Chapter 4
Digital Marketing Strategies for Accessible Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the applications of digital marketing in the construct of communicational practices aimed at target audiences that have some physical, motor, psychological, or other disabilities, who require additional information or specialized advice to fully comprehend all elements involved, when planning/deciding to travel. Throughout the text there are several references of the conceptual framework, as well as several examples of case studies that highlight some of the practices used in diversified contexts, using digital tools as privileged means of intervention in the different dimensions required to support the so-called accessible tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity sector that boosts economic growth and generates high levels of employability. As a dynamic industry that is constantly looking for new supply frameworks and market segments, innovating, differentiating and modernizing itself, it requires a constant technological upgrading as well as new digital ways to effectively reach the different and potential markets.

One of the key components of this sector is the customer, his expectations, needs and requirements. In an information-based society, the costumer is also evolving, originating new trends, such as the demand for comfortable and safe travel, diversity and service complementarity, and a dynamic and innovative response to all segments. It is currently expected that the destinations enhance the tourists' experiences, inevitably increasing the business opportunities of the sector. However, destinations must be committed to the theme and work diligently on their image, positioning themselves through good practices, shaping their image as a responsible destination, sustainable and accessible to all.

Nowadays social thought can no longer be dissociated from economic thought. As such, an accessible, ethical and responsible destination is also a more competitive destination. Additionally, accessible tourism is increasingly aiming for the provision of a quality service, responding to higher standards of demand, requiring more sophisticated marketing strategies and resources.

In this context, this chapter aims to provide the reader with an increased knowledge of this growing segment in terms of demand and supply in the tourism sector, referring to the best practices existing at international and national level with a focus on the importance of marketing strategies, as well as highlighting the boost that digital marketing can give in this scope. Several case studies are presented in the chapter to demonstrate just how effective (or not) digital marketing can be for the accessible tourism. The cases represent examples that have been applied to accessible tourism and should be viewed as an incentive to search for other practices and applications around the world, and that deserve to be analyzed in order to understand the impact of the application of digital marketing strategies.

The knowledge brought forth by this chapter aims to be a working tool for teachers, students, employers and other stakeholders, both in the educational system and in the productive and institutional system, by aggregating pertinent and useful information. Furthermore, it also intends to identify strategies and the best way to implement them to respond to the needs of a market characterized by its own idiosyncrasies, but in full growth in terms of people flows and, fundamentally, in terms of economic / financial flows.

BACKGROUND

In the current globalizing world, incessant technological development involves a new approach to tourism, rendering it essential to create an online presence. Consequently, digital marketing has been transforming the strategic position of organizations in the tourism industry by changing their efficiency, differentiation, operational costs and response time, and also stimulating radical changes in the way they operate and

distribute products. While on the one hand this form of marketing benefits customers by allowing them to have more information at their disposal, in a simpler and more economical way, on the other hand, it also allowed, for example, organizations to reduce costs, bureaucracy and paperwork associated with the product marketing.

The development of technology and the evolution of marketing are inexorably linked, and the existing match involves creating mutual benefits. As technologies emerge, evolution and innovation occur in the marketing processes, and as new concepts of marketing emerge, they lead to more advanced and different forms of communication; it is within this context that digital marketing is created and is continually being recreated. As Kingsnorth (2016, p. 290) pointed out "one of the key benefits of including social in your digital strategy is therefore clearly the volume of users, but equally important is the ability that the main platforms provide to target advertising by sophisticated demographic factors such as age, location and even interests".

As referred by Baltes (2015, p. 111) "many companies are interested in the increase the use of the content marketing tool in their marketing policy, as they notice the limitations of the traditional marketing communication strategy, as well as the huge opportunities brought by digital marketing".

In an increasingly competitive and global society in which everything digital is gaining ground, the proliferation of systems directed to the use of preferential communication tools by the tourism industry allows the creation of new opportunities for the different actors, simplifying and streamlining many of the inherent procedures in its activity.

The tourism industry, in its various aspects, should keep in mind that the new consumer profile, associated with digital marketing, makes purchasing decisions based on personal selection processes in often customized buying environments where interaction in the buying process is often with a machine, from which it compares characteristics, information, prices, and which may even be "in" different shopping places as many browser windows are opened, and frequently using immediate forms of payment. To innovate, to anticipate trends in demand, to surprise and satisfy customer expectations, needs and desires are fundamental steps in tourism, and digital marketing can be "a great foundation in this process" (Ferreirinha, 2017, p. 19).

