

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

The *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing* is, quite simply, the definitive reference work in the field.

This is the largest tourism management and marketing ontology that has ever been put together and offers a holistic examination of this interdisciplinary field. Bringing together a wealth of expertise, a team of international authors from all parts of the world shed light on the current state of tourism research and practice around the globe and provide unique insights into the field.

Carefully curated by leading tourism scholar Dimitrios Buhalis, the *Encyclopedia* is an invaluable resource for academics, students and practitioners and provides the ideal starting point for any research journey. The concise entries present an accessible and condensed overview of each topic and the selected references that follow each entry suggest directions for further detailed exploration.

### Key Features:

- Over 800 entries
- Entries organized alphabetically for ease of navigation
- Fully cross-referenced
- Concise, structured entries by the world's foremost scholars in tourism
- Selected references for further study
- Inclusive global authorship team.

Professor Dimitrios Buhalis is a Strategic Management and Marketing expert with specialization in Information Communication Technology applications in the Tourism, Travel, Hospitality and Leisure industries. He is Director of the eTourism Lab at Bournemouth University Business School in England. He is the Editor in Chief of *Tourism Review* and one of the most cited researchers in tourism, hospitality, marketing and strategy.

Encyclopedia  
— of —  
TOURISM  
MANAGEMENT  
AND  
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DIMITRIOS BUHALIS

Edited by  
DIMITRIOS BUHALIS

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# Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing

Dedicated to the memory of my mother Stella and my sister Diamantoula  
who departed this life during this journey.

# Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing

Volume 1

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*Edited by*

Dimitrios Buhalis

*Bournemouth University Business School, UK*

*School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic  
University, Hong Kong SAR, China*



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## Website Evaluation

Website evaluation is ‘the act of determining a correct and comprehensive set of user requirements, ensuring that a website provides useful content that meets user expectations and setting usability goals’ (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2006 cited in Law, 2019, p. 3). This evaluation is important in achieving the objectives of a website from the perspectives of customers, internal organizations, marketing and technical aspects (Morrison, Taylor and Douglas, 2004; Sun et al., 2017). Websites act as a medium of communication; they deliver information, establish relationships with their stakeholders and market products and services to customers (Law and Bai, 2006).

In tourism and hospitality, websites are intended for specific businesses. Some examples include websites for hotels, destinations, travel suppliers, airlines, online travel guides, online travel magazines, travel search engines and travel blogs (Law, Qi and Buhalis, 2010). With the various types of websites in tourism and hospitality, a systematic website evaluation should be conducted on the basis of a tested theory and a standardized and measurable approach. Tourism and hospitality websites are primarily built for consumers and industrial practitioners. Therefore, several stakeholders are involved in the website evaluation process. In this type of evaluation, the perspectives of customers, suppliers and a combination of both are examined (Sun et al., 2017). The evaluation approach for websites should be based on the company’s objectives, target market and stakeholders (Law et al., 2010). The website evaluation process also requires input from the perspective of stakeholders (i.e., expert and academic researchers, industrial practitioners, marketers, destination management organizations and policy makers).

Previous studies have focused on the approaches for evaluating websites. In general, five specific measurement methods are used – namely, counting, user judgment, automated, numerical computation and combination (Law et al., 2010). The counting method evaluates website attributes by counting the frequency

of the appearance of features. Then, the values obtained from the quality of the related features is compared with the overall performance scores. This method is used for measurement of performance, content richness and design quality through a quantitative approach. However, it cannot assess the ease of use of the website from the user’s perspective. In contrast, several studies use user judgment based on human–computer interaction by assessing the quality of the website design. In this method, the qualitative approach is based on experiential values and user preferences for website features and functionality aspects. Website evaluation through consumer decision making can be assessed from the parameters of website quality. In addition, the measurements are based on user satisfaction or their perceptions on usefulness, ease of use, accessibility and user attitude (Sun et al., 2017). However, this approach may not be able to present a whole picture about website performance in numerical form. Several studies have used automated methods via software systems. Consequently, researchers have developed software specifically designed for different research purposes. Previous research indicates that the applications of a dedicated software system can provide faster processing and higher level of consistency (Law et al., 2010).

From the mid-2010s, website evaluation has used specific mining tools or available online tools to analyse processes in tourism and hospitality. Apart from the use of software, the numerical computation method focuses on mathematical functions to calculate the efficiency and performance of websites. It also provides faster and more consistent results than other methods. However, this approach cannot effectively handle sophisticated processes, thus potentially causing difficulties for some users. Since 2015, a combination of methods from theories and models adopted from other disciplines have been formulated. Several studies have used these hybrid methods (i.e., automated and user judgment or expert input). The use of these strategies has created a variety of outcomes that can address the diverse needs of a wide range of stakeholders. The numerical computation approach is a measurable scheme that is readily replicated and suitable for application in long-term strategies.

