

# Competitiveness of Croatian Destinations Through Online Marketing Indicators

Gržinić Jasmina, University Jurja Dobrile in Pula, Faculty of Economics and Tourism  
„Dr. Mijo Mirković“, Croatia<sup>1</sup>

Sučić Čevra Mirela, Net travel service, Zagreb, Croatia

UDC: 338.487:659.13/.16(497.5) ; 659.131.7:004.738.5 JEL: F29, G34 ID: 203728908

**ABSTRACT** – *The purpose of this paper is to determine whether destinations in Croatia follow the trend of the modern market by ensuring first impression quality through an online campaign. The World Tourist Organisation (UNWTO: 2008) takes into consideration categories of web page quality evaluation such as: information level of the destination web site, level of accuracy, level of consistency, type and quality of interaction with visitors, value of visual identity. Web site development requires a user centered design process with permanent evaluation of the evolving design. The aim of this research is to explore web site design quality factors in order to adopt web page quality to a profile of destination visitors. This paper analyses online marketing concepts as new tools and processes that enable customer relation systems and ensure an interactive approach to potential customers. The fundamental empirical research was based on 11 Croatian destinations, both inland and coastal types, in order to analyse and identify levels of standardisation in online marketing quality. The focus was on the official local tourist board sites as destination tourism organisations. Destinations included in the research were: Zagreb, Split, Dubrovnik, Opatija, Osijek, Zadar, Šibenik, Varaždin, Plitvice, Hvar and Rijeka. It is confirmed that the Web structure did not meet the requirements of modern tourists according to the selected categories. For example, the Šibenik official page is written only in the Croatian language. Furthermore, it is found that in addition to a non-existent domain policy, there is no commonly accepted visual identity that would be followed. The platforms of the web sites do not have a common system or tool. The evaluation indicates that only Zagreb's site offers a direct booking engine which proves that the destination is in line with the modern trends of online marketing. There is a strong, positive and statistically significant connection between the quality of internet pages of chosen tourist destinations and the number of tourist arrivals in that destination. From the web designers perspective, this research should help in the future web site development process in order to define the business objectives, context and key scenarios of use.*

**KEY WORDS:** *tourism market, new technologies, online marketing, destinations, quality, standardisation*

## Introduction

Tourist and hotel companies need to present themselves in modern business as „smart organisations“ which mobilise resources (Open information flow, Disciplined decision

---

<sup>1</sup>Preradovićeveva 1/1, email: jasminagrzinic@efpu.hr



making, Alignment & Empowerment), understand the environment (Systems thinking, Embracing uncertainty, Outside-in strategic perspective), achieve purpose (Continual learning, Value creation culture, Creating alternatives). These nine „Smart organisation“ factors form a base for the making of high quality strategic decisions. (Matheson & Matheson, 2001).

Marketing and promotion form is an important part of the quality of a tourist product. A company whose services fulfil fundamental tasks associated to users, consumers or clients will be perceived by a website visitor as a company which provides quality services. (Ozretić, 2002). There is a need for different financial mechanisms in order to fit market requirements. Besides their own investments in marketing and promotion, tourism participants should be supported at a local level by investment by local authorities in order to gain coordinated marketing activities. Activities should not be individual and unbalanced, but they should be a part of an organised and coordinated overall destination market performance. It is crucial to create transparent marketing as well as a system of return of marketing investment through continuous evaluation and monitoring in order to enable the optimal balance of marketing activities.

Tourism provides a unique set of circumstances in which firms have an incentive to cooperate to promote the destination but compete to promote them. (Richie, 2002). The modern tourism market concept has consequently been facing a rather dynamic and continuously changing organisational and conceptual background which is mostly recognised through: (European Commission, 2002).

- Change of system towards market economy,
- Change of market from mass to experience,
- Change of product – ever greater adjustment to demand,
- New sales and distribution channels and systems,
- New technologies and operating standards.

Destinations seen through the market category should follow market changes in order to ensure a stable market position as well as a solid platform for the complete travel experience to clients. Today's tourists are prepared to use new services for the reasons of practicality of travel booking from their own homes, cost reduction, lack of time and formal planning, as well as the impalpability of services in tourism (Goh, et al., 2010, Dimanche & Jolly, 2009, Davidson & Burgess, 2006, Buhalis & Jun, 2011). Research shows that a modern traveller visits almost 26 destination web sites before they commit to purchase of a holiday. Furthermore, almost 2/3 of travellers tend to get very detailed information on the product (such as location, service level or specific points of interest) before a travel decision is taken and almost 71% of the potential clients follow a TV or press advertisement by an online search of product details. This information significantly emphasises the importance of the new sales and promotion tools and involves very indicative information on a modern traveller. (cf. Trittschuh: 2012, International Conference Future Hotels). The travel process is rather complex and begins not with the purchase of a tourist product or travel itself, but with getting information about the destination and ensuring the quality of the first phase of the process (Avelini Holjevac, 2002).