At the same time, tourism is recognized as an activity sector capable of promoting sustainable economic development processes, stimulating the competitive growth of productive clusters, promoting social cohesion, creating qualified employment and preserving resources, essential factors for today's societies.

In fact, the tourism industry has established itself as a growing sector with a major impact on the economic and social life of the countries and is therefore considered an economic lever of special relevance.

Admittedly, the development of tourism activity marks and accompanies the evolution of social phenomena and it is perceived as an activity with a long history: "the phenomenon of tourism is related to travel, a visit to a place different from that of people's residence. Thus, in historical terms, it began when man ceased to be sedentary and began to travel, mainly motivated by the need to trade with other people" (Ignarra, 2003, p. 2).

Since tourism is an activity with a maze-like and complex nature, as it is a multidisciplinary activity, and therefore, its study is intricate, lacking an analysis that encompasses multiple angles, includes several influences and, given the implications that it has in the various society dimensions, instigates a multidisciplinary research, focusing on the different perspectives that contribute to the whole comprehension of tourism (Jafari & Graburn, 1991).

Beaver (2002, p. 285) considers the supply and demand perspective in the conceptualization of Tourism, when he refers to this sector as "(...) the activities of people during travel and stay in places outside their usual environment, for a consecutive period of no more than one year and for leisure, business and other reasons, together with the organizations and persons facilitating this activity, including the services that enable and support these activities and the providers of those services, both public and private, and do so either directly or through intermediaries".

Thus, the tourism sector has assumed the need to adapt to the requirements of the demand and its target audiences, since "those who do not adapt or who do not anticipate changes do not have a place in tourism" (Cunha, 2003, p. 94). It is understood, then, that this adaptation must be closely linked to issues of sustainability and social responsibility, since society is increasingly sensitive to changes framed in these trends, which in turn influence the tourism industry (Butler & Pearce, 1995) and to foster the great potential associated with accessible tourism.

In this context, Devile, Garcia and Carvalho (2010, p. 2) approach accessible tourism as "(...) tourists with incapacities, including those who, due to the environment in which they are inserted, suffer a limitation in their relational capacity and have special needs during travel, accommodation and other tourist services. They are, specifically, individuals with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities or others who are in medical circumstances requiring special care, such as the elderly and others in need of temporary assistance".

Hence, it is understood that "a tourist with an incapacity is a person who moves voluntarily and temporarily out of his / her habitual environment, whether in his / her own country or abroad, for a reason other than to exercise a profession for a period of time equal to or greater than twenty-four hours" (Devile, 2009, p. 40). Moreover, for Devile (2009, p. 40), the incapacitated tourist "is distinguished from the tourist without incapacity, due to being unable to carry out certain tasks autonomously and without assistance during his trip, for various reasons".

Despite being a relatively recent area of study there are already some attempts in the literature to define Accessible / Inclusive Tourism. In addition, it should be clarified that there are numerous denominations for this type of tourism. Authors Buhalis and Darcy (2010) advance with different terminologies, such as:

- Disability tourism;
- Easy access tourism;
- Barrier-free tourism;
- Inclusive tourism;
- Universal tourism;
- Accessible tourism.

In this subject, Teles (2009) mentions that the concept of accessibility and mobility for all, because it involves concepts of design, landscape, aesthetics, and even functionality of objects, equipment or spaces, possibly has in its genesis overly subjective inputs, contributing to the understanding of the specificities and complexity of this segment.

From the above it can be seen that tourism activity should be devoted to offering services and products that can be enjoyed by all, regardless of the inabilities / difficulties that each consumer may present in different contexts related to the sector (e.g. accommodation, transport, visits to monuments, among many others).

THE EVOLUTION OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism is turning towards new supply frameworks, innovating, qualifying, differentiating and modernizing itself. It is indeed a cross-cutting sector that must reinvent itself, adapting itself to the preferences and demands of the modern world, responding to the trends of the growing and diverse demand, seeking to enhance the experiences of every tourist, and inevitably, increasing the business opportunities of the sector.

