

UNIT - I

Unit Structure

Lesson 1.1 - Introduction to E-Tourism

Lesson 1.2 - Use of Information Technology in Tourism

Lesson 1.1 - Introduction to E-Tourism

Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, the learners should be able to

- Understand the meaning and concepts of electronic tourism
- Gain knowledge on the key activities and players in electronic tourism
- Know the relevance of electronic tourism in the Indian Tourism industry
- Appreciate the historical development of e-tourism
- Gain an understanding of the significance of Electronic technology for data processing and communication in e-tourism

Introduction

The Internet and information technology have become the most imperative innovation in the history of mankind next to the invention of printing press. The Internet integrates numerous features of present media with new competence of interactivity and addressability; thus, it renovates not only the way individuals conduct their business with each other, but also the very significance of what it means to the society. Currently, millions of people that include customers, businessmen and employees worldwide rely on the Internet for working, learning, socializing, entertainment, leisure and shopping. Since the emergence of the Internet, travel planning (e.g., travel information search and booking) has always been one of the major reasons that people use the Internet.

The travel marketplace is a global arena where millions of buyers (travel agents and the public) and sellers (hotels, airlines, car rental companies, etc.) work together to exchange travel services. Among the “shelves” on which buyers explore for travel-related services are world’s global distribution systems (GDS) and the Internet distribution systems (IDS). These systems have become Internet supermarkets connecting buyers to the service providers and allowing reservations to be made at less time and with less effort. Ever since the appearance of the electronic and Internet the tourism and travel industry has started sprouting around the electronic media and are becoming more and more customer friendly.

The information centric nature of tourism industry makes it very critical for customers to access internet. The revolution of the Internet and information and communication technologies is making the Electronic media an integral part of tourism and it helps and allows tourists plan or customise their plans accordingly through internet applications offered by the tourism players. At present more travel is sold over the Internet than any other consumer product. The Internet has become the most appropriate channel for selling travel as it brings a wider network of suppliers and a widely disseminated customer groups together into a centralized market place.

E- Tourism in India

The revolution of the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in India has had already insightful repercussions for the tourism industry. A whole system of Communication Technologies and the Internet has been rapidly diffused throughout Indian tourism sectors. Subsequently, online travel bookings and associated travel services are accepted as one of the most thriving e-commerce implementations.

Tourism has closely been connected to progress of Information and communication system for over 10 years in India. The tourism industry initially concentrated on utilizing information system to increase efficiency in processing of information within and managing distribution.

During the last decade of 20th century, India saw the emergence of e-tourism, its innovation and growth. It is because of the online revolution and its utility where the tourists are more interested to get information on destinations, facilities, availabilities, prices, geography & climate and present status of friendly relation. This led to the development of e-commerce strategies in tourism industry and more services in the form of online hotel booking, flight booking, car booking, bus booking came into forefront as online services provided by the big online travel companies such as Travelchacha.com, Makemytrip.com, Yatra.com, Cleartrip.com, Ezeego1.com, Arzoo.com, Travelguru.com, Travel.indiatimes.

com, ixigo.com, travelocity.co.in etc. On these sites, the travellers have wide option of exploring details of hotels, flights, cars, buses and other allied services.

At present, the information and communication technology supports all operative, structural, strategic and marketing levels to facilitate global interaction among suppliers, intermediaries and consumers around the world and Indian players. Now in India the online travel bookings and associated travel services are recognized as one of the most successful e-commerce implementations. Many tourism-related organisations had to go through a major business processes re-engineering to capitalise on the emerging technologies in order to transform their service process and data handling to match the global standard.

More specifically, the opening up of the Indian market for foreign players and the changes in the aviation industry policy attracted large number of international players across the world to establish their business centres in India. The foreign players were brought in their technical know how's and their innovative business process into the Indian market that contributed to the forceful adoption on technology and information system of tourism players to stay alive in the competitors.

The global business dimension also increased the demand of international consumptions and tourism related services both domestic and international, which made the tourism associates to re-engineer their products and process to match the expectation of the market. According to 2013 CNN global travel survey, India is now one of the top tourism destinations in Asia as it has received 3.3 million foreign tourists during the first half of this year.

Currently the Indian market is well equipped and competitive as any of the international tourism market across the world as it was able to adapt to the rapidly changing IT enabled tourism process and service delivery by partnering with international participants. The amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) inflow into the hotel and tourism sector during April 2000 to April 2013 was worth US\$ 6,664.20 million, as per data provided by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce.

