Developing Tourism Web Service for Russian Tourists: Case Moi Helsinki

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2014 Kerava

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Degree Program in Tourism
Bachelor's Thesis
January, 2014

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Year	2014	Pages	43

Tourist behavior and consumption patterns of Russians abroad are relevant topics in today's tourism industry. As the role of social media in travel industry has increased dramatically during recent years, tourism marketing has also moved to the world of social media, creating opportunities for new marketing concepts and forms. In Finland, where Russian tourists form the majority of all foreign visitors, companies still struggle to utilize Russian social media as a marketing tool. The development project introduced in this Bachelor's thesis offers a new concept that can hopefully be beneficial for all Finnish companies willing to approach Russian consumers.

The aim of this Bachelor's thesis is to develop a new tourism web service for Russian tourists in Finland. The idea of Moi Helsinki project is to offer Russian audience reliable and trustworthy reviews of products and services in Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Moi Helsinki project is property of Finnish travel organizer My Suomi Ltd, who is the commissioner of this thesis.

The theoretical framework includes relevant data related to three subjects: social media, social media in Russia, and Russian tourist behavior. Review of various social media concepts is directly related to the development of Moi Helsinki concept. Information on social media in Russia was utilized when deciding on the implementation form of Moi Helsinki web service. Russian tourism behavior, in its turn, was studied when developing the content for the web service. Main concepts related to Social media phenomena are presented mostly through literature review. Russian social media and Russian tourism behavior are studied by means of media scanning and include the latest data available.

The development process described in this paper is presented in chronological order, from development of project's idea to concept implementation. Development process has resulted in a ready-to-use project implementation plan utilized by My Suomi Ltd. As at the moment Moi Helsinki service still has not been launched online, there is no possibility to present and review the outcomes of the project. However, this paper reviews the current state of the project and suggests topics for project's further development.

Keywords: social media, Russian tourists, marketing

Table of contents

1   Introduction

1.1   Background of Moi Helsinki Project Idea

The goal of this thesis is to develop a new web service for the travel organizer My Suomi Ltd. The demand for a new web service arises from the My Suomi's intention to raise the awareness of company's travel services among Russian audience.

Russian tourists in Finland are a phenomenon that has significant positive impact on Finland's economy. Many Finnish companies are willing to approach Russian tourists due to their high purchasing power. However, when it comes to the effective marketing methods targeting Russian consumers in Finland, companies face numerous challenges. Project described in this thesis attempt to develop a new marketing tool that would be effective with Russian consumers and stimulate their consumption of products and services in Finland.

The idea of the Moi Helsinki project is to offer Russian audience reliable trustworthy reviews of products and services in Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Primary short-term goal of the project is to serve as a marketing channel for company's primary travel services by bringing traffic to My Suomi's Russian web pages. In case the project reaches this goal, it will be commercialized and used as a marketing platform for Finnish companies targeting Russian customers.

My Suomi Ltd is a commissioner of this thesis and has purchased all the rights to use Moi Helsinki brand and development strategy described in this thesis.

1.2   Thesis' Structure

The theoretical framework for the Moi Helsinki project development serves to support the project idea. It consists of three parts, each equally important for understanding the background of the project idea.

The first part of the framework studies Social Media phenomenon. It embraces such concepts relevant to this project as social networking sites and blogs, social media marketing, social media in tourism. This part is strongly related to the development of Moi Helsinki concept.

The second part deals with the data on Social media in Russia and provides closer view on popular Russian social network Vk.com and Russian blogosphere. This part highlights the scale of social media in Russia and serves to prove that the form of implementation of Moi Helsinki service is suitable for achieving project's goals.

The third part is dedicated to Russian tourism behavior. It includes statistical information on Russians traveling abroad and as well highlights of Russian tourist behavior in Finland. Information presented in this chapter was utilized when developing the content for Moi Helsinki web service.

The empirical part of the thesis represents Moi Helsinki project development process. It describes the process in chronological order; from developing project idea to project's current state. Development process has resulted into ready-to-use project implementation plan utilized by My Suomi Ltd.

Figure 1 below demonstrates the structure of this thesis. Responsive to the topic of the project, text boxes that form the theoretical background of the project are presented in a form of tag clouds, which are typical search tools for blogs and other social media channels.

Part 1 **Part 2** **Part 3**

web 2.0 *consumer relations*

marketing   tourism

SOCIAL MEDIA

Blogs **Facebook**

TripAdvisor

Vk.com   statistics

Blogs

RUSSIAN SOCIAL MEDIA

Rapid growth

Outbound travel

Finland   shopping

RUSSIAN TOURIST
BAHAVIOUR

consumption

Tax-free

Developing tourism web-service for Russian tourists:
Moi Helsinki

Project idea → **Concept development and refining** → **Current state of Moi Helsinki** → **Suggestions for further research and development**
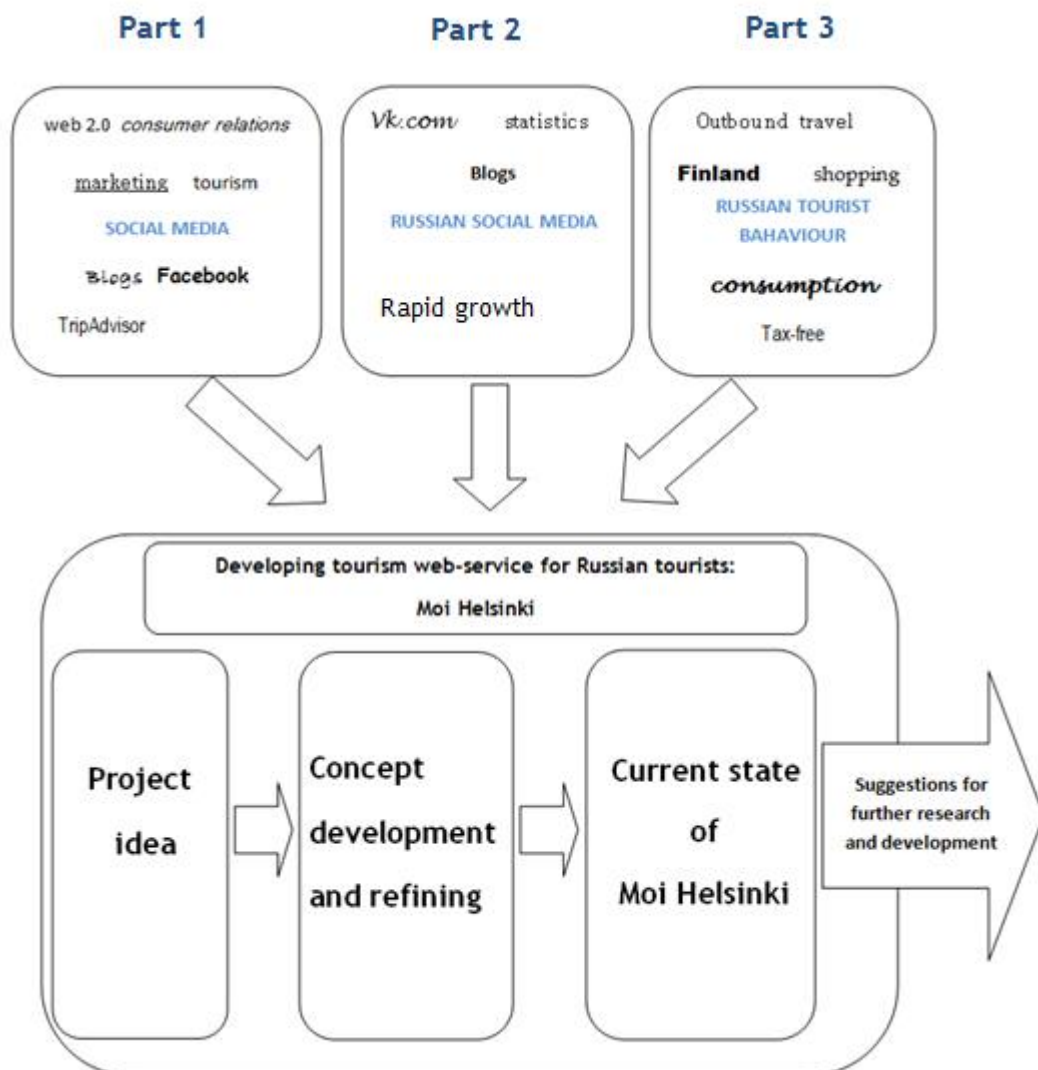
Figure 1: Thesis' structure

1.3   Commissioning Company

Commissioner of this thesis work is a Finnish travel organizer My Suomi Oy. Office of the company is situated in Hietalahti, Helsinki. My Suomi operates on tourism market since 2006. For 6 years company has been offering unique tours and various travel services to Japanese customers in Japanese language. In the end of year 2011 My Suomi started to cooperate with one of the biggest business-travel companies in Russia and operate as a seminar organizer for large groups of Russian professionals in different fields. All together in 2012 - 2013 My Suomi organized 16 group seminars in fields of education, engineering, construction and social infrastructure in Finland. Each seminar hosted from 11 to 35 visitors. Usually participants are high-ranked representatives of ministries, professionals unions, leading professionals of various companies and institutions. Each seminar organized by My Suomi includes meetings with high-ranked authorities in certain field, as well as practical visits to operating units depending on the theme of seminar: schools and kindergartens, hospitals and elderly homes, construction sites etc. Thus, participants are able to get reliable and complete information on the subject of the seminar.