Considering the "tourist gaze" as a perspective constructed through the differences between what the tourist is, and what the tourist would like to be or have (Urry, 2002), it is questioned how a blind person perceives the landscape of a destiny, considering that "through the senses, man is able to relate to the material world (...) from observation" (Sousa, 2007, p. 111). Moreover, it is "scientifically proven that the senses of human beings ... as sensory receivers of environmental messages and sending of synapses are also transmitters of emotional experiences" (Kanashiro, 2003, p. 156).

It is soon understood that "the five senses allow us to perceive volumes, textures, temperatures, odors, colors, sounds and tastes, and vision is the form we most use to interpret the landscape" (Sousa, 2007, p. 104), and therefore a blind person may resort to other sensory elements.

As such, it is important to briefly review the relevance of the classification, especially the dimensions relating to environmental and personal factors. If, on the one hand, the classification of environmental factors addresses issues such as the description of the "world in which people with different levels of functionality must live and act" and include "products and technologies, natural and built environment, support and relationships, attitudes, and services, systems, and public policies "(WHO & The World Bank, 2011, p. 5); personal factors focus on issues such as "motivation and self-esteem, which can influence how much a person participates in life in society" (WHO & The World Bank, 2011, p. 5).

All these types of limitation are translated by type of incapacity. Devile (2009, p. 40) contributes to the understanding and distinction of temporary incapacity (for example, to use crutches due to a broken foot) and permanent (example: to use a wheelchair due to paralysis). Also according to this author "permanent incapacity is characterized by the definitive condition of labor, social or human capacity limitations, and temporary capacity being a brief condition that makes it impossible to perform certain tasks".

Therefore, and although they may be related in some way, the concepts of "incapacity" and "disability" present different notions. In a broader dimension, incapacity is defined "by the relationship of the individual to his or her social environment, the more noticeable the more barriers this environment places the person with incapacity" (Devile, 2009, p. 40). On the other hand, disability is seen as "an anomaly or a change in the structures or functions of the organism" (Devile, 2009, p. 40).

Nubila and Buchalla (2008, p. 330) also understand incapacity as "a more comprehensive term, indicating the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a certain health condition) and their contextual factors environmental or personal), that is, something that involves a dynamic relationship".

For Darcy, Cameron and Pegg (2010, p. 516), "incapacity is a multidimensional construct, in which each dimension has its own needs. The multidimensional construction consists of: mobility, hearing, vision, learning, mental health, sensitivity and long-term health conditions".

In addition, accessible tourism can be extended to temporary difficulties, since its concept is broader and includes those who are temporarily affected by an accident, parents carrying baby carts or pushchairs, travelers with heavy luggage, families with children or the elderly.

Consequently, multi-deficiency, described as "the set of two or more physical, psychic or sensorial impairments or incapacities" appears in the market (Contreras & Valencia, 1997, p. 378). However, for Nunes (2001, p. 16) it is "more than the mere combination or association of incapacities, constituting a very heterogeneous group, although presenting specific / particular characteristics".

Although several authors attempt to define incapacity, it is considered important to pay attention to the interest and motivation to travel. For Gonzalez and Alonso, (2004, p. 27) "the degree of incapacity has no influence when traveling". The same authors consider that the incapacity can raise "the fears ... confronted with the possibility of facing the difficulties", as it is the case of the barriers not adapted to the concept of universal design, a concept to be addressed throughout the present study.

However, Pérez and Velasco (2017, p. 25) consider that more than a niche market, accessible Tourism should be viewed as an opportunity to "(...) enjoy tourism, by people with disabilities, aiming for the fight against inequalities and exclusion".

More focused on the tourism supply perspective, Peixoto and Neumann (2009, p. 147) consider that accessible Tourism should channel efforts to promote "(...) travel and destinations, products and appropriate tourist information for all those who have special needs in terms of accessibility, their families and friends, without any sector or group being discriminated against, and should be an accessible reality in accommodation, transportation, in physical terms, but also in terms of access to activities, information and communication". In fact, the authors value a differentiating, accessible, inclusive and extended offer for the public that comes as a companion for travelers with reduced mobility. In addition, the definition reflects the need to qualify the offer in all subsectors involved in the tourism sector.

In this perspective, Darcy and Buhalis (2011, p. 10) consider that "Accessible Tourism is a form of tourism that involves processes of collaboration between the various stakeholders, which, through the offering of products, services and environments based on Universal Design, allow people with special needs in terms of accessibility - both in their [physical] mobility, vision, hearing dimension and their cognitive dimension, to play an independent, equitable and dignified role".