The below Figure shows the contribution of Indian tourism to the world tourism. The graph reveals that there is a steady growth in the Indian tourism contribution to the world market especially after 2000. The emergence of ICT during the beginning of this century can be one of the major reasons for such a rapid growth and increase in the significance in the world market as reported by the Indian tourism department.



India's share of India in International tourism

Source: Indian tourism statistics (2012)

The Internet Economy Watch Report for the month of September 2012, released by the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) indicates a marginal growth of 7 percent in online booking of air tickets when compared with the numbers of corresponding month last year.

Though Indian market is considered to be one of the competent it has still more to learn and adapt from European markets. Tourism department (2013) has reported that India and Japan will plan to strengthen cooperation in tourism sector. Both the countries will identify areas for working together and explore new opportunities in tourism sector especially in the field of human resource development (HRD) and investment in the tourism sector. (IBEF, 2013)

Understanding E-Tourism and its Concepts

This section of the chapter will clarify e-tourism and explain various concepts that relate to the electronic tourism.

E-Tourism

It can be understood as the application of Information and communication technology on the various sectors of the tourism industry.

According to Buhalis (1998) “E-tourism is the digitisation of all the processes and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality and catering industries that enable organisations to maximise their efficiency and effectiveness”.

The above definition clarifies that electronic tourism is the digitalisation of all practices and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality and catering industries.

E-tourism cannot be understood as an independent process or system as it comprises of numerous participants and players those utilise the electronic mode through information technology and communication system to reach the customer directly or indirectly. The e-tourism takes different forms that can be accessed by the customers through different channels and distribution systems.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTS)

According to Buhalis (1996), ICTs include “the entire range of electronic tools, which facilitate the operational and strategic management of organisations by enabling them to manage their information, functions and processes as well as to communicate interactively with their stakeholders for achieving their mission and objectives.” ICTs include not only the hardware and software required but also the groupware, net ware and the intellectual capacity (human ware) to develop, program and maintain equipment).

Poon(1993) has defined information and communication technology as the “collective term given to the most recent developments in the mode (electronic) and the mechanisms (computers and communication technologies) used for the acquisition, processing analysis, storage, retrieval, dissemination and application of information.

ICT effectively integrates the entire range of hardware, software, groupware, net ware and human ware and blurs the boundaries between equipment and software. Thus, ICTs emerge as an integrated system of networked equipment and software, which enables effective data processing and communication for organisational benefit towards transforming organisations to e-businesses. This course material will use ‘IT’ and ‘ICT’ interchangeably.

Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce) and Electronic Business (E-Business)

According to Turbanet *al.* (1996), “E-commerce is the process of buying, selling, or exchanging products, services, or information via computer networks, including the Internet”. In this book, the terms are used interchangeably. Electronic business includes not



only purchasing and selling but also includes servicing the customers, work together with business associates, conducting electronic learning, and performing e-transactions both internally and externally by an organization.

Internet

Internet is the network of all networks. Internet is a network which associates numerous networks and surfers around the world and a network that no one owns outright. The terms, the Web and the Internet, have often been used interchangeably; however, the Web is part of the Internet as a communication tool on the Internet. Additionally, the terms, the Internet and ICTs, are often utilized in parallel; however, rigorously speaking, the Internet is part of ICTs.

Infomediaries

An electronic intermediary that provides and/or controls information flow in cyberspace, often aggregating information and selling it to others. The most well-known infomediaries in the tourism industry are Trip Advisor and Holiday Check which successfully implement a Web 2.0 approach and integrate the users as producers of trusted content.

Meta mediaries like travel meta-search engines (TSEs) appear between suppliers and consumers to aggregate and filter out relevant and pertinent information from the wealth of material. TSEs like Sidestep, Mobissimo and Kayak enable customers to compare offers and prices by carrying out live queries to suppliers, consolidators and online agencies and presenting the results transparently.

E-Tourism Players and their Activities

The main actors in the tourism industry include governments, tour operators, hotels, airlines and other transport operators, and tourists or consumers. Each of these actors has a stake in the development of the electronic market. Each is expected to be affected in different ways by the changes brought about by electronic commerce.

