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Internet Marketing in Tourism

The quality of Helsinki City Tourism Bureau's website from tourism perspective

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Internet Marketing in Tourism
Case: The quality of Helsinki City Tourism Bureau's website from
tourism perspective

Saroj Pradhan
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Laurea University of Applied Sciences
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Abstract

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Internet Marketing in Tourism

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To meet the educational standard of Laurea University of Applied Science this thesis was written. The main objective of this study is to find the possibilities to make the official website of destination effective for its users. To find those possibilities three major pilot studies were conducted i.e. a verbal interview, an electronic interview and an online questionnaire.

In this age of internet, official website of destination plays a vital role to provide information to its potential users. Thus quality of the website should be maintained in order to attract users to use it frequently. To increase the quality of the tourism website, destination marketing organization should know the requirements of tourists and this thesis is small effort to find those requirements.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied to yield out best possible results. To reach the objectives of the research a tourist interview, a tourism expert interview and a tourism professional online questionnaire were conducted. Finally by comparing the tourist interview results and the professional's online questionnaire results the most demanded elements of tourism website were discovered.

The results of this thesis would be helpful to case study destination which is Helsinki and hopefully it provides proper guidelines to all those nations and destinations or tourism business enterprises that are going to design websites for their tourists or users.

Key words: Official tourism website, Internet, Internet marketing and tourists.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	6
1.1	The aim and objectives	6
1.2	Background of Research.....	6
1.3	Research Problem	7
1.4	Research outline.....	7
1.5	The delimitation of research.....	8
1.6	The structure of the thesis	9
2	Internet Marketing and its changing nature	9
3	Internet as a means of communication	11
4	Internet as the means of transaction.....	11
5	Internet as a means of competitiveness	12
6	Internet and tourism	12
7	Tourism Website	13
8	Research methodology	14
8.1	Data collection	15
8.1.1	Tourist Interview	16
8.1.2	Online questionnaire.....	17
8.1.3	Expert Interview	18
9	Data Analysis	18
9.1	Tourist Interview	19
9.2	Tourist interview vs. Professional online questionnaire.....	24
9.2.1	User friendly website	25
9.2.2	Website with several languages	26
9.2.3	Relevant information	26
9.2.4	Flexibility of website	27
9.2.5	Easy URL	27
9.2.6	Website update	27
9.2.7	Accuracy	28
9.2.8	Efficiency	28
9.2.9	Multimedia Facility.....	28
9.2.10	Map Facility	29
9.2.11	Blog writing.....	29
9.2.12	Search box	30
9.2.13	Accessibility	30
9.2.14	Customer service	30
9.2.15	Contact information	31
9.2.16	Relevant link	31

	9.2.17Website in search engines	32
	9.2.18Feedback.....	32
	9.2.19Weather information.....	32
	9.2.20Currency exchange rate	33
	9.2.21Booking accommodation	33
	9.2.22Visa information of neighbouring countries	34
	9.2.23Buy local travel ticket online	34
	9.2.24Online booking of tickets to neighbouring country.....	34
	9.2.25FAQs	35
	9.2.26Professionals' feedback of website	35
	9.3 Expert Interview.....	36
10	Result.....	37
11	Validity and Reliability	40
12	Conclusion	41
13	Author's view about Visit-Helsinki website.....	43
14	List of References	44
	14.1 Books and publication	44
	14.2 Journals, Articles and Reports	44
	14.3 Electronic reference.....	45
15	List of figures and tables	45
	15.1 Figures	45
	15.2 Tables	46
16	Appendices	47

1 Introduction

The rapid development in internet technology has affected the tourism business globally in various ways. Marketing is one sector where the internet has greater influence. The internet has become the most effective and convenient means of marketing. Small shops to large chain hotels have successfully used internet as their marketing tool especially through their own website. Similarly the internet also plays a significant role in destination marketing and a website can build the global brand for a destination.

Tourism and information communication and technology (ICT) are the two most dynamic motivators for the global economy (Buhalis, 2003, 24). As the internet is increasingly becoming the means by which travellers' worldwide search for information, the official website of the destination should be able to attract and convince the tourist to visit by providing accurate information (Jamnia, 2012, 19). If the official website of the destination cannot produce instant information and inspire confidence in the potential tourist then another destination will be just a few clicks away from being visited. Hence it is crucial to have quality information on the official website of the destination and the responsibility for that falls on the marketing organisation of the destination (DMO). This thesis is a small effort to discover what kind of information tourists actually look for on the official website of the destination.

1.1 The aim and objectives

The main aim of this research is to review the quality of information on the official tourism website through the case study of the Visit-Helsinki-website. Data collected verbally from tourists through 45 interviews in the Helsinki area helps in showing what tourists actually look for in a destination website and the results collected from an online questionnaire sent to tourism professionals will show us what information is provided on the Visit-Helsinki-website. The comparison between the two results will indicate what information in Visit-Helsinki-website meets tourist needs and what is lacking in it. The objectives of this research are as follows.

- To discover what kind of information tourists look for when exploring the official website of a destination before venturing out on a holiday.
- To find out what information tourists can find in the case destination website, this being Visit-Helsinki website.
- To investigate how tourists perceive technology while travelling and looking for information through i.e. mobile technology. One should assume or at least expect that tourists and the tourism industry keep in pace with technology.

Since this research will discover what information potential tourists look for on a website, therefore not only will the Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau benefit from the results but also those who are designing tourist websites for their business. The result can also act as a checklist for developing countries and destinations who wish to update and improve their own tourism website in order to increase business possibilities through tourism.

1.2 Background of Research

In today's world, tourists have become so choosy that they will not make any purchase decision before they get enough information and feel secure about what they are purchasing. Marketing should therefore be considered compulsory these days. Rapid development in internet technology and the dot-com bubble have changed the marketing principles in a dramatic way. "Internet marketing has been popularly used within three years (of being devel-

oped) while it took thirty years for the radio and fifteen years for television to be accessed (WTOBC, 1999, 137).''

The number of internet users is increasing day by day worldwide so internet marketing is therefore the wisest way of marketing in this information age. The United Nation's information Economy Report (2005) indicated that most of the internet users, by region and development, lived in Asia, followed by Europe but USA still hold the largest internet population of 185 million. The report also explained that if considered on the basis of growth rates, Europe has overtaken N. America in terms of internet users. Worldwide 14.3% of the total population had internet access at the end of 2004 but this figure is increasing since new emerging countries like China, India, and Brazil, eastern European countries like Latvia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine have been developing internet technology rapidly and making easy internet access for their citizens. It is also mentioned that tourism online travel sales increased by 34% from 2004 to 2005 making the total of transactions 25.2 billion Euros only in the European market. It is also predicted that after 2006 European online travel market could increase by 6 to 6.5 billion Euros per year. This whole figure and the data mentioned above suggest that the potential of the online customer is increasing fast. Informative internet marketing in the form of up to date tourist websites is one of the best ways to serve this growing market force. The author is delighted to research this burning topic at such a time of great change and progress.

1.3 Research Problem

The trend has been to promote destinations with websites since it is cheap and easily accessible for people worldwide despite geographical and political boundaries. Almost every tourist destination has its own official website where tourists can find information related to accommodation, shopping, sites to visit, current events etc. Beside basic information like accommodation, gastronomy, normal sites to visit and shopping, the demand of tourists is increasing with the advance of technology. The authority in concern such as the destination marketing organisation should know the needs of tourists. This in turn will make this particular destination more competitive than its neighbouring countries and their cities. The main question presented in this thesis would thus be: "What kind of information do tourists look for when visiting the official website of destinations?"

1.4 Research outline

The main part of the research material is formed by the three major pilot studies, the tourist interview, tourism expert interview and the online questionnaire aimed at professionals in the tourism industry. The design process of the interview questions and the questionnaire is fully supported by the related literature (different related books, surveys and electronic sources like Web Pages). Separate questions were designed for tourists visiting the Helsinki area and for tourism experts where as the online questionnaire was designed for tourism professionals. The figure 1.4 below shows the brief research plan of this thesis and the detailed process is mentioned in the chapter titled methodology.

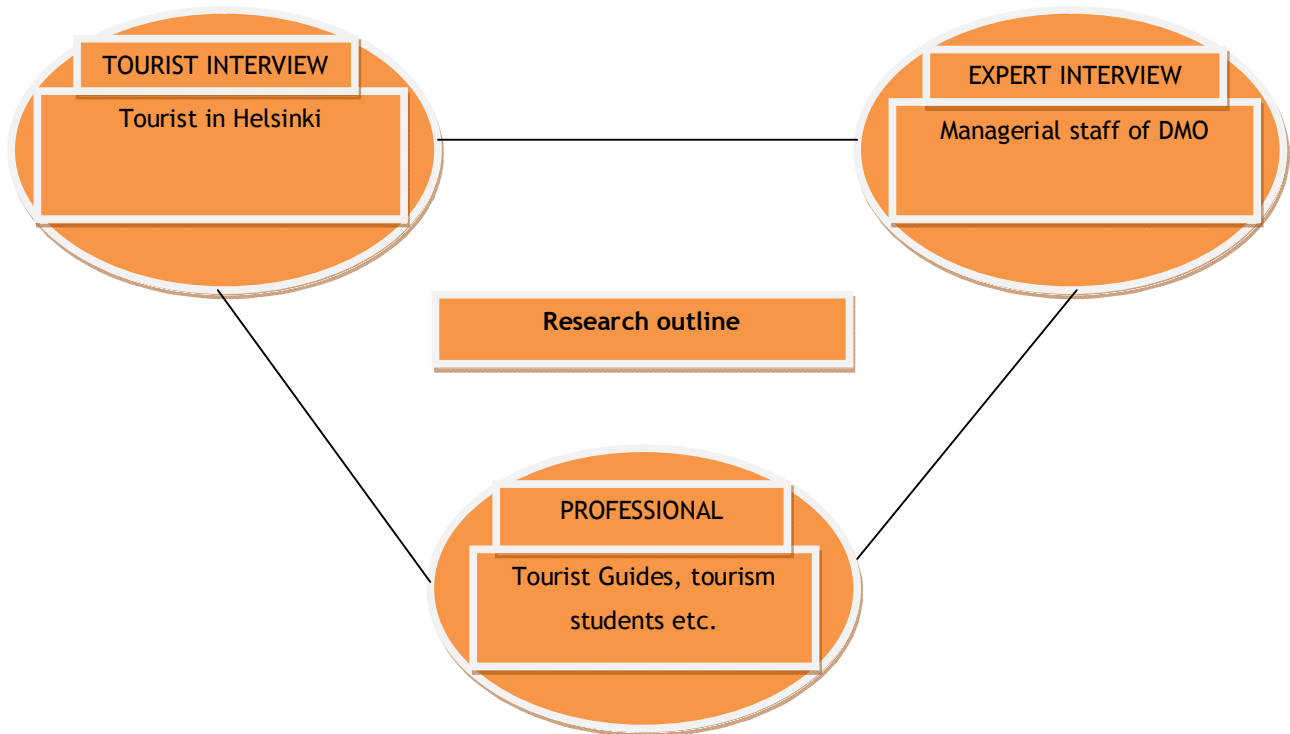


Figure 1: representation of research outline of thesis

Figure 1 simply gives the research outline of the thesis. It consists of tourist interview aimed for tourist in Helsinki, expert interview aimed at managerial staff of destination marketing organisation which is Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau and professional online questionnaires for professionals related to tourism fields as shown in above figure 1.

1.5 The delimitation of research

Since internet marketing is a vast topic, the author could not in this research cover the whole subject. Neither are different types of internet marketing discussed nor described. Nevertheless to make the topic more precise and narrow the most popular category of internet marketing is chosen, this being a website. The research is concentrated on contents of website which are designed for tourists or in other word the purpose of this study is to check the quality of information in www.visithelsinki.fi from tourism point of view. The technical side of website is not touch because if touched, the research area will be wide and there is possibility that author get distracted from main objectives.

Since the research part comprises of the interviews and the online questionnaire the researchers faced some difficulties while gathering data. During the tourist interviews, most approached tourists refused to take part in interview as they had “no” time - they suspected our efforts to be some ploy by which they were being sold something. The author faced technical challenges while designing the online questionnaire because of his lack of IT skills due to his study field being tourism.

1.6 The structure of the thesis

To present the core information of the research to the readers, the thesis had to be structured properly and systematically. In this thesis the author has structured the thesis in such a way that readers should find it easy to read and to find the core information of the whole research clearly. The thesis is broadly divided in to four sections: Introduction, Literature review, research and results (as well as conclusions).

‘The first impression is the last impression’

The beginning of any written material should be interesting to the reader and the objective of the introduction should be motivating to the readers in order to inspire interest in the subject. The introduction chapter is sub-divided into other five sub-chapters namely aims and objectives of the thesis, the back ground of the research, the research problem, the research outline and the delimitation of the research.

