Chapter 7
Cloud Computing in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

With rapid growth and development in technology, cloud computing has become a dominant platform for small businesses as well as major enterprises. Cloud computing streamlines the overall delivery of services and resources, helps keeping the costs in control, and global business is set for a huge change in the way businesses are done. The substantial transformation over the past few years has evolved tourism industry towards Tourism 3.0, where the consumers can easily connect to travel websites and interact by sharing their experiences. This considerably influences the perceptions, expectations and decisions both the actual as well as and potential travelers. This provides sufficient reasons for the tourism industry players to adopt and adept themselves with the latest advancements in the information technology, and the adoption of cloud computing is key in this regard as it provides easy access to a web platform that offers more productive, efficient, and competitive services to promote tourism as a vehicle of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

With rapid growth and development in technology, we find that cloud computing has become a dominant platform for small businesses as well as major enterprises. Cloud computing streamlines the overall delivery of services and resources, helps keeping the costs in control and significantly reduces the deployment complexities. Cloud is taking over all areas of business and technology from marketing, sales, computing, e-commerce, tourism, hospitality and technology corporates. Global business is set for a huge change in the way businesses are done and organizations operate, with cloud computing integration.

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Since cloud computing is making inroads in other industries, there is hardly any surprise that tourism industry which employs 1 in 12 people in the world and generates 5% of the global GDP, has also seen the possible benefits of going on the cloud to develop tourism across the world by helping them apply these emerging technologies to improve business efficiency and innovation through cloud-based solutions, including productivity and collaboration tools, instant messaging and e-mail, video conferencing and distance training solutions, customer relationship management, enterprise resource planning, and development and application platform tools etc.

This chapter provides an overview of Cloud computing and its role in tourism sector.

CLOUD COMPUTING

"Cloud computing is a model for enabling, convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g. networks, servers, storage, applications, and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction. This cloud model promotes availability and is composed of five essential characteristics, three service models, and four deployment models." Also, "Gartner defines cloud computing (hereafter

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