The concerns and interests of these stakeholders need to be addressed in order to ensure that changes are managed and promoted to the benefit of all. Each of these players utilise information and communication technology in their processes to complement each other on making e-tourism efficient. Some of the e-tourism activities performed by the main stakeholders are discussed below.

a. E - Airlines

Due to the complexity of airline operations, they realised the importance of IT very early as they believed that it will help them making them efficient, quick, low-cost and accurate management of their inventory and in-house organisation. Initially the bookings and reservations were made on physical display boards, where the travellers were listed. Travel agencies had to locate the finest routes and fares in physical and then check availability and make bookings by phone, prior to issuing a ticket manually.

Distribution is a vital component of airlines' approach and competitiveness, as it determines the cost and the capacity to access the travellers. The cost of distribution is increasing considerably and airlines find it difficult to control. Currently, the communication technology is used heavily to support the Internet distribution of airline seats. These systems are at the heart of airline operational and strategic agendas. This is particularly the case for smaller and regional carriers as well as no-frills airlines which cannot afford GDSs' fees and aim to sell their seats at competitive prices. This has forced even traditional or full-service to recognise the need for re-engineering the distribution processes, costs and pricing structures.

E-airlines focus on the following aspects:

- Improving the accessibility, customer relationship and their business associates;
- Electronic bookings
- Online ticketing;
- Yield management
- E-auctions for very last minute available seats
- Disintermediation and restructuring of agency charge schemes
- Increasing the productivity of the new channel in electronic distribution

Players like Air Asia, Tiger airways, all classical examples for e-airlines that work on customising the services based on the customers to work out on low cost fares. The electronic mode allows the customers to choose the options on unbundled packages in terms of travel insurance, additional luggage, Food, Choice of seat etc.

The Air Asia Web page displaying the online air ticket information and promotions, the web page contain provisions for checking availability, flight information, cost, etc. These web pages are easy and customer friendly and keeps promoting their e-airline initiatives through news papers, through promotions.



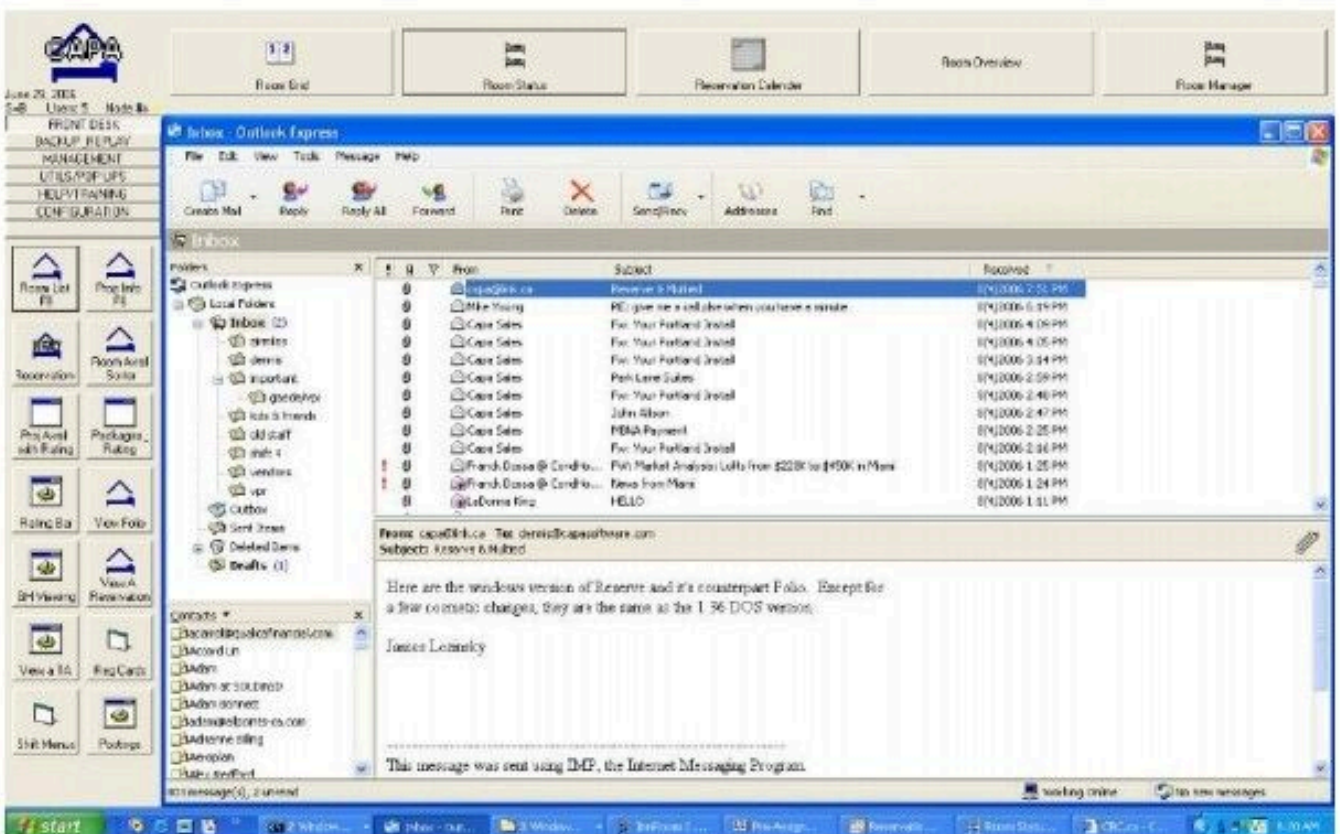
AirAsia- example of an Airline whose business model is powered by the Internet

