

# **Nigeria in the Dynamic World of Internet Facilities usage and its ripple Impact on Hospitality, Travel and Tourism**

**OLAWUYI, O.S. & <sup>1</sup>M.T. ADEDARA**

Tourism and Development, Center for Sustainable Development (CESDEV), University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti

Email: Kunle023@yahoo.com.au, <sup>1</sup>mactaiwo@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

The study examines the positive contributions of the use of internet facilities (social media) in the development of hospitality, travel and tourism in Nigeria. It helps in accessing information on hospitality, travel and tourism. It enhances the publicity and marketing aspect of several hospitality, tourism and travel destinations in Nigeria. Social media has made it easy for academics to get lots of information from written articles, journals and several literature reviews on tourism destinations. Students of tourism can easily access information on hospitality tourism and travel materials and social media applications for research and other purposes. Important information can also be uploaded and kept safe on social media applications which eliminate the fear of losing such important files to viruses or misplacement. This study revealed that social media is an indispensable tool to the marketing of travel and tourism destinations in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Social media, Internet, hospitality, travel and tourism destinations

## **Introduction**

Internet facilities include Email (yahoosmail, gmail, hotmail), instagram, yahoo messenger, facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, Google+

and Youtube. The importance and usage of the internet cannot be overemphasized in hospitality, travel and tourism industry. Oketunji (2001) opines that the Internet gives us access to a vast wealth of knowledge and access to tools that facilitate research.

However, the text is based on facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, Google+ and you tube because they are the social media (internet facilities) that are relevant for obtaining information on hospitality, travel and tourism. Social media provides the platform for instant discussions or communication between two or more people, irrespective of distance. Social media has made it quite easy to advertize various hospitality industries and tourist destinations without the representative of such tourism company having to travel to such prospective tourists destinations in and outside Africa. Before the advent of social media, people got to know about tourism sites through either newspapers, handbills (which must have been conveyed down to such prospective tourists through people or postage) or through the words of testimony from the mouth of a tourist who must have visited these tourist sites before. This depended on chance because only a few individuals can get to learn about such tourist destinations within a very limited time frame. In the past, apart from very adventurous individuals, a limited number of people travelled for tourism purposes due to lack of adequate information. It may take several years for people in Africa to get to learn about new travel destinations in a particular place without the help of the internet and social media. Multi-lingual information search applications can thus provide comprehensive search results for people who need to search using a keyword in one language and look for a search result in another language (Li and Law, 2007). This makes it easy to search for information particularly on travel and tourism.

Further, before the advent of social media applications, it was difficult for most people to have access to detailed information about the climatic conditions, likely weather hazards and culture of their chosen destination for tourism. There is preponderance of some climatic hazards such as flooding, typhoon, storms and so on, in some parts of the world at specific season of the year. By clicking on the internet, all these information can be made available to such individuals right away in a very timely manner, so as to make such potential tourist adequately prepared for such journey or even postpone the journey to a time that is safe from such climatic hazard.

As a matter of fact, individuals that do not understand the modus operandi of the ticket booking can easily discuss with the representative of the travel agents on social media and ask for the cost of booking with the travel agents and he can send his or her details to the travel agent via the same medium and get back the confirmation of the booked ticket right away. Internet tourism started less than two decades ago in Nigeria. Within these two decades, social media has made it highly possible for tourists to easily know about the attractions that are wonders of the world and the newly built tourist attractions and their locations in various parts of the world. Business travelers who look for comprehensive Information Technology (IT) services in hotels are willing to pay for certain IT services because they understand that hotels have to bear the high costs of implementing such technology. (Yeh et al, 2005)

### **Methodology**

Various products and services of facebook, google+, twitter, linkedin, skype and Youtube had been spelt out and analyzed, and each of these products and services for enhancement of travel and tourism are discussed in the text. Focus group interview was adequately employed and literatures were reviewed to provide more information on the subject of our study.