Destination Management Organisation (DMO) is an organisation which enables tourism bodies, coming from both the public and private sectors, to coordinate cooperation with local



authorities in order to provide the best possible result for destination's visitors. The aim of the DMO includes better usage of the destination's existing resources through the involvement and cooperation of different stakeholders in order to achieve possibilities for long term competitiveness. The local destination management organisation is therefore responsible for management and/or marketing of a limited area or destination.

The marketing concept should be thoroughly planned, using appropriate promotional channels in line with the necessary investment criteria as well as the best possible market result. Additionally, the marketing concept should be followed by an adjusted and coordinated destination offer as well as communication with the visitor before and after the visit, but especially during the visit to the destination. A lack of quality in any of the mentioned travel process stages will result in lack of quality in the entire tourism product chain.

Marketing investments should be directed to those markets that can generate visitors with medium and higher purchasing power as well as shorter and more frequent visits with a focus on the special interest segment. That means that the tourist traffic can be spread across a longer period of the year with the content adapted to a very specific type of visitor. The focus of the entire destination offer should be placed on the content, animation and event organisation which gives a new dimension to a destination product and generates an economic and wider aspect of other benefits to a wide variety of stakeholders. The destination's marketing message must be creative and clear and should reflect the idea which needs to be conveyed. The Internet, as a marketing tool, has ensured new distribution possibilities, reduction in personnel costs and penetration into new markets. (Chaffey, 2009b). It is predictable that the number of services available online will continue to grow every year, not only in order to provide clients with more services, but also to keep up with the competition. (Bevanda, Gržinić, & Červar, 2008).

It is noted that, on web pages, higher priority is given to informing the visitors rather than to the entertainment content, with the aim to accelerate the decision making process, i.e. channel communication towards the sales (Costa, 2001). The largest part of the funds within the IT application in tourism business is placed in advertising. (Dore & Crouch, 2003), while often neglecting the quality (Frew, 2000). A quality chain is complex and creating a first image of the destination is the first element in ensuring the integrated quality of a travel process. In a modern technology era there are several points to be taken into consideration while trying to ensure quality in all aspects, from promotion to delivery of a tourism product and post communication. In short, the intellectual component of destination management now rivals the action component in significance. (Richie, 2002).

There is a need to support the marketing process with increasingly sophisticated destination marketing information systems (DMISs) (Sheldon, 1997, Sussman, 1994).

Online marketing and promotion represent a growing element of influence of purchase theory. Marketing goals begin to be fulfilled by implementation of digital technologies. (Chaffey, 2009a).

Some of the website selection criteria are: server and web technical characteristics, usability and accessibility, content quality and presence on the Internet (Ružić, Biloš, Turkalj, 2009). Several authors (Park & Gretzel, 2007, Gonzales & Palacios, 2004) indicated the existence of the different relative importance of each web site quality factor across e-business



domains and between stakeholders. They also found the correlation between web site quality and e-business performance. A web site with the highest quality produced the highest business performance. Therefore there is a need to constantly monitor users' behaviour and their requirements in different e-business sectors towards better web site design (Lee & Koza, 2006). Vrkić (2003) suggests that tourist destinations should be connected with the market by means of the Internet and quotes the following methods: Internet marketing applications, audience, information sources and Internet pages.

Web page design guidelines often offer the same advice for all types of web sites, regardless of their purpose (Susser & Ariga, 2006). Tourism companies and hotel structures tend to follow the market trend carefully and adjust their sales and promotion activities to the demands of a modern market. There is a continuous introduction of new tools and processes which facilitate customer relation systems and ensure an interactive approach to potential customers. Destinations, seen through market categories, should follow as the model of consumer behaviour changes:

- New entrance points such as modern tablet technologies, smart phones and pc's,
- Social media tools (twitter, Facebook etc.),
- Online magazines.

The development of ICTs and particularly the Internet has empowered the „new“ tourist who is becoming knowledgeable and is seeking exceptional value for money and quality time. They are less interested in following the crowds on packaged tours and much more keen to pursue their own preferences and schedules. (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Web offers as opposed to traditional information distribution channels increase purchasing power and decrease the power of business Internet subjects. The research conducted by the Internet company for design and development Genex among American consumers points to clients' impressions related to the design of web pages of the search requirements. Upon the arrival of surfers on the pages, the first impressions pertinent to the design of those pages are the most important; low prices and/or famous product brand names do not mean anything if the design and usefulness are missing and 30 percent of the surveyees believed that the page design is more important than the products offered for sale. (Peters, 2003, Beuchert & Malek, 2011, Cho & Youn-Kyung, 2012). According to Plenković et al (2006), what web pages should (or should not) look like, the most important recommendations being:

- Content should be placed on each page,
- Individual Web pages should contain 25-50 percent less information than corresponding paper pages, because reading from a screen is 25 percent slower than reading from paper,
- Web pages should use larger letters than paper pages.