After analyzing and scrutinizing the different perspectives of several authors regarding the definition of Accessible Tourism, it is important to consider the tourist with reduced mobility. The literature shows the complexity of the customer with reduced mobility. More than a matter of motivation, it is perceived that " people may have the same disability but not the same level of functioning" (Eichhorn, Miller, Michopoulou & Buhalis, 2007, p. 18), inevitably increasing the level of demand. In this parameter, we understand the position of Fontes, Ambrose and Broeders (2012), when they argue that it is a market range and not a segment, due to its heterogeneity within the group.

These tourism clients have benefited from the awareness of the agents of the sector, as well as the development of actions and concepts related to accessibility.

More than serving the fringe of people with reduced mobility, the creation of accessibilities sensitive to Universal Design, benefit the whole society, since "the intention of the concept of universal design is to simplify the lives of all" (Darcy, Cameron & Pegg, 2010, p. 529).

Therefore, the concept of accessible tourism has evolved, no longer serving only to accommodate or integrate people with disabilities, into a concept that integrates the adaptation, comfort and quality of tourism services for all.

It can thus be observed that the promotion of accessibility is an imperative of today's society. However, although most European countries present great potential, this may not be sufficiently satisfactory in promoting destinations accessible to all. The participation of society in this issue is of paramount importance when complemented with legal intent.

Once the minimum criteria for the accessibility of the tourist services chain have been identified, it is important to understand that all of them must relate in a coherent and responsible manner, allowing all "processes necessary for the transformation into an accessible destination ... in progressive manner" (Montes & Aragall, 2009, p. 143).

This market is so vast that it can encompass people with some kind of physical, psychological or sensory limitation, even a traveler with heavy luggage, as well as the senior tourism segment, which is a clear growing market, since aging population in developed societies is clearly an opportunity: first, through associated income resulting from equal opportunities and access to employment; and second, by the technological and scientific development that recovers the autonomy of seniors with reduced mobility and the increase of average life expectancy.

This target audience presents a multiplicity of challenges. We constantly see changes in the market, changes in paradigms that represent the capacity for renewal, fruit of innovation and differentiation of tourist destinations. One of these challenges is to offer quality, sustainability and competitiveness in a market that undoubtedly needs to be regarded as a serious commitment: accessible tourism for all.

In fact, the most obvious are architectural and urban barriers, but many others, such as psychological, digital information and communication barriers, discourage disabled people. There are still several websites with accessibility barriers that make them difficult or impossible for some people to use.

In this context and bearing in mind that Todor (2016, p. 52) considers that "digital marketing is a blanket term for the targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing of goods or services using digital technologies in order to reach and convert leads into customers and preserve them. The main objective is to promote brands, shape preference and boost sales through several digital marketing techniques. Alternative

terms for digital marketing are often: 'online marketing', 'internet marketing' or 'web marketing'. The fundamental concept in digital marketing is based on the inbound marketing approach or what it is called customer centric approach", it is necessary to analyze the links that can be established between this field of marketing and the idiosyncrasies associated with accessible tourism.

THE DIMENSIONS OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

The Tourism sector has been witnessing numerous and constant changes. In the current tourism market, it is perceived that consumers/tourists tend to see their consumption habits in constant change. One of the inducing effects of these changes is the constant technological evolution that allows the consumers to have a differentiated access in information gathering, as well as the use of digital marketing tools/instruments, that allow to powerfully promote the dissemination of products/services, brands, conquering new markets and strengthening the so-called traditional markets. We are therefore witnessing the development of the social network phenomenon, which allows the sharing of information, photographs, ideas, opinions and evaluations, obliging operators in the sector to redefine strategies, models and practices aiming for different target markets.

Altinay, Saner, Bahçelerli and Altinay (2016) consider "Web accessibility is not only dependant on accessible content but also on the accessibility of Web browser and other user interfaces. Software tools also have an important role in web accessibility". Digital marketing enables to expand the market, to promote products (goods and services), and it helps the companies to develop a better segmentation. In addition, it is possible to offer previously unknown destinations, and it makes the destinations accessible.

As such, accessible tourism should also be a concern of the economic agents of the sector, who must evaluate that tourism for all is a business opportunity and a competitive advantage.