### **Literature review**

According to David (2011), travel and tourism is a truly global economic activity that takes place in almost all destinations across the world, from leading capital cities and smaller towns and villages in rural and coastal areas, to some of the remotest points on the planet. Cohen (1972), was one of the first sociologists who developed a four fold typology to conceptually clarify the term "tourist". In his concept, tourists are individuals who travel out of their place of abode particularly for leisure, and not for income generation.

In 2011, tourism contributed almost US\$ 6 trillion to the world global economy, or 9% of global gross domestic product (GDP), and 100 million direct jobs. It also created US\$ 650 billion investment opportunities (WTTC, 2011:2). This indicates the positive impact of travel and tourism in the development of Africa and the world at large. As part of the advantage of this development, some international hotels and touristic sites get to

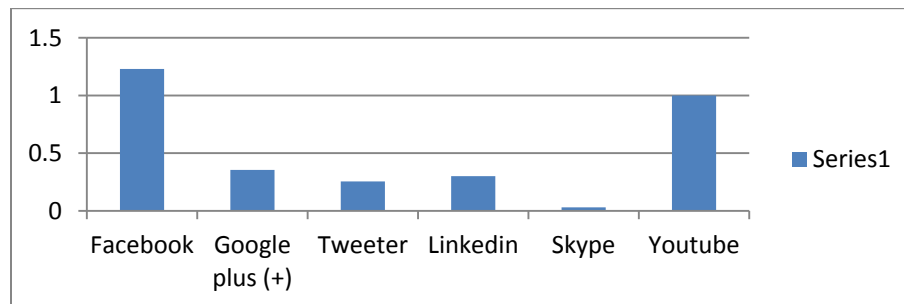
employ capable hands from Africa through the internet, which was not possible when the social media and internet was not in use.

In Africa, hotels spring up in large numbers, although many are not up to global standards but the staff strength of these hotels increased and that helped to provide job opportunities. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2010), international arrivals of tourists worldwide have more than doubled since 1990. It has risen from 435 million to 675 million in 2000, and to 940 million in 2010. The internet aided the increase in international arrivals because travelers get to know a whole lot about their destinations through the internet.

Over the last decade, organizations in all sectors of the economy rushed to join the online business community and adopted the internet for their daily business activities (Barnes and Hinton 2007:1) Arnie (2002) opined that tourism is one of the most important sectors that apply information and communication technology (ICT), and one would expect that changes in ICT, particularly the arrival of the internet would influence the structure of this industry.

#### **Social media applications that aid hospitality, travel and tourism**

Tourism and hospitality are social phenomena, and the industries associated with them are largely application oriented. (Rob et al, 2007). Social media provides a platform for effective mass integration. The social media applications that really aid hospitality, travel and tourism are stated in the pie chart below:



**Figure 1: Average monthly users of social media (in millions) culled from (thenextweb.com, 2014 and expandedramblings.com, 2014, reuters.com, 2014)**

The average monthly users (in millions) of the selected social media in a descending pattern is represented on the vertical axis of figure 1 while the respective social media applications are stated on the horizontal axis of the same figure. Hence, it depicts that facebook has the highest number of monthly users followed by youtube, google+, linkedin, twitter and skype, accordingly.

### **Brief notes on other internet facilities that aid travel and tourism in Africa**

Email is social and highly important for tourism growth, although it is not considered as social media because it does not provide the platform for effective mass collaboration (v. mass communication, team collaboration, etc) (Anthony, 2010). It must be said that even though internet usage had brought much joy and ease to the prospective tourists in Africa, at the same time it had caused some sorrow to some travel agents and had even sent some travel agents out of business, particularly the less innovative ones. Since much information can be gotten from the internet about the types of the documents needed in securing a visa of another country, and even making hotel reservations and ticketing, a lot of well informed people had considered it much useless to consult any travel agent or even pay any travel agent for assistance. In situations like that, only strong and innovative travel agents can survive comfortably. Internet and social media has indeed brought crucial changes to our perception of tourism in Nigeria and has enlightened Nigerians about tourism and its importance. Websites are of great use to travel and tourism development. Essential information about the travel and touristic destination can be easily accessed on the webpage with just a single click of the mouse, this gives the prospective tourists mental and psychological preparedness for their trips. Reza (2013) opined that official sites are digital speakers of a country on internet and these databases are stronger, more updated and are multi-lingual.