The web design quality research on specific tourism industry issues have not reached a consensus on what makes a tourism site effective (Susser & Ariga, 2006). Web designers, especially in the tourism field, have a difficult job which requires a lot of effort, creativity, originality and which, above all, has to result in a „catchy“ page that will attract the user of tourist services more than a page from the competition. The importance of a simple but attractive look of a web page is one of the key factors to a successful tourist organisation business (Yuan, et al., 2003, Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2006). A survey of previous research in this field has shown that Web site evaluation studies tend to rely on expert assessments or



predetermined benchmarks and on the tangible aspects of a web site rather than on consumer's options. Perceived usefulness was a key predictor of users' attitudes towards using hotel-owned Web sites, while perceived ease of use was a key predictor of users' attitudes towards using third-party Web sites. (Park & Gretzel, 2007, Dulčić, Petrić, 2008, Morosan & Jeong, 2008).

## Research hypothesis

Destination internet pages, strategy marketing and destination tourism strategy must be closely linked. The main hypothesis of the article is that the information structure on internet pages and their mutual connection are a dominant activity of DMO internet page creation. Web designers especially in a tourism field, have a difficult job to conceive a web page that will attract the user of tourist services more than a page from competition. There is the lack of effort, originality and creativity in Croatian web tourism presentation. The most pages are not user friendly, they are both confusing and outdated. The destinations of Osijek and Šibenik are not only not being updated, but all the subpages are technically inactive.

On the other side, stronger, positive and statistically significant connection exists between the quality of the internet pages of chosen tourist destinations and the number of realised overnights in that destination.

In Croatia, we distinguish six types of tourist internet pages, namely: (Ružić, Biloš, Turkalj, 2009):

- Company internet pages,
- Reservation internet pages,
- Destination tourism pages,
- Tourist mega internet pages,
- Tourist search pages and information catalogues,
- Tourist information services.

Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra (2002) have developed a conceptual model for evaluation and improvement of electronic service quality, which now consists of the listed criteria: information and content accessibility, simplicity of use, security/privacy, site aesthetics/graphic design, efficiency and reliability, assurance/trust, price knowledge, personalisation.

The World Tourist Organisation takes into consideration 5 categories of web page quality evaluation (Table 1). (UNWTO, 2008).

*Table 1. Evaluation factors*

Key factors	Description
Information level of the destination web site	Shows balance of quantity and quality of information about the destination as well as how well organised and presented the information is
Level of accuracy	Shows accuracy of information provided, i.e. whether they are true and valid (updated)
Level of consistency	Shows compliance of subpages to a home page



Key factors	Description
Type and quality of interaction with visitors	in terms of information, visual identity and accuracy Shows the level of interaction tools for visitors: interactive maps, booking platforms, applications etc.
Value of visual identity	Visual attractiveness of the web site

Research was conducted in the period from March to May 2012 and the results are indicative for a subject of this paper in order to ascertain if destinations utilise modern technology tools as innovation to secure the integrated quality of their products in all phases. The focus was on the official local tourist board sites as the tourism carriers of a destination. Destinations included in the research were: Zagreb, Split, Dubrovnik, Opatija, Osijek, Zadar, Šibenik, Varaždin, Plitvice, Hvar and Rijeka.

In order to estimate the mentioned quality the Likert five-point scale was applied, with point 1 being the lowest and point 5 being the highest evaluation point. Even though the period of the research was relatively short, it can represent an indicative result from which significant conclusions can be made.

## Methodology

In this paper, five evaluators, tourism experts, graded the web page quality. The grades ranged between 1 and 5, where 1 was the lowest grade and 5 the highest grade. Each evaluator awarded a grade for a specific quality aspect of each of 11 destinations (category evaluation). The evaluated categories were as follows:

- web level grade,
- change/upgrade frequency grade,
- web page accuracy grade,
- subpage consistency grade,
- interaction quality grade and
- visual identity grade.

All the sites were evaluated with the same procedure, with the same order of subpage evaluation and an equal period of time for each web page in order to ensure objective conclusions. Evaluation of the site was complete only after every subpage was surfed through.

## Descriptive data analysis of internet page quality

The grading results are expressed in descriptive indicators in tables 2 and 3. The web page quality of 11 evaluated destinations in Croatia varies between the lowest average of 2.84 (Varaždin) and the highest average of 4.20 (Zagreb). If we designate the grade 3 as the quality minimum, then two destinations (Varaždin and Osijek) did not satisfy that minimum, while the remaining nine destinations, did. The average grade of all the 11 destinations for all six evaluated categories is 3.43.





Table 2. Average grades of web page quality of evaluated destinations

No.	Destination	Average grade
1.	Zagreb	4.20
2.	Split	3.07
3.	Dubrovnik	3.92
4.	Opatija	3.81
5.	Osijek	2.95
6.	Zadar	3.90
7.	Šibenik	3.01
8.	Varaždin	2.84
9.	Plitvice	3.40
10.	Hvar	3.43
11.	Rijeka	3.19
	Total	3.43

By the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was determined that the grades in specific evaluated categories were not distributed normally ( $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the arithmetic means (averages) are not adequate mean values, they are median and mode. However, in order to more precisely express the mean value and for the purposes of further analyses, the arithmetic mean has indisputable advantage.