Considering the fact that tourism is a very important social asset and should be available to all (only the European Union has 80 million people who currently have some type of disability), it is of all interest to evaluate and follow this indicator.

The emergence of projects such as Tur4all Portugal and PANTOU - Promoting Accessible Tourism Around the World (Figure 1) that seek to respond to the needs of the market but also to the rights of the people providing objective and updated information on the real conditions of accessibility of the tourist supply, are increasingly more important.

Figure 1. Case study 1: PANTOU – Promoting Accessible Tourism Around the World & Tur4all Portugal
Source: https://pantou.org and https://www.tur4all.pt

These two websites present identical objectives and functionalities, with a different geographic scope of the contents / information provided. The PANTOU is a website that presents the directory of accessible tourism services, covering the entire tourism and travel value chain.

The website was created in 2017 by the European Commission and its main focus was on European businesses and on destinations and service providers offering Europe-inbound tours. Since April 2017 the Pantou Directory is open to accessible tourism suppliers from around the world.

Tur4All is a Web Platform of *Accessible Tourist Resources for All* that provides several information on how to make Portugal an accessible destination for all; information on accessible tourism resources, while also seeking to promote accessible tourism and increase the number of tourists.

These projects develop consultancy and technical support in accessibility, marketing, publications, mobile applications, as well as other initiatives such as training plans, support in the organization of trips, among others.

The design of these initiatives associated with the application and use of digital tools make it easier for tourists with any kind of access needs to find what they are looking for when planning a visit; promotes accessible tourism suppliers, showing places to go and things to do - in safety and with convenience and comfort; enables suppliers and destinations to find new partners and build networks of accessible services, for the benefit of visitors, local businesses and communities.

It is increasingly perceived that economic sectors, such as tourism, are influenced by new information and communication technologies. As a dynamic sector, and functioning as an open system, Tourism is combined with the changes required by the new environment of the Internet, namely digital marketing allied with social networks, contributing to an increasing importance of using tools such as Electronic Word- of-Mouth (eWOM) and social networks.

For Tham, Croy and Mair (2013) there are three combinations of factors that influence the image of the tourist destination, of organic nature (life experience in general), induced (provided by destination) and real (in situ experience), with the most influential and credible being of a real nature and the least influential of the induced nature.

In addition, digital marketing provides analytical tools and software to monitor the evolution of inputs and outputs, and all of these tools can offer a flexible and custom tourism services. In this sense, the only assumption is to consider that the supply of products and services can be researched and acquired through the virtual world, consequently, from anywhere in the world.

Internet tools and social media are fundamental instruments to connect consumer and tourism destination because they have been considered an excellent source of information (Del Vecchio, Mele, Ndou & Secundo, 2018).

In this parametric, organic word of mouth (WOM), which is a highly influential and credible tool in the choice of tourist destinations, due to its source and information content, has been extended to the digital medium through electronic WOM (eWOM) (Tham et al., 2013). The exponential growth of social media and its impact on the choice of tourist destinations is thus perceived. Accordingly, tourism industry players such as hotels, restaurants and tourism marketing companies are embracing social media as one of the means of interaction with their target market (Tham et al., 2013).

The study "Community crosstalk: an exploratory analysis of destination and festival eWOM on Twitter" (Williams, Inversini, & Buhalis, 2015) is an excellent case of interaction through social media. The authors conclude that, in the case study, the tweets published by the organizers have a large impact on social networks, as, after a quantitative analysis it was concluded that there was a large number of followers. Thus, the structural characteristics of eWOM among the communities of interest generated by investors when an event is being produced were verified, and it was concluded that, although there is a somewhat dispersed form of propagation, the overwhelming majority support with their tweet.

In this case, the use of eWOM appears as a developing tool, especially used by event organizers, in an attempt to segment the market, attracting the interest of the communities that "like" the theme of the event.

Digital marketing has a significant influence on the decision of visitor choosing the tourism destination (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2017). And the consumers are more likely to share promotional messages if they perceive that purchases will occur soon, and it is more effective among strong E-WOM ties (Choi, Seo & Yoon, 2017).

Hence, using technology makes life easier, especially for disabled people, and "Social media tools facilitate accessibility to send out information, people through networks and encourage disabled people to have their say on their personal and professional development" (Altinay, Saner, Bahçelerli, & Altinay, 2016), and shows how technology overcomes the different barriers faced by people with disabilities.