b. E-Hospitality

e-hospitality is beyond just distributing, servicing, as it offers more than that by supporting proven hospitality and technology products for the Hospitality Industry. Additionally, **e-Hospitality** offer support and services beyond just that of a front desk system vendor, therefore it is postured to assist properties with all aspects of the front desk and associated guest amenities from the phone system and voice mail to Pay per View (PPV) movies, secure high speed in rooms, lobby kiosks, and even guest printing/faxing from the guest rooms.

The Web screen shot displayed below (Figure) is a model of e hospitality system offered by CAPA e-hospitality Inc.

Hotels use information and communication technology in order to improve their operations, manage their inventory and maximise their profitability. Their systems facilitate both in-house management and distribution through electronic media. 'Property management systems (PMSs)' coordinate front office, sales, planning and operational functions by administrating reservations and managing the hotel inventory. Moreover, PMSs integrate the "back" and "front" of the house management and improve general administration functions such as accounting and finance; marketing research and planning; forecasting and yield management; payroll and personnel; and purchasing. Understandably, hotel chains gain more benefits from PMSs, as they can introduce a unified system for planning, budgeting and controlling and coordinating their properties centrally.



Example - E-hospitality solution

Source: <http://www.ehospitalitysystems.com/>

Hotels also utilise ICTs and the Internet extensively for their distribution and marketing functions. Global presence is essential in order to enable both individual

customers and the travel trade to access accurate information on availability and to provide easy, efficient, inexpensive and reliable ways of making and confirming reservations.

One of the most promising developments in hospitality is 'application service providers (ASPs)'. ASPs will be increasingly more involved in hosting a number of business applications for hospitality organisations. ASPs are ideal for hotels, especially for smaller- to mid-sized ones, that want to leverage the best vertical and enterprise support applications on the market without having to deal with the technology or pay for more functionality than needed. As they do not have extensive ICT departments and expertise, they can easily access up-to-date applications and benefit from the collective knowledge accumulated by ASP providers without having to invest extensively in technology or expertise building.

The development of the Internet has provided more benefits as it reduces the capital and operational costs required for the representation and promotion of hotels. Hotel websites are a basic requirement to an increasing number of communication and business strategies. The usability of a website, effectiveness of its interface, as well as its amount of information, ease of navigation, and user friendliness of its functions, are central to the success of these strategies and an Automatic Website Evaluation System (AWES) can provide objective and quantitative guidance to website design.

However, many small and medium sized, independent, seasonal and family hotels, find it extremely difficult to utilise communication technology due to financial constraint and lack technological expertise.

c. E-Tour Operators

Leisure travellers often purchase "packages," consisting of charter flights and accommodation, arranged by tour operators. Tour operators tend to pre-book these products and distribute them through brochures displayed in travel agencies. Recent times in India, the tour operators realised the benefits of utilising communication technology in organising, promoting, distributing and coordinating their packages.

Gradually, all major tour operators developed or acquired databases and established electronic links with travel agencies, aiming to reduce their information handling costs and increase the speed of information transfer and retrieval. This improved their productivity and capacity management whilst enhancing their services to agencies and consumers. Tour operators also utilised their CRSs for market intelligence, in order to adjust their supply to demand fluctuations, as well as to monitor the booking progress and productivity of travel agencies.