Certain destinations' achieved average grades (arithmetic means) are illustrated graphically, by simple columns (graph 1), while the destinations in the graph are listed according to the height of the average, from the highest to the lowest.

In the first evaluated categories, the median is 4 and, in the last evaluated categories, it equals 3. This means that half of the destinations were awarded the grade 4 and less and the second half of the destinations, grade 4 and higher in the following categories:

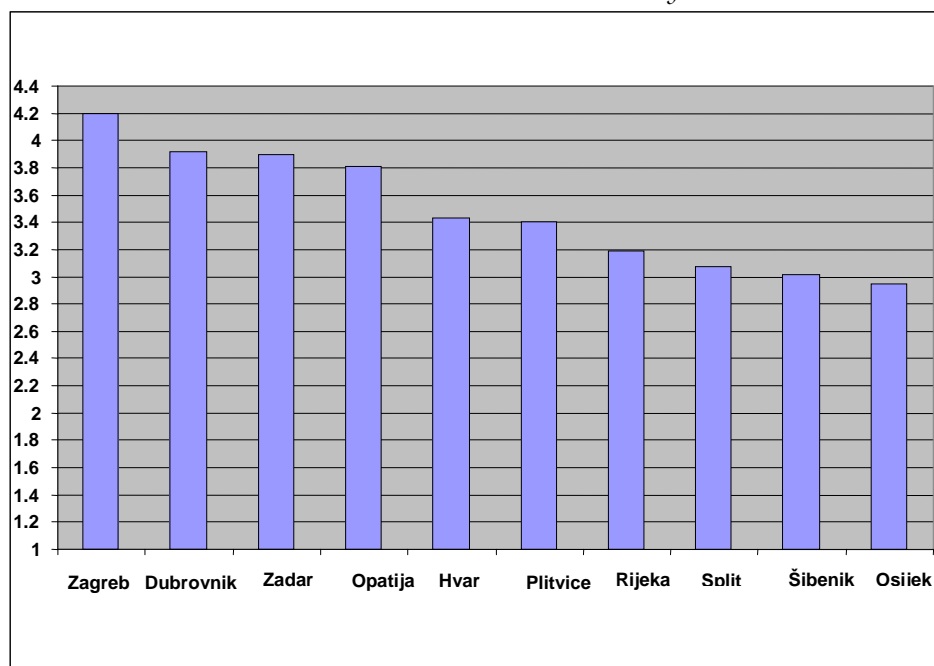
- web level grade,
- change/update frequency grade,
- web page accuracy grade and
- subpage consistency grade.

It can also be said that half of the destinations were awarded the grade 3 and less and the other half of the destinations were awarded the grade 3 and higher in the following categories:

- interaction quality grade
- visual identity grade.



Graph 1. Rank list of web page quality average grades of evaluated tourist destinations in Croatia in May 2012



The modal (the most frequent) values are similar to the medial values. These two types of mean values coincide in all categories, except in the category of interaction quality grade.

When considering average grades by specific categories, then all the evaluated categories, apart from the interaction quality grade, have satisfied the aforementioned minimum of 3.

In table 3, all the three types of mean values are stated in order to compare them according to specific evaluated categories.

Table 3. Web page quality average grades by evaluated categories

Destination	web level	change upgrade	page accuracy	consistency	interactive quality	visual identity	average
Zagreb	4.6	5.0	4.6	3.4	4.2	3.4	4.20
Split	3.4	4.0	3.0	2.8	2.2	3.0	3.07
Dubrovnik	4.4	4.5	4.6	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.92
Opatija	3.4	4.25	4.4	3.8	3.4	3.6	3.81
Osijek	3.0	3.5	3.2	2.6	2.0	2.4	2.95
Zadar	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.8	3.4	4.0	3.90
Šibenik	3.0	3.25	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.2	3.01
Varaždin	2.6	3.25	3.2	3.0	2.2	2.8	2.84
Plitvice	3.8	3.0	4.2	4.0	2.8	2.6	3.40
Hvar	3.2	3.75	4.0	3.8	3.0	2.8	3.43
Rijeka	3.2	3.75	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.8	3.19
Average grade	3.51	3.84	3.87	3.35	2.95	3.05	3.43
Median	4	4	4	4	3	3	





Destination	web level	change upgrade	page accuracy	consistency	interactive quality	visual identity	average
Mode	4	4	4	4	4	3	
Standard deviation	0.979	0.939	0.982	1.058	1.268	0.989	1.036
Variation coefficient	28	24	25	32	43	32	30

The grade variability is average in all evaluated categories, given that the variation coefficient ranges between 24% and 43% (on average it is 30%). In the category of interaction quality grade, the evaluators were the least united (the variation coefficient is 43%).

### Correlation analysis of data on quality of internet pages of chosen tourist destinations

It is expected that there is a correlation between the quality of the internet pages of 11 chosen destinations as an independent variable (X) and the number of tourist arrivals in that destination, as well as the number of tourist overnights in that destination (Y).