Changes in assessment standards have moved from a narrow focus toward the evaluation of website features that reflect the overall user experience in terms of customer satisfaction,

functionality, usability, intention to purchase and an understanding of the psychological aspects of using websites to encourage consumers' favourable behaviour (Law, 2019). Thus, an effective and reliable method is essential to maintain service performance and website usability. Continuous evaluations on a website will certainly affect users' decision-making experiences, which, in turn, can help the organization achieve its long-term goals (Qi, Law and Buhalis, 2015). Website evaluation has used several models – namely, the new model and adopted/modified model evaluated by time, adopted methodology and the specific method used (Law, 2019). The development of website evaluation models in tourism and hospitality began in the 1990s when the use of the Internet was growing. Models, such as the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and its modified models, were used for website evaluation. In the 2000s, more modified frameworks became available, such as the model of Internet commerce adoption (MICA), its extended version (eMICA), online travel service quality (E-QUAL), and the information system of the eCommerce success model (Law et al., 2010; Morrison et al., 2004). New conceptual models were also developed by scholars in this period. Examples of these models include the 2QCV3Q meta model, which is related to tourism identity, content, service, location, management, usability and feasibility. Meanwhile, the AIDA

concept, which consists of attention, interest, desire and action, emphasized the information structure and attractiveness of tourism sites (UN World Tourism Organization, 2005). More new models emerged in the 2010s, with some of them focusing on adopting the information, communication, transaction, relationship and technical merit (ICTRT) model, online relationship marketing between customers and suppliers, and electronic customer relationship management (eCRM). Most of the models applied the trial and evaluation approach (Sun et al., 2017). In addition, they were in line with the growing development of eCommerce activities.

Most works on website evaluation are based on functionality and usability dimensions. The table summarizes the measurements for these website evaluations. Despite the various terminology used to explain the functionality and usability of the website, these definitions are considered essential elements of the website assessment (Law, 2019).

The first dimension is functionality, which refers to the availability of information, content and site management. These factors are very crucial in supporting the communication process. The quality of the content or features are the vital factors for the effectivity of the website. Moreover, the quality of the information provided to its users can be evaluated on the basis of their features and their effectiveness

#### *Dimensions and parameters for website evaluation*

Dimensions	Parameters
Functionality	Accurate information, added value, aesthetic, brochure request service, communicative, comprehensive information, content, contact information, design attractiveness, sending eCards, easy-to-find information, easy-to-complete transaction, email newsletter, emotional appeal, experience, feedback system, facilities information, foreign currency converter, frequently asked questions (FAQs), identity, images, impression, in-depth information, index page, information quality, information richness, innovative, interactive feature, Internet-based application, membership availability, mobile-friendly, multimedia, multilingual capabilities, payment, persuasive, personalization, reservation, rapid linkage, site management, search function, service or product information, social media extension, support services, surrounding area information, textual information, timeliness of information, transaction support, user interface, updated information (i.e., event, location and weather), visual appearance, visual information, web design and well-arranged categories
Usability	Accessibility, booking rate, credibility, customer relationship management, ease of use, ease of physical access, easy to navigate, easy-to-find information, effectiveness, efficiency, eBusiness services as media transaction (i.e., booking system, payment system, security, and ease of login), findability and search engine optimization (SEO), fulfilment, information architecture, layout and graphics, purchase intention, query system, relational, relevant response time, relevant link provided, safety certificate, search filter and sort, speed, system quality, usability of language, user friendly, user satisfaction, visual/graphical representation, website supportiveness, website quality and website management

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(Ip, Law and Lee, 2011). With the development of social media and the use of mobile devices, a growing number of people have been using the latest technology, such as mobile applications. The advent of mobile marketing (mMarketing) has compelled organizations to adapt mobile-friendly web designs.

The second dimension is usability, which focuses on the evaluation of website features that reflect the overall website experience not only in terms of customer satisfaction and intention to purchase but also of the psychological aspects of using websites to influence consumers' behaviour (Law, 2019). This dimension uses several parameters, including website effectiveness, supportiveness, ease of navigation and the growing use of eBusiness services. In the context of tourism and hospitality, a website is one of the starting points where customers meet with organizations/service providers to search for information. Therefore, ensuring quality service through websites is crucial. Website service quality is a major determinant of the success of services carried out online. In addition, user experience (UX) is the key for making a website efficient, as feedback from users support the improvements and continuous development of the website itself. The quality of the website can also create a positive attitude, build trust and increase satisfaction to provide better solutions and experiences for website visitors. In addition, several criteria are used to measure the performance of the website. These criteria include speed, system quality, findability and search engine optimization (SEO), which encourage people to search, click and discover the contents of the website. Web traffic has a high correlation with the success of an eBusiness service, which can be gauged through the booking system support with a reliable payment system and security of the website.

Studies on website evaluation in tourism and hospitality have increased in recent years because websites have become an integral part of an organization's strategy, which can lead to its subsequent growth and increase its competitiveness. Information and communications technology trends, such as the adoption of social media and Mobile 2.0, will challenge web designers to provide a more responsive and interactive experience on smaller mobile devices. The adoption of artificial intelligence and big data has changed the productivity and efficiency of the tourism and hospitality industry. These new trends will reconstruct models, parameters,

methods and users' involvement for future website evaluation processes.

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## Website Evaluation

Rob Law and Fajar Kusnadi Kusumah Putra

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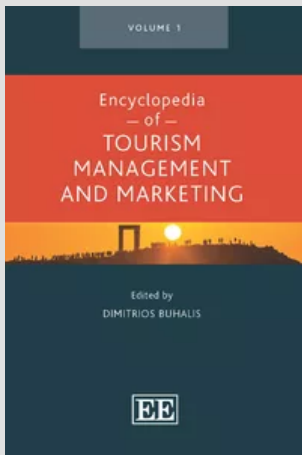
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