@costabcnmaresme	September, 23 rd 2011	721	1,231
Terres de Lleida CATALAN	@aralleida	October, 19 th 2009	3,639	4,027
Terres de Lleida SPANISH	@aralleida_es	November, 9 th 2009	1,296	2,740
Barcelona	@visitabarcelona	July, 20 th 2010	2,676	1,395
Terres de l'Ebre	@terresebretur	December, 21 st 2012	267	516
Val d'Aran	@val_daran	March, 22 nd 2011	1,656	1,024

Source: The authors

Table 5

Tweets sent every year

Tourism brand	Tweets	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Costa Brava	9,228	1,002	8,226			
Costa Daurada	256	256	-	-	-	-
Pyrenees	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central Catalonia	181	181	-	-	-	-
Costa Barcelona	1,231	376	806	-	-	-
Terres de Lleida CATALAN	4,027	954	2,158	915		
Terres de Lleida SPANISH	2,740	470	1,493	509	257	11
Barcelona	1,395	170	741	441	43	-
Terres de l'Ebre	516	516	0	-	-	-
Val d'Aran	1,024	151	779	94	-	-

Source: The authors

Table 6

Average daily tweets per year

Tourism brand	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Costa Brava	8.49	6.77			
Costa Daurada	2.17	-	-	-	-
Pyrenees	-	-	-	-	-
Central Catalonia	1.53	-	-	-	-
Costa Barcelona	3.19	2.20	-	-	-
Terres de Lleida CATALAN	8.08	5.90	1.14		
Terres de Lleida SPANISH	3.98	4.08	1.39	0.70	0.21
Barcelona	1.44	2.02	1.21	0.21	-
Terres de l'Ebre	4.37	-	-	-	-
Val d'Aran	1.28	2.13	0.26	-	-

Source: The authors