Another application is observed in the study "Using Twitter Data for Cruise Tourism Marketing and Research" (Park et al., 2016) which demonstrates that the analysis of the information contained in social networks is an important method for the cruise market. The main theory upheld by the study is that its authors consider that the analysis of existing information on Twitter can be used to better perceive the tourism market, allowing companies to adapt their marketing strategies, in order to obtain better results. From the outset, the case study allows to identify the main destinations sought in this type of trips. In addition, a subgroup analysis was conducted and it was uncovered that those who had more connections with other users were celebrities, resulting in a higher visibility of their tweets about cruises, which were seen by millions of people. Thus, tourism companies may use celebrities' social networking as a very effective way of promoting their products (Park et al., 2016).

Obviously, these destiny promotion methods raise questions about the credibility and reliability of these new forms of marketing because, although they are in exponential growth (Tham, Croy & Mair, 2013), social media is an effective way to promote the most popular target areas on the platforms, especially if the number of followers of published information is taken into account.

On both the demand and supply sides, social networks play a significant role in the tourist destination, as they allow interaction with visitors. The visitors expect an interactive communication including empathy and emotions on the messages. Social media can help destinations, supporting and motivating an interactive communication (Kiráľová & Pavlíčeka, 2015).

In keeping with Viren, Vogt, Kline, Rummel and Tsao (2015) the concept of social media was first proposed in the 1950s by Barnes (1954), who limited the concept to connected actors in order to consolidate and to establish "bonds" and relationships between different people, in person or not, according to their interests. Also according to Viren et al. (2015), the first social networks platform specialized in tourism was born in 1896, in Detroit, Michigan, USA, among hotel managers in the city, with the aim of promoting the region. With the development of Electronic Media, eWOM is spreading at a dizzying pace, reaching increasing popularity (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Along these lines, it is perceived that companies and organizations of the tourism sector resort to digital marketing tools, adopting social media as one of the means of interaction with their target market. As a result of technological advances, society has been experimenting with a wide range of innovations that have contributed to its attitude in the face of consumption. These changes promoted at the level of digital marketing refer mainly to the development of new applications supported by mobile devices, greater access to Wi-Fi during the trip, placing the Internet in a state of "omnipresence", the emergence of a diversity of online distribution channels, thus contributing to consumer adherence to the contributions of eWOM tools (Bronner & Hoog, 2016). Often, a tourist's strong connection to social media can create an immediate connection between the tourist destination and the potential target audience by publishing a simple photograph in a particular tourist territory (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016). In this perspective, together with the publication of the photographs, the tourist becomes the 'narrator' of his own experience, describing the attributes of the tourist destination. (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2016). The immediate nature of this type of sharing, is quite evident, thanks to the development of portable devices that allow the direct upload of the photographic record, enabling other followers of social networks to have immediate access to these states. Comparing with the projections for the future of eTourism, Buhalis and Licata (2002) indicate that the tourist distribution will present an emerging market based on online intermediaries, and on Internet booking platforms.

In this context, and taking into account Devile (2009, p. 41), which states that "accessible tourism must be thought of and worked within the framework of the tourist destination's supply (...), whenever possible, and gradually make spaces, buildings, equipment, services, attractions, animations and events, thus broadening the potential demand of the destinations that are thus positioned", the tourism industry, fruit of globalization and the development of new technologies, shared by the 'actors' responsible for the sustained development of the sector (Brás, Costa & Buhalis, 2010) should position itself in such a way that its offer is available and accessible to all potential clients, regardless of the permanent or punctual disabilities that they present.

The availability of information on tourist experiences allows the optimization of results in the decision-making process, and adds value to business models (Del Vecchio et al., 2018). Websites and social media can provide a lot of information.

A result of the increased use of information and communication technologies by the tourism industry, was the creation of new opportunities for the different players and operators in this system, simplifying and streamlining many of the procedures inherent in their activity.

Regardless of the degree of disability, consumers seek to be increasingly informed and are, in most cases, fervent advocates of new technologies. In this sense, there has been a need to adapt websites and search engines to make them accessible to people with different types and degrees of limitations.

Websites like (Figure 2) can be presented as an example of platforms that provide accessibility help, allowing computer users to make the most use of digital services regardless of their disability.