The second chapter of the thesis consists of the literature review. Every study and research reaches its aims and meets its objectives with justified findings when researchers have enough information on the subject. Therefore to understand the subject matter deeply, the author read different books, journals, articles and electronic sources. To support the idea, aims and objective of the whole research six sub-chapters are contained within the literature review chapter, i.e. internet marketing and its changing nature, internet as a means of communication, internet as a means of transaction, internet as a means of competitiveness, internet and tourism and tourism website. The objective of each six sub-chapter is to support the whole idea of the research.

The third chapter of this thesis is on research methodology. Adopting correct and proper research methods gives concrete data which when further analyzed properly and scientifically yields valid and reliable results. This chapter is sub classified into two more sub-chapters: data collection and data analysis. These two sub chapters are further sub-divided in to three sub-sections: tourist interview, online questionnaire, expert interview and tourist interview, tourist interview vs. online questionnaire and expert interview respectively.

The final chapter of the thesis is results and conclusions. When data is analysed properly conclusions can be drawn on the whole research and in results one can see if the objectives of the research were met or not. Furthermore the reliability and validity of research is discussed on chapter 11. On chapter 13 author express his personal view on the contents of www.visithelsinki.fi website.

2 Internet Marketing and its changing nature

Internet Marketing (also known as web marketing, online marketing, webvertising or e-marketing) is the use of Information Technology in the process of creating, communicating and delivering value to the customer, and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders (Strauss, El-Ansary, Frost, 2006, 3). In simple words internet marketing can be defined as the way of delivering information about the services and products to the customer through the internet. In this information age marketing through the internet is quite a smart idea since the process is relatively cheap, effective and efficient.

The nature of marketing is ever changing and this applies also to internet marketing. This changing nature of marketing brings lots of opportunities to develop new products, new markets, and new media to communicate with customers and also new channels to reach business partners (Strauss, El-Ansary, Frost, 2006, 50). One should however bear in mind that the changing nature of internet marketing also brings threats and develops weaknesses in companies. So as time passes the internet marketers should change their marketing plan keeping in mind what customer wants and what resources the company have to overcome their threats and weaknesses.

The table below 1 shows the changes in the marketing process through the application of IT from 1930 to the present. As we can clearly see the marketing concepts have in the course of time been changing from product concept to the present internet marketing concept. Today's world is dominated by internet marketing.

Period (approximate)	Marketing	Orientation	Information Technology
Pre 1930	Production Concept Product Concept	Product, Product characteristics and product application	Limited application of Mechanization
1930-1950	Sales concept	Transaction and Product values	Mechanization of the process and production. For transaction processing administration and market research. Limited application with communication
1950-1980	Marketing concept	Communications to the market, product values (brands), transactions	Loyalty concepts, Application with direct communication
1980-2008	Strategic marketing Concept	Target groups, buyer's behaviour and needs. Realizing the competitive advantages and building relationships	Application of the Internet and CRM
2008-present	Integral/Internet marketing concept Relationship Concept	Relationship Development interactivity based on individual customer needs and wishes	Interactivity and the Internet. Tracking and tracing, location-based services, 'near field communication' and development of communities and 'social networks' as communication platform

Table 1: Changes in internet marketing concept (Molenaar, 2012, 36)

3 Internet as a means of communication

It is very important for all stakeholders to be in touch with their customers so that they know the exact desire of them and as per it they can modify their service. Thus internet is the channel to bring customers closer to businesses. It is widely predicted that tourism will be one of the most rapidly expanding industries online and that purchasing products via the internet is one of the fastest growing forms of shopping. The development of distribution systems has simplified, increasing the communication process between buyers and sellers - the internet is hence sometimes also called 'The Information Superhighway'. It is accepted that the internet increases the interactivity between consumers and suppliers and that the World Wide Web (WWW) enables the distribution of multimedia information such as textual data, graphics, pictures, video and sounds (Buhalis, 1998).

In the survey by Buhalis (2002), most of the respondents felt that the internet facilitates access to a great number of people and offers the opportunity to develop a closer relationship with the customer. Internet not only develops the bond between buyers and sellers but also creates a communication bridge between business to business, business to government and between related stakeholders. Internet is thus without any doubt the most important means of promotion and distribution in the tourism market. It provides a huge platform, especially in the form of www to interact, to communicate and to share mutual interests among all stakeholders and customers.

4 Internet as the means of transaction

Few would deny that tourism and all transactions related to it are internet based business. It is also proven by various studies and research that compared to other industries, tourism has the largest online sales and transactions. People can now book airline tickets, accommodation, order almost everything through the internet and pay online and the number of people using these services is accelerating fast. (See chapter 1.2, Background of research). Approximately seventy million consumers made travel plans online in July 2006. Travel bookings are the single largest component of e-commerce, according to Forrester Research.

The growth in the amount of tourism related websites such as an official website of a destination, a website for booking flight tickets, accommodations, transportation, shopping and so on indicates that this business is increasingly going online in its global visibility and transactions. Online transactions are also the safest and quickest process and due to this it is gaining popularity in electronic commerce.

The table below shows the revenue made only by online travel agencies (OTAs) in different years. These below table 2 shows the huge transactions involved in the online tourism market.

Online Travel Agencies (OTAs)	Total revenue (in euro)	Year
Voyages-sncf.com	2.23 Billion	2008
Expedia, Inc.	2.937 Billion	2008
Opodo	1.3 Billion	2008
Priceline.com	1.9 Billion	2008
Orbitz Worldwide, Inc.	870 million	2008
Webjet	592 million	2011
Sabre	2.9 Billion	2008

Table 2: Revenue made by different OTAs in different years, source Wikipedia

By looking above table 2 one can easily see the big money involved in this business. Voyages-sncf.com, Expedia Inc, Opodo, Priceline.com and Sabre already has more than billions of euro

in revenue. Orbitz Worldwide Inc and Webjet have revenue in millions which is also a big junk of transaction made. Looking these facts and figure in above table 2 one can easily predict this business will grow bigger in coming future.

5 Internet as a means of competitiveness

Who will first catch the potential customer? Of course the one who will reach to them first, give enough and reliable information about the service. And in today's world which is that fastest medium by which sellers can catch and deliver information about a product? Without any question it is of course the internet. Despite of geographical, political and religious boundaries internet can deliver globally the information about products in no time. Internet is the only medium which can give fair opportunities to compete in the market, be the company's multinational or small businesses.

To remain competitive in the market the internet is a must. The competition in business is necessary because competition makes the market innovative and dynamic (Jamnia, 2012, 39). There is always fear for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that they will be dominated by large firms in competition since it are very costly to do huge publicity and advertisement. But if those SMEs can use internet in proper way, though they do not have enough capital they can reach people with a strong presence. Matlay (Matlay, 2004, 298) believed that the internet has impacted significantly on the organisational growth, development and competitiveness at both micro- and macro-economic level. In tourism industry according to Ritchie and Ritchie the impact of IT is evident in tourism production, marketing, distribution and operational function of both private and public sectors. Distribution is one of the few elements in marketing mix that can still enable tourism enterprises to improve their competitiveness and performance and IT has successfully transformed distribution to the marketplace where access to information is easily achieved.

6 Internet and tourism

The rapid development of the internet technology has made our planet a global village. There is no corner of the world where the internet cannot deliver information in a few minutes. The internet has become a vital part of people especially to those who are involved in the corporate world. The business without speed transaction, effective flow of information and good marketing policies could not stand in this information age. To remain strong competitively in any industry the right and effective use of internet is important.

The internet emerged in 1957 as a scientific and military tool set up by the US army and aimed to link together mainframes and enable them to communicate with each other and share data through a flexible system that could remain operational if a few minutes were destroyed or put out of order (Buhalis, 2003, 15, and WTOBC, 1999, 24-5). But who could then have imagined the wide horizon of internet use. By now every industry all the way from multinational companies to medium size enterprises to small firms use the internet. One of the largest industries where business cannot be imagined without internet is tourism.

Tourism and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are two of the most dynamic motivators of the emerging global economy (Buhalis, 2003, 24). Nearly all tourists know how to exploit the internet in order to find and purchase their desired services. Internet has given such a huge and perfect platform that sellers can sell their products in the way they want and buyers can buy selecting the best out of different alternatives with adequate amounts of information along with it.

In 1972 the internet appeared publicly at the Internet Computer Communications Conference and at the beginning the internet was used mostly as a tool of communication through email, discussions groups and long distance file transfer (WTBOC, 1999, 28). But now after the inven-

tion of World Wide Web (WWW) technology internet is widely used as a means of marketing as well. WWW is an extremely important pool of knowledge to find information in about destinations, tourism products and service (Jamnia, 2009, 37)

Tourism is also a kind of E-business in which there is transaction of products or service in the form of information. Rapid progress in the development of internet technology has made the tourism industry information concentric in which buyers pay for the provided information and service during the time of consumption they realised and experienced what they have paid for. Therefore to keep business running successful all stakeholders such as government, Airlines, tour operators, Hotels and other Tourism related industries should pay attention to the wishes of the customer and accordingly provide information through the internet as it is through the related web pages and information provided there that tourists decide what to purchase.

The table 3 below shows the overall capability of E-business which means all Tourism related organisations also possess the similar composition and IT plays vital role in every step. It is necessary to have continuous interaction with the customer, to pass information within and out of the organisation; for the effective planning of the organisation's work, to manage human resource and to perform financial task ICTs technology.

Internal Capability	Examples
Customer Interactions	E-commerce, Customer Service, Distribution Channels
Production and fulfilment	SCM, Production scheduling, inventory management
People	Culture, Skills, Knowledge management, Leadership and commitment to E-business
Technology	ERP systems, Legacy applications, Networks, Website, Security, IT skills
Core Infrastructure	Financial systems, R and D, HR

Table 3: Capability of E-business, Adapted from Ravi Kalakota and Marcia Robinson, 2008, E-business: Roadmap for success, Reading MA: Addison-Wesley

7 Tourism Website

All tourists wish to make sure that they have enough information about the destination, accommodation, transportation, etc. before setting out on their journey. The easiest and fastest way to find all the information is directly from the tourism related websites. Tourism websites are simply baskets of information or travel catalogues or travel journals designed with the purpose of delivering information to the tourist. Tourism websites are created by companies, organisations or nations.

Since all tourists rely heavily on information given on tourism websites before going on holidays it is vital that tourism website should contain quality information for the benefit of all users. Gosh (1997) and Nell (1998) both believed that successful tourism websites provide good content in both information and services that cater to travellers' needs. Quality of website can be measured by features like up to date, timely, accuracy, usefulness, comprehensiveness, informational, innovativeness and professionalism. In addition to those if concerned about the technical aspects of tourism website the quality website can be measured from its

speed, ease of use, interactivity, visual presentation, and accessibility. Similarly, O'Connor (2004) has suggested five broad dimensions to website design: language, layout, information architecture (how a site content and features are arranged), user interface (how navigation through the content is facilitated) and general issues on design and maintenance.

The quality of information is a good weapon in the competitive market. The destinations which can better represent themselves on their website will win the uncertain tourist who has not decided where to travel (WTOBC, 1999, 4). The primary concern of a tourism website is to gain customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customer satisfaction means that users are satisfied by the useful information provided by the websites and loyalty means that users visit the website again whenever they need the information. Shankar (2003) believed that in order to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty tourism websites should determine the appropriate information needs of their customers and design a website so that the customer can access not only the relevant information but also when they need it. Similarly, they should invest in technologies that search for the right information and retrieve the information as quickly as possible, with the focus on creating the right user-interference that allows customers to access information the way most convenient for them. Customer satisfaction also greatly depends on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of specific information concerning destination accessibility, facilities, attractions and activities (Buhalis, 2003, 132).

User satisfaction is an important measure of a successful website.

Understanding customer information satisfaction is a critical factor in the online world because all the products are delivered and purchased via internet in the forms of information. Kim and Lim (2001) mentioned that the importance of the quality of the information increases when the customers decide to purchase tourism product because of information provided to the website. There should be enough and trustworthy information in the website but enough information does not mean to confuse the users because website may contain lots of information in same topic which make users confuse. The main intention of website design should be that the users reuse the site and recommend others to use same site to find information.

Tourism is an intangible service sector but after the advancement of the tourism website, tourism services and products somehow become tangible because buyers can see images and videos of products and services before purchasing and using them. The use of multimedia increases the confidence to buy the tourism products and hence increases the quality of the website. All users have their own criteria with which to rate the quality of a website. Raveendran (2006) listed the information needs in tourism as comprising of geographical information, attraction features, activities and entertainment facilities, seasons of visit and other unique features, quality of facilities and their standard prices including exchange rates, and entry and exit formalities and restrictions.

The tourism website could contain all the industries that are related to the business of tourism. Nation and destination themselves, hotels, airlines, travel agencies and other small and medium related enterprises use websites to deliver information to their customer and this process is getting better and more advance by the day. Nevertheless the primary purpose of the websites should be the same which is the delivery of the right and correct information to the potential customer so that they feel secure before purchasing the products or services.