Organizing group seminars for Russian special interest groups brings significant profit to the company. Volumes tend to be large in comparison to services for Japanese individual travelers. However, as My Suomi is a small privately-owned company, expanding the business of special interest seminars to Russian consumers was not possible until now due to weak financial state of the company. There were no marketing activities undertaken, even the web page in Russian language did not exist.

Realizing its expertise and uniqueness of provided services, My Suomi intends to create own Russian web site and develop a web-service which would serve as a marketing tool for company's main services and create strong awareness of My Suomi as a business tourism professional among Russian audience.

Recognizing the potential of the concept described in this thesis, My Suomi also sees the possibility to develop the concept into a profit-generating marketing channel for Finnish service providers that aim to approach Russian consumers.

2   Social Media: Main Concepts

In the following subchapters author introduces the key concepts on social media in frames of this development project. Thus, this part of thesis' theoretical framework covers subjects such as social media phenomenon, blogs, social networking sites, social media marketing and social media in tourism. The author acknowledges that social media can be interpreted in a

different way than in this particular case and that is covers much more various concepts. However, this chapter includes only those concepts that are relevant and significant for this particular development project.

2.1   Understanding Social Media Phenomenon

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the era of Social Media as we understand it today started already in 1990s, when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded "Open diary", an early Social networking site that brought together online diary writers into one community. At the same time the term "weblog" was first used, and truncated as "blog" a year later when one blogger jokingly transformed the noun "weblog" into the sentence "we blog". Later on, the growing availability of high-speed Internet access added to the popularity of the concept, leading to the creation of social networking sites such as MySpace (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004). This, in turn, coined the term "Social Media", and contributed to the prominence it has today.

A formal definition of Social Media requires distinguishing two other related concepts: Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. The term Web 2.0 was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilize the World Wide Web - content and applications being no longer published by individuals, but instead continuously modified by all users. Although Web 2.0 does not refer to any specific technical update of the World Wide Web, there are some functionalities that are necessary for its functioning. Among them are Adobe Flash (a method for adding animation, interactivity, and audio/video streams to web pages), Really Simple Syndication, also known as RSS (a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content), and AJAX - Asynchronic Java Script, a technique to retrieve data from web servers asynchronously, allowing easy update of web content. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010.) In the context of this thesis Web 2.0 is considered as a platform for Social Media evolution.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasize that while Web 2.0 represents ideological and technological foundation, User Generated Content can be seen as a sum of all ways to make use of Social Media. The term which became popular in year 2005, is usually applied to describe various forms of media content that are freely available to public and created by end-users.

In its turn, the term Social Media implies a group of Internet-based applications that build on foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Heinlein 2010).

Agresta, Bough and Miletsky (2010, 2) argue that the key concept behind social media is that

it is shared with those that one identifies as friends or followers. Thus, it forms an inner cir-cle (which can in fact be quite large) that has opted in to view any content or information you opt to share, thereby making it the act of being social online. Social media often consists of extending one's personal identity into a setting where it is observed by others who have chosen to pay attention to you. "In this respect, social media is much like attending a dinner party. Indeed, many of the same rules of societal participation at dinner parties apply. You don't want to be the person running around with a lampshade on your head or, worse yet, the one that no one wants to talk to and politely wanders off to the appetizer table." (Agresta & al. 2010, 2)

According to Evans (2008, 31), social media involves a natural, genuine conversation between people about something of mutual interest, a conversation built on the thoughts and experi-ences of the participants. It is about sharing and arriving at a collective point, often for the purpose of making a better or more-informed choice.

2.2   Blogs and Social Networking Web Sites

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), blogs represent the earliest form of Social Media. Blogs are special types of websites that usually display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order. They are the Social Media equivalent of personal web pages and can come in different variations, from personal diaries to relevant information in one specific content area.

Many blogs focus on a particular topic, such as web design, home staging, sports, or mobile technology. Some are more eclectic, presenting links to all types of other sites. And others are more like personal journals, presenting the author's daily life and thoughts. (WordPress 2013)

As Weil (2006, 1-3) states, corporate blogging is the use of blogs to further organizational goals. In other words, it is a communications and marketing channel. On a practical level, blogs are more engaging than static Web-sites. They offer something new to read, view or listen to almost every time you visit. They offer a way to interact online that's easy and quick. Today, forward-looking corporate Web-sites are including their blog as part of their site's core design and/or including a prominent link from the home page. (Weil 2006, 6-7.)

A blog is the best way to bring traffic to a Web site. This is especially in case rolling out a new Web site that needs to establish its presence. (MMI Public Relations 2012) Moreover, blog offers an efficient way to alert interested readers every time something new is added without using e-mail. (Weil 2006, 6-7.)

Like other forms of content marketing, corporate blogging can help businesses boost their web presence in terms of Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, and distributing headlines can drive engagement while helping build a social media presence. Sharing headlines of newly posted blogs on social networks is likely to improve traffic to these pages and improve the overall accessibility of businesses, giving them a voice in their respective industries. (Brafton 2012.)

As Vagner (2012) states, the effective corporate blog does not need to be a complete information resource. It should rather jump-start the conversation and spark an interest in the subject matter and your brand. Ultimately, it should serve as a key lead generator and a gateway to long-term customer relationships.

Social networks are groups of people, or communities, who share a common interest, perspective or background. However, nowadays online services such as Facebook make the communities easier to find, and communications are done interactively via social media. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 26.)

In its turn, social networking sites are applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending instant messages between each other. These personal profiles can include any type of information, such as photos, video- and audio files and blogs. (Kaplan & Heinlein 2010.)

Tuten (2008, 33-34) emphasizes that social networks have grown in popularity from their ability to provide a platform for information sharing, communication, and relationship development and maintenance. "Social networks are participatory, conversational and fluid. Members produce, publish, control, comment, rank and interact with online content." (Tuten 2008, 33-34.)

2.3   Social Media Marketing

This chapter will describe social media as a marketing tool, and social networks as marketing channels. As well, this chapter explains why social media marketing is vital for companies.

As today's consumers can be segmented to special niche markets, social media is a usable channel for reaching these niches, which traditional mass media often neglects to reach. Social media enables people to interact in the niche groups of like-minded people. Therefore for marketers it is important to become part of the group. (Gillin 2009, 26.)

According to Weber (2009, 22-24), with social web the control of information shifted from marketers to consumers. The explosion of media choice has undermined the mass marketing model because it is dramatically harder to put together a mass audience than it was when everyone you wanted to reach watching just three television networks. Today, the computer and mobile phones allow consumers to find what they want when they want it. Lately, the explosive growth of the social web has changed the marketer´s role from a "broadcaster", pushing out messages and materials, to an "aggregator", who brings together content, enables collaborations, and builds and participates in communities.

Social media can be used effectively through participation and influence, not command and control - one can only choose whether or not join the community there. As such, for companies aiming for long-term success, not participating is not an option. (Evans 2008, 35.)

Evans (2008, 37) argues that knowing how to "influence the crowd" effectively one can create a significant and defensible market position based on solid social acceptance. The Social Web is all about what ones' community of supporters can do to help building business.

The core of marketing in a social media is to become part of a consumer community. Doing successful marketing in an online network requires the companies to get their brand and product to be part of the customer's online experience. In order to achieve that position, the companies need to engage themselves with their current and potential customers and interact with them. Social media as a marketing platform gives the marketer great advantage when the visitors of the platform are engaged to participate and produce material through various contests, games and reviews. (Gillin 2009, 231.)

Murray (2011, 12) mentions that as applying any kind of new marketing tool into practice, also the use of social media in marketing needs careful planning and preparations. When the most suitable network has been chosen, preparation of a plan and the actual content for the network takes place. "Having a content ready and creating a schedule for its release is the ideal way to make sure you have something to contribute once you join the social media of your choosing." A way to get familiar with the network communicating style is to do research on what other people and companies and competitors are sharing. One must keep in mind that marketing in social media as any other kind of marketing. Marketing actions must be published regularly in order to appear as an active user, show the meaning of the social media relations and keep the followers, the customers interested. (Murray 2011, 15.)

Social media is beneficial for companies when used as an e-marketing tool together with other marketing methods. Marketing in social media compliments and supports other marketing

methods, but, however, does not replace them. Social media marketing provides easiness of sharing content to other users and commenting on the self-created content as well as content created by others. Using social media as a marketing tool improves the image of a company and helps to create awareness among consumers. (Leino 2012, 120.)

