

# Chapter 4

## Service Providers' Perspective about Destination Based Web-Marketing: An Empirical Investigation

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### ABSTRACT

*Web marketing is a new way of performing the task of marketing, and electronic services have already changed whole industries, such as banking, health, education, etc., by streamlining the business and service processes. The tourism industry is no exception to this change; the information and communication technology in the tourism sector is of special significance. With this backdrop, the present chapter aims to study the role of destination based tourism websites in promoting Jammu as a destination by various service providers (Hotels, Travel Agencies, and Airlines). The findings of the study suggest that while the websites are scoring above-average values on the all the five factors under study (Functionality, Convenience, Website Layout, Convenience and Content) their performance can still be improved. The service providers who use these websites, are completely satisfied with the speed of information downloads, transaction processing speed, website designs, logical organization of the website, etc.*

### INTRODUCTION

Internet was used as a tool to study as well as a tool to research. It has become the way to improve the overall surveys and social science, instead of relying on the web for mere communication needs (Michigan State University, 2009). Marketers also,

after understanding the applications and utilities of internet, have used the web space to explore consumer's tit-bits. So it can also be said that besides its basic use of communication, web has also been used by researchers and also by marketers for selling and advertising to enhance the overall interactivity today (Nair & Malewar, 2014).

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Internet marketing (IM) is also known as digital marketing, web marketing, online marketing, or emarketing. As the name states, it is the advertising of products or services over the Internet. However, it also implies marketing through the wireless media and through e-mail. Electronic customer relationship management (ECRM) systems are also categorized under Internet marketing. IM can be creative, as well as, technical through its design, development, advertising, and sales over the Internet (Rashad Yazdanifard, Venpin, Yusoff & Islam, 2011). Information and communication technologies are gaining importance in different industries. In the media, not a day goes by where themes like new economy, e-business, or e-commerce are not discussed. The tourism industry is also following the trend to take advantage of new technologies. Destination management organizations (DMO) use the World Wide Web (WWW) for the commercialization of destinations and to promote products and services that are associated with each destination. On the whole, however, the big challenge for the destination marketing is establishing new value-added scenarios based on the new potentials of information and communication technologies (Buhalis, 1997, 1998; Sheldon, 1997). The information society becomes real, due to the fact that changes in consumer behavior reflect new possibilities of communication via online services, in particular the Internet.

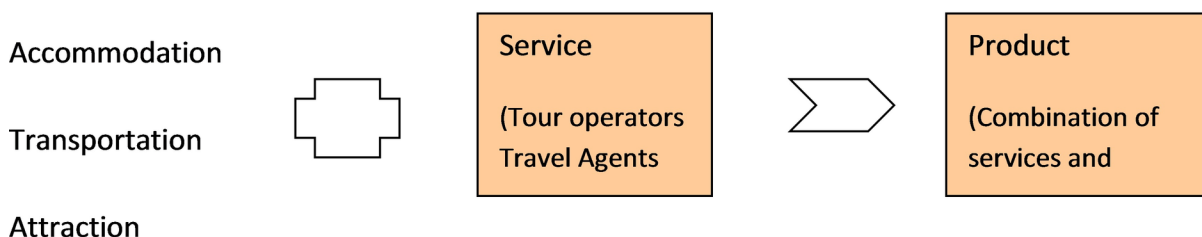
Tourism comprises the activities of person traveling to and staying places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive

year for leisure, business and other purposes (Bardgett L, 2000). In order to travel to a particular area there must be a reason. For example a person may travel for leisure, business visiting friends and relatives, health, education etc. He/she chooses a destination from one or the other reason. Transport is necessary to travel and accommodation to stay at the destination. So, tourism as an industry has three major components: Attraction, Accommodation and Transport.

The structure of the tourism market is described very comprehensively by the books of Poon (1993), Sheldon (1998) and Holloway (1994). Holloway provides a basic understanding of the nature, structure and organization of the tourist industry. Schertler (1994) describes in his book that the travel and tourism products are perishable. They must be sold within a certain period of time or they become worthless. The book provides a very good and complete overview about the strategic implications of ICT on the strategy of destinations.

The Internet/web is especially relevant to tourism since it enables knowledge about the consumer or tourist to be gathered, as well as vice versa. In particular, information technology- especially the internet is assuming greater importance for the tourism industry. Tourism is already the largest category of products and services sold over the internet, and the web is also widely-used resource for researching and planning travel. Readily available information on destinations and products empowers tourists to compare offerings, put together their own holidays and make direct bookings. The role

*Figure 1. The product creation in the tourism industry [Source: Markus, Gratzner; Werner, Winiwarter; Hannes, Werthner (2002)]*



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