8 Research methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods hold an important role in this research process. The data collected from interviews encompasses a qualitative analysis whereas the number of participants and their effects in interview and online questionnaire represent the quantitative approach. The qualitative data uncovers the depth of knowledge and understanding of the research question and quantitative data brings validity and reliability to the result. So overall it can be said that a mixed research method has been applied to get the core outcome. The below figure 2, designed by the author, explains the process more clearly.

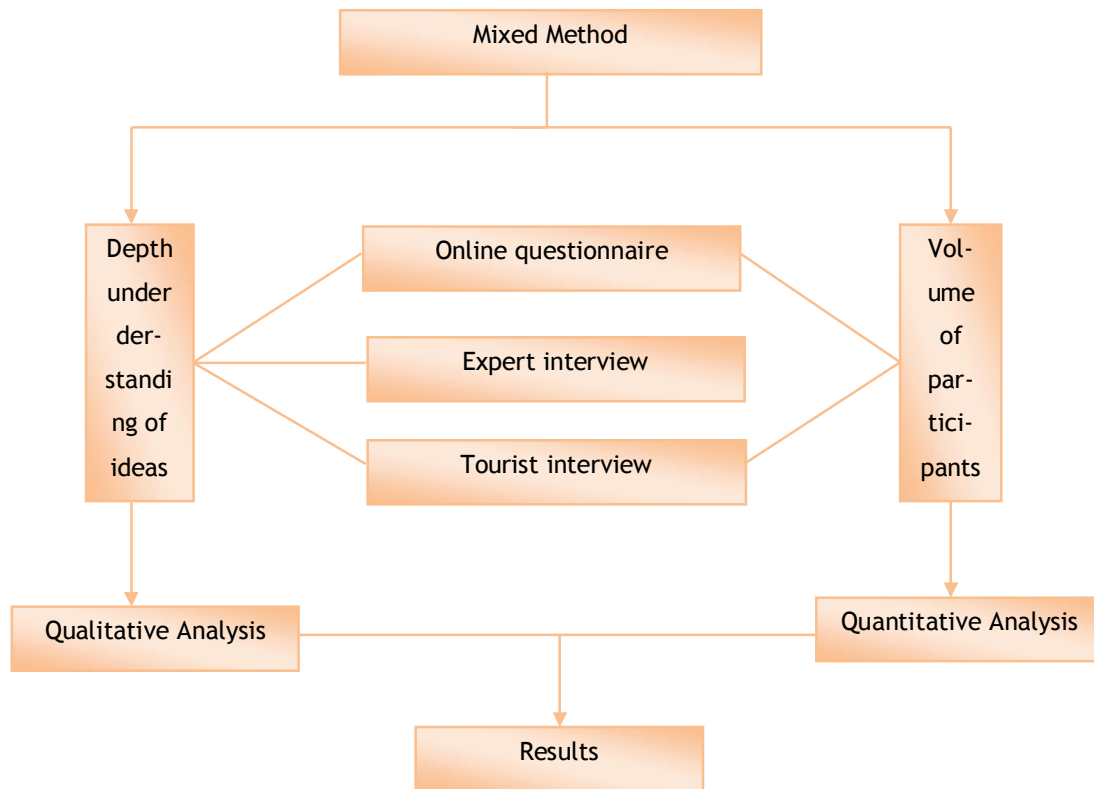


Figure 2: Concept of mixed research method

The above figure 2 describes the used mixed research method, derived from the research methodology design (Adapted from Zina O Lary, 2004). The speciality of this method is to investigate and to yield the results out by triangulating the tourist and expert interview and online questionnaire which is shown in above figure. In this survey qualitative and quantitative research is conducted simultaneously hence for reasonable output both data were analysed together carefully.

As a research tool the author chose interview and an online questionnaire which both hold qualitative and quantitative data and therefore in the above figure 2 the qualitative and the quantitative analyses are joined by a line. In simple words qualitative research means the depth of understanding in knowledge and ideas in people behaviour and quantitative research means analysing of data which is in numerical form by using a scientific and mathematical way. The Research tools, interview and online questionnaire both generate qualitative and quantitative data hence in above figure 2 both research processes are joined together by tourist and online questionnaire. Whereas for expert interview number of respondents is just one thus it is joined to qualitative section only. The interview answers give us qualitative data whereas the number of participants and other factors like age-groups give us quantitative data.

8.1 Data collection

This chapter explains the detailed process of the collection of data. The author had selected two best suitable survey methods for this research, namely a questionnaire and interviews. There are two separate interviews and one questionnaire. The first interview is targeted at tourists in Helsinki and the second interview is aimed at tourism experts in Helsinki. Finally the questionnaire is meant for tourism professionals who are related through their work or

study to tourism like tourism students, Helsinki tourist guides, staff at the tourist information centre, etc.

To support theory and to meet the objectives and aims of the research problem the author has chosen for case study “The Quality of the Website of Helsinki Tourism and Convention Bureau”. The reason behind choosing this case study is that this 21st century website is the best way of internet marketing especially in the tourism business. Actually through the website the city is selling its products in the form of information to its visitors. Hence it is very important to know what the website is offering to its customers and whether it is fulfilling their needs. Therefore to meet the first objective; “to discover what kind of information tourists are looking for when they explore the official website of a destination before venturing on holiday” the author decided to interview tourists in Helsinki.

The expert interview is designed especially to show if the Helsinki tourist and convention bureau is strong enough to deliver quality information to its potential customers. And finally the questionnaire is designed for cross checking the information the tourists say they look for in the visit-Helsinki website.

Both the questionnaire and the interview are co-related with each other; the tourist interview questions reveal the desire of the tourist while visiting a new destination, the expert interview is designed to find out what kind of service and technology the operator has to deliver information to the tourist through the destinations website and the tourism professionals questionnaire finds out whether the destination website has all the necessary information the tourist wants.

8.1.1 Tourist Interview

The tourist interview holds an important space in the whole research process. The main objective of this research is to find what kind of information is looked for in the official website of a destination before going on Holiday. Hence this interview is important in the sense that it helps to find out the interest of the tourist. Once the data is collected, the results can turn fruitful not only for the city of Helsinki but also by acting as a checklist for new destinations who are promoting it as a tourist destination through a website.

The researcher tries to interview as many tourist as possible in Helsinki, the case study city, to make the results more reliable and valid; an important factor in the quantitative research process. The author himself, with his two assistants, interviewed 3 days nearly 15 tourists per day. All in all there are 45 interviews of which two are default. The researcher chose two busiest tourist areas, Suomenlinna and the Cathedral at the Senate Square for the interview in order to access tourists with different interests from all over the world. Real tourist were chosen for the interview in order to get realistic data as at the time of the visit the tourists know exactly what kind of information they wish to find in advance in the official website of a destination.

There are all together 12 questions in the interview. The questions are divided in such a way as to bring results for two: the first and the third research objectives out of the three mentioned above. The first section of the interview gives general information about the tourist such as gender, age and nationality. The second section supplies information for the third objective of the research, being: “To investigate how tourists perceive technology while travelling and search for the information using like in mobile technology”.

Finally the last part of the interview reveals the first and main objective of the research which is: “to discover what kind of information tourists seek when exploring an official website of a destination before venturing out on holiday”. This last section of the interview has 25 sub questions (website facilities) in the form of statements and the interviewee has to choose one out of five alternatives starting from strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree and strongly

disagree, scaling in numbers: 5,4,3,2,1, respectively. This method, which is popularly known as the Likert scale, is widely used to check people's opinions on certain statements.

There are other supporting questions as well which help to reach the aim of the whole survey. The figure 3 showing below that the tourist interview is designed to achieve the first and the third objective of this research.

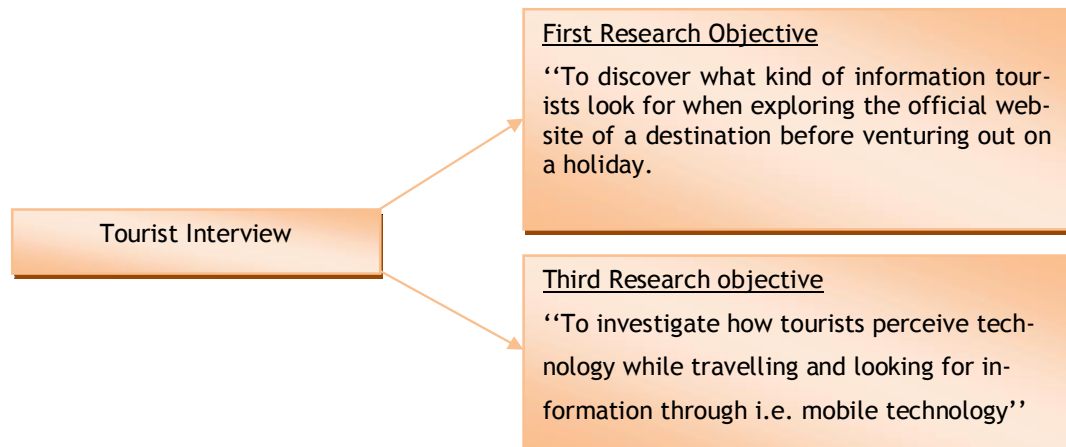


Figure 3: Diagram representation of method to meet first and third objective of research.

Tourist interview question are designed with a sets of such questions which ultimately leads this research to meet first and third objective of research as shown in above figure 3. The question no. 12 in this interview helps to meet fist objective of the research and questions 5-8 lead to third objective.

8.1.2 Online questionnaire

The second part of the research is an online questionnaire. The questionnaire in this research plays quite an important role as it is designed for cross checking the information tourists say they look for in the Visit-Helsinki website. Hence this questionnaire helps to reach the second objective of the research which is "to find out what information the tourist can find in the case destination website, being Visit-Helsinki website".

The author intentionally chose the online questionnaire to achieve the second objective of the research, the research being related to internet marketing and IT. The author learned much on the technical aspects of IT whilst developing the online questionnaire, thus notably improving his IT and internet marketing skills. To design the online questionnaire the author gratefully received full assistance from the student affair office of Laurea University of Applied Science.

To answer the questionnaires tourism related professionals living, studying or working around the Helsinki metropolitan region were chosen. This because the online questionnaire had questions which needed to be answered by someone related to tourism in the Helsinki Region. Such a group would know about the latest updates in the information and current tourism related activities in the region. Therefore the groups targeted for the questionnaire were tourist guides, staff of tourist information centres around Helsinki and tourism students of Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

The online questionnaire contained the same questions as the last section of the tourist Interview i.e. questions no 12. There are 25 sets of questions (website facilities) in the form of statements which are considered as important elements of a successful tourism website. And to check the degree of their importance the most advanced and scientific standardized scale was used, being the Lickert scale. To check the respondents' attitudes towards the statements five alternatives were given which are: strongly agree, agree no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree, numerically: 5,4,3,2 and1, respectively.

The design is in purpose because as mentioned above the intention of the set of questions in tourist interview is to find what tourists look for in an official website of a destination and the intention of the online questionnaire is to cross check whether the information the tourists looked for during the interview period could be found on the visit-Helsinki website or not. Therefore when equipped with both the data from the tourist interview and the online questionnaire, they could be overlapped and the weak points as well the strengths could be found.

The figure 4 below explains the how online questionnaire is designed to reach the second objective of the research.

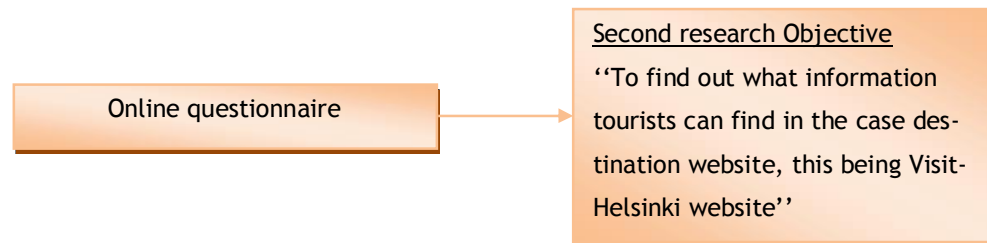


Figure 4: Diagram representation of method to meet second objective of the research

8.1.3 Expert Interview

The other research section of this thesis is an electronic expert interview aimed at staff working in Helsinki City Tourist and Convention Bureau. The intention of this interview is to find out the inside information related to the tourism website of the Bureau, the weak points and strengths while promoting the city through the website. Mojdeh Jamnia in her PHD thesis 'The Role of Information Technology in Tourism Destination Marketing' mentioned that the DMOs should be strong and creative enough to deliver information to visitors through the website. Hence in this research as the case study city is Helsinki and Helsinki city Tourist and Convention Bureau is the destination marketing organization, it should be strong, active and creative enough to give enough and reliable information to the tourists of Helsinki.

The expert interview contains eight questions designed with reference from Mojdeh Jamnia's PHD project: 'The Role of Information Technology in Tourism Destination Marketing'. Mojdeh Jamnia designed questions in such a way to help to find the weakness and strength of DMOs and inside core information of the DMOs. Author believes that the reply from expert will uncover the process of managing tourist information and contents in www.visithelsinki.fi website. The author decided to use similar sets of question to achieve the same objectives.