Paker (2011, 5.) argues that social media marketing, when done correctly, brings the company improved visibility in online search results, improved and more efficient customer service, better brand awareness among the consumers, improved relations with media, improved recruitment prospects and devoted customers.

2.4   Social Media in Tourism

Social media has a huge impact on every industry across the world and travel is no exception. Social media is a powerful tool for consumers planning trips and can be an even more effective tool for destination marketers striving to drive new visitors. (LeadSift 2013.)

According to Samiljan (2012), social media is having a major impact on travel industry. For many travelers, social media has become an invaluable tool for virtually every part of planning and taking a trip. Along with millions of other consumers, online travelers have fully embraced social media, and social networking is one of the most powerful forces driving travel today (PhoCusWright 2012).

According to Chome (2013), travelers do not appear to engage in social networks with the primary intent of actually booking travel. While customers may research trips and find inspiration, purchases on social media are rarer.

An infographich by Four Pillars Hotels (2012) shows that social media nowadays plays a key part in the consumers travel experience from researching on holiday destination to hotel booking. Thus, 70 percent of global consumers say consumer reviews are the second most trusted form of advertising after recommendations from friend and family. 52 percent of Facebook users said their friends' photos inspired their choice and travel plans; Of those who used social media to research travel plans only 48 percent stuck with their original choice; other 33 percent have changed their hotel, 7 percent – destination, 10 percent – resorts, 5 percent – airlines.

It is also worth mentioning that the influence of Twitter grows far beyond the social network, as "users are likely to blog, post reviews, comment on news stories and participate in discussion forums". (Exact Target 2010.)

A great example of social media being used in tourism industry is the worlds' largest travel site TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor branded sites make up the largest travel community in the world, with more than 260 million unique monthly visitors, and over 125 million reviews and opinions covering more than 3.1 million accommodations, restaurants and attractions. The sites operate in 34 countries worldwide. Site enables travelers to plan and have the perfect trip. TripAdvisor offers trusted advice from real travelers and a wide variety of travel choices and planning features with seamless links to booking tools. (TripAdvisor 2013.)

For destinations and hotels TripAdvisor offers a way to promote services, connect with customers and monitor the quality of services. Besides that being present on the free platform can optimize companies' search engine rankings, leverage customer satisfaction and according to the latest statistics also increases the number of bookings. (SparkLoft 2013.) Rise and growth of the TripAdvisor are phenomenal, as average unique visit rate of well in excess 50 million during year 2012 (Bdaily 2013). Forbes even takes it one step further and predicts a revenue growth to 1.3 Billion until 2016 (SparkLoft 2013).

3 Russian Social Media

3.1 Russian Social Media Overview

In frames of this development project Russian social media is being interpreted as social networking websites within Runet. Runet is Russian Internet sector. There are few relevant definitions of Runet, but in context of this certain project author defines Runet as Russian-speaking Internet (Russian SEO & SEM 2011). Thus, Russian social media includes social networking web sites in Russian language.

Russia is embracing social media at lightning speed. They are adopting social media at a more rapid rate than most other countries around the world. For global brands looking to expand their social media presence to Russia, there are now, more than ever, tremendous opportunities in tapping into this newly hyper social culture. (Synthesio 2013.)

There are only 20% of active social media users within its population, but the Russians who are connected to the internet spend more time on social networks than in any other country in the world – especially on their own local sites. Although Russians are active on Facebook and Twitter, the world-known sites from the West take a backseat to the more popular local Russian sites – VKontakte.ru, and Odnoklassniki. The largest social network in Russia, Vkontakte, is very similar to Facebook, and it's become extremely popular on account of its integrated file sharing which allows users to post music and videos directly onto the site. It actually rivals YouTube as the most popular video hosting platform in Russia. Odnoklassniki is the

second largest social media site in Russia, designed for reconnecting with old classmates and friends. Russians have become a hyper social culture, and have truly embraced social media – but for brands, listening and engagement practices are still at their early stages. Most companies have only started to engage to these practices less than a year ago. However, the country has some strong innovators and web entrepreneurship is booming – we can certainly expect large global brands and innovative small businesses to launch social media initiatives that will set an example to others. (Synthesio 2013.) Figure 2 illustrates rating of Top 5 social networking sites in Russia in terms of unique visitors and average time spent on site.
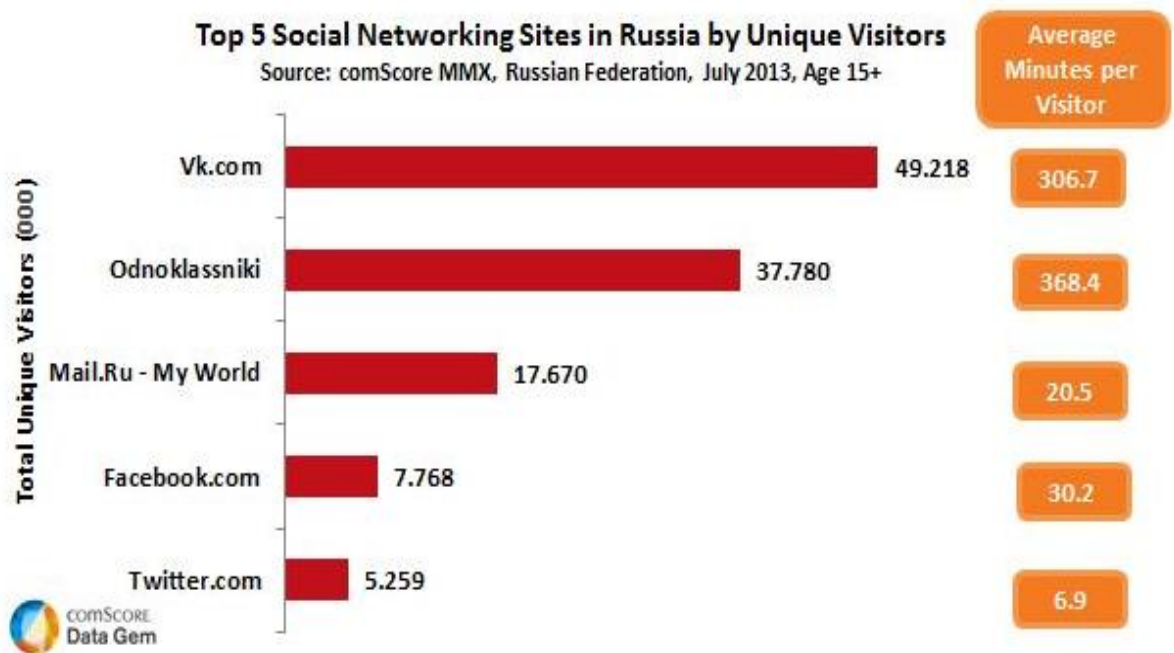

Figure 2: Top 5 Social Networking Sites in Russia (comScore Data mine 2013)

According to ComScore Data Mine (2013), in July 2013 various social networking web sites in Russia were visited by nearly 56 million internet users, which is 85% of the total online population in Russia. Taking the top spot was Vk.com with 49.2 million unique visitors that month.

3.2   VK.com

Vkontakte (in Russian Вконтакте, «in touch») is a popular Russian social network. According to Wikipedia (2013a), VKontakte is the second biggest social network service in Europe after Facebook, it is available in several languages but popular particularly among Russian-speaking users around the world, especially in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Belarus, and Israel. Like other social networks, VK allows users to message contacts publicly or privately, create groups, public pages and events, share and tag images, audio and video, and play browser-based games.

Sometimes wrongly dismissed as just another Facebook clone, Vkontakte has an incredible level of engagement with its users (AdAge Global 2012). In January 2013 VK.com attracted 50.5 million users of 12 to 64 years of age in Russia, or 47.5% of the country's population of the same age group. The popular social network occupied third place among the Top 10 Russian websites. (East-West Digital News 2013). According to comScore data Mine (2013), only in July 2013 Vk.com had 49.2 million unique visitors.

However, currently Vk.com is an absolute market leader in Russia in terms of audience. It has 44 million users across the country, versus 12.8 million on Facebook (The Voice of Russia 2013). However, Odnoklassniki is an absolute leader in terms of average time spent on site with six hours per month, which is 12 times the average spent on Facebook by Russian users. Vk.com comes second in this rating, with slightly over 5 hours a month. (comScore data Mine 2013.)