It is estimated that about half of Internet operations, especially in e-commerce, translate into research, access to information and purchase of tourism products "(Machado & Almeida, 2010, p. 13), as such, the value of this kind of tool, to potential disabled consumers, depends on its accessibility.

Buhalis cited in Poon (1988) explains that the rapid development of both tourism supply and demand has made ICT a key partner in this industry, in the role of distribution, tourism coordination and, crucially, digital marketing.

Through digital marketing, tourism destination could change the traditional concept of promotion and marketing because tourists could share their experience (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015). In addition to social networks, digital platforms are also important for the tourist destination. And mobile applications may increase the shared data, but the information is limited (Williams, Inversini, Ferdinand & Buhalis, 2017).

Considering this, the growing trend of mobile devices usage by the tourist industry is not negligible. Indeed, the growing need for quality and rapidly available tourism information has led the tourism industry to become a leader in the development of

Figure 2. Case study 2: My web my way – Making the web easier to use
Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility

This site provides advice and help to maximize resources and technologies available to use a computer in topics such as accessibility.

It also includes guides and information booklets that feature a variety of accessibility technologies available on a computer, allowing your users to make the most of the Internet, regardless of their ability or inability to view information.

This page allows the digital marketing associated with the tourist information pages to be accessible and understandable to all, allowing to increase exponentially the number of views, consultations, contacts, requests for information, reservations of services, among others.

This page was developed and maintained through a partnership between BBC Online and AbilityNet, one of the UK's leading computing and disability institutions.

applications and use of mobile devices to access / compare / evaluate information, as well as the purchase / reservation of products and/or services through the Internet. Obviously, this context implies necessarily that the dimensions of digital marketing are maximized and exploited in order to reach as many consumers as possible, so that forms and / or strategies that facilitate and allow access also to clients included in the so-called accessible tourism.

The initiative "Tourism for All in Catalonia" promoted by the Catalan Tourist Board can be a good example from this trend (Figure 3). According to the *Agéncia Catalana de Turisme*, accessible tourism has become one of its main strategic lines and today Catalonia is a reference destination for accessible tourism in Spain, with more than 1,100 tourist resources providing facilities for people with disabilities, reduced mobility or special needs.

Undoubtedly, the availability and the access to information condition the consumers' choice decision to a specific destination or product. According to Buhalis and Licata (2002), tourism distribution will present an emerging market based on online intermediaries, and on Internet booking platforms. In fact, there has been recognition by society that these new technologies are the active suppliers of tools and platforms necessary for information dissemination, innovation and competitiveness among tourist destinations (DelChiappa, Baggio & Rodolfo, 2015).

The technological development in Tourism has created business opportunities that have been used by companies specialized in services such as E-procurement, informatics and information technology, advertising and design. However, it should be noted that in order to achieve sustainable development, the key factor is the agreement between production/distribution processes, which maximizes natural and cultural attractions for the benefit of every type of consumers.

Figure 3. Case study 3: Catalunya – Accessible Tourism
Source: http://turismeperatothom.catalunya.com/ca

The Tourism Agency of Catalonia started to promote accessible tourism in Catalonia in 2007 by developing the initiative "Tourism for All in Catalonia", with the goal to improve accessibility to its facilities, services and resources for individuals with some form of disability or reduced mobility.

Within the scope of the various strategies outlined, it created a specific website that provides information on accessibility, aiming to promote the most accessible tourist destinations in Catalonia based on the following premises:

- The destination covers the whole process of the tourism experience.

- The destination goes beyond an isolated tourism facility, resource or service.

- Based on the accessible nature of its cultural or natural resources or leisure facilities, the destination has a range of tourism facilities and services that are accessible for all.

The idea underlying this initiative is based on the fundamental principle that accessibility in the tourism sector should be a factor in the evaluation of the quality of tourism products, ensuring the full satisfaction of all consumers, thus ensuring greater attractiveness and competitiveness to the destination.

In this case digital marketing is used to facilitate the access, use and enjoyment of the services, divulging the level of accessibility of the tourist offers in a destination.

According to Buhalis and Law (2008) tourists who use the Internet as a tool for knowledge of tourism offers tend to spend more in the destination area compared to those who consult other sources of information. Therefore, the quality and availability of this information should be based on the development of technologies, usability and the way consumers use it in search of clarifications, options, preferences, setbacks, among others, although the digital marketing applied to the destinations has some limitations, like a local destination preserving its own identity, or destinations that don't appreciate new technologies.