9 Data Analysis

Under this topic the collected data is analysed using the best possible method to yield the best findings and results. Since whole research is deeply inspired by the Mojdeh Jamnia's PHD

thesis work the author followed the same pattern in this research i.e. to compare and to check the respondents' opinion a likert scale is used. Likewise three pilot study i.e interviews and questionnaire are analysed together using triangulation method Adapted from Zina O Lary, 2004).

9.1 Tourist Interview

As already mentioned above, to meet the first and third objective of the research, the researcher interviewed 45 tourists in Helsinki, a case study city. The interview questions are categorised as personal data questions, attitudes and opinions (measured with the Lickert scale), behaviour (yes/no questions) and knowledge (multiple response questions). Such classification of questions made analysis easier to perform and to understand.

The first section of the interview contains three questions which are for collecting personal data. The questions are designed to find out the sex, nationality and age group of the participants. And the survey said among 45 participants 22 are male which makes 48.9% of total and 23 are female which is 51.1% of total. The survey thus has an almost half male and half female respondent amount which is good for research because there will be almost equal opinion of male and female tourist in data. The table 4 shows the respondents by gender division.

Male	22	48.9%
Female	23	51.1%
Total	45	100%

Table 4: Respondents by Gender division

Similarly under the category of nationality, the result is surprising as it comprises of participants from all over the world except from Africa, and Oceania. The largest tourist group is from Europe with 18 tourists followed by Asia with 12 tourists then by North America with 9 and then by South America amounting to 2 tourists. The percentage of tourists in Helsinki according to this survey is 40% European, 27% Asian, 20% North American and 4% are South American where as number of domestic tourists to Helsinki is 4 accounting to 9% of total. The pie chart 5 below shows the percentages of tourist origin in Helsinki by continent.

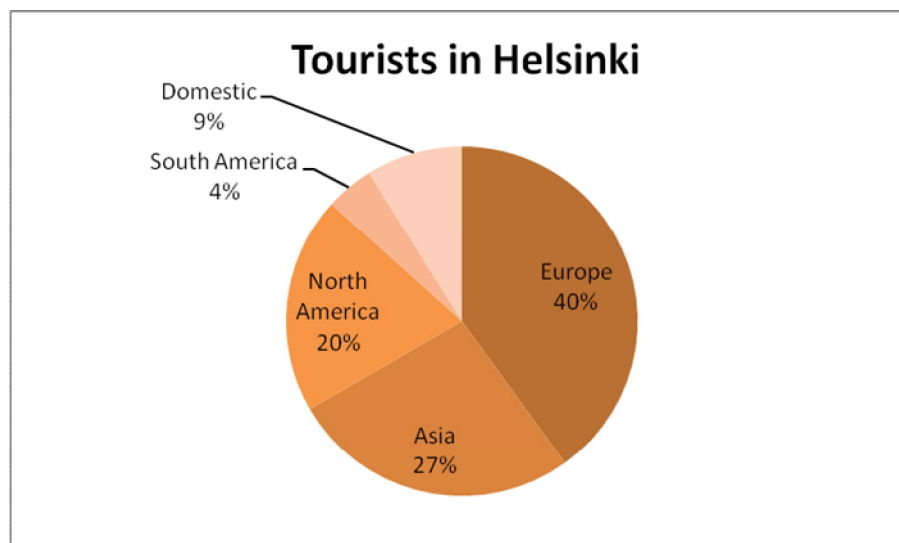


Figure 5: Tourist in Helsinki by continent

The deep analysis under the topic Nationality by their country shows that the USA makes highest number of tourist in Helsinki with 6 in total making 13% by itself only. It is followed by the Czech Republic with 4 tourists and then by France, Italy, Germany, Japan and India each with 3 tourists. The table 5 below shows more clearly the number of tourists as representatives of a country in Helsinki in this survey.

Continents/Finland	Countries/Cities	Number of Tourist	Total	Percentage
Europe	Czech Republic	4	18	40%
	Germany	3		
	France	3		
	Italy	3		
	Spain	2		
	Sweden	1		
	Russia	1		
	Poland	1		
Asia	Japan	3	12	27%
	India	3		
	China	2		
	Israel	2		
	South Korea	1		
	Taiwan	1		
North America	USA	6	9	20%
	Canada	2		
	Mexico	1		
South America	Chile	1	2	4%
	Argentina	1		
Domestic	Kuopio	2	4	9%
	Turku	1		
	Lahti	1		
TOTAL			45	100%

Table 5: Number of tourist in Helsinki by the countries around the globe

To make more clear what age group tourist would mostly like to visit Helsinki the frequency table is designed starting with age 15 and to 60+. The frequency table is open interval because the age of tourist visiting to Helsinki is not definite. The frequency table 6 designed for the survey is as follows.

Age group	15-30	31-45	46-60	60+
Frequency	22	15	3	5

Table 6: Frequency table to determine age of tourist in Helsinki

The survey says Helsinki is a popular destination for tourists under age group 15-30. Out of 45 tourists interviewed 22 are in this age group totalling 49% which is almost half of the entire amount. The second group of tourists to visit Helsinki more is 31-45 with 15 tourists making 33%. The amount of tourists visiting Helsinki at the age of 46-60 is 3 totalling 7%, the lowest among any age group. There are 5 tourists in the under 60+ age group interested in visiting Helsinki, making 11% of the total.

To calculate the average age of tourists visiting Helsinki, let's assume the age 75 of tourist who like to visit Helsinki lately. The age is reasonable as, at the time of the interview the researchers found no interviewee to be above 75. Also naturally people above 75 wish less to visit new countries due to health and energy problems. At the time of the interview the fre-

quency table was designed to be inclusive so to acquire the average age of the interviewees the interval needed to be converted to exclusive as shown in table 7 below. Thus the average age of tourist in Helsinki was calculated as follows.

Age group	Frequency (f)	Mid Value (X)	Fx	Average Age
14.5-30.5	22	22.5	495	x=34.75
30.5-45.5	15	38	570	
45.5-60.5	3	53	159	
60.5-75.5	5	68	340	
	N=45		$\Sigma fx=1564$	

Table 7: Calculation of average age of tourist visiting in Helsinki

Hence the above calculation in table 7 clarifies that average age of tourists visiting Helsinki is 35 which means that the Helsinki is famous destination for the mid 30's tourist.

The second section of the interview is yes/no related questions. The tourists were asked if they had visited the official tourist website of Helsinki, www.visithelsinki.fi. Surprisingly 24 interviewees said no which is more than half of total number of interviewees, whereas 19 said yes, 1 said not applicable because she came in group so she didn't need to visit websites as everything was already planned by a group leader as in where and what to visit. One domestic tourist from Turku left the section blank as he said Helsinki is familiar to him so he doesn't need to surf the site.

The questions 5-8 were designed to check how tourists utilized technology while visiting new destination. These questions were the key source to meet the third objective of the whole research process. Since technology is changing rapidly and transforming into more advanced and handy appliances, the tourists were asked if they use Laptop or mobile phone to find information about Helsinki. Before people used mainly desktop computers to use the internet to find information, now people use mostly a laptop. Recently the tendency has changed to using smart phones and tablets. The table 8 below shows the result of the interviews related to the third objective of the research.

No. of Tourist Using Laptop	No. Of Tourist using mobile phone	No of tourist using neither of devices
16	17	12
35%	38%	27%

Table 8: No. tourists using laptop or mobile phones during Helsinki visit.

The result in table 8 above shows that there are significant numbers of tourist using modern devices to check the information of the destination where they are travelling. The numbers of tourist using mobile phones, 17, are higher than that of tourists using laptops, 16, which signify that tourists are keener to use the most advance and handy devices while travelling to new destination. This also signifies that changes and transforming of technology is directly proportional to the tourist way of finding information about their visiting destination and whole tourism industry. Hence the result in above table 9.1.6 also proves the hypothesis which was raised above in chapter 1.1 aims and objectives that tourists and tourism industry always moves with technology. Therefore this results is quit important to the Helsinki tourism marketing organisation in that sense they should design the website which is friendly to smart phones as most of the tourists they use smart phones to check the tourism information in Helsinki.

The results in table 8 also show that there are 27% of tourists who neither use laptop nor mobile phones. But the result doesn't mean that this group of tourists are not moving with technology but rather there were hidden reasons why they were not using laptops or mobile phones. Some tourists didn't use because they came Helsinki in a group so the guide already

planned everything in advance so they did not need to search anything while some tourists want to use internet in mobile phone but because of expensive roaming charge they didn't dare. And some tourists want to enjoy free internet in their hotels. Therefore this 12 number of tourists have special reasons on not using laptops or mobile phones.

Continents	Countries	Number of tourists with mobile phone browsers by country	Number of tourists with mobile phone browser by continent	Share by continent
Asia	Japan	2	8	47%
	China	1		
	South Korea	1		
	India	2		
	Israel	2		
Europe	Germany	3	6	35%
	Finland	2		
	Italy	1		
North America	USA	1	2	12%
	Mexico	1		
South America	Chile	1	1	6%
Total		17	17	100%

Table 9: Table representing origin of tourists who are using mobile phones during visit

The result in table 9 above shows that Asians are the largest group of tourists in Helsinki using mobile phone browsers. 47% of total tourists who use mobile phone browsers in Helsinki are from Asia which is not surprising result as Asia is developing rapidly in IT sector. Countries like Japan, South Korea, India, China, Taiwan, and Singapore are called IT hubs. Second bigger group of tourists using mobile phone browsers while roaming in Helsinki come from Europe making 35% followed by North America with 12%. With only 1 tourist using mobile phone browsers South America is at bottom of the list making just 6%.

Some tourists even said it easy to navigate Helsinki thorough mobile phone but on other hand significant tourists respondents it's difficult as well. The reason can be the complex system of navigation which is other challenges to the Helsinki city to simplify.

That group of tourist who use internet in their mobile phone have certain applications which they use mostly while they were in Helsinki. The table 10 below shows the list of popular applications used by that group of tourist in this survey.

Applications used by tourist in Helsinki in their mobile phone	No. of tourist with those application in their mobile phone
• Map applications	14
• Top sites to visit in Helsinki	3
• Public transport route finder (www.hsl.fi)	7
• Search engine	7

Table 10: Top mobile applications used by tourists in Helsinki in this survey

The result in above table 10 clearly shows that "Map application" is most popular mobile application among the tourists. Out of 17 tourists, 14 use map application in their mobile phone. "Public Transport route finder (www.hsl.fi)" and "search engine" are the second popular applications with 7 numbers of tourists using each application. The third popular mobile phone application is "Top sites to visit in Helsinki" which is used by 3 tourists.

To support the whole idea of thesis, website is the best media to deliver information to the potential visitors' two questions 10 and 11 are designed. These questions are designed in order to find which the best media to find the tourist information is and which search engine is widely used to find that information. To find most popular media used by tourist to find the information five alternatives were given among which interviewees has to choose which they use mostly. Below bar diagram 6 shows the results.

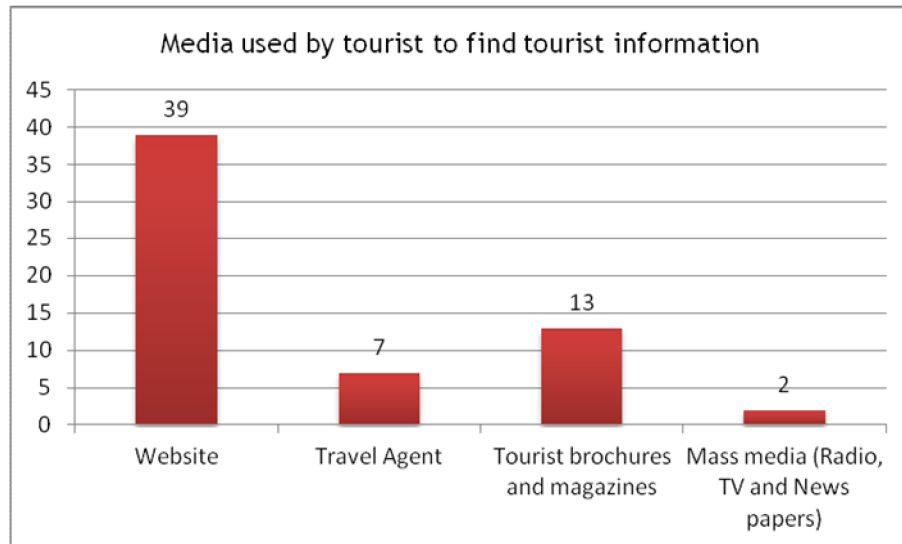


Figure 6: Popular media use by tourist to find tourist information

The results in above bar diagram 6 show that 39 interviewees used a website to obtain information before going on holiday which is remarkable. The author is thus right in saying that a website is the most popular media to find the information. The website alternative left other media alternatives far behind. Then second most popular media was tourist brochures and magazines with 13 supporters followed by travel agent with 7, and by mass media like radio, TV and newspapers with 2 supporters. This result clearly indicates that an official website is the best method for marketing a destination.