On a global scale, Vkontakte now ranks seventh, and it attracts more than 40% of its traffic from outside Russia. Experts believe the site's European dominance could be hard to dethrone (it's number two in Europe). Facebook now shows steady growth in nearly every geographic region except the US, Canada and Europe. In the US this is mostly attributed to saturation of the market, but with people like Hollywood star Tom Cruise setting up their pages on Vkontakte, chances are high that more users from all over the world will be following this example and joining the social media brand made in Russia. (The Voice of Russia 2013)

3.3   Blogs

According to annual analysis conducted by Yandex (2009), 70 % of all Russian-speaking blogs and 76 % of all active blogs are hosted on four web services: LiveJournal.com, Blogs.Mail.ru, Ya.ru and LiveInternet.ru (fig. 2). LiveInternet is leading with a large margin in the number of blogs previous years.

70 % of all Russian-speaking blogs and 76 % of all active blogs are hosted on four web services: LiveJournal.com, Blogs.Mail.ru, Ya.ru and LiveInternet.ru. LiveInternet is leading with a large margin in the number of blogs. Every day bloggers make about a million blog entries in Russian — about 300,000 posts and about 700,000 comments. (Yandex 2009)

However, Yandex has discontinued publishing annual analysis of Russian blogosphere in 2009, as it caused such blogging activity that aimed purely to put blogs on top of Yandex rating. Thus, since 2009 there is no precise statics available on Russian blogosphere.

As for year 2011, with four million accounts and about 20 million visits daily, LiveJournal is

one of the most popular Russian blogging platforms and social networks (RT.com 2011). LiveJournal is a social network owned by SUP Media where Internet users can keep a blog, journal or diary (Wikipedia 2013b). Originally started in the US, LiveJournal became very appealing to Russian audiences (RT.com 2011).

According to Brand Analytics (2013), within last three years amount of Russian internet users owning and account in LiveJournal has decreased from 9 to 5 percent. Such situation might look as a downfall of LiveJournal, especially when other social networks steadily grow. However, amount of audience of Live Journal is being stable. Thus, nothing predicts distinction of blogosphere in Russia. During past few years Russian blogosphere has shown tendency to become more and more professional. There are still thousands of regularly updated popular blogs, moreover, top blogs are being successfully commercialized, and in terms of content and amount of readers they start to look more like large mass media sources.

4   Russian Tourist Behavior

As a result of constant growth of Russian economy, country's outbound tourism is growing accordingly. Tourism behavior and consumption patterns of Russians abroad are a relevant topic in today's tourism industry around the world.

20 years ago, in the time of the Soviet Union, Russians were banned from travelling abroad. In 1995 only 2.6 million Russians went on holiday outside the former Soviet Union; by 2006 this figure had trebled to 7.7 million. (Dynamic Export 2012.) Continuing to grow rapidly to this day, the number of Russians traveling abroad amounted to 24 million during the first half of 2013, of which 8.5 million travelled for the purpose of tourism (Federal Agency for Tourism 2013)

Table 1 presents 10 most visited outbound tourism destinations for Russian travelers in year 2012 based on statistics of Federal Agency for Tourism (2012):

№	Country	Amount of Russian tourists in 2012
1	Turkey	2 516 136
2	Egypt	1 906 637
3	China	1 328 850
4	Thailand	885 113
5	Spain	792 084
6	Germany	713 096
7	Greece	690 412

8	Italy	570 764
9	UAE	549 382
10	Finland	512 547

Table 1: Most visited outbound tourism destination (Federal Travel agency 2012)

Apart from the big volume of Russians travelling overseas, they are also amongst the world's largest spenders. Travel operators report that Russians spend on average US$1,000 per head on their holidays. 72 percent of Russian tourists pay for their holidays in cash. (Dynamic Export 2012.)

According to the research conducted by Citi Bank (2013), by the end of 2013 Russian credit card spending abroad will aim at 1,7 trillion rubles.
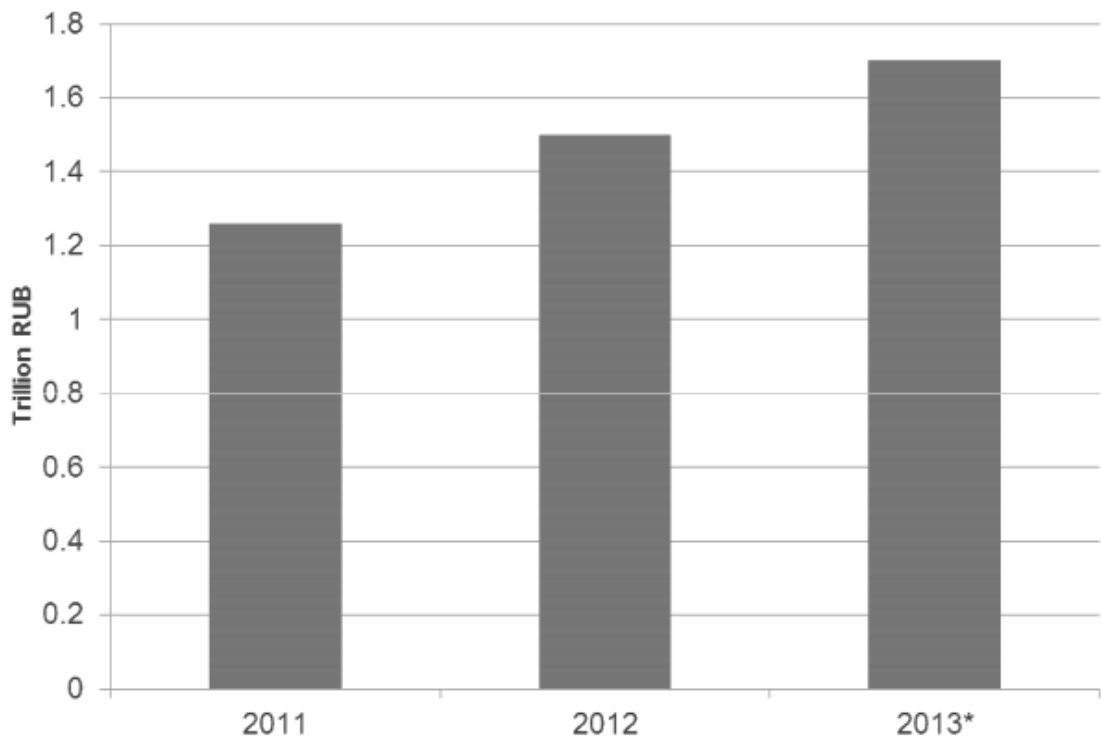

Figure 3: Russian credit card expenditures abroad in 2013 (Citi Bank 2013)

Consumer 360 (2013) reports that the vast majority of Russians shop for products they intend to use in the short term. Only 5 percent shop with future buying intentions in mind — half the global average rate. One quarter of Russians shop to satisfy an immediate need, and half (47%) shop to buy things to use that day.

According to Mek (2013), only 29 percent of Russian tourists travelling abroad speak English even at basic level. Thus, offering Russian tourist services in Russian language is likely to improve customer's experience. Russian customers tend to have various additional questions on products and services. In case customer has opportunity to do it in his native language, decision-making process becomes easier and purchase is more likely to be made.

4.1   Russian Tourists in Finland

In 2012 there were 3,6 million Russian tourists visiting Finland, which constitutes 45 percent of all foreign visitors (and about 2 percent of total Russian population). From 2011 the amount of Russian tourists visiting Finland grew by 10 percent. (VisitFinland 2013a.) In Finland, Lappeenranta, Helsinki and Imatra are the most favorite destinations for Russian visitors. (Kauppalehti 2012.)

Majority (80 percent) of Russian tourists in 2012 came from St.-Petersburg region. In 2012 there was over 1, 5 million registered night stays, which was 26 percent of all foreign tourists' overnight stays. (Statistics Finland 2012.) According to Helsinki Expert (2011) 57 percent of tourists from St.-Petersburg in 2011 were planning to visit Finland again within upcoming two years, and 23 percent were likely to do that.

According to the research conducted by TAK Oy (2012) during year 2012 Russian travelers have spent in Finland 1,153 billion Euros. 879 million was spent on products, the rest (274 million) – to various services. Russian tourists are highly satisfied with customer service in Finland, safe and pleasant environment. About half of all interviewees (nearly 4000) search for the information about travel destination before the trip. Internet is clearly the most used information channel. Travelers usually look for information using search engines and social media. About 60 percent of Russian travelers with Internet access are registered in social network Vkontakte, also known as Vk.com.

According to Weaver (2012), shopping opportunities form a major attraction in Finland for the westbound Russians. Russian tourists come to Finland on shopping trips because of the high quality and attractive prices of branded goods in Finnish retail stores.

Apart from that, Russian visitors praise the provision of friendly service in their own language in Finnish Lapland and south east Finland. However, poor Russian language skills in the service sector across the metropolitan Helsinki region are the target of some criticism. (Yle 2013a.)

Although Russians only stay for an average of 1.4 nights, they spend more per day than almost any other tourist nationality, and account for about a third of all the money spent by Fin-

land's foreign visitors. (This is Finland 2012.)