Table 4. *Internet page quality grades, number of tourists and number of overnights in chosen tourist destinations*

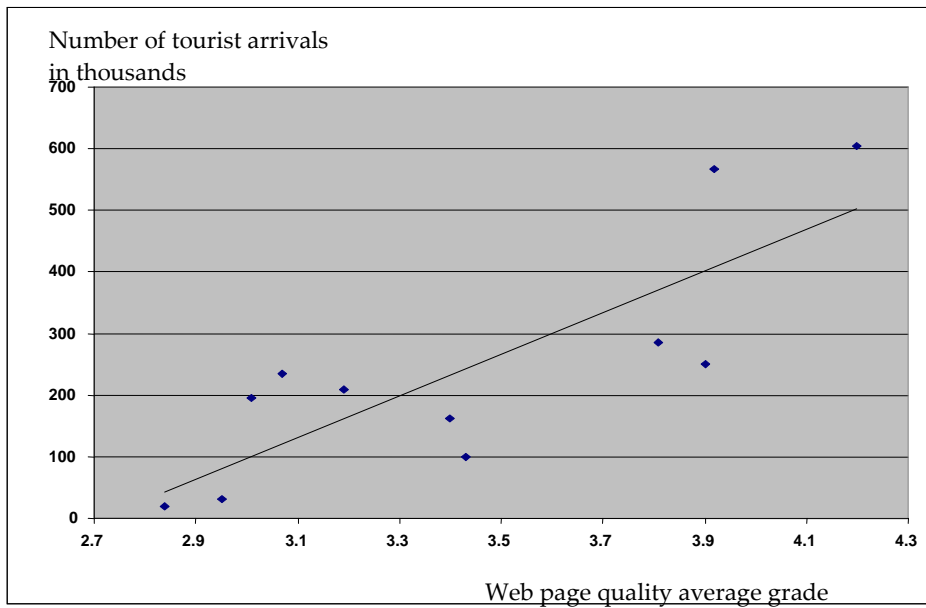
Destination	Average grade	Number of tourists (in 000)	Number of overnights (in 000)
Zagreb	4.20	603.8	969.5
Split	3.07	234.0	749.1
Dubrovnik	3.92	568.0	2098.1
Opatija	3.81	285.2	920.8
Osijek	2.95	31.5	66.3
Zadar	3.90	250.7	967.4
Šibenik	3.01	195.5	1076.4
Varaždin	2.84	19.3	42.9
Plitvice	3.40	162.8	216.7
Hvar	3.43	100.2	457.2
Rijeka	3.19	210.0	265.6

Source: Prepared by the author according to Croatian Bureau of statistics, <http://www.dzs.hr>

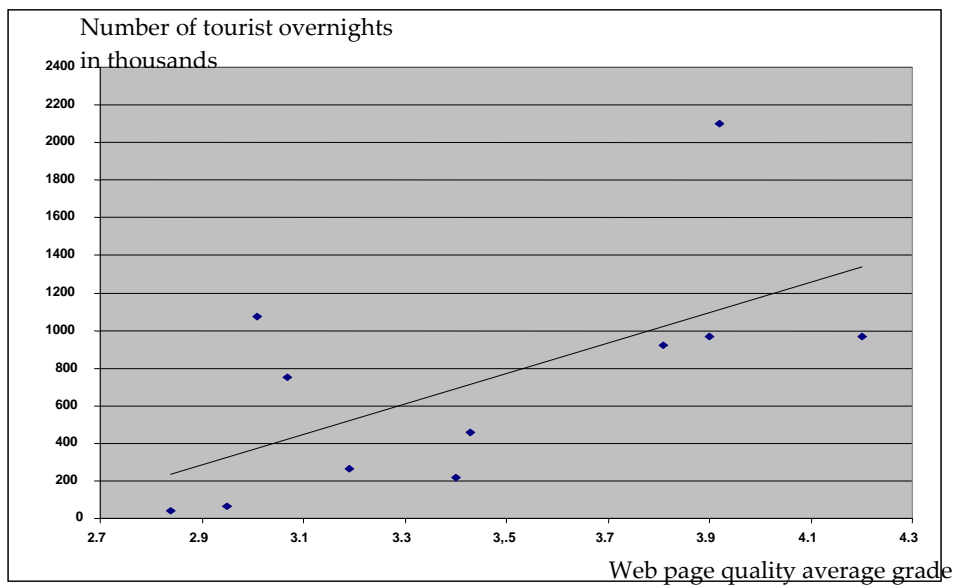
For this, average quality grades obtained in this research can be of use, as well as official data on the number of tourists and number of overnights in the quoted destinations in the year 2012 (table 4). The stated connections are graphically shown (graph 2 and graph 3).



Graph 2. Graphic illustration of the correlation between average grades of web page quality and the number of tourist arrivals for the 11 chosen destinations



Graph 3. Graphic illustration of the correlation between average grades of web page quality and the number of tourist overnights for the 11 chosen destinations



There is a strong, positive and statistically significant connection between the quality of internet pages of chosen tourist destinations and the number of tourist arrivals in that



destination. The proof lies in the Spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.84, which is statistically highly significant ( $p = 0.001$ ).