Now there is no doubt that a website is the best way to market the destination to tourists. It is wise to find out also what kind of search engine tourists use to find tourist information in the internet. Question number 11 supports this idea. Tourists were asked which search engine they use mostly to find the information in the internet. They were given four alternatives and they had to select the engine used most. Below bar diagram 7 shows the results of the interview.

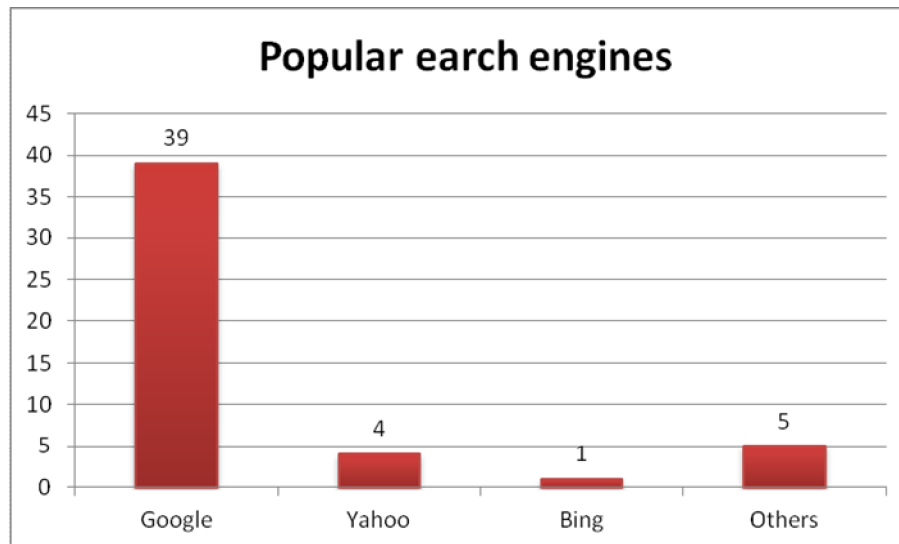


Figure 7: Popular search engines used by tourist in Helsinki

According to this survey the result in above diagram 7 says Google is the most popular search engine for tourist to find the information in the internet. Out of 45 interviewees, 39 chose Google as the best search engine which makes 87%. 4 tourists used Yahoo where as only 1 tourist was found to be using Bing as a search engine. On the other hand 4 tourists surprisingly had different search engines to the mentioned alternatives. 1 said www.duckduckgo.com, other said www.naver.com which is Korean search engine, other pointed out www.growyn.com, and a Japanese search engine and 2 of the interviewees mentioned no specific name. This result is useful for the marketing department of the Helsinki Tourist in order to bring more visibility for the official tourist website.

9.2 Tourist interview vs. Professional online questionnaire

This chapter involves the analysis of the data gathered from the tourist interviews and the tourism professional online questionnaire. The analysis of both the online questionnaire and the tourist interviews is done simultaneously to compare the results and hence its will be easier later on to find out what tourists look for in an official website of a destination and what Helsinki Tourist and convention bureau is providing. The first objective is: “to discover what kind of information tourists look for when they explore an official website of a destination before venturing out on holiday” and the second objective is “to find out what information tourists can find in a case destination website, which is visit-Helsinki-website”.

The interview questions and online questionnaire were designed using statements in tourist information which are important factors in a tourism website. Those statements were collected mainly from the PHD research of Mojdeh Jamnia and other sources like internet, journals, tourist brochures and magazines and the author's own research. The Likert scale is adopted for this part of research i.e. respondents have to choose their choice from strongly agree to strongly disagree and the choices are given points from 5 to 1 scale respectively. The Likert scale is the best method to analyse this kind of qualitative data as it helps to compare the results with ease.

The interview was held with 45 tourists out of which, 43 interviewees filled this part of the interview. Online questionnaires were sent to tourism related professionals like tourist guides, tourist information desk staff, owners of hotels and restaurants and tourism students. The reason for choosing respondents who are related to tourism field was that they know the importance of an official website of a destination. They are also familiar with tourists' needs

and current activities in the destination that affects tourism industry of the particular destination - this brings more reliability to the research.

The link of the online questionnaire was sent to the tourism office of Helsinki and it was requested that the office send it to its entire staff. The link is also posted on the wall of a social networking site: the facebook page of Helsinki Tourist guide group, Visit Helsinki page and sent as a mass email to the students of Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Since we had the information of 43 tourist interviews, the same numbers of respondents for the online questionnaire were needed to make comparison as fair as possible. Therefore until the same numbers of respondents were achieved the link sending process continued. Finally 43 respondents for the online questionnaire were achieved. The table 11 below shows a list of the respondents of the online questionnaire.

S.N	Respondent's Job title	Number
1	Student	16
2	Entrepreneur	5
3	Tourist Guide	2
4	Hospitality Executive	1
5	Tourism Education & Official Helsinki Guide development manager	1
6	RDI Specialist	1
7	Education Assistant	1
8	Account Manager	1
9	Bank Official	1
10	Assistant	1
11	Restaurant Worker	1
12	Chef	1
13	Housekeeper	1
14	Unemployed	1
15	Untitled	9
	Total	43

Table 11: Respondents for online questionnaire

The table above 11 shows the number of professionals' respondents for the online questionnaire. The highest numbers of respondents for online questionnaire are student group with 16 responses followed by entrepreneur with 5 responses. The Author has target the respondents who are truly related to tourism field but the results shows respondents are also from different works of life, but still response are counted and taken into consideration bearing in mind that respondents on other works of life can study and give comments about the website. Everyone in their life have an experience of being tourist and have knowledge what they want while searching in tourism website before going on Holiday.

9.2.1 User friendly website

One of the important qualities of successful website is being user friendly. User friendliness is also in the list of Al Mashari and Al-Sanad (2002) popular finding as a critical success factor of all kind of websites. It is therefore vital that this factor should be apparent in the official tourism website of destination

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	Total	Mean
Tourist	27	13	2	1	0	195	4.53
Professionals	14	24	2	3	0	178	4.14

Table 12: Comparing results for user friendly website

The result in above table 12 shows that the mean score obtain from tourist interview is 4.53 and that from online questionnaire is 4.14. The mean score of online questionnaire is slightly less than interview. We can thus consider Visit-Helsinki website is user friendly but still there is room for improvement.

9.2.2 Website with several languages

Since the users of the website are from all over the world and they use different languages, it is always useful to have different language facilities available in the website. This allows users to find information about the destination easily in the language of their choice. The different researches have proven that English is a widely accepted language option on a website.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	25	17	1	0	0	196	4.56
Professionals	28	15	0	0	0	200	4.65

Table 13: Comparing results for website with several languages

To check if the visit-Helsinki website has enough language facilities for its users a survey was done and survey results shown in above table 13 gave the mean score of the online questionnaire, 4.65, is greater than that of tourist interview, 4.56. This indicates that the website is successful in providing more language facilities to users than they are demanding.

9.2.3 Relevant information

It is vital that websites should contain relevant information. One of the key factors of user satisfaction depends on the relevancy of the information contained in a website. Gretzel and Wöber (2004) on their research found that information that doesn't yield results is highly problematic firstly as it does not satisfy the users and secondly it may even suggest that the domain searched does not contain useful information. Therefore the research is conducted to check the relevancy of information on the visit-Helsinki website. The table 14 below shows the results.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	24	18	1	0	0	195	4.53
Professionals	13	28	2	0	0	183	4.26

Table 14: comparing results for relevant information

The result in above table 14 shows that the mean score of online questionnaire is less than tourist interview just by 0.27 which is comparatively less this means results says website contains relevant information.

9.2.4 Flexibility of website

A flexible website is easy to use and that is what a user needs while searching for information. If the website is difficult to use the patience of users may be taxed which means that the website fails to deliver information to its customer. Hence it is suggested that a website should be interactive and flexible. Confirming the above study the table 15 below shows the result of the study.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	8	25	9	1		169	3.93
Professionals	6	26	8	2	1	163	3.79

Table 15: Comparing results for flexibility of website

The result of table above 15 show that although the interview mean score is more than that of the professional online questionnaire the difference in score is much less - hence the website can be said to be flexible.

9.2.5 Easy URL

URL stands for Uniform Resources Locator which is an online address which can be retrieved while browsing (Jamina, 2009, 219). Easy URL and web address motivates users to visit site more often. Following table 16 shows the result of survey carried out under this topic.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	11	20	10	2			3.93
Professionals	20	13	7	3		179	4.16

Table 16: Comparing results for easy URL of website

The online professional questionnaire has a score of 4.16 as shown in above table 16 which is higher than that obtained from the tourist interview; this means www.visitthelsinki.fi is a simple and easy web address for users.

9.2.6 Website update

Updating information in the website is very important because users definitely do not like to see old information and are always seeking for the latest and current information. Fresh and updated information always catches the attention of the readers. And one reason why a tourism website is better than any other media is that the latest information can be updated as soon as it is available whereas in other media one has to pass through a number of steps before reaching the readers with the information.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	35	6	2			205	4.77
Professionals	7	13	20	2	1	152	3.53

Table 17: Comparing results for updating website

Surprisingly the mean score difference between the tourist interview and the professional online questionnaire is considerable, more than 1, which is shown in above table 17. This means that the professionals didn't find the visit-Helsinki website was being updated as per demand.

9.2.7 Accuracy

Tourism products are information at the point of sale and therefore to sell tourism products tourism destinations need to provide accurate information in order to attract the trust of tourists (Jamina, 2009, 220). Wöber (2003) stated that the European cities' tourism portals consist of a number of features which support the integrity and accuracy of the presented information. The results of the accuracy check for visit-Helsinki website are as follows.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	26	14	3			195	4.53
Professionals	10	22	6	5		166	3.86

Table 18: Comparing results for accuracy of contents of website

The results say there is still doubt concerning the accuracy of the website content since the demand of the tourists is clearly higher than that of what the professionals gave for the website. The result is shown in above table 18.

9.2.8 Efficiency

The world is getting busier by the day. Users have very limited time to search for information so if they do not find the information quickly they switch to another option. Efficiency saves users time and effort when searching for a particular destination and results in user satisfaction and loyalty (Jamina, 2009, 220). The study of Lu and Zhang (2002) found that efficiency is one of the criteria to assess customer satisfaction. Let's see what the survey says for the visit-Helsinki official website.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	21	13	9	0	0	184	4.28
Professionals	13	22	6	2	0	175	4.07

Table 19: Comparing results for efficiency of website

Under the efficiency section of the website, since the difference between tourist interview and professional online questionnaire is much smaller as shown in above table 19 and thus - it can be concluded that the visit-Helsinki website is efficient.

9.2.9 Multimedia Facility

The World Wide Web is an ideal channel for the promotion of a destination as a global medium and multimedia experience (WTOBC, 1999, 4). Multimedia facilities provide entertainment to the users and hence maintain consumer interest in a site. Multimedia in tourism web-

site can be a very effective way of promoting destinations. Multimedia virtual tours and live cams are an addition way of making a site more interesting (WTOBC, 1999, 83).

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	13	10	14	6	0	159	3.80
Professionals	12	16	11	4	0	165	3.84

Table 20: Comparing results for multimedia facility in website

The mean scores between the tourist interview results and the online professional's questionnaire almost tally, 3.80 and 3.84 respectively as shown in table 20 above, which suggests that the visit-Helsinki website is providing exactly what tourists demand from a multimedia facility.

9.2.10 Map Facility

Many studies say the map facility is the most important one for a tourism website. Direction to the touristic sites, hotels, shopping centres, historical sites, etc. are always helpful for a tourist to view beforehand on a website. This facility helps tourist to make a mind map before coming to the actual destination.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	27	14	1	1	0	196	4.56
Professionals	16	17	5	3	2	171	3.98

Table 21: Comparing results for map facility of website

The map facility seems to be unsatisfactory as per the results shown in above table 21 since the tourist demand is considerably higher than what the professionals actually find on the website. The mean score for tourist demand is 4.56 and the result from professionals' online questionnaire is 3.98.

9.2.11 Blog writing

Blog writing facility is important on a tourism website as tourists can write about their personal experience during their visit to the particular destination. Positive experiences can attract more tourists to the destination due to the reading of the blog. Users can also give suggestions and recommendations for better service which can be fruitful for the whole destination.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	3	4	18	15	3	118	2.74
Professionals	6	9	18	8	2	138	3.21

Table 22: Comparing results for blog writing

The results show in above table 22 clarifies that a blog writing facility result is surprisingly much higher than tourists' need. The table above says that the mean score obtained from the tourist interview is 2.74 which is sharply less than the mean score obtained from the professionals' questionnaire, 3.21.