Many hotels and tourism sites situated in local places in Nigeria where internet facilities do not exist may not benefit from the use of this new development. Efforts should be made by owners of these industries to be up to date in having such facilities. Government at the local, state and federal levels can also assist them in providing communication facilities. Since their contributions would definitely bring some economic gain into government purse at the end of the day, it is advisable that the reality of

what exists on a tourist site or hotel should be replicated on their website in order to give them good name.

The table below shows the various services and products of social media (internet facilities) that are important for hospitality, travel and the tourism industry in Nigeria. It also shows the particular product each social media possesses. This is further explained below.

**Table 1: Social media and their products**

Social media	profile page	Groups	Events	Photos album	Messages	News feed	Business page	Notification	Video call
Facebook	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Google+	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Tweeter	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Linkedin	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Skype	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Youtube	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

Culled from [blog.hubspot.com](http://blog.hubspot.com), 2014

### **Impact of social “media profile” page on hospitality, travel and tourism**

The table above depicts that all the aforementioned social media applications have a profile page. The profile page is very important to any social media application. It shows in detail the necessary information (such as age, sex, work experience, services rendered, location and so on) about the owner of the social media account. This social media service enables prospective tourists the opportunity to know the preliminary and important details about the hospitality, travel and tourism industry.

### **Impact of social media “groups” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

Table 1 shows that Facebook and Google+ have Group as their product. Group can also be likened to be a community of people who are connected on the same platform. This service aids travel and tourism marketing because it is easy to market travel and tourism products and services to members of the group.

### **Impact of social media “events” hospitality on travel and tourism**

Table 1 depicts that facebook, twitter and linkedIn renders event services to the public. These services also aids marketing because travel and Tourism Companies can upload their past and forth coming programmes and activities on this platform and it would update the prospective clients as such.

### **Impact of social media “photo album” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

Table 1 shows that facebook, google+, youtube and Twitter have photo album as their products. This helps tourism because photos of events and locations could be uploaded on this platform, which can definitely attract more and new tourists and customers to such travel and tourism locations.

### **Impact of social media “messages” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

Table 1 shows that facebook, twitter, and linkedIn have message platform for their application. This is very good because a tourist manager can send many messages to prospective clients through this medium. Also, a tourist manager can use this medium to negotiate and transact business with his/her new or former clients.

### **Impact of social media “newsfeed” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

Table 1 shows that facebook, twitter, and youtube are the sets of social media that offer newsfeed as a product. Newsfeed avails the followers of the particular account to get updates about the recent or old comments, pictures and videos uploaded on social media, this in turn helps to advertise tourism products.

### **Impact of social media “business page” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

Table 1 show that it is only google+ and linkedin that offers this product. Business page on social media is very important because it creates the platform for business and business personalities to stay connected with customers and fans, thus owners of tourist destinations can easily stay connected with their customers.

**Impact of social media “notification” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

Table 1 shows that facebook, Google+, twitter and skype that have Notification as their products. Notification gets the owner of the particular social media account aware of new activities on the social media.

