Evaluating information services in virtual tourism communities / Or Darom

Abstract

This work focuses on virtual communities with emphasis on information services on tourism related communities.

The purpose of this work is to analyze the information services offered to members of virtual tourism communities. Another object is to identify the most useful services and those perceived as the most important ones for the purpose of preserving the community.

Finally sex related differences on those perceptions will be investigated.

Mapping of communities website provides information on services offered to members of the community. Services are categorized as follows:

- Communication among community members

- Search options

- Browsing options

- Restricted options

- Layout and design of homepage

- Others

A convenient sample of community members filled a questionnaire on Useful and important services and differences between male and female members were investigated.

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Results showed that the most useful services are email services, uploading contents. Browsing through members pages creating personal pages and writing comments on other members pages.

Services contributing to the preservation of community were: creating personal images uploading content email services writing comments on other member's pages and searching options.

Breakdown by sex showed that the ranking of importance is different – men think that creating personal page is the most important while women think that email services are the most important ones.

With regard to contribution for preservations comparison of men to women showed that 4 out of 5 services were similar and the difference is again with regard to email – women think that it continues to preservation and men do not. Men emphasize the importance of searching tourism information as a service contributes to preservation.

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