9.2.12 Search box

A search box in a tourism website helps users to quickly search for information. This facility saves lots of time for busy users. Hence it is vital to have this facility on a website.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	13	19	6	5	0	169	3.93
Professionals	24	13	0	3	3	181	4.21

Table 23: Comparing results for search box

The visit-Helsinki website definitely has a search box facility which is also shown by the above result in table 23 by scoring a higher mean value by the professionals' online result than the tourist interview.

9.2.13 Accessibility

Physically disabled tourists also like to get information beforehand about the destination where they like to travel in future. Considering the potential tourists who are physically disabled the website should be disabled friendly. Many countries in the world receive a large number of such tourists which has a direct impact on the national economy like in Australia. Therefore targeting such tourists the official website of a destination should have facilities like sound effects, a large letters option, videos, etc. as well as information regarding facilities for the disabled in the destination.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	10	17	14	2	0	164	3.81
Professionals	4	13	19	5	2	141	3.28

Table 24: comparing results for disabled accessible facility in website

The results of above table 24 show that as per tourist demand the website has slightly less disabled facilities. But on other hand since the difference between the mean score of the tourist interview and the online questionnaire is less comparatively, it is understandable that the website is disabled accessible but room for improvement can be found.

9.2.14 Customer service

Tourists definitely want to have all the necessary information about the destination before going on holiday. Therefore they check for information on the website first because the website is the most used and popular media for tourist to find information which is proven in the above figure 6.

But if tourists didn't find the information through the website there should be a facility through which as soon as they send the query they get a reply. The author called this facility the customer service of the website. This facility serves users to get quick information and prevents users from changing their choice of destination for holiday.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	10	17	14	2	0	164	3.82
Professionals	4	17	17	4	1	148	3.44

Table 25: Comparing results for customer service facility

The result shown in table 25 above says that the customer service facility should be improved as tourist demand is higher than what the professionals found on the website.

9.2.15 Contact information

The contact us-feature offers tourists the means to contact the national tourism organisation for further enquiries and is an example of the interactivity between the users and the system (Jamnia, 2009, 228). A tourism website must have contact information so that if the tourists want to know more about the destination they can ask by using phone, email or fax. Contact information is not only needed for tourists but also for tourism entrepreneurs who are willing to invest in the destination.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	20	19	3	1	0	187	4.35
Professionals	20	16	4	3	0	182	4.23

Table 26: Comparing results for contact information

The result in above table 26 says the mean score between the tourist interview data and the online questionnaire data almost tally. The tourist interview result is slightly higher by just 0.12 which is negligible. This can be because during the time of the survey contact the info section of the website was under construction and also lacked a phone number and email address. The website can be said to be successful in providing contact information to the users.

9.2.16 Relevant link

One of the important elements for a successful website is to have other relevant links to other necessary websites. Lu et al. (2002) argued that tourism activity involves six basic elements: eating, accommodations, travelling, wandering, relaxation, and shopping. Therefore a tourism website should provide sufficient links between these six elements to integrate all services involved in this industry. The sufficient links to other relevant sites help the tourist to save time and patience.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	14	23	6	0	0	180	4.19
Professionals	17	14	7	5	0	172	4.00

Table 27: Comparing results for relevant links

The survey result in above table 27 says visit-Helsinki website provides links to the related web pages but the mean score obtained from the questionnaire is slightly less than of the interview which is shown in above table. Since the difference is less than 0.19 it can be understood that the website provides related links to the other web pages.

9.2.17 Website in search engines

The first thing that comes to the mind of a tourist before going on holiday to a particular destination is to search for information on the place. We have results above already showing fig 7 that people use different search engines to find information on the internet. It is therefore important that the visibility of web pages should be strong so that whatever search engines the users use the web page should be pop out in it. Wolfenbarger and Gilly, 2006 argued that most consumers want to serve themselves by locating information that is relatively easy to find.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	21	18	4	0	0	189	4.40
Professionals	16	14	11	1	1	172	4.00

Table 28: Comparing results for finding website in search engines

The visit-Helsinki website appears in all kinds of search engines. The above result in table 28 shows a high score in the professional online questionnaire. This also suggest the web page is available in different search engines.

9.2.18 Feedback

Feedback facility on a website is important as sense it allow users to share valuable information, experiences, expectations, suggestions and recommendations. This information is a great asset to the destination for the advancement of the tourism industry within the nation.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	7	14	17	4	1	150	3.45
Professionals	11	19	7	6	0	164	3.81

Table 29: Comparing results for feedback facility

The result in above table 29 shows that the tourist demands for a feedback facility on a website mean score is 3.45 and what professionals found in website is 3.81 which is slightly higher. This means users can enjoy feedback facility in visit-Helsinki website.

9.2.19 Weather information

Before going on holiday tourists have to arrange themselves according to the destination weather. Therefore it is a good idea to have weather information on a tourist website so that tourists can get all the information about weather from the website itself and they do not have to waste time checking other sources. Many researchers say that a tourist website should contain an automatic local temperature update facility which facilitates all users of the website.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	15	10	10	7	1	160	3.72
Professionals	27	7	7	2	0	188	4.37

Table 30: Comparing results for weather information

The result is quite surprising as the result shown in above table 30 it says tourists do not seem interested in seeing weather information on a tourist website but a positive thing is that the professionals find enough weather information on the visit-Helsinki website which is clearly shown by the above result. The mean score of the result from online professional questionnaire is 4.37 which is higher than that of the tourist interview result.

9.2.20 Currency exchange rate

All tourists need to plan the budget for the travel beforehand. For that they need to know the currency rate of the country where they are travelling along with the cost of accommodation, travel and all other travel related expenses. This information should be in the tourist website so that the tourists can easily plan their travel budget. Tourism prices are the second most frequently used explanatory variable in the studies (Jamnia, 2009, 224). Martin and Witt (1987), Crouch (1994), Witt and Witt (1995) and Webber (2001) all suggested that the price term consists of two components: the cost of living, while at the destination and the cost of travel to and from the destination. The cost of living has again two components: the exchange rate and the destination country prices.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	5	18	13	6	1	149	3.45
Professionals	1	5	11	16	10	100	2.33

Table 31: Comparing results for currency exchange rate

The results of above table 31 say that since the professional online questionnaire mean score is very low, the website contains much less or no information at all about the cost of travelling in Helsinki, whereas the same table above also shows that the tourists want to find the exchange rate and expense information of Helsinki. The tourist interview mean score is 3.45 where as that of the professional online questionnaire is just 2.33.

9.2.21 Booking accommodation

Tourists will definitely find ease in being able to see the cost of accommodation on the official website of a destination and if at the same time they can book accommodation through the same website or have an easy and direct link for online booking of accommodation. This brings efficiency to both: users and accommodation providers.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	12	17	10	4	0	166	3.86
Professionals	7	15	11	7	3	145	3.37

Table 32: Comparing results for booking accommodation

The result displayed in above table 32 shows that the tourist demand of online booking of accommodation through official tourism website of destination or direct link to online booking is 3.86 where as the mean score obtain from the professional online questionnaire is 3.37 which is less than the tourist demand.

9.2.22 Visa information of neighbouring countries

Many tourists want to visit neighbouring countries too when they are on holiday at a certain destination. For example tourists who come to visit Helsinki, Finland are likely to go to Russia for a visit. For that they need a visa to travel and if tourism website provides these information tourists can save time and feel at ease to travel to such destinations.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	7	18	15	3	0	158	3.67
Professionals	3	9	21	5	5	129	3.00

Table 33: Comparing results for visa info of neighbouring countries

The above result in table 33 says that the visit-Helsinki website doesn't have enough visa and travel information to its neighbouring countries than that of tourist demands. The mean score of professional online questionnaire is less by 0.67 than of tourist demand.

9.2.23 Buy local travel ticket online

Travellers can save time and other difficulties if they can buy tickets to the local public transport of the destination where they are travelling. Tourists can go directly to hotels or a conference or any place where they want to as soon as they land to the destination after buying travel tickets already through website.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	8	16	10	8	1	151	3.51
Professionals	2	6	16	17	2	118	2.74

Table 34: Comparing results for buying travel ticket online

As per the results obtained in table 34 above, tourist want to buy tickets online through a website of local public transport before coming to the destination. On the contrary results also say that the visit-Helsinki website does not have such a facility. The mean score difference between the tourist interview and the online professional questionnaire is large. Tourist interview mean score is 3.51 and that of the online questionnaire is just 2.74.

9.2.24 Online booking of tickets to neighbouring country

It is very convenient if a tourist can buy travel tickets to go to a neighbouring country before coming to the destination. If tourism website facilitates tourists with this facility they can save time and relax while travelling and without wasting any more time they can go to other countries.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	8	10	14	9	2	142	3.30
Professionals	3	12	15	7	6	128	2.98

Table 35: Comparing results for booking tickets for neighbouring country

The results of above table 35 clarify that in some points tourist want to have such a facility to book travel tickets to go neighbouring country in advance through destination website. Such facility seems lacking on the website as the mean score of the professional online questionnaire is sharply less than 2.98 whereas the mean score for tourist demand is 3.30.

9.2.25 FAQs

A good websites always have section called frequently asked questions. In this section the best answer is given to the questions asked by many users. On a tourist website tourist planning to visit have the same common questions. By browsing through the FAQ-section they can without wasting time get the information they need. They do not have to waste more time in sending queries, calling or sending e-mails. This facility brings efficiency to users and as well as to the providers.

Respondents	S.A (5)	A (4)	N.O (3)	D.A (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	Mean
Tourist	15	20	6	2	0	177	4.12
Professionals	6	14	13	10	0	145	3.37

Table 36: Comparing results for FAQs facility

The results of above table 36 explains that the tourists' high demand for a frequently asked questions section as the mean score for the tourist interview is high, 4.12 where as on the other hand the visit-Helsinki website seems to be lacking this facility as the professional online questionnaire mean score is low, 3.37.

9.2.26 Professionals' feedback of website

The feedback given by professionals about the visit-Helsinki website is mixed. But majority of the respondents think that website still has room for improvement.

Regarding the language facilities the results obtained from research (see table 13) are satisfactory but some respondents urged that though there are many language options they do not give same content in another language for example in French and after changing language option, the information provided will be in less text. Whereas a Helsinki tour guide has recommended on adding more language option like Arabic.

Some of the respondents wish to have more user friendliness on the website. An official Helsinki guide and a tourism education development manager found that the event calendar on the website is somehow not flexible enough to check the events day by day. Similarly other respondent who is an entrepreneur felt that facilities like search box, map and location and customer service are difficult to find. Education assistance replied that the website is ok for professional users but not quit flexible enough for elderly users like her mom.

Likewise a part of respondents wish to have some more elements in the website. One of the respondents who is a hospitality executive wished to have contact info of local artists who are willing to show their work and work spaces. Other respondents expressed the desire to have a

separate page especially for residents of Helsinki with the purpose of guiding tourists by posting information by locals.

Few of the respondents suggested having more interesting videos on the website, a review page for the visitors and a rating system. One of the respondents who is a student suggested to update the page more frequently.

A respondent who is also a student got annoyed by unwanted advertisement by “My Helsinki Box” whenever the visit-Helsinki site is opened but on other hand the same respondent praised that the website is really nice and helpful.

On contrary some respondents have heavily criticized the development, design and information of the website. Of that group an entrepreneur expressed his negative surprise that hierarchy of the website is very complicated with lots of irrelevant information and that it seemed as if website was not ready for use. Other respondents including a tourism entrepreneur and a tourism degree student noted that the website cannot be called an ideal website and recommended it improve all the elements raised as questions in this research.

9.3 Expert Interview

The electronic interview was made with the web editor of Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau. The purpose of the interview was to find how Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau manage its website to deliver quality information to its users.

Different studies have said that the longer the chain to the flow of information the higher the risk of getting different meaning out of the same set of information. In response to inquiry the web-editor said that creating and co-ordinating content on the official website of Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau including the section for tourism professionals are his main responsibilities. Further on he explained that the technical implementation and database on which the website functions is handled by Lasipalatsin Mediakeskus Oy and Aspicore Oy respectively. Beside that the updating and maintaining of the website is done by Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau.

A reliable source of accurate information is very important while updating information on the website. The website should be updated with the information which is important, necessary and helpful to both users and providers. To the question of how Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau collects its information released on the website, he replied the contents which have to be updated regularly like the front page and the events sections are planned one month in advance together with communication and marketing teams. Whereas information and data collected from different sources like press releases, information provided by the partners and information collected by Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau, are used as contents in different section of the WebPages.

Suggestions and feedbacks from users are always helpful in making a website better. The suggestions and feedback should be taken into consideration every time before updating the information. When users feel their ideas and suggestions are respected and used the bond between users and the website gets stronger which means they visit the website again and again and get enthusiastic to give more valuable comments and advice which are assets to the marketing teams. The question was put in if Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau use valuable suggestions and feedback from users and the answer was yes. They do go through all the suggestions and recommendations of the users. The common requests and suggestions are: the new companies request for their visibility in the website, request to use open data that Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau provides and requests to promote videos, photography and personal pages. The decisions to accept the requests are dependent on the established criteria which determine whether company information should be published in visit-Helsinki website or not and to what extent.