**Impact of social media “video call” on hospitality, travel and tourism**

From table 1, only Google+ and Skype have video call facility. This is very important for the travel and tourism industry because it allows travelers to keep in touch with family and friends and also when prospective tourists see fascinating tourist attractions on video, which will in turn trigger the eagerness of tourist. In order to be able to use these facilities people need to be trained in social media usage.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

This paper explores how social media usage can contribute immensely to the growth of Tourism in Nigeria. Social media and the internet has brought more relief to hospitality, travel and tourism industries as a whole in Nigeria. It did help alleviate poverty through job creation; it gave the people enlightenment through easy access to information and made tourism tasks less stressful. It aids the spread of information by strengthening the marketing aspect of tourism.

It is pertinent to advise that the hospitality, travel and tourism industry in Nigeria should adopt the use of social media effectively to improve revenue generation. The Nigerian government should also ensure that they efficiently employ its usage in show casing their assets to the world at large. Local travel and tourism companies in every nook and cranny of Nigeria should employ social media tools to grow their business while companies that are already using social media applications should ensure they are always abreast of new developments.

**References**

- Arnie, W. (2002). "Developing Countries and the Tourist Industry in the Internet Age: The Namibian Case" *Forum for Development Studies* Vol No. 1-2003 Pg 3.



- Cohen, E. (1972). Towards a sociology of International Tourism. *Social Research: An International Quarterly Political Economics*. Vol 39:164-182.
- David, S. (2011). The Authority on World Travel & Tourism. Travel and Tourism development potential. World Travel and Tourism Council Publication.
- Barnes, D. and M. Hinton (2007). searching e-business performance measurement system, *The Electronic Journal of Information System* 10(1),134-142.
- Li, K. W. and R. Law (2007). A Novel English/Chinese Information Retrieval Approach in Hotel Website Searching. *Tourism Management*. Vol 28(3), 777-787.
- Migration and remittances factbook, (2011). World bank publication. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)).
- Oketunji, I. (2001). Automation of cataloguing practices in Nigerian libraries. *Proceedings of selected papers presented at various workshops of NLA. Cataloguing, Classification, and Indexing Section, 1995 to 2000*: 86.
- Rob L., R. Leun, and D. Buhalis (2007), "Information Technology Applications in Hospitality and Tourism: A Review of Publications from 2005 to 2007" *Journal of Travel & Tourism marketing*. World Bank data base.
- Reza K. (2013). "Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business" The Impact of ICT on Tourism Industry in Iran" VOL 4, NO 11.
- UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) (2010). UNWTO Annual Report. A year of recovery. UNWTO publication.
- WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) (2011). Travel and Tourism 2011. (PDF).
- Yeh, R. J., J.K. Leong, I. Blecher & H.H.S. Lai (2005). Analysis of hoteliers' e-commerce and information technology applications: business travelers' perceptions and needs. *International journal of hospitality & tourism administration*, 6(2), 29-62.
- Anthony, B. (2010). [blogs.gartner.com \(www. http://blogs.gartner.com/anthony\\_bradley/\)](http://blogs.gartner.com/anthony_bradley/)<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/31889/13-Brands-Using-LinkedIn-Company-Page-Features-the-Right-Way.aspx>.

- Craig, S. (2014). director of marketing ([http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/resource-how-many-people-use-the-top-social-media/4/.U7CfYe8w\\_hk](http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/resource-how-many-people-use-the-top-social-media/4/.U7CfYe8w_hk)).
- Craig, S. (2014). director of marketing ([http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/facebook-page-statistics/#.U7G-au8w\\_hk](http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/facebook-page-statistics/#.U7G-au8w_hk)).
- Emil, P. (2014). <http://thenextweb.com/facebook/2014/01/29/facebook-passes-1-23-billion-monthly-active-users-945-million-mobile-users-757-million-daily-users/http://www.tourismandmore.com/tidbits/using-the-social-media-for-tourism/http://www.tradingeconomics.com/sub-saharan-africa/international-tourism-receipts-percent-of-total-exports-wb-data.html>.
- Kurt, W. (2014). <http://mashable.com/2014/04/11/linkedin-apps-2014/http://www.planeta.com/planeta/99/1199globalizationrt.html>.