Webpage of SOTC – Example for e-tour operator

Few players realise the major transformation of the marketplace, while the majority regard communication and information technology as an exclusive facilitator of their current operations, and as a tool to reduce their costs. However, several tour operators in have embraced electronic brochures and developed their online strategies. The electronic mode enables them to concentrate on offering customised packages and allows them to update their brochures regularly.

Although a partial disintermediation seems inevitable, there will always be sufficient market share for tour operators who can add value to the tourism product and deliver innovative, personalised and competitive holiday packages. However, many key players in Indian market have started disintegrating their packages and selling individual components directly to the consumers. In this sense they will be able to re-intermediate, by offering their vast networks of suppliers through their channels.

Innovative tour operators use the Internet extensively to promote their products and to attract direct customers. They also use the Internet to de-compose their packages and sell individual products. Thomson.co.in for example has developed a comprehensive online strategy to provide media rich information on its web site. The company supports podcasting and video casting and also has integrated Goggle Earth geographical information data on its website. It also distributes branded content on a wide range of Internet sites such as youtube.com to attract consumers to its web site and to encourage them to book. It is evident therefore that tour operators that will use technology innovatively will be able to provide value to their clientele and safeguard their position in the marketplace.

d. E-Travel Agencies

Information and communication technology has become a major tool for travel agencies as they provide information and reservation facilities and support the intermediation between consumers and principals. Travel agencies operate various reservation systems, which mainly enable them to check availability and make reservations for tourism products. Until recently GDSs have been critical for business travel agencies to access information and make reservations on scheduled airlines, hotel chains, car rentals and a variety of ancillary services. GDSs help construct complicated itineraries, while they provide up-to-date schedules, prices and availability information, as well as an effective reservation method. In addition, they offered internal management modules integrating the “back office” (accounting, commission monitor, personnel) and “front office” (customers’ history, itinerary construction, ticketing and communication with suppliers).

Multiple travel agencies in particular experience more benefits by achieving better coordination and control between their remote branches and headquarters. Transactions can provide invaluable data for financial and operational control as well as for marketing research, which can analyze the market fluctuations and improve tactical decisions.



Web page of Yatra.com – example for online travel agency (OTA)

The table (figure) depicts the list of electronic travel agencies and the list of services offered by them online.

Table showing List of e- travel agencies (services offered) in India

Online Travel Agency	Services offered					
	Air	Hotel	Car	Bus	Rail	Cruise
Make my trip	√	√	√	√	√	√
Yatra	√	√	√	√	√	√
Clear trip	√	√	√			
Travel guru	√	√				
Travelocity	√	√	√			√
Arzoo	√	√	√			
Travel chacha	√	√	√			
Via World(Flightraja)	√			√		
Trip mela	√	√				
Travel spice	√	√	√			
Air tickets India	√	√	√			
India times Travel	√	√				
Ezeego I	√	√	√	√	√	√
Expedia	√	√	√			
Red Bus				√		
Ticket vala		√	√	√		
Travel Bixee	√	√		√	√	
Thomas Cook	√	√			√	√
Cox & Kings	√	√	√			
Travel-O-Travel	√					
Book my trip	√	√	√			
Cheap Air Tickets	√					
Take off Trip	√					
Prime Travel India	√	√	√			
Travel Mart	√	√	√			
Travel port	√					
Cheap-o-air	√	√	√	√		
Me Go		√				
Journey Mart	√	√	√		√	√
STA Travel	√	√				

Source: <http://india-online-travel.blogspot.in/> (accessed on: 12.09.2013)

e. E-Destinations

Destinations are amalgams of tourism products, facilities and services which compose the total tourism expertise under one brand name. Traditionally the planning, management and coordination functions of destinations have been undertaken by either the public sector (at national, regional or local level) or by partnerships between stakeholders of the local tourism industry.

The screen shot (Figure) is the e-destination webpage that displays the information on various parts of the world and the tourism attraction and travel information for the travellers across the world.



