



Topic 2:

Digital channels for DMOs

DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR TOURISM: CHANNELS, QUALITY, CO-CREATION, AND COLLABORATION

PROF. PIERLUIGI FELICIATI, AA 2023/24



unimc
UNIVERSITÀ DI MACERATA

l'umanesimo che innova

content

- Digital channels for touristic destinations: a taxonomy
 - -> from official to completely uncontrollable)
- Exercise

A taxonomy of digital channels

Official, semi-official and open digital channels for destination marketing:

- Website (or Facebook page?)
- Social networks / groups / chatting apps
- Big data / spread the word phenomenon

Website (or Facebook page?)

The «classical» web channel is the website

*A website (also written as a web site) is a collection of web pages and related content identified by a common **domain name** and published on at least **one web server**.*

Its content is conceived, published and updated by the subject who owns the website.

It is expected to represent the **official voice** of someone/thing, and its content should be **correct, trustworthy and updated**.

For public bodies' websites, there are specific national regulations.

Website (or Facebook page?)

So, for touristic destinations, a website is not definitive as a printed depliant or a book/guide.

It is a dynamic channel whose management asks for attention and dedicated resources. If something changes in an organisation/service, the website has to be immediately updated.

Facebook pages are replacing the website for projects, commercial bodies, and single people.

They offer different opportunities of building a complex informational architecture, but have the same expectatons of officiality and trustfullness. They have to be managed as well.

Website monitoring



Website monitoring is the process of testing and verifying that end-users can interact with a website or web application as expected.



Businesses often use website monitoring to ensure website uptime, performance, and functionality are **as expected**. So, a clear organisational policy is needed: who wishes what from whom?



Monitoring gathers extensive data on website performance, such as load times, server response times, and page element performance, that is often analysed and used to optimise further website performance (i.e. the speed at which web pages are downloaded and displayed on the user's web browser).

Website visibility (SEO)

Websites **should be indexed by the search engines** spiders/robots (SE).

Their information (text and images) and metadata (titles, tags, keywords, authors, etc.) are captured in the SE database and included in proper searches with a high ranking.

The challenge is to **climb to the first place in the search results rank (*PageRank*)**.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) improves the quality and quantity of website traffic to a website or a web page from search engines. SEO targets **unpaid traffic** (known as "natural" or "organic") rather than direct/paid traffic. Unpaid traffic may originate from different kinds of searches, including image search, video search, academic search, news search, etc. The PageRank is determined by an algorithm based on clear heading/metadata, popularity, technical efficacy and other elements.

Remember that we refer to the Surface Web (4% of the total)!

Social network/ media

A **social network** is a **theoretical concept in the social sciences**, particularly sociology and anthropology, referring to a *social structure of individuals or organizations*.

Social media are *interactive technologies and digital channels* that facilitate the *creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks*. Their common features:

- Social media are **interactive Web 2.0** Internet-based applications.
- **User-generated content**—such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions — is the lifeblood of social media.
- Users create **service-specific profiles** for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization.
- Social media helps the development of online social networks by **connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups**.

Social network/ media

Touristic destinations, cultural institutions, events, and DMOs invest more and more time and attention to be **present and visible on social media**.

The language, updating rules and trustfulness are different from those of websites, more inspired by advertising practice:

- More direct, simple, cool tones
- Use of tags (#WORD) to aggregate similar posts or to be on the top
- The same topic/event could be relaunched several times, with the risk of being too insistent / bothering users

Social network/ media

Social media can not substitute websites.

This is valid for public bodies, i.e. cities, villages, monuments, museums, natural or archaeological parks, etc.

Launching a **social media strategy** asks for specific resources and professionals (social media managers) who are updated on the news in that complex and dynamic world.

Launching a social media strategy, much more than website management (you own the domain), asks for a **management policy of digital resources** (press releases, data, images, videos, ...).

Big data / spread the word

As we already mentioned, the current Web is made more and more of little pieces of data (posts, comments, images, memes, likes/unlikes, stars, hearts, data and so on).

Those data are captured, indexed, used, shared, re-used, and activate complex phenomena of consent, imitation, opposition, hunger, violence...

Analysing those data could reveal exciting information about someone/thing' **Web Reputation**.

Web reputation

A **web presence** is a location on the World Wide Web where a person, business, or other entity **is represented**.

- **Web presence management** is knowing where an individual or business is represented, whereas **web reputation management** knows what people say about an individual or a company.
- Web presence management handles owned media, while reputation management systems with earned media. A reputation management system often includes a *content listening system* to monitor the stream of messages about a particular subject which may be coming from any point of presence on the web.
- Web reputation companies do this work: “Transform feedback from reviews, likes, listings, comments and clicks into your competitive advantage.”
(<https://reputation.com/>)

Exercise

- Choose as pilots the two touristic structures you have chosen during the previous evaluation
- Surf the web and check out whether they have:
 - A (touristic) Website
 - If they are on Facebook, Instagram, X
 - Note your summative evaluation on those channels: Coherent? Updated? Attractive? Better on the commercial aggregative systems (Booking, The Fork, etc.)?

Discussion



What is **your opinion** about the Social Media presence and reputation of your pilot case (hotel and restaurant)?

Are there significant **differences** (content, brand, attractiveness, ...) between their official Websites and their Social Media presence?

And what about them on TripAdvisor?
Coherent with their Websites and Social Media?