Only in Lappeenranta tax free sales in February 2013 were about EUR 7.2 million, which was an increase of 11 percent from the year before. Tax free retail sales in the whole of Finland went up by 12 percent in February. The leading cities for tax free shopping in Finland are Lappeenranta, Helsinki and Imatra. (Invest in Finland 2013.)

5   Development Project: Case Moi Helsinki

5.1   Developing Project Idea

For the first time author came up with the idea of a blog for Russian audience interested in Finland in spring 2013. The idea was born after the decision to create a web site in Russian language for My Suomi Ltd. Realizing that a static web page requires intensive marketing and is less effective in terms of visibility in search engines; author considers creating a corporate blog that would support or possibly even replace a static corporate web-site.

Author's original idea of a blog was considerably different from the final concept of Moi Helsinki project. Corporate blog was meant to include mainly information on company's services for Russian customers, such as upcoming professional seminars, and information about Finland as destination for special interest groups. The idea of a blog was supported by My Suomi's managing director and implementation process was about to start.

However, in a little while one of Finland's most read media magazines (later MM) gets interested in a project and wills to take part in it. Considering that a media expertise would be a big advantage in a start-up blog project, My Suomi agrees to develop and implement a project in collaboration with a media partner. Media partner is also willing to support the project financially, which is very appealing for My Suomi, as small turnover of a company cannot ensure desirable investments into a new project.

Negotiations on a blog project started In June 2013. During the meetings representatives of both parties are present: thesis' author and managing director from My Suomi side, and editor-in-chief, journalists and web-designers from MM side. During the meetings parties discuss on project's concept, which is naturally going through changes as now it has to satisfy MM's requirements as well.

During the expert meetings layout and possible content of the blog project, target audience and marketing strategy are being discussed. During one of the first meetings parties also agree on projects name: "Moi Helsinki". This name is chosen as it is easy to read and pro-
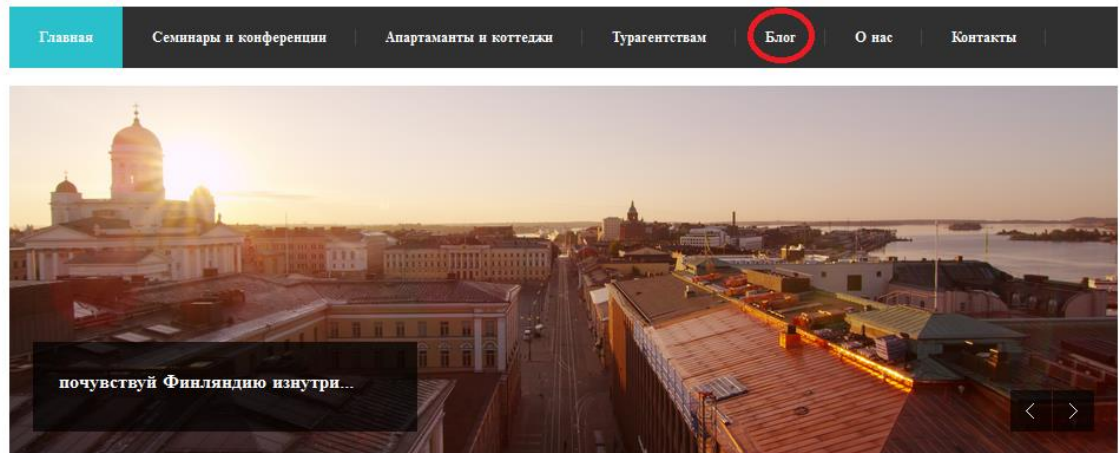
nounce in Russian, is memorable and recognizable and simple enough to enter into search engines. It also well represents the content of a blog, as in Russian it means "My Helsinki".

Already after few meeting it is obvious that negotiating parties have a different vision of a project and its outcomes. That is when author insists on involving an outsider-consultant (later OC) into the project. Together with the OC author proves that MM's concept of the project will not lead to desirable outcomes. The new concept needs to be developed. That is when author comes up with a new and final concept of a Moi Helsinki project. Both My Suomi Ltd and MM are highly satisfied with the concept, as they see it as a potential profit generating marketing channel for Finnish companies. Author presents projects' marketing plan which is approved by both parties and later purchased.

By October 2013 domain www.moihelsinki.fi is purchased and a web platform for Moi Helsinki is created. My Suomi registers accounts with the name "Moi Helsinki" in social networks Vk.com (Attachment 2), LiveJournal and Instagram. Instagram is a simple photo-/video sharing application that enables users to take pictures and videos, apply digital filters to them, and share them on a variety of social networking services (Business Insider 2011). First posts are ready to be published.

However, the negotiations on potential profit shares between My Suomi Ltd and MM lead to strong disagreement, and soon after MM quits the projects. My Suomi intends to develop and implement the project on its own, but due to lack of finances and big loads of work with company's primary services Moi Helsinki project freezes.

In the end of October 2013 My Suomi decides to build a web site named Моя Финляндия (rus., My Finland) for Russian audience and plans to integrate Moi Helsinki blog page within the web site. On 9.12.2013 web-site is still under development.

Figure 4: Shortlinks to Moi Helsinki in the layout of Moyafinlandia.fi homepage

Moi Helsinki will also be integrated with other social media networks, which will enable mutual traffic flow between My Suomi web site and social networks, and, as result, create a readership at My Suomi web site.
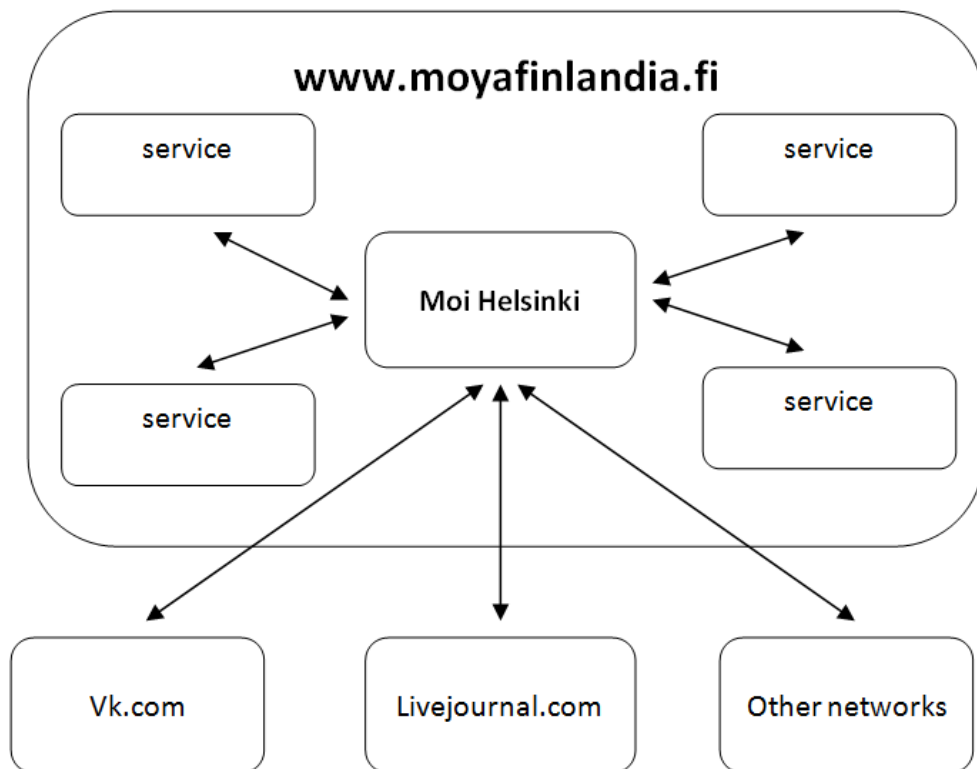
Figure 5: Traffic distribution between www.moyafinlndia.fi and social networking sites

5.2   Concept Development and Refining

5.2.1   Researching on Existing Finland-related Web Sources

After coming up with the idea of a blog, an empty niche on the Russian Finland-related web had to be defined. In order to find the existing web sources, possible partners and competitors of Moi Helsinki, research on Russian Finland-related web sources was conducted. Full table of Finland-related Internet sources in Russian language is presented in Attachment 1. Finland related sources on the Russian web were searched by means of the search engines Yandex, which is Russian most popular search engine generating 62 percent of all search traffic in Russia (Yandex 2014), Google and social network Vk.com. All sources were divided into three categories: corporate web-pages and blogs; personal blogs; groups and communities in social media.

Category "Corporate web pages and blogs" covers various sources published on own internet platform. Category includes both static web pages and blogs, as difference in content and even layout between them is not significant. Sources under this category are owned, sponsored and produced by companies or organizations.

"Personal blogs" category presents non-profit blogs produced by private people. Blogs in this category are not sponsored by companies or organizations.