Example of e-destination

Though communication and information technology were never considered as a critical instrument for the development and management of destinations, increasingly 'Regional tourism Organisation' (RTOs) use ICTs in order to facilitate the tourist experience before, during and after the visit, as well as for coordinating all partners involved in the production and delivery of tourism. Thus, not only do RTOs attempt to provide information and accept reservations for local enterprises as well as coordinate their facilities, but they also utilise communication technology to promote their tourism policy, coordinate their operational functions, increase the expenditure of tourists, and boost the multiplier effects in the local economy.

http://www.edestinations.com/DestinationSheets/EDES_India.pdf

The above web link is the classical example for the e-destination. It is electronic file in the website of the tourism organisation those promote their destinations online. The file consists of the details of the locations and attractions of the particular destination. Though it had a slow start in Indian region, currently there are dynamic players in the industry those focus on e-destination efforts.



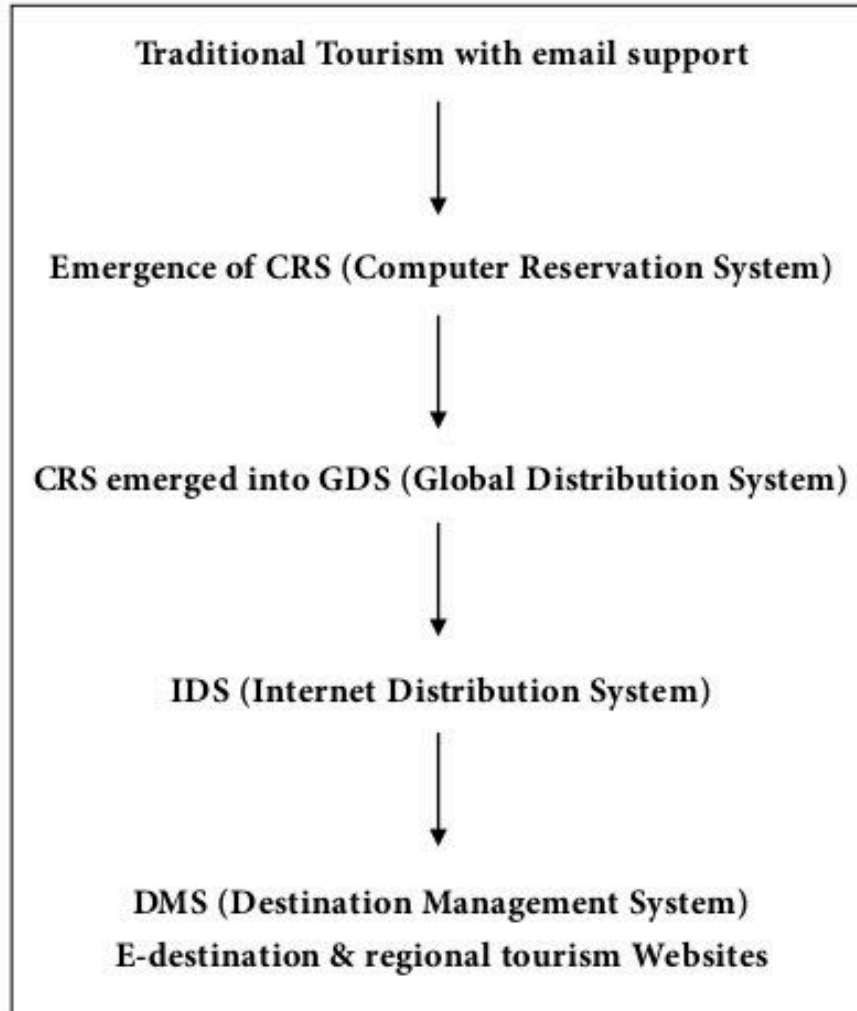
Etoursim-india.com – Example for e destination

The screenshot (Figure) is the e-destination initiatives of the Indian tourism organisation. It consists of e-brochure and pictures apart from reservations and package designing provisions that helps the tourism entities to promote their destinations across the world and also makes it easy for the potential travel to understand and familiar various aspects of the destination before travelling.

Historical Development of Electronic Tourism

The origination of information technology and communication system has a huge impact on the wide range services across Indian market. Tourism is one of the major sectors that embraced information technology to redesign or recreate process and operations that made the industry more attractive and efficient.

But the process of getting diffused into computerised operations and process did not happen overnight. The development of tourism sector that completely work with and around IT took more than decade time. Below mentioned Flow chart explains the major development and transformation of tourism industry.



Historical Development of e-tourism

The Flowchart (Figure) explains the various main stages of technological developments established Information Technology in tourism enterprises, namely Computer Reservations Systems (CRSs) then another 10 years time Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) came into emergence then later there is an integrated approach called Internet Distribution System (IDS) that utilised electronic media as well as communication technology.