A stronger, positive and statistically significant connection exists between the quality of the internet pages of chosen tourist destinations and the number of realised overnights in that destination. The proof for this is Spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.66, which is statistically significant ( $p = 0.026$ ).

## **Discussion**

### **Summary of findings**

It is found that in addition to a non-existent domain policy, there is no commonly accepted visual identity that would be followed. The platforms of the web sites do not have a common system or tool.

Detailed research results are analysed in the following text.

### **Information level of the destinations' website**

It is found that the tourist boards of Zagreb, Zadar and Dubrovnik keep a high level of information on their web sites, providing clear indications of the most important information that potential visitors should receive. On the other side, research shows that the site of the destination of Rijeka does not contain any useful information a modern visitor would expect and the site content is not inviting to the potential audience. It is important to further note that the Šibenik official page is written in the Croatian language only which, if we compare this fact to the main emissive markets, indicates a lack of market focus. Osijek's site provides a choice of only 2 languages – Croatian and English. This fact indicates the need to define the top emissive markets for the destination in order to adjust online content to the specific segments.

### **Level of accuracy**

The evaluation indicates the most common mistakes such as grammar mistakes, misspelling, translation errors; e.g. the destination of Osijek does not have the same home page in both offered languages, or the destination of Split has an updated site version only in the English language, despite the presence of other languages, which leaves the impression of negligence and unprofessionalism.

### **Level of consistency**

The evaluation shows that there is a significant lack of quality in this segment. The destinations of Osijek and Šibenik are not only not being updated, but all the subpages are technically inactive. The pages are not user friendly, they are both confusing and outdated. Even though the average grade for the destination of Zagreb is relatively high, translation of daily updates of sites is done only in the English language. Considering the new and growing emissive markets that tend to visit this destination, it is widely recommended to have a continuous translating service for all subpages.



### **Type and quality of interaction**

Research shows that only a few destinations hold modern interacting tools such as interactive maps, social network connections or a main tool such as a booking platform for example, only Zagreb's site offers a direct booking engine which proves that the destination is in line with the modern trends of online marketing offering a client a direct connection to suppliers. Further, Dubrovnik offers a booking platform only for its hotels and camps.

### **Value of visual identity**

The results represent the realistic value level of visual identity with a few destinations which hold extremely low grades in this category such as Osijek, Šibenik and Rijeka. It is important to note that the destination of Plitvice is graded as a very informative web site, yet the visual identity is recognized at a very low level. It is important to balance and standardise the quality level with all the categories of the research.

### **Limitations and future research directions**

It was found that there is a need to further invest into visual identity along with securing a consistent quality level throughout the entire web page, but the most worrying value belongs to introducing modern interacting tools that are not widely accepted by the destinations examined.

There is a high need for adjustment as well as coordination of online activities with local and national respective quality and development strategies. The model of consumer behaviour has been widely changed and only a systematic approach and complex overview of the problem can result in long term consistency. The travel process begins with an online search for a product, research of the key elements that can create a desire to travel and to motivate a consumer to make a purchase. The online presentation of a destination should be determined by simplified online content with a high level of consistency, accuracy and attraction. Form and content count, therefore more elements are crucial:

- Images presenting the destination must be taken professionally,
- Layout should be functional,
- Design should be modern and fitting the «destination feel»,
- Material should be informative,
- Web site engine should be solid,
- Atmosphere of the website should create desire,
- Materials should be updated regularly,
- Added value should be incorporated,
- It should be adjusted to modern tools like smart phones, social media platforms,
- Memberships and affiliations,
- Booking engines,
- Website should have sales approach,
- Materials should be interactive,
- Attention to detail,



- Analytical side of the page (to find out about visitors, what they research, where they checkout and how to visit the page).

Visitors to Croatian destinations are mostly very loyal visitors. They have been coming to Croatia for generations and loyalty programmes should be implemented in agreement with the destination stakeholders. Web site presentation should encourage a desire to visit, try local products, participate in local activities and to enter the destination. Every detail should be planned and should come with a story. The web site should be adjusted to different market segments (business travellers, families, young couples, children, pensioners). The web page should be adapted to a profile of destination visitors. If the average stay is 7-10 days, programmes on the site should be created to match the criteria offering added value to clients. The page must be interactive and good practice examples should be encouraging new visitors and bad comments should be treated properly to minimise negative impacts.

Databases should be renewed and updated continuously. Quick connection to Skype and telephone contacts should be adopted to follow global online trends. Visitors should be able to leave comments, post photos, connect to social networks and share information.

Certain destinations acknowledged that the personal approach is not to be underestimated, so they provide customer service at „happy hour“ times with an online support and information service. This practice should be considered. All these facts imply that the gap between Croatian destination presentations and European benchmark models is huge and a serious turn should be taken.

Destinations interact in the modern tourism market and perform as business units offering different tourism products to different market segments. To ensure their competitiveness in a continuously demanding environment, modern market rules should be applied. In order to ensure quality at each level of the tourism product, the quality of the destination's online presentation, as the first phase of travel, should not to be neglected.