Category "Groups and communities in social media" covers various public accounts placed within social networking sites Vk.com and LiveJournal. Within Vk.com two types of public accounts are present – public pages and groups. While main purpose of public page in Vk.com is to keep readers updated with current news, groups are meant to serve as a discussion platform for readers. One more difference between these two types of accounts is the way they can be "followed": groups can be joined by vk.com users, and current group members can invite their friends to join the group as well. In its turn, pages cannot be joined; the only way to follow public page is to "like" it. Biggest advantage of public page is that it can be easily integrated to any outer web sites by adding "Like" – button. At the same time, groups are more effective in terms of user generated content. (Vk.com 2013)

Category	Amount of active sources	Most significant sources within the category
Corporate web pages and blogs	11	www.stopinfi.ru - Web version of printed journal; offers discounts to services in Finland. Lots of cooperation with Finnish companies, strong presence in social media. www.checkinfinland.ru - Group by the marketing agency, features various articles about Finland www.discoveringfinland.fi - Tourist information from Discovering Finland www.vseohelsinki.ru - Project by Russian company Inlead (information and consulting services) in cooperation with Finnish partners
Personal blogs	4	http://lap-landia.livejournal.com/ - personal blog by Estonian woman living in Finland. Blog features very high-quality text- and picture content. Lots of nature-related posts.
Groups and communities in social media	25	http://stop-in-finland.livejournal.com/ - travel community by Stop in Finland http://ru-finland.livejournal.com/ - Community for those interested in Finland; who wants to live there, work or just visit

Table 2: Existing Finland-related sources on Russian web

After collecting the search results into the table, some of the sources were considered and

marked as not relevant; some were marked as the potential competitors or partners. Full table of Finland related sources on Russian web is presented in Appendix 1.

Based on the search results, following conclusions have been made:

- Information market for Russian tourists is saturated;
- Majority of the available portals are published by Russian travel companies (travel agencies and transportation companies). Information includes advertisement (in a way or another) of their own services, which sometimes defines the way information is presented;
- All of the analyzed portals publish information about upcoming events, attractions, travel tips;
- Language used is mainly promotional: positive, general, often using marketing cliché. Often information in different portals is similar both by content and the style;
- Only Helsinki-centre has blog on their web pages, but it looks as news blog and is updated approx. once a month (last update made in the end of June 2013).

There are no corporate blogs written with a personal touch are available; however, several companies are starting blog activities. Moi Helsinki can have first mover advantage if the blog is developed in cooperation with other info portals. One possibility is to offer blog services to Finland Promotion Board (www.finland.fi) and publish blog on their web pages.

Only 4 personal blogs about Finland were found; one of these blogs is most likely sponsored by Da.fi; and one is not updated since 2010. Remaining two personal blogs about Helsinki and Finland provide authentic texts based on personal reflections and experiences; however, the blogs are more of a general character and do not review services and/or places.

Finland-related communities are strongly presented in www.vk.com. The most popular Finland-related communities in vk.com are the ones owned by transport companies and travel agencies (targeted at frequent tourists who often go to Finland and thus need updated information on transfer services). These groups provide also information on products and services, which is attractive to Russian tourists. General news groups about Helsinki have about same readership (between 2000 and 9000 members) and distribute similar kind of information. Presence of Finland-related communities in LiveJournal is not significant.

5.2.2   Identifying an Empty Niche

Based on this research, there are no blogs purely about Finland that function well. All existing sources can be classified on the following dimensions: commercial versus personal texts; level of specification. Based on these dimensions, following segmentation map has been developed:
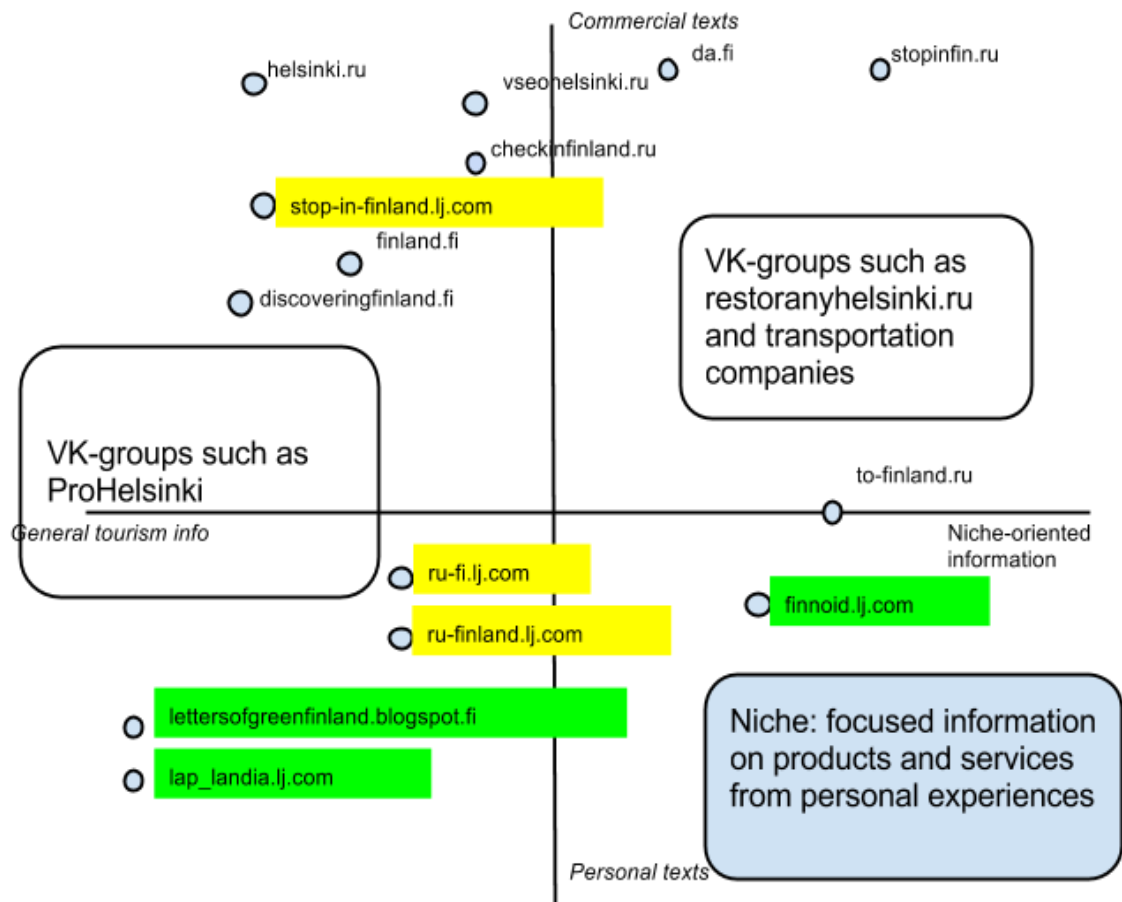
Figure 6: Segmentation of Finland-related web sources in Russian language

As seen on the picture above, market is almost free of competition when it comes to niche-oriented information in a form of personal text. Empty niche that could be covered by Moi Helsinki is marked in blue. Thus, Moi Helsinki can fulfill the gap by offering regularly updated blog with personal touch, featuring content that is both interesting to read and valuable for the audience.

5.2.3 Concept and Vision

In today's consumption society, customers are facing difficulties choosing between similar products and services. Moi Helsinki regularly (2-3 times per week) tests various products and services in Helsinki Metropolitan Area and publishes the results in its blog/on its web page. The main principle of Moi Helsinki - we do not represent any product or service, and our reviews only serve the interests of our readers.

Moi Helsinki is a unique review service of products, services and places in Helsinki and Finland aiming at providing Russian consumers/tourists reliable and personally tested information. Moi Helsinki does not sell or market tested products and services. Project's only intent is to provide fact-based reviews to help customers make their choices.

Moi Helsinki publishes personal reviews which can be sponsored by the service providers or third parties; however, sponsorship does not affect the reliability of the reviews. Authors test, compare, describe and discuss products and services based on own experiences.

For the readers we offer independent, personal and reliable reviews (texts, photos and/or video materials, links to products and services) in HMA.

For Finnish companies project offers an opportunity to create awareness among Russian tourists and thus improve their customer base. Our tests can positively influence consumer market and provide feedback for companies to improve service/product quality.

There are similar concepts functioning successfully in the sector of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). One of them is the Finnish project «Kuningaskuluttaja» (fin., "King consumer"), published both in a form of a TV program and web page integrated into TV channel's web site. (Yle 2013b.) Project tests various FMCG and services, describes and compares them. Project as well features various advices for consumers and consumers' questions answered by experts and producers. Project is present in Facebook.