The IDS is an comprehensive system that makes use of both GDS & CRS apart from giving birth to Destination Management system (DMS). Although these technologies emerged with gaps of about 10 years from each other, they currently operate separately as well as jointly, controlling different functions and target markets.

First Stage - 1970s: Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs)

Computerised networks and electronic distribution in tourism emerged in the early 1970s, through internal CRSs. They became the core of the distribution mix and strategy of airlines. CRSs are widely regarded as the critical initiators of the electronic age, as they formulated a new travel marketing and distribution system. A CRS is essentially a database which manages the inventory of a tourism enterprise, whilst it distributes it electronically to remote sales offices and external partners. Intermediaries and consumers can access the inventory and they can make and confirm reservations.

The rapid growth of both demand and supply, as well as the deregulation of the air transportation demonstrated that the tourism inventory could only be managed by powerful computerised systems. Airlines pioneered this technology, although hotel chains and tour operators followed by developing CRSs. CRSs enable principals to control, promote and sell their products globally, while facilitating their yield management. In addition, they integrate the entire range of business functions, and thus can contribute to principals' profitability and long term prosperity. CRSs often charge competitive commission rates in comparison with other distribution options, whilst enabling flexible pricing and capacity alterations in order to adjust supply to demand fluctuations. CRSs also reduce communication costs, while providing intelligence information on demand patterns or the position of partners and competitors. Hence, CRSs contribute enormously to both the operational and strategic management of the industry.

Second Stage - 1980s: Global Distribution Systems (GDSs)

GDS originally stem from the Airline Industry. With the start of commercial flights, the airlines needed a system that would allow travel agents to make reservations for flights. Initially the airline CRS developed into GDSs by gradually expanding their geographical coverage as well as by integrating both horizontally, with other airline systems, and vertically by incorporating the entire range of principals, such as accommodation, car rentals, train and ferry ticketing, entertainment and other provisions. Later GDSs emerged as the major driver of ICTs, as well as the backbone of the tourism industry and the single most important facilitator of ICTs globalisation. It matured from their original development as airline CRSs to travel supermarkets.

Ever since its origination it has emerged as business specialising in travel distribution. Airline computer reservations systems emerged to become global distribution systems (GDSs). In order to avoid over-lappings, principals integrated their CRSs with GDSs, by developing interfaces. Several companies emerged to facilitate interconnectivity.

This enabled the display and purchasing of the majority of tourism products on-line. As GDSs connect most tourism organisations with intermediaries around the world, they lead the standardisation processes and control a considerable market share. GDSs emerged as the “circulation system” or the “backbone” of the industry by establishing a global communication standard and a new tourism electronic distribution channel. Evidently GDSs became businesses in their own right, as they changed their nature from tools for vendor airlines and accommodation corporations, to “electronic travel supermarkets” and strategic business units for their corporations.

Third Stage –since the last decade of the 20th century:

IDS (Internet Distribution system)& DMS (Destination management systems)

These are the *virtual* or *online* travel agents. They are different from GDS as IDS also makes use of GDS. A travel agent with a walk-in office around the corner uses a GDS, the IDS are those portals that allow hotel reservations online. The virtual travel agency operate through IRD that offers all the services of tourism sector at one stroke with the ability to customise or choose between the ranges of service option that suits the requirement of the customers.

At present Indian tourism sector is supported by strong online travel agents like Expedia.co.in, tripadvisor.in, makemytrip.com, Travelocity.co.in, etc. They are able to support the Indian tour travel industry through their online presence that attracts huge number of clients across the country at regular basis.

These virtual travel agents offer services that range from smallest need to the largest requirement and offers wide range of packages that covers everything that is needed for tourism consumption. The screenshot of expedia.co.in, one of the most familiar virtual travel agent.

The virtual travel organisation through IDS co-ordinates and utilises GDS and CRS to offer the required services that are booked through web. This reduces the cost of distribution as it does not require physical settings and can be unbundled accordingly.

The Web screen shot (Figure) of the Expedia.com are the classical example for IDS. They on the well renowned virtual travel agent, that offers wide range of travel and tourism related services to the customers in India and abroad. The webpage (Figure) of Expedia shows offers and information related to the travel arrangements and tour packages that allow customers to book and interact with the agent online.



