

Adoption of Ict in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector In Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have revolutionised the travel industry in the last decade. eTourism reflects the digitalisation of all processes and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality and catering industries. It emerges as a term describing the entire range of applications of ICTs on tourism and the implications for the tourism value chain. Major opportunities and challenges have emerged and need to be addressed by all industry players. However, the level of eTourism developments varies between regions, countries and continents. The key objective of this research has been to examine the Adoption of ICT in the tourism industry mainly looking at Meikles Hotel in Zimbabwe .In particular the research examines the level of ICT diffusion in tourism enterprises .The tourism sector is experiencing an acceptance of ecommerce to the extent that the whole industry structure is changing .The web is used not only for information gathering but also for ordering services .A new type of user is emerging one who acts as his or her own travel agent and build a personalised travel package .This research focuses on evaluating the current status of Meikles Hotel Zimbabwe in order to study the adoption of ecommerce applications on the hospitality sector.

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I. Introduction

The tourism industry requires a diverse range of information and lends itself well to the support offered by developing multimedia, communication technologies and information systems .The internet provides an extra ordinary connectivity and the ability to communicate efficiently and effectively with customers at a reasonable cost .Its potential to generate more revenue is not questionable but is acknowledged as something the tourism industry in developing countries need . The implications of the Internet and other growing interactive multimedia platforms for tourism promotion are far reaching and alter the structure of the industry. This research aimed to explore the impact of ICTs and the Internet in particular for the future competitiveness of the tourism and hospitality industry. This paper explores the current state of eTourism development and examines the use of the Internet in the sector.

The rapid development and commercialization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the travel and tourism industry has prompted hotels and other enterprises in this sector to increasingly adopt these technologies. This is based on the expectation that the new ICT based technologies and processes would lead to an improvement in their operating efficiencies and customer service levels. The ICT based products and processes help the hotels to enhance the operating efficiency, improve the service experience as well as provide a means to access markets on a global basis. While ICTs were used in the hotel industry from the late seventies in the form of Computerized Reservation systems and Global distribution systems, it was only in the 90s that the ICTs began to make a difference in the hospitality sector . Nowadays the internet has turned into an informative channel providing both individuals and organisations with different types of information making them aware of new tourism and travel opportunities and offers enabling them to compare the offers ,have online purchases and provide feedback .It has also turned into a source for travel agencies and organisations to promote their services and products to their potential customers . As the internet is being used worldwide it was important for Meikles hotel to implement hence the creation of its web site www.meikles.com

Meikles Hotel

Meikles Hotel is situated in the heart of Harare and overlooks the historic landmark and colourful flower gardens of Africa Unity Square. Consistently voted as one of the best hotels in Zimbabwe, Meikles Hotel is a proud member of The Leading Hotels of the World, a prestigious hospitality organisation which represents some of the world's most acclaimed hotels, spas and resorts. Established in 1928, the organisation exists to meet the needs of discerning travellers and for a hotel to be recognised by this body, it needs to exceed every expectation and achieve exacting standards of excellence.