Complaint about the service and information on the website always makes the service provider alert to give better service. Therefore destination marketing organizations should always be grateful to receive any kind of complaint from its users and should take necessary action against it. When the web editor was asked if he received complains about the service and what kind of complaint was usual he said that most of the complaints he received were concerning updating information such as changes in the opening time of restaurants or exhibitions. If the complaints are of a nature that can be corrected in a short time the corrections are done immediately as when links are not working or if there is false information on the site.

Positive feedback and comments always motivate the service provider to do a better job. Therefore the question was asked if they have received positive feedback from their users. He replied that they definitely have received lots of positive feedback. This interview was done on March 2012 and on that same month the official website was given a new look. So he said 'they have received lots of positive comments and feedback about the new outlook and informative contents of the website lately. Users had also praised the structure of the website. He added that users find it logical and easy to use.

Tourist website designers should know the importance of tourism website. When he/she has enough knowledge about the tourists' needs it is possible to deliver the right and necessary service in the form of information through the website. The Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau web editor believes that a successful tourist website should meet the needs of all visitors when they look for information. He continued that the website is good when it has up-to-date and correct information and a versatile way of showing what a destination has to offer. He added in addition that to provide interesting and useful contents to the visitors other factors such as usability and navigation also plays a vital role to make a tourism website successful.

The web editor also believes that an official tourism website is very important in delivering valid and up-to-date information to the tourist. To support this idea he added that the visit-Helsinki website is updated with an event section including an extensive event calendar which is one of the most followed and used pages of the website. The website is also equipped with a broad data base with the help of which tourists can plan their trip in advance or when they are in Helsinki or after the trip. He also explained that the website is designed under four main different categories and the intention is to make it easy for the visitors to navigate through the website and to make Helsinki city accessible for tourists.

10 Result

All the three objectives of the research were met using different suitable methods. To meet the first objective: "To discover what kind of information tourists look for when exploring the official website of a destination before venturing out on a holiday" interviews were held with 45 tourists in Helsinki on three different days. The two most touristic spot in Helsinki (Suomenlinna and the white church) were chosen in order to find tourists from different parts of the world assuming that they will give different opinions.

After the calculation of the mean score of the points given by tourists for each of the website's facilities, one can see three different kinds of results. Mean scores which are above 4, mean scores which are in between 3-4 and mean scores which are below 3. What should be clear by now is that the website facilities with mean scores 4 or above mean that the facility is in great demand by the tourists. If the mean score is in between 3-4 then facility is in moderate demand. Whereas if mean score is below 3 then the facility is in little demand by the tourists. The tables (37-39) below show the mean score results of the tourist interview.

Touristic website's facilities which are in high demand by the tourists are shown in the table 37 below.

S.N	Website facilities	Mean score
1	User friendly website	4.53
2	Several language options	4.56
3	Relevant Information	4.53
4	Updating	4.77
5	Accurate information	4.53
6	Effective contents	4.28
7	Map facility	4.56
8	Contact information	4.35
9	Find ability in different search engines	4.40
10	Relevant links to other websites	4.19
11	FAQs	4.12

Table 37: website facilities with mean score above 4

Touristic website facilities which are in moderate demand by tourists are shown in the table 38 below

S.N	Website facilities	Mean scores
1	Flexibility	3.93
2	Easy URL	3.93
3	Multimedia facility	3.80
4	Search box	3.93
5	Disabled accessible	3.81
6	Customer Service	3.82
7	Feedback	3.45
8	Weather information	3.72
9	Currency exchange rate	3.45
10	Online booking of accommodation through destination website	3.86
11	Visa information of neighbouring countries	3.67
12	Book transportation fares through destination website	3.51
13	Book travel tickets to go neighbouring countries through destination website	3.30

Table 38: website facilities with mean score in between 3-4

Touristic website's facilities in less demand by tourist is shown in table 39 below

S.N	Website facility	Mean score
1	Blog writing	2.74

Table 39: website facility with mean score less than 3

To meet the second objective of the research: "to find out what information tourists can find in the case destination website, this being the Visit-Helsinki-website" an online questionnaire is sent to 43 tourism professionals. The tourism professionals checked the official website of

Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau (www.visithelsinki.fi) and rated the website facilities which are stated in the online questionnaire. The mean score is calculated for each of the listed website facilities according to the points given by the professionals. In the results three different kinds of mean score were seen. The mean scores 4 or above, the mean scores in between 3-4 and the mean scores below 3. The mean score 4 or above signifies that visit-Helsinki website have enough information or facilities which are highly satisfactory. The mean score in between 3-4 means that the visit-Helsinki website has information or facilities which are in just satisfactory level. Whereas the mean score below 3 signifies that that web facilities or information in visit-Helsinki website are less than satisfactory.

The below table 40 shows the visit-Helsinki website facilities that are highly satisfactory

S.N	Website facility	Mean score
1	User friendliness	4.14
2	Several language options	4.65
3	Relevant information	4.20
4	Easy URL	4.16
5	Effective contents	4.07
6	Search box facility	4.21
7	Contact information	4.23
8	Relevant links to other websites	4.00
9	Weather information	4.37
10	Find ability on different search engines	4.00

Table 40: Facilities of visit-Helsinki website with mean score above 4

The table 41 below shows the lists of visit-Helsinki website facilities which are at a satisfactory in level

S.N	Website facilities	Mean scores
1	Flexibility	3.79
2	Updating of contents	3.53
3	Accuracy	3.86
4	Multimedia facility	3.84
5	Map facility	3.98
6	Blog writing section	3.21
7	Disabled accessible	3.28
8	Customer Service	3.44
9	Feedback facility	3.81
10	Online booking of accommodation though destination website	3.37
11	Visa information of neighbouring countries	3.00
12	FAQs section	3.37

Table 41: Facilities of visit-Helsinki website with mean score in between 3-4

The table 42 below contains the list of the visit-Helsinki website facilities which are in a less than satisfactory level

S.N	Visit-Helsinki website facility	Mean score
1	Book transportation fares through destination website	2.74
2	Currency exchange rate facility	2.33

Table 42: Facilities of visit-Helsinki website with mean score less than 3.

The third and last objective of this research is “to investigate how tourists perceive technology while travelling and looking for information through i.e. mobile technology”. An assumption was made before starting the actual research that tourists and the tourism industry keep in pace with technology. To reach this objective 45 tourist were asked what kind of IT devices they used while travelling and searching for tourist information. The choices of IT devices were given as laptop or mobile phone. 33 tourists replied among which 17 making it 38% out of the total amount of tourists interviewed said they have mobile phone with internet while 16 tourists out of 45 said they use laptop to find tourist information while travelling. 12 tourists gave negative signal i.e. this group of tourists they use neither of the devices (see chapter data analysis, Table 8).

If we talk about technology the world is focusing sharply on mobile technology these days. The results say tourist and tourism move hand in hand with technology. 73% of tourists use IT devices during travels according to this survey. The number of tourists with a mobile phone with internet is at the top. People used to use desktop computers before, then laptop and now they use mostly smart phones and tablets. This result clearly tells that tourists adopt the new technology quickly and apply it while travelling (mobile technology while travelling). Even tourist websites are designed to be mobile phone friendly i.e. tourist websites are designed especially for smart phones. These above results and examples prove that the assumption made by the author is correct hence it is true that tourists and tourism industry keep in pace with technology.

11 Validity and Reliability

To bring validity and reliability to this project suitable research method were used. The nature of this research is such that it produces both qualitative and quantitative data and thus mixed research methods are applied in this survey. The research consists of three major pilot studies i.e. verbal tourist interview, expert electronic interview and professional online questionnaire. To yield the best results out of these three pilot studies, triangulating the data from these sources is necessary hence Zina O Lary, (2004) research methodology is adopted in this survey.

To meet the objectives of the research the comparison of data from two sources i.e. tourist interview and professional online questionnaire is necessary therefore the Likert scale was chosen for this purpose. The speciality of the Likert scale is that it helps in scaling the responses in the survey research yielding final results comparable. Using likert scale in this study, the comparison between the tourist interview’s results and a professional online questionnaire’s results are possible.

However there is always a chance of getting biased results. The tourist interviews were taken on three different days in the summer with 45 tourists in Helsinki. The results can be different if the interviewees are in a larger number than 45. Also there is a possibility of getting different results if the interview is taken in different seasons of the year. Since the author

had limited time to finish his thesis he could not wait for other seasons of year to take more interviews.

The Helsinki City tourist and Convention Bureau may have different results than this survey. For example according to this survey the highest number of tourists in Helsinki is from USA, second highest is from Czech Republic and third highest is from Germany, France, Italy, Japan and India. But according to the tourism statistics Finland, Russian tourists come first, Swedes come second and Germans come third. However Germans are the third largest group of tourists visiting Finland in both of the results.

Demand of people is always high, this is human nature. Therefore unsurprisingly all tourists, who were interviewed, wish to have an ideal tourism website. The tourists thus agreed strongly with most of the website facilities stated in this research. On other hand the professionals who were asked to check the quality of facilities of the visit-Helsinki website, for same facility the points could be largely different. This is because everyone has their own opinion. For example www.visithelsinki.fi has facility of enlarging the letters of the website. This facility is helpful for partially visually impaired users. Some respondents might thus be satisfied with the facility where as some respondents might wish for a facility for completely blind users or deaf users too. This kind of contrast opinion can bring changes in the result if similar research is done in the future.

12 Conclusion

There should not be any doubt now that a tourism website is the best tool for the promotion of the destination. The result obtained above in chapter data analysis figure 6 proves that tourists first rely on the information of the official website of the destination before visiting the particular place or country. It is therefore crucial that the official website should meet all the needs of its users and should convince users to travel to the destination.

Finally the aims of the research are fulfilled by reaching all three objectives. The results obtained in the above tables 37-42 clear that there are grounds for the Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau to be proud of its website as it meets the demand of tourists. On the other hand there are facilities or contents on the website which need to be upgraded to meet tourist demands. According to this survey below table 43 shows the facilities that have to be upgraded to meet tourist demands.

S.N	Website facilities	Mean score of Tourist demand	Mean score of Visit-Helsinki website facilities
1	Updating contents of website	4.77	3.53
2	Accuracy of information provided	4.53	3.86
3	Currency exchange rate facility	3.45	2.33
4	Map facility	4.56	3.98
5	Information on online buying of local transportation tickets	3.51	2.74
6	Information on online buying of tickets to go neighbouring countries	3.30	2.98
7	FAQs facility	4.12	3.37

Table 43: List of facilities of visit-Helsinki website which need to be upgraded

The lists of website facilities mentioned in the above table 43 are the ones which the tourism professionals rated with low points. If the facility is in great demand by the tourists their mean score is higher than the one provided by the visit-Helsinki website. Therefore these are the

section which the web master of Helsinki city tourist and convention bureau should think about and upgrade them to meet the tourist demand.

Even there are facilities or contents in visit-Helsinki website which are rated higher than tourist demands by tourism professionals. Below table 44 shows the lists of facilities of visit-Helsinki website that meet the tourist demand.

S.N	Website facilities	Mean score of Tourist demand	Mean score of visit-Helsinki website facilities
1	Language options	4.56	4.65
2	Easy URL	3.93	4.16
3	Blog writing section	2.74	3.21
4	Search box	3.93	4.21
5	Weather information	3.72	4.37

Table 44: List of facilities of visit-Helsinki website which has mean score more than tourists demand

The list of 5 visit-Helsinki website facilities mentioned in above table 44 are the one for which tourism professionals rated with higher points than tourists demanded. Thus mean score of tourists demand for those 5 facilities are less than what tourism professionals found in visit-Helsinki website. These are the grounds on which web master of visit-Helsinki should be proud of.

Nevertheless website is such a promotional tool where there is always ground for improvement and advancement. The contents and facilities of the website should be upgraded to meet with tourist needs as per the current demand of the time. If a destination marketer can do so then the website can draw the attention of the potential tourist. The content rich tourism website always motivates tourists to use the website again and again and persuades them to visit the destination.

It is also proven above that tourist and tourism industry keep in pace with technology. Tourism is one industry where the use of IT is huge. These days the majority of tourists have handy IT devices such as smart phones and tablets with internet (see chapter Data analysis table 9.1.6). They use those devices to find needy touristic information while travelling. Obviously they like to go to the official website of destination through their mobile phones or tablets. Therefore the official website of a destination should also be mobile phone or tablets friendly. The visibility easy access of a website should match with such devices so that users find the information easily and quickly. If all those qualities are found in a tourism website of a destination then the website can be called an idol website. The idol tourism website is every tourist's wish and necessity.

One of the reasons for choosing this topic to study is that there are many developing countries in the world with high potential for tourism but due to lack of proper promotion and advertisement people who love to travel are unaware of these places. Among such countries Nepal is one, the author's birth country with a huge potential for tourism because of its natural beauty and cultural diversity. Unfortunately Nepal receives less than a million of tourist a year. Tourism analysts believe that one of the factors affecting tourism in Nepal is a lack of proper promotion. The official tourism website of Nepal lacks lots of facilities which are raised in this research. As a result Nepali tourism website fails to deliver proper information to its potential tourists. Therefore the author believes that the results of this research could help the Nepal tourism board to upgrade its website with all the facilities studied above.