Webpage of Expedia.co.in – Example of IDS (Virtual travel agent)

(DMS) then emerged

The basic version of DMS consists of Product Database, Customer Database and a mechanism connecting the two. Not only DMSs enable coordination of whole range of products and services offered by the local suppliers and promote them on the global scale but also allow travellers to create a personal destination experience. The DMS tries to focus on following aspects:

- Provide information and undertake some marketing activities through mass media advertising;
- Provide advisory service for consumers and the travel trade;
- Design and distribute brochures, leaflets and guides; and
- Coordinate local initiatives.
 - Information on locally available attractions and products
 - Useful for helping to overcome seasonality problems by spreading and balancing tourism demand

The key element of destination management should be a partnership involving central and local government, local communities and all parties involved in the provision of tourism services.

Specifically, these would be: governmental and non-governmental tourism promotion agencies; destination management organisations (DMOs); local and international tourism service providers; domestic and international travel agents; global distribution systems (GDSs); travel portals; and the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

Electronic Technology for Data Processing and Communication

Electronic capabilities are a subset of the overall e-business strategy of the company; enable companies to link their internal and external data processing systems more efficiently and flexibly.

A business travel process management application for corporate customers: Most companies around the world look critically at their business travel management processes. The goal is double: to use process redesign methodologies to streamline these processes and lower their cost (sometimes, processing an airline ticket request or a cash advance costs more) on one side, and leverage technology, enforce policies and start collecting consolidated data on travel management in order to negotiate future discounts with suppliers on the other side.. The workflow system would be used internally to circulate travel requests and expense reports around the company, collecting the required authorizations and feeding automated statistics collecting systems. The system would allow for the general specification of the required trip (time, place and specific constraints). Connections to external partners would be used to send completed requests to a travel agency. Based on each traveller's profile and on the company's policy, the agency would then fill in the details (specific place, rental car type and company, etc.) and pass the actual reservations and orders.

It is obvious that with the development of such automated systems, intermediaries such as travel agencies will find their added value increasingly harder to justify. With the increasing intelligence of travel systems, they will be able to contact the suppliers systems directly and book segments without needing a travel agency. Printing the tickets will not be necessary anymore as the trend towards ticketless travel expands. The supplier's system will return confirmation numbers that will be used to print a trip confirmation on any printer. Such automation will be driven by the trend towards the reduction of distribution costs: it is currently the third cost in order of importance for airline companies, and the most easily targeted. The current commission cap in the United States is a proof of that trend. The expense reporting part will also be automated through the same facilities. The credit card institutions will increasingly deliver their credit charge data through automated delivery channels, and the downloaded charge data will form the basis for the fulfilment of an expense report. The travel management system will complete it, and include recurrent charges (such as the private car trip to the airport and parking) before triggering the

workflow system to circulate the expense report for approval. Once approved, a link with the internal accounting system will make sure the credit card company or the traveller is reimbursed.

Electronic systems used in tourism are split in two categories: front-office and those which use the Internet.

Front-office systems: Are used to process data and offer written or visual reports, and are present in both the medium and large receiving structures, as well as in tourism agencies. They register the tourists and manage the accommodation, retail the products and manage the income. Two of such systems are Fidelio and SITEL, applications that deal with complex services: spare time management, profit growth, billing, mailing and tourist arrivals and departures.

E-systems for booking: They can be operative for both individual tourists as well as for agencies, by encompassing the selling, informing and informing functions. Their modular structure allows them to connect the sectors of ticketing, outgoing, incoming and internal with accounting and financial sectors from the receiving structures or from the agencies. Amongst other things, they can also allow the shipping and receiving of data from and to the global distribution systems, such as World span and Amadeus.

Conclusion

The emergence of Information technology has transformed the tourism and travel industry beyond comprehension. ICT has made the industry more competitive and attractive to both customers and services providers apart from other stake holders and distribution partners. Indian tourism market was able to adapt to the ICT interference and they understood the global competition and growing demand for the e-tourism in the other countries. The tourism merged with IT in the early stage when Computer Reservations Systems (CRSs) came into existence, then in another 10 years time, with Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), and finally an integrated approach called Internet Distribution System (IDS) that utilised electronic media as well as communication technology evolved. Electronic tourism comprises of e-airlines, e-travel agencies, e-hospitality management e-tour operators and e-destinations. Today the tourism market is rapidly changing and is looking continuously grow and change business and the process that will increase the efficiency of the tourism consumption.