The other web service based on similar concept is implemented in Russian market, it is FMCG consumer oriented test and review TV- and web project "Контрольная закупка" (rus., «Test purchase»), www.zakupka.tv. In a form of a TV program project daily tests products, usually food, of same range but different producers. Products are first being tested by consumers, then by experts. After comparing the results project names the winner, best product of its range. Reliability of the projects is based on its core principle – serving purely consumers' interests without cooperating with any producers. Web version of the project features results of tests, lists of best products of its categories and other relevant content, e.g. recipes and price monitor for different FMCG distributors. As well, consumers can suggest own ideas for tests. Zakupka.tv is present in Twitter, Vk.com, and Odnoklassniki. Producer (TV channel "1TV") describes "Test purchase" as a unique project of social orientation and one of the most successful projects in the history of the channel. (1TV 2013; Контрольная закупка 2013)

5.2.4   Implementation

In order to reach its primary short-term goal and bring traffic to Моя Финляндия web site, Moi Helsinki needs to establish strong readership and trustworthy image among readers.

In order to achieve that, strong presence in social media must be established. Following social networks were chosen for project's implementation for few significant reasons. First, as specified earlier in theoretical part of this thesis, Vk.com and LiveJournal are extremely popular social networks in Russia. These two social networks also seem to be suitable in terms of target group – they feature plenty of successfully functioning travel communities, some of which are seen as partners for cooperation. As well, Vk.com has number of useful and easy to use technical features for marketing public accounts. Instagram, in its turn offers an opportunity to publish picture content instantly, without significant time consumption. Table 3 shows the type of presence in different social media channel and frequency of update.

Social media channel	Description	Content	Frequency of update
Vkontakte: Group: Moi Helsinki Public page: Moi Helsinki	Open group for consumers interested in products and services in Finland. Linked to www.moihelsinki.fi. Content-wise no difference between the group and the page	Notices and links to new tests at moihelsinki.fi; articles and photos published at MoiHelsinki.fi + additional material (questionnaires, competitions, short notes, pictures, announcements)	daily
Instagram	A picture a day: own pictures related to Helsinki, mainly phone shots with hash tags	Pictures (not necessarily connected to update in other SM)	daily, up to few times a day
Livejournal.com	User MoiHelsinki publishes same content as at moihelsinki.fi; and participates in travel communities at least 2-3 times per month (one entry per community a month)	Articles and photos published on MoiHelsinki.fi	As often as MoiHelsinki.fi updates

Table 3: Activity in different social media channels

As soon as Moi Helsinki is actively present in social media and gains strong readership, part-nerships with destination marketing organizations must be developed. At least the following forms of media cooperation should be established:

- Possible link exchange with other tourism providers
- Embedding Moi Helsinki blog into tourism web pages
- "guest" posts by Moi Helsinki authors to VisitFinland.com and similar services
- Cross-cooperation with other Finland related establishments in social networks

Apart from that, traditional media should be taken into account when promoting Moi Helsinki and establishing brand's awareness. There are multiple traditional media channels for coop-eration, in author's opinion most effective are the following:

- Metro paper: placing an article about Moi Helsinki even in one issue would create awareness among huge audience, including potential customers – companies targeting Russian consumers
- Periodical literature in Russian language available in Finland, e.g. Novosti-Helsinki
- Printed version of travel magazine STOP in Finland – magazine is being distributed on Finnish-Russian border crossing and targets exactly the right audience
- Printed marketing material for tourists published by Helsinki expert and visit Finland – both target the right audience
- Allegro magazine - travel magazine distributed in express train Allegro on the route St. Petersburg – Helsinki 4 times a day to each direction. This media riches significant amount of readers. Magazine's content and form of distribution targets exactly the right audience

When awareness of Moi Helsinki is established and project attracts desirable traffic to Моя Финляндия web site, sales strategy can be implemented in order to commercialize the pro-ject.

The first step of the strategy requires creation of "tested by Moi Helsinki" logo. In the future such logo placed in marketing material (both digital and printed) targeting Russian tourists will challenge the companies to become "tested".

After the logo is created, commercial offers for potential customers must be made. First of-fers can be done using My Suomi's business network and target company's business coopera-

tion partners – hotels, restaurants, design stores, museums etc. Offers must include full description of service's concept and benefits of using Moi Helsinki as a marketing tool.

Moi Helsinki offers significant benefits for business customers. The fact that projects is positioning itself as "independent" and contains trustworthy reviews written by real consumers makes Moi Helsinki reliable. Being integrated with major Russian social network VK.com and various Finland related web sites Moi Helsinki is actively featuring reliable user-generated content, at the same time it is a corporate project which ensures quality of the content and possibility to control it.

Due to its niche-oriented content and form of implementation Moi Helsinki ensures that companies will reach desired audience – Russian consumers with high purchasing power interested in Finnish goods and services.

Diverse content of the service and various types of update in social media enable numerous options for product and service marketing. Companies can sponsor competitions in social media, place discount coupons on Moi Helsinki page in Vk.com, publish reviews and place traditional banner advertisement on Moi Helsinki blog page.

When first customers accept offer and market their product/service using Moi Helsinki service, they should be offered to place "tested By Moi Helsinki" logo to their web site. Such cross-referencing with tourism service providers will strengthen Moi Helsinki brand and create competition between service providers in same field. Such situation will make Moi Helsinki more desirable and, as a result more, profitable marketing channel.

5.3   Current State of Moi Helsinki

"Most new businesses fail— many don't last a year. Similarly, most new bloggers give up within a year. Blogging is hard work. Most people are ready for the hard work the first few months, but what about 6 or 12 months out?" (Demopoulos 2013, 89)

This question seems quite up-to-date for Moi Helsinki project at the moment. After over six months of development and preparations Moi Helsinki is still not launched. My Suomi intends to launch the blog in near future and blog platform is integrated into company's new web site. However, there is no certainty about the project anymore.

Unfortunately, many significant actions aiming to ensure projects success have not been undertaken. Thus, negotiations with destination marketing units have not taken place. Practicalities of implementation process have not been solved, e.g. there is no clear plan on how to organize enough proper workforces to keep blog and other social media channels regularly

updated and ensure high quality of the content.

Despite many project-related activities still pending, it is clear now that as Moyafinlandia.fi is opened to public, Moi Helsinki will be launched as well. And even though most likely the concept developed in this thesis will not be fully utilized immediately, it is possible to update Moi Helsinki according to it later.

Current state of Moi Helsinki shows that time factor is crucial for small projects. With every delay it gets more and more difficult to start the implementation, and changing circumstances may force to change projects implementation plan or even the whole concept. In case of Moi Helsinki, rescheduling clearly has negatively affected on the project. It is hard to say whether with time Moi Helsinki lost its potential or not, but at least at the moment there is much less certainty about the projects that 6 months ago. Other important factors, such as passion and believe in success, decrease with time as well. However, at the moment it is clear Moi Helsinki will be launched, and time will show whether it will be a well operating concept or not.

6   Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to develop new web-service for Russian tourists in Finland. Concept of the Moi Helsinki project was formed and refined based on literature- and media research on three relevant subjects: social media, social media in Russia, Russian tourist behavior. These three topics are presented in theoretical part of this thesis and serve to prove that project is very topical for the tourism industry, especially in Finland.

Project described in this thesis is still in its initial phase and its outcomes, such as efficiency in terms of marketing and profitability, cannot be predicted.

Author described the project development process in chronological order from concept development to project's implementation and marketing. In this chapter author presents several perspectives on the Moi Helsinki project's evaluation and suggests topics for future research and development.

6.1   Evaluation of Development Project

From authors personal point of view Moi Helsinki is seen as highly successful development project. It turned out to be an effective learning experience, as author has been managing the project on her own throughout the whole process. Author has fully implemented her theoretical knowledge gained during the studies into practice and developed new skills and expertise.

Moi Helsinki received very positive feedback from all projects participants including projects commissioner My Suomi Oy. Thus, project is a successful example of author's job and an important step in her career and professional growth.

It is quite challenging to evaluate Moi Helsinki from commissioner's perspective as project has not been fully utilized yet. However, My Suomi Oy intends to launch the project in near future. My Suomi Oy's managing director Hanna Jämsä sees Moi Helsinki as highly potential projects and believes it will be an effective tool for expanding in Russian market. On the other hand, project cannot be considered fully successful for commissioner. As practice has shown, due to small scale of commissioning company Moi Helsinki is difficult to implement: no human and financial resources may be invested as project does not bring immediate profit.

Moi Helsinki has great potential in terms of providing new opportunities to market Finland to Russian tourists. At the moment there are no similar concepts implemented in tourism market, which makes Moi Helsinki unique. Moreover, as volume of consumption by Russian tourists is extremely high in Finland, Moi Helsinki concept may be especially suitable and effective in this market. Moi Helsinki further developed and implemented accordingly, can become a successful marketing platform promoting Finnish goods and services in a new way, which is much more effective and consumption generating than destination marketing concepts implemented before. In case implemented in cooperation with Finnish major destination marketing organizations, project can influence Finland's destination marketing strategy targeting Russia and increase volume of tourism consumption in Finland.

6.2   Suggestions for Further Research and Development

According to Antti Isokangas (2013), founder and managing director of media consulting agency Ali Consulting, at the moment only 17% of Finnish travel companies use blog as a tool to reach Russian consumers, even though role of blogs in today's Russian cannot be overestimated.