This paper represents the results of the survey on whether Croatian destinations follow modern marketing trends and what quality level is achieved among Croatian destinations in regard to online marketing. The results show that there is a big lack of quality in their online activity and that the average value is significantly low. Tourist destinations with quality sites (eg Dubrovnik and Zagreb) have more visitors, as opposed to destination with lower quality sites (eg Osijek and Varaždin). The quality of a website is not a critical factor that determines the number of visitors, but it is (as evidenced by these correlation coefficients) indicative.

That being said, there are fundamental changes which should be made at both organisational and political level.

It is recommended that further authors' researches include some of the following points:

- Who should be the main carrier/leader of destination marketing and branding?
- Is there a need to standardise online marketing rules for Croatian destinations?
- Does standardisation necessarily imply creativity limitations?
- How to monitor whether the quality of the presented content corresponds to high quality delivery in the destination etc.?

This research is indicative as an overall evaluation of the investment, creativity and update of the destinations, but it will be further analysed from the perspective of the background and organisational and political frame of the needed changes.



## References

- Avelini Holjevac, I.** 2002. *Upravljanje kvalitetom u turizmu i hotelskoj industriji*. Opatija: Fakultet za turistički i hotelski menadžment.
- Bevanda, V., Gržinić, J., and Červar, E.** 2008. „Analysing the Users' Perception of WEB Design Quality by Data Mining Tools (Case of Croatian online travel agencies)”, *Tourism and hospitality management*, 14(2): 251-263.
- Beuchert, C., and Malek, F.W.** 2011. *Effective web site design*. HSMAI foundation. [www.tigglobal.com](http://www.tigglobal.com)
- Buhalis, D., and Law, R.** 2008. „Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the Internet - The state of e-Tourism research”. *Tourism Management*, 29 (4): 609-623.
- Buhalis, D., and Jun, S.H.** 2011. *E-tourism*. Goodfellow publishing. Oxford.
- Chaffey, D.** 2009a. *E-marketing, internet marketing definition*, <http://www.davechaffey.com/Internet-marketing/C1-Introduction/E-marketing>
- Chaffey, D.** 2009b. *Introduction to digital media*, <http://www.davechaffey.com/guides/introduction-to-digital-media>
- Cho., E, and Youn-Kyung, K.** 2012. „The Effects of Website Designs, Self-Congruity, and Flow on Behavioural Intention”. *International Journal of design*, 6(2): 31-39.
- Costa, L.** 2001. *Managing the impact and use of Information and Communication Technologies base services*. Report on behalf of European commission, Working group F, Follow up given to the Council Conclusions, [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/working\\_groups/finalreporte\\_june2001\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/working_groups/finalreporte_june2001_en.pdf)
- Croatian Bureau of statistics.** <http://www.dzs.hr>
- Davidson, A.P., and Burgess, S.** 2006. *E-commerce in tourism: Use of web sites by small, regional and urban enterprises*. Australia: Cooperation Research Centre.
- Dimanche, F., and Jolly, D.** 2009. „Investing in technology for tourism activities: Perspectives and challenges.” *Technovation*, 29 (9): 576-579.
- Dore, L. and Crouch, G.I.** 2003. „Promoting destinations: An exploratory study of publicity programmes used by national tourism organisations.” *Journal of Vacation marketing*, 9(2): 137-153.
- Dulčić, A., i Petrić, L.** 2008. *Upravljanje razvojem turizma*. Zagreb: Mate.
- Duran, I.** 2010. *Internet Marketing Strategies for Tourism Products*, <http://www.optimum7.com/internet-marketing/internet-marketing-strategy/internet-marketing-strategies-for-tourism-products.html>
- European Commission** 2000. *Towards quality urban tourism: Integrated quality management (IQM) of urban tourism destination*, Brussels.
- Frew, A.J.** 2000. „A critical analysis of tourism information technology research”. In *Information and communications technologies in tourism Vienna*, ed. D. Fesenmaier, 39-52. Austria: Springer.
- Goh, D.H. et al.** 2010. „Determining services for the mobile tourist.” *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 51(1): 31-40.
- Gonzales, M. F. J., and Palacianos, T. M. B.** 2004. „Quantitative evaluation of commercial web sites: an empirical study of Spanish firms.” *International Journal of Information Management*, 24: 313-328.