According Hua, Ramayah, Ping and Jun-Hwa (2017) if social media is perceived as a risk, travelers tended to avoid using the networking sites to select tourism destinations. Nevertheless, the authors found a positive relationship between electronic word-of-mouth [e-WOM] and attitude. So, trust must be a goal to achieve.

In general, it is assumed that digital marketing is a fundamental resource to respond to the design of the delineation of all types of tourist demand, which cannot, undoubtedly, be dissociated from the one that contemplates the profile of the accessible tourism consumers, as well as from the current market trends, where technologies are a key success factor.

CONCLUSION

The literature, statistics, and trends clearly show that the market for the disabled / aging population is increasingly large, has significant purchasing power and an interest in spending on tourism / leisure products / services.

Digital Marketing must be present in websites, tools, and technologies designed and developed to allow people with disabilities to use them. These tools facilitate disabled people interaction with the Web without barriers. It is essential for Web marketing to become accessible, in order to provide equal access and opportunity to people with diverse abilities.

In this context there is, objectively, the perception that tourism has to move towards new approaches, allowing the development of an industry aware of new concerns, namely social, where accessible tourism is contemplated. A fundamental requirement of this market is the accessibility in terms of built environment, however, of increasingly more importance, is the information and the means of communication used to reach the target public.

As with all tourists, disabled people can share, through social media, their experiences, including the problems they encountered in their destination. Similarly, they can also recommend certain specialized tourism suppliers, who are able to satisfy the needs of a disabled tourist.

Hence the need to produce specialized information for the consumers of accessible tourism, on the accessibility of specific contexts of supply, so that they can be involved in the travel process, always considering that the greater the degree of disability, the more detailed will have to be the information available. Digital accessible design improves overall tourist experience and satisfaction, in a variety of situations, across different devices. Accessibility can enhance the tourist experience, drive innovation, and extend market reach.

It is expected that the definition of a system designed to efficiently communicate the different operations carried out by the tourism sector in order to integrate and distribute relevant content in an accessible manner is fundamental to allow the rendering of personalized and customized services to vicissitudes of each incapacity of potential target audiences.

At the same time, digital technology allows significant improvements in the media, overcoming traditional restrictions as geography, language, time zones, among others, reaching much wider and more global audiences. However, this communication can also be directed, with extraordinary precision, to very specific niche segments, taking advantage of the benefits of digital marketing to improve several specific components associated with accessible tourism.

To promote interaction between users and the Internet, digital marketing has to be made accessible to people with disabilities taking into account not only the contents presented, but also the way they are presented (e.g. texts, images, sounds, etc.); the use of the assistive technology (for example screen readers, switches, etc.); the profile of developers, designers, who may have certain disabilities themselves and with their experience can identify / create mechanisms closer to the real needs; create online database for accessible trips, which could increase the visibility of products / services and increase turnover.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Accessible Tourism: Concept that integrates the adaptation, comfort and quality of tourism services and products for all (seniors, tourists with physical or social limitations, and can be extended to people with temporary difficulties or without disabilities/incapacities).

Assistive Technology: Products, equipment, and systems that include assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Digital Marketing: Strategy developed and implemented by companies using the Internet as a marketing tool with the aim to expand markets, to promote products (goods and services), and assisting in the development of a better segmentation of consumer market.

Disability: A physical or mental condition (or a combination of both) that impairs a person's movements, senses or activities, restricting their ordinary activity.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM): The word-of-mouth that consumers self-expressed, positively or negatively, to other consumers in the internet.

Incapacity: The inability of an individual to do something because of a medical condition. The incapacity can be permanent (definitive condition of labor, social, or human capacity limitations) or temporary (temporary incapacity that makes it impossible to perform certain tasks).

Universal Design: Is the design and composition of a barrier-free environment so that it can be used by all people regardless of their age, physical limitations and disabilities, in the most independent, usual and natural design possible.

Usability: It's a term that refers to the ease of access and/or use of software or website, allowing users to achieve specified goals, with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction.

Web Accessibility: Websites, tools and technologies conceived and developed in an inclusive way, aiming to ensure that all users have equal access to information and functionality by eliminating any barriers that prevent interaction or access to websites by people with disabilities.