13 Author's view about Visit-Helsinki website

This research is done to check the quality of information of the visit-Helsinki website from tourism perspective. The technical aspects of website were not discussed because as mentioned above in chapter 1.1 the objectives of this research is to find what kind of information tourists look for when visiting official website of destination and to find what kind of information do www.visithelsinki.fi contains for its users. To make research precise, information in website which is necessary for tourist were only focused.

If I am one of those tourism professionals then I would have rate the www.visithelsinki.fi facilities as follows.

Facilities	Grades	Facilities	Grades
User friendliness	5	Search box	5
Language options	5	Disabled accessibility	4
Relevant information	4	Customer service	4
Flexibility	4	Contact information	5
Easy URL	5	Relevant link pages	5
Updating	4	Find ability in different search engines	5
Accuracy	4	Currency exchange rate facility	2
Efficient	5	Online booking of accommodation	5
Multimedia facility	5	Visa information of neighbouring countries	1
Maps are available	5	Online booking for transportation fares	2
Blog writing page	4	Online booking of travel tickets to go neighbouring countries or cities	1
Feedback facilities	5	FAQs page	2
Weather information	4		

Table 45: Author's rating of www.visithelsinki.fi facilities

The above table 13.1 shows the score given to each facilities of www.visithelsinki.fi website by author assuming him as a one of the tourism professional. If mean score is calculated out of all grades of each facilities listed in above table then average score will be 4. This means author finds www.visithelsinki.fi is successful website to provide quality information to its users. However author finds some facilities which are important from tourism prospective but lacking in website. Currency exchange rate facility, visa information of neighbouring countries, online booking or buying of local transportation tickets, online booking of travel tickets to go neighbouring countries and frequently asked questions are the facilities which author finds lacking in website. These facilities are shown in above table 45.

Overall the www.visithelsinki.fi website is advance and has lots of useful information for its users. This is age of technology and technology is changing rapidly. Therefore to bring quality in website, latest technology should be adopted every time to modify the contents and to provide information to tourists as per their demand. There are no such criteria to rate tourism website as ideal or perfect but destination marketing organisation should always try their best to provide quality information to its visitors. There is always space to make better and advance hence responsible authority should be motivated to achieve that.

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15 List of figures and tables

15.1 Figures

Figure 1: representation of research outline of thesis	8
Figure 2: Concept of mixed research method	15
Figure 3: Diagram representation of method to meet first and third objective of research.	17
Figure 4: Diagram representation of method to meet second objective of the research...	18
Figure 5: Tourist in Helsinki by continent	19
Figure 6: Popular media use by tourist to find tourist information.....	23
Figure 7: Popular search engines used by tourist in Helsinki.....	24

15.2 Tables

Table 1: Changes in internet marketing concept (Molenaar, 2012, 36)	10
Table 2: Revenue made by different OTAs in different years, source Wikipedia	11
Table 3: Capability of E-business, Adapted from Ravi Kalakota and Marcia Robinson, 2008, E-business: Roadmap for success, Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.....	13
Table 4: Respondents by Gender division.....	19
Table 5: Number of tourist in Helsinki by the countries around the globe	20
Table 6: Frequency table to determine age of tourist in Helsinki	20
Table 7: Calculation of average age of tourist visiting in Helsinki	21
Table 8: No. tourists using laptop or mobile phones during Helsinki visit.	21
Table 9: Table representing origin of tourists who are using mobile phones during visit...	22
Table 10: Top mobile applications used by tourists in Helsinki in this survey	22
Table 11: Respondents for online questionnaire	25
Table 12: Comparing results for user friendly website.....	26
Table 13: Comparing results for website with several languages	26
Table 14: comparing results for relevant information	26
Table 15: Comparing results for flexibility of website	27
Table 16: Comparing results for easy URL of website	27
Table 17: Comparing results for updating website	27
Table 18: Comparing results for accuracy of contents of website	28
Table 19: Comparing results for efficiency of website.....	28
Table 20: Comparing results for multimedia facility in website	29
Table 21: Comparing results for map facility of website	29
Table 22: Comparing results for blog writing	29
Table 23: Comparing results for search box.....	30
Table 24: comparing results for disabled accessible facility in website	30
Table 25: Comparing results for customer service facility	31
Table 26: Comparing results for contact information	31
Table 27: Comparing results for relevant links	31
Table 28: Comparing results for finding website in search engines.....	32
Table 29: Comparing results for feedback facility	32
Table 30: Comparing results for weather information	33
Table 31: Comparing results for currency exchange rate.....	33
Table 32: Comparing results for booking accommodation.....	33
Table 33: Comparing results for visa info of neighbouring countries	34
Table 34: Comparing results for buying travel ticket online	34
Table 35: Comparing results for booking tickets for neighbouring country	35
Table 36: Comparing results for FAQs facility	35
Table 37: website facilities with mean score above 4	38
Table 38: website facilities with mean score in between 3-4	38
Table 39: website facility with mean score less than 3.....	38
Table 40: Facilities of visit-Helsinki website with mean score above 4.....	39
Table 41: Facilities of visit-Helsinki website with mean score in between 3-4.....	39
Table 42: Facilities of visit-Helsinki website with mean score less than 3.	40
Table 43: List of facilities of visit-Helsinki website which need to be upgraded.....	41
Table 44: List of facilities of visit-Helsinki website which has mean score more than tourists demand	42
Table 45: Author's rating of www.visithelsinki facilities	43

16 Appendices

Appendix 1: Tourist Interview

I am Saroj Pradhan, a graduating tourism student at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. I am writing a thesis on the topic Internet Marketing in Tourism. The objective of the thesis is to research quality of information in Visit-Helsinki website. Therefore I kindly request you to answer these questions.

This questionnaire will be analyzed confidentially and if you have any further inquiry regarding this questionnaire please feel free to contact me at saroj.pradhan@laurea.fi

Thank you for your time and effort to support my thesis.

1 Gender

M	F
---	---

2 You are from.....

3 Which age group you fall under?

15-30	31-45	46-60	60+

4 Have you visited official website of Helsinki www.visithelsinki.fi before coming here? What other website you found when you look for Helsinki information before coming here?

5 Are you using your laptop in your hotel to find the tourist location in Helsinki?

6 Are you using your mobile phones browser when roaming in Finland? (If no please skip questions 7 and 8)

7 Do you find easy to navigate Helsinki through your mobile phone?

8 What applications you are using in your mobile phone?

- Map application
- Search engine
- Public transport route finder (www.hsl.fi)
- Top sites to visit in Helsinki

9 As a tourist do you think official website of destination plays vital role to gather information? How?

- 10 Which one of following you use mostly to obtain information before going on holiday?

Website	Mass media	Travel Agent	Tourist Brochure/Magazines

- 11 Which search engine you use to find the information in the internet?

Google	Yahoo	Bing	Others (please specify)

12

If you look website of destination before going on holiday what do you think following are important on what extend?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I like user friendly website					
The website should be written in several language					
The website should have relevant information					
The website should be flexible					
The website should have easy URL					
The website should be updated regularly					
The content of website should be accurate					
The website should be efficient					
The website should have multi-media facilities					
Maps are very helpful in destination website					
Blog writing page is necessary in website					
A search box is necessary in website					
The website should be disabled accessible					
The website should provide customer service					
Contact information should be in website					
There should be relevant link pages					
The website should be easily found in different kind of search engines					
Feedback facilities should be in website					
Weather information should be in website					
Currency exchange rate facility is not necessary in website					
I prefer online booking of my accommodation through destination website					
I want to see visa information of neighbouring countries in destination website (e.g. Russia, Estonia etc)					
I like to book transportation fares through destination website					
I prefer booking tickets to go neighbouring countries and cities through destination website					
FAQs should be in website					

Appendix 2: Professional online questionnaire

Ali Najibi x helsinki ci x https://pu x https://pu x https://pu x Laurea Un x Laurea's T x E-lomake x E-lomake x Outlook V x how to ad x

https://elomake3.laurea.fi/lomakkeet/5794/lomake.html

Default form title[copy]

Quality of Visit Helsinki website of Helsinki Tourist & Convention Bureau

I am Saroj Pradhan, a graduating tourism student at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. I am writing a thesis on the topic Internet Marketing in Tourism. The objective of the thesis is to research quality of information in Visit-Helsinki-website. I kindly request you to explore the Visit-Helsinki-website (<http://www.visithelsinki.fi/>) and answer these questions.

This questionnaire is only for professionals and data will be analyzed confidentially.

If you have any inquiry regarding this questionnaire please e-mail me at saroj.pradhan@laurea.fi

Thank you for your time and effort to support my thesis.

What is your current job title?

Please visit the website <http://www.visithelsinki.fi/> and mark the statements below from strongly agree to strongly disagree

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The website is user friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The website is written in several language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The website has relevant information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The website is flexible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The website has easy URL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The website is updated regularly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The contents of website is accurate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The website is efficient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multimedia facilities are available in website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is map facility in website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can write blog in the website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Multimedia facilities are available in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

There is map facility in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can write blog in the website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

A search box is available in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The website is accessible for disabled ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The customer service facility is available in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Contact information is in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Enough relevant link pages are found in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can found website easily in different search engines ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can write feedback in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can see weather information in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I did not see currency exchange rate information in website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can book online accommodation through the website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can buy tickets for public transportation through website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

There is visa information to go neighbouring countries (like Russia, Estonia etc) ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can buy transportation tickets to go neighbouring cities and countries through website ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I can read FAQs in feedback ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

State please if you have any suggestion how the tourism information in Visit Helsinki website can be upgraded?

Proceed

Save

Järjestelmä Edux E-lomake 3.1 www.e-lomake.fi

00:16 16/04/2013

Appendix 3: Tourism expert interview with original answers

Dear expert at Helsinki Tourist and Convention Bureau

I am Saroj Pradhan, a graduating tourism student at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. I am writing a thesis on the topic Internet Marketing in Tourism. The objective of the thesis is to research quality of information in VisitHelsinki-website. Hence I kindly request you to answer the questions below. Your answer is very helpful to my research.

The information of this interview will be considered confidentially.

1. What is your position and responsibilities in this organization?
 - I am working as Web Editor for Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau. My responsibilities include creating and coordinating content for the City of Helsinki's official tourism website www.visithelsinki.fi, including the section for tourism professionals.
2. Is there a separate department for constructing and updating website or do you buy expertise from other IT companies?
 - Technical implementation of the website is provided by Lasipalatsin Mediakeskus Oy and the database on which the website functions is provided by Aspicore Oy. Other than that the website is maintained and updated by the Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau.
3. How do you collect the tourism information from different sources to put in Visit-Helsinki- website?
 - The continuously updated content (for example the front pages and events section) of the visithelsinki.fi website is planned monthly in advance together with the Communication and Marketing teams. In planning the content of the website we take advantage of a variety of sources such as press releases, partner information and our own tourist information.
4. Do you use information of feedbacks and suggestions while updating website? Could you give some examples?
 - We read all the feedback that comes to us and take all the suggestions into consideration. The most common suggestions concern:
 - New companies requesting visibility on our website
 - Requests to use the open data we provide
 - Requests to promote videos, photography, personal pages

Decisions on e.g. these issues are made according to established criteria which determine whether e.g. the company information will be published on our page and in what extent.
5. How important role do you think the Visit-Helsinki-website plays to deliver information to the tourist?
 - I think it plays a very important role to delivering valid and up-to-date information for the tourist. We provide on our website e.g. a wide events section including an extensive event calendar which together comprise some of our most followed and used pages. The visitor can also take advantage of the broad database we provide on our page in planning his/her trip to Helsinki either in advance, while in Helsinki or even after the trip. The website is designed under four main categories to make the visitor's visit on our website and in Helsinki easier and more accessible.

6. Have you ever received feedback or comments complaining about information in website? If yes please state what was it about? Did you take action to change that?
 - Most of the feedback we receive concerns requests for updating information on a specific place, such as opening hours for a restaurant or an exhibition. We always take all the feedback into consideration and correct the potential false information there may be on the site e.g. links not working.
7. Have you received positive feedback about information and service of website? If yes please state?
 - The website www.visithelsinki.fi was given a new look and more informative content when it was updated in March this year. The reception of the renewed site has been overall positive, and especially the new outlook has delighted, the users have considered it fresh and the structure of the site logical and easy to use.
8. What are the important factors of a successful tourism website?
 - A successful tourism website reaches the visitor whether he/she is looking for information specifically on Helsinki or just searching for interesting travel destinations on the web. The information has to be up-to-date and correct as well as versatile in showing what the destination has to offer. In addition to providing interesting and useful content for the visitor, such factors as usability and navigation obviously also play an important part in making the site successful.

Thank you for your time and effort to support my thesis.