- Kaplanidou, K., and Vogt, C.** 2006. „A Structural Analysis of Destination Travel Intentions as a Function of Web Sites Features.”, *Journal of Travel research*, 45 (2): 204-216.
- Lee, Y., and Kozar, K. A.** 2006. „Investigating the effect of website quality on e-business: An analytic hierarchy process (AHP) approach.”, *Decision Support Systems*, 42: 1383-1401.
- Matheson, D., and Matheson, J.E.** 2001. „Smart organizations perform better”, *Research Technology Management*, p. 49-54, <http://www.iriinc.org/RTM.htm>.
- Morosan, C., and Jeong, M.** 2008. „Users’ perceptions of two types of hotel reservation Web sites.”, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(2): 284-292.
- Ozretić Došen, Đ.** 2002. *Osnove marketinga usluga*. Zagreb: Mikrorad.
- Park, Y. A. and Gretzel, U.** 2007. Success Factors for Destination Marketing Web Sites: A Qualitative Meta-Analysis, *Journal of Travel Research*, 46, 46. Available at: <http://jtr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/46/1/46>, Accessed: 2007-11-05.
- Perkins, E.** 2000. *Online Travel*. 1 edition. Microsoft Press.
- Peters, K.** 2003. *Web site design trumps even price in consumers’ buying decisions*, <http://www.internetretailer.com/2003/06/17/web-site-design-trumps-even-price-in-consumers-buying-decision>.
- Plenković, J., Plenković, M., and Hadžić, S.** 2006. „Education for a healthy life. V: WALAT, Wojciech” (Ed.), *Technika - informatyka - edukacija: teoretyczne i praktyczne podstawy edukacji technicznej*. T. 5. Rzeszów: Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, p. 145-151.
- Pollock, A.** 1995. „The impact of information technology on destination marketing.” *EIU Travel and Tourism Analyst*, 3: 66-83.
- Richie, R.J.B., and Richie, J.R.B.** 2002. “A framework for an industry supported destination marketing information system.” *Tourism Management*, 23(5): 439–454.
- Ružić, D., Biloš, A. and Turkalj, D.** 2009. *E-Marketing*. Osijek: Factum.
- Sheldon, P.J.** 1997. *Tourism information technology*. CAB International, Oxon.
- Susser, B. and Ariga, A.** 2006. „Teaching e-commerce Web page evaluation and design: A pilot study using tourism destination sites.” *Computers & Education*, 47(4): 399-413.
- Sussman, S.** 1994. „The impact of new technological developments on destination management systems, Progress in Tourism.” *Recreation & Hospitality Management*, 5: 240-296.
- Trittschuh, E.** 2012. *Creating A Digital Marketing Strategy Fit For The New Reality*. Presentation during International Conference Future Hotels, Zagreb.
- UNWTO** 2008. „Handbook on E-marketing, A practical Guide for Tourism Destinations”, Madrid: World Tourism Organisation.
- Yuan, Y., Gretzel, U., and Fesenmaier, D.R.** 2003. „Managing Innovation: The use of Internet Technology by American Convention and Visitors Bureaus.” *Journal of Travel Research*, 41(3): 240-256.
- Zeithaml, V.A., Parasurman, A. and Malhotra, A.** 2002. „Service Quality Delivery through Web Sites: A Critical Review of Extant Knowledge.” *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30 (4): 362-375.



## Konkurentnost hrvatskih destinacija kroz online marketing indikatore

**REZIME** – Cilj ovog rada je utvrditi slede li hrvatska odredišta trendove na savremenom turističkom tržištu vezano za kvalitet online prezentacije. Svetska turistička organizacija (UNWTO: 2008) sugerise procene kategorije kvaliteta web stranica i to: nivo informiranosti, izmene, tačnost, doslednost, interakcija, identitet. Razvoj zahteva dizajn procesa koji se orijentiše prema korisniku sa stalnom evaluacijom razvoja. Cilj ovog istraživanja je istražiti kvalitet web stranica kako bi se ostvarilo prilagođavanje profilu gosta destinacije. U radu se analizira kvalitet web stranica kao novih alata koji obezbeđuju interaktivni pristup potencijalnim kupcima. Istraživanje obuhvata 11 hrvatskih odredišta, obalnih i kontinentalnih, kako bi se analizirao i utvrdio nivo standardizacije kvaliteta online marketinga. Fokus istraživanja su službene stranice turističkih zajednica zbog njihove funkcije destinacijskih menadžment kompanija. Odredišta uključena u istraživanje su: Zagreb, Split, Dubrovnik, Opatija, Osijek, Zadar, Šibenik, Varaždin, Plitvice, Hvar i Rijeka. Potvrđeno je da Web struktura ne ispunjava zahteve savremenih turista po izabranim kategorijama. Primjerice, web stranica destinacije Šibenik daje informacije samo na hrvatskom jeziku. Osim toga, utvrđeno je da pored nepostojanja zajedničke domene ne postoji opšte prihvaćen vizualni identitet koji će se pratiti. Platforme stranica nemaju zajednički sistem ili alat. Procena ukazuje da samo web stranica Zagreb nudi direktan buking, što dokazuje da je destinacija u skladu sa savremenim trendovima online marketinga. Postoji jaka, pozitivna i statistički značajna veza između kvaliteta internet stranica odabranih turističkih destinacija i broja dolazaka turista u te destinacije. Iz perspektive web dizajnera, ovo istraživanje bi trebalo da pomogne u budućem procesu razvoja, kako bi se definisali poslovni ciljevi, kontekst i bazni scenariji korišćenja.

**KLJUČNE REČI:** turističko tržište, nove tehnologije, online marketing, destinacija, kvalitet, standardizacija.

Article history: Received: 3 July 2013  
Accepted: 29 September 2013