However, destination marketing units, regions, private travel agencies in Finland do put efforts to reach Russian consumers in social media. During year 2013 Finnish Tourism Board has been implementing a massive social media campaign to Russia. European Union sponsored region development project GoSaimaa utilizes Russian social media channels as one the main marketing tools (Ahola 2013). Thus, there is clearly a demand for an effective social media based marketing project targeting Russian consumers in Finland.

At the same time, Finland-marketing content targeting Russians is very similar in most of social media projects and usually can be barely recognized among others. Even sufficiently sponsored campaign by Visit Finland (2013) in Vk.com has fewer than 2700 followers. Such

situation might be signalizing that new social media marketing concept must be undertaken. As Finland's most attraction for Russians is great shopping opportunities, consumption-oriented projects featuring user generated content could be a suitable solution.

Whether it will be implemented or not, the Moi Helsinki concept can serve as a basis for further development aiming to fit it to current market situation. One possible research topic could cover the expectations of Russian travelers from Finland-related content in social media. Research could be implemented in two stages: first quantitative one, unveiling general pattern, and after that qualitative, gaining deeper understanding of consumer's needs.

In case Moi Helsinki is launched in the near future, that would be interesting to research whether or not project has potential to become a destination marketing channel of a bigger scale. Perhaps research can be conducted in cooperation with governmental and municipal destination marketing units.

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Ahola, S. Project manager, goSaimaa. Venäjä - seminaari matkailuyrittäjille 11.12.2013. Loh-
ja.

Figures

Tables

Attachment 1: Table of existing Finland-related Internet sources in Russian language

Corporate web pages and blogs:

Corporate web page/blog	Description	Readership/comments
www.russian.fi www.doska.fi www.kauppatori.ru	The biggest information portal in Russian language about Finland	8000 visitors daily. Most visitors are Russian immigrants already living in Finland *Not seen as direct competitor*
http://to-finland.ru/	Information portal for those planning to visit Finland. Practical information in visas, border crossing, route planning etc. Non-commercial project, but accepts ads to compensate maintenance costs	n/a
http://vseohelsinki.ru/Category/Home/89	Project by Russian company Inlead (information and consulting services) in cooperation with Finnish partners (no information which partners). Has started in May 2013	*Closest competitor to Moi Helsinki.*
http://www.helsinki.ru/helsinki-centre/blog	Blog of the Helsinki-center in St.Petersburg. Project by Helsinki Abroad Ltd Oy	In cooperation with Uudenmaan Liitto and Greater Helsinki Promotion/GHP Ltd Oy. *The only "alive" corporate blog*
http://finland.fi/public/default.aspx?culture=ru-RU&contentlan=15	The only Finnish project for Russian tourists. Produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; published by Finland promotion Board	Also available in Chinese, German, Spanish, English, French and Portuguese. *Potential for cooperation*
da.fi	Big information portal for tourists, work-seekers, business people. Positions itself as "professional and reliable information about life and business in Finland". Calls itself No.1 portal about Finland in Russia	Strong presence in social media
http://www.checkinfinland.ru/	Group by the marketing agency, various articles about Finland. In cooperation with visitfinland.com. Photos owned by VisitFinland.com.	*Closest competitor to Moi Helsinki.* However, they also lack a personal touch in their publications. *Potential for cooperation*
http://www.helsinki-blog.ru/	4 blog posts dated 2010. No information about the publishers.	Last updated in 2010 *Not relevant*

http://www.stopinfin.ru/	E-version of printed journal; offers discounts to services in Finland	
http://www.novosti-helsinki.com	E-version of printed newspaper NOVOSTI HELSINKI (Helsinki news) – is the first Russian-language magazine with current news from Finland.	*Potential for cooperation; not a competitor*
http://www.discoveringfinland.com/ru/	Tourist information from Discovering Finland.	Also available in Finnish, English and German. *Potential for cooperation.*

Personal blogs:

Blog	Description	Readership/comments
http://finnoid.livejournal.com/	Collection of articles about Finland. Not active in lj.	About 800 friends. In cooperation with da.fi - their project? *Not relevant*
http://cloudberryfields.ru/	Blog by a woman who likes Helsinki. Personal style, light and easy to read texts with photos. Information seems reliable, contains external links and facts (such as prices).	Last updated in 2010 *Not relevant*
http://lap-landia.livejournal.com/	Blog by Estonian woman about her life in Finland. Lot of nature-related posts and photos. Blog covers whole Finland.	Over 800 friends, a friend of approx. 1500 users
http://lettersofgreenfinland.blogspot.fi	Blog by Russian woman, text mostly about places. Very simple, hardly has any information that could be interesting for tourists. However, followers comment the posts quite actively. Posts written in both Russian and English.	approx. 110 followers

Groups and communities in social media:

Groups and communities	Description	Readership/comments
Livejournal:		*Descending order*
http://ru-finland.livejournal.com/	Community for those interested in Finland; who wants to live there, work or just visit. Registered in 2004	770 members, over 900 followers
http://ru-fi.livejournal.com/	Community by www.da.fi . News	428 members, 520 follow-

	about Finland. registered in 2007	ers
http://stop-in-finland.livejournal.com/	Community by www.stopinfin.ru Last updated Jul 2013	197 members, 220 followers
http://all-finland.livejournal.com/	Community by www.busline.ru Registered in 2009	Less than 50 members and followers
Vk.com:		
Vk groups		
★Comfort-travel★ Ежедневно в Хельсинки , Финлянд	Group by http://www.com-travel.ru	17000 members
Туры в Финляндию Финляндия на выходные Хельсинки	Group by atis.tour.ru	16000 members
Финляндия. Однодневные туры в Финляндию. Удобно, Быстро, Надёжно	Group by http://marina-travel.ru offering 1-day trips from St.Petersburg to Helsinki	over 9000 members
Easy Travel Ltd. отдых в Финляндии и Скандинавии	Group by http://traveleasy.fi	over 9000 members
Хельсинки - Helsinki	All about Helsinki, group by www.russian.fi	9000 members
Финляндия	For those who live or is interested in Finland, group by www.russian.fi	8700 members
Про Хельсинки! Про Столицу со вкусом™ Helsinki	News about Helsinki Soon opening also own web-page www.prohelsinki.fi (now under development)	over 7400 members
STOP in Finland - вся правда о Финляндии!	Group by www.stopinfin.ru	5700 members
Рестораны Хельсинки	Group by http://restoranyhelsinki.ru	5000 members
Финляндия по-русски	Mainly ads; group by www.russian.fi	over 2000 members
Финляндия - что и где ВЫГОДНО И ДЕШЕВО	To share experiences how to spend quality time in Finland cheaply; group by http://www.taxi--jeep.ru/	over 2000 members
Новости Хельсинки	News about Helsinki, group by http://www.novosti-helsinki.com	1500 members
Клуб любителей Финляндии	For those who love this small northern country, group by www.russian.fi	781 members

Моя Финляндия - My Finland	Author's project editor of the "EX-magazine" dedicated to Finland and its inhabitants	241 member
Всё о Хельсинки | Финляндия | Helsinki	Group about Helsinki by http://www.vseohelsinki.ru	251 member
Vk.com pages:		
Vittu Joo, Suomi! | Fuck Yeah, Finland!	General community about Finland	almost 7000 followers
Финляндия | Suomi	We know everything about Finland and even more	over 5000 followers
Just Finland!	No description, mainly photos	4500 followers
Tyypillinen Suomalainen	Page about Finns	around 1500 followers
Хельсинки Топ	For those who live or visit Helsinki: information about discounts, group by www.smartguide.fi	over 1000 followers
Удивительная Финляндия	Travel notes about Finland through the eyes of a foreigner; group by http://lapinsatu.com	60 followers

Attachment 2: Screenshot of Moi Helsinki public account in Vk.com

Открытая группа

Moi Helsinki | Мой Хельсинки
изменить статус

Описание:	Мой Хельсинки - это новый проект о Финляндии. Мы тестируем места, услуги и товары, интересные русским туристам. Здесь вы сможете найти результаты тестов, прокомментировать их и предложить нам новые объекты тестирования. Показать полностью..
Веб-сайт:	http://www.moyafinlandia.fi/мой-хельсинки/
Местоположение:	Helsinki

Свежие новости

Обсуждения ред.
2 темы Новая тема

А что вы покупаете в Финляндии?
1 сообщение. Последнее от Moi Helsinki | Мой Хел.., 15 сен в 14:08 →

Ваши тест-предложения
1 сообщение. Последнее от Moi Helsinki | Мой Хел.., 15 сен в 13:58 →

Управление сообществом
Пригласить друзей
Рекламировать сообщество
Статистика сообщества

Вы состоите в группе.
Рассказать друзьям 💬

Выйти из группы