Web 2.0 and **impacts in tourism**

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Objectives | In the tourism industry, when products or services diverge from the customers' expectations, service providers' reputation and revenue can be at risk. The guest may complain about some product or service, may not return to the same hotel or restaurant, but, even worst, the guest may disseminate negative word-of-mouth. This is even more critic nowadays, because tourists can publicize complaints in a social network. Therefore, this work is an overview of the research literature about online reviews and their impact in the tourism.

Methodology | he methodology used was based on analysis of the last researches about the topic, found in academic databases and in relevant journals, such as Journal of Marketing, Journal of Business Research or Tourism Management, for instance.
The first step was to analyze articles about the interpersonal influence effect (WOM and EWOM), trying to comprehend the concepts, their evolution and importance in consumer behavior. Afterwards, the objective was to understand the impacts in tourism and hospitality, especially the influence of the online reviews in tourists' expectations and travel experiences. Finally, some articles were collected about social networks, trying to highlight their relevance nowadays, especially for tourism managers and marketers.

Main results and contributions |
I. Word-of-mouth effect
Word-of-mouth (wom) is considered as the most effective and least understood marketing communication strategy (Misner, 1999), allowing consumers to share their opinions and other informations about products, brands and services, with potential buyers.
This interpersonal communication process has also been recognized as influential in shaping tourism demand. Some researches indicate that wom can influence travel decisions (Shanka, Ali-Knight and Pope, 2002), boost wine sales (O'neill & Palmer, 2004), or even influence tourists when they are choosing a restaurant (Litvin, Blose and Laird, 2004).
Actually, the internet has leveraged this effect. Tourists can obtain information from other tourists and share their own experiences and advices (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004).

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II. Online reviews, expectations and complaints

The influence of user reviews is particularly important in hospitality and tourism industries, because the quality is only perceived after consumption According to the results, a 10% improvement in reviewers' rating about a hotel can increase sales by 4.4% and a 10% increase in review variance can decrease sales by 2.8% (Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009).

In fact, positive online reviews can increase expectations, but it also makes more difficult to satisfy those expectations and needs (Díaz-Martin, Iglesias, Vásquez, and Ruiz, 2000), and when products or services diverge from expectations, service providers' reputation and revenues can be at risk (Park & Lehto, 2008).

Nowadays, knowing how to manage complaints is crucial. According to the researches, the majority of the guest do not receive any response from the providers after the incidents (77.5 per cent) , and when incidents are related with the interpersonal treatment, families prefer negative word-of-mouth instead of monetary recovery (Park & Lehto, 2008).

On the other hand, some companies are recognizing that consumers have a powerful influence upon each others, and are changing their marketing strategies using wom marketing (Trusov *et al.*, 2009), i.e., much cheaper ways to catch attention, such as blogs or social media (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008; Carson and Schmallegger, 2008).

III. Social networks in tourism

Actually, social networks are changing the way tourists plan their trips. These websites allow users to interact and share their opinions with others about tourisitic attractions, hotels and restaurants.

Probably the largest community of travel / tourism presented online is Tripadvisor. It was founded in 2000 and aims to assist those who pretend to travel, allowing tourists to share their own experiences and advices with others. Currently the website has 20 million registered members, 50 million visits per month and 60 million travel reviews (Tripadvisor, 2011).

Internet users may have different motivations in using or generating e-wom (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). It can be a way to reduce risk and uncertainty in the purchase situation (Chen, 2008), a question of saving time in the decision making process, or even of arriving at a better buying decision (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003).

Nevertheless, it is not only a question of derive social and economic value (Balasubramanian and Mahajan, 2001), but there are also some hedonic characteristics in the process (Parra-López, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutiérrez-Taño, & Díaz-Armas, 2011). The emotional components are present in the customer satisfaction, which can be a stronger predictor of future behavioral intentions (Martin, O'neill, Hubbard & Palmer, 2008).

Therefore, when a destination or a hotel service exceeds the customers' expectations, it is likely that he or she feels motivated to share their own positive experience with others. On the other hand, disappointed customers may use negative wom in order to relieve their negative emotions (Sweeney *et al.* 2005).

Limitations | This "state of the art" paper, aims to draw attention for the online environment and the impact it can provide in a tourism supplier and/or in the destination image. There are scarce researches examining the factors that influence consumer response toward online information (Richard *et al.*, 2010). So, despite being a key topic, more research is needed. It would be useful to understand how the different stakeholders manage these online reviews, which could provide further valuable insights for tourism suppliers and marketers.

Conclusions | Historically, travel and tourism industry had been the most popular content area on the internet, due to the higher perceived credibility of consumer's opinions, compared to traditional touristic information sources. In U.K. the number of customers preferring and trusting in sites with amateur reviews is increasing, and German tourists tend to judge online customer ratings as high credible (Carson and Schmallengger, 2007).

Therefore, tourism managers and marketers need to check and manage the feedback created online, aspects that can be useful to understand visitor's expectations, experiences and satisfaction, to solve problems, analyse competitive strategies, monitor the company's image and reputation (Litvin *et al.*, 2008), and also for revenue generation purposes (Kirkpatrick & Roth, 2005).

Those virtual communities can be a way for promoting a destination, a tool to evaluate the tourist satisfaction with a destination, as well as an important source of innovation for service providers..

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