

## Article

### YouTube and the Tourism Industry

*Internet has changed our way of acting and thinking, and through it, ways to communicate and to distribute goods and services. YouTube is part of this revolution and has created opportunities and alternatives for the sector that concerns us: Tourism Industry.*

YouTube is the most popular website in the Internet for watching and sharing videos. Founded in 2005 by three employees of PayPal, and following year, bought by search giant Google. This rising social phenomenon has been of enormous magnitude.

Since then YouTube has become a market of its own that feeds itself from three current trends: increasing bandwidth, popularity of user-generated content and social networking boom. Since its appearance, sites that offer similar services have multiplied but YouTube still remains, according to 2009 report of Entertainment Media Research, the most visited site by Internet users, noted for its contents and ease of use.

As a free trade platform, the opportunities for the advertising and, indirectly, for the tourism industry does not go unnoticed. Just simply enter the word "tourism" or "hotel" to discover a cascade of references. What stands out at first glance is that YouTube has generated a change in the conception of space. In virtual terms, the Internet is limitless space, and time is a variable provided by the user, and paid monthly in the Internet Services bill. From this point of view, the options for advertising multiply. Free ads, large audience, and above all, a volunteer audience.

However, analysts of digital media oversee the narrowness of this new advertising model. Many business reports claim that YouTube, for its restrictions on how to advertise, defended at all costs by its users, and the market fragmentation that it generates, reveals limited for generating money. Its buyer, Google, has tried by various means to generate returns being the last of these maneuvers the option to rent movies from the site.

Those attributes that multiplies possibilities also generate restrictions. The unlimited space creates trash content, multiplicity and massiveness, hampering a clean search or the ability to reach target consumers.

The option outlining on the horizon is to rethink the advertising model to adapt it to the restrictions of its environment. According to the report mentioned above, between 44 and 47% of YouTube users come to it through recommendations from friends. One of the paradigmatic elements of this site and what makes it popular, is the ability to "share" in a simple way. This crossed mixed references make possible what is called "viral effect". A commented and shared video generates an unlimited chain that marketing experts identifies as one of the most potential elements for advertising or generating "branding" phenomena.

Respecting direct and massive marketing of hotel brands and tourism & leisure companies, YouTube reveals relatively limited. Big brands create specific content but only succeeds those who find a way to echo the crossed comments. A high percentage of the videos seen on YouTube are famous commercials played on TV or other media, and are uploaded by private users. While most of videos posted on YouTube are user-generated, there is a marked inclination to watch professionally produced videos and "viral" commercials. This entails awakening the attention of volunteer consumers to facilitate the access to their searches and develop a sense of community around it. One available tool offered by YouTube are the "channels"; channels provide the space for collecting videos



Tourism Business & Planning

related to a brand, a company or a specific topic. Both users and companies make use of this tool to improve their chances of visibility.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dk4dZOy5plo>

Another tool is humor, one of the common denominators of viral phenomena. A lot of tourism-related content that users have chosen to upload are funny situations from private experiences or products made for that purpose. Humor develops bonds of closeness and complicity; this has worked for traditional mass advertising and continues operating in the virtual environment that has almost enhanced the effect.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRclQ5ONFg>

As part of the relation YouTube / Tourism Destination, options are clearer. YouTube has been defined by its followers as a capsule of experiences, a window to the world. The current trend of destination branding can make use of YouTube's revolution on conceiving space. Proliferation of videos of tourist destinations escorts a long-established trend of tourist movement. In an increasingly connected world, instant access to a catalog of possible destinations for the consumer is a reality that the tourist industry cannot go unnoticed. The challenge is to show what motivates experience; concerns to tourism industry to go beyond the barrier of virtuality and encourage the passage of "user" and consumer of visual experiences to a subject desirous of achieving real experiences.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdq7Oa3trDs>

Luciana Asinari – C4T