

Electronic Markets and Tourism

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Dear Readers,

The third ENTER conference in Innsbruck (17 - 19 January) has shown us again just how important new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become to the travel and tourism industry. This is because the industry lends itself to the adoption of new ICTs given its multi-organisational and transaction, information and communication intensive environment. Thus, I recommend anyone with interest in this area to consult the two books (see below), in which this year's ENTER conference papers and lectures have been published. The papers presented here further expand on some of the issues raised during the conference with a particular focus on (emerging) electronic markets. Four of the papers discuss specific electronic market systems in Europe: Two papers investigate the TIM, SAM, MNET, MAT and SAMSON series of projects; one paper presents the Info Austria / Euro-START Austria project; and another paper outlines the Jerseylink project.

The Internet and its hypermedia sub-network, the World Wide Web (WWW), are especially fascinating information and communication media for travel and tourism products. In a recent study, 1118 travel and tourism companies worldwide were identified which were using the WWW (see Table), and this number is increasing almost daily.

One of the papers published in this section specifically deals with the consequences, threats and opportunities created by the Internet. It also looks at the potential replacement of viewdata (videotex) as a booking and reservation tech-

nology, which is an important current issue for the European travel and tourism industry. A topic sometimes overlooked is discussed in the leading article. Small and medium-sized companies are central to many sectors of the travel and tourism industry throughout the world; however, they are characterised by a relatively low adoption and diffusion of new ICTs. Since the use of new ICTs is likely to be a crucial factor in determining their survival in the long term, this paper therefore tackles important issues for these companies. As a reflection of the significance of electronic markets / electronic commerce in the travel and tourism industry, it is intended to have a regular section on this subject in this journal. Papers are, therefore, invited for submission, preferably to myself, or otherwise to the usual address listed in the 'Impressum'. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely



· Karsten Kärcher

Guest-editor

Recommended Reading

- [1] *Fleisch, E.; Schertler, W. (Eds.)*: Reorganisation und Standardisierung im Tourismus - ENTER '96, Vienna/Munich 1996.
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Type of travel and tourism companies using the World Wide Web (WWW)	Worldwide users in March 1996	Worldwide users in December 1995	Worldwide users in June 1995
Tour Operators	290	285	166
Travel Agents	374	267	192
Airlines	128	68	46
Accommodation Enterprises	290	229	145
Car Rental Companies	36	23	12
Total	1118	872	561

Table 1: Estimates by Genesys. Sources: TTG: Worldwide Agents Now Caught in Web: More Agents are Joining the Internet Despite a Widespread Fear That it Poses a Threat to Retailers' Business, in: Travel Trade Gazette UK & Ireland, January 24, 1996, p. 51. TTG: Travel Industry Internet Sites: Rise in Travel Net Sites, in: Travel Trade Gazette UK & Ireland, April 10, 1996, p. 43.