



## PROMOTING ROMANIA'S TOURISM ATTRACTIONS IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

### PROMOCIJA TURISTIČKE PONUDE RUMUNIJE U ONLINE OKRUŽENJU

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#### Abstract:

Located between 43°37'07" and 48°15'06" north latitude and 20°15'44" and 29°41'24" east longitude, in south-central east Europe, and with all relief forms, Romania is one of the countries that can have an important role in the foreign tourists' preferences. The multitude and variety of tourist attractions all over the country offer numerous leisure time possibilities. Currently, efforts are being made to transform and upgrade the image of Romania as a tourism destination and promote its attractions at the international level. Such opportunity is triggered by modern technology that has become a fundamental tool for marketing activities. The creation of websites for the purpose of presenting the tourism offer of Romania enhances the visibility and interest of potential tourists.

#### Key words:

tourism, tourism attractions, promotion, online environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

People have always been willing to spend their free time outside their home, but the choice of a holiday destination is affected by a series of factors. These factors can be grouped into several categories, according to the given criteria. Taking into consideration the marketing profile, we can distinguish the following factors:

- ♦ factors of tourist demand such as the population's incomes, the urbanization degree, the free time, the dynamics of the population evolution;
- ♦ factors of tourist offer such as the unity and variety of tourism resources, the diversity and the quality of services, the cost of services, the structure and the labour force training.

Besides these factors, there is also the motivation of potential tourists, which actually influences the decision to buy a certain tourism product. Their decision is personal and subjective, determined by endogenous, psychological, and exogenous motivation, influenced by the social environment. The psychological motivation refers to the individual's perception, his/her beliefs and attitudes, former experiences and needs.

As regards exogenous motivation, an individual takes into account the group he/she belongs to, the reference group, the social class, family and culture.

All motivations that act towards every future tourist can create a favourable or an unfavourable image of a tourist attraction, a tourist destination or a tourism form. Also, when referring

#### Apstrakt:

Rumunija se nalazi u jugoistočnoj Evropi između 43°37'07" i 48°15'06" severne geografske širine i 20°15'44" i 29°41'24" istočne geografske dužine, sa svim reljefnim oblicima. Kao takva, ona je jedna od zemalja koje mogu u velikoj meri uticati na preferencije stranih turista. Mnoštvo i raznolikost turističkih atrakcija dostupnih širom zemlje doprinose sve većem broju aktivnosti koje turisti mogu upražnjavati u slobodno vreme. Trenutno se ulažu veliki naponi kako bi se unapredila slika Rumunije kao turističke destinacije, kao i promovisala njena turistička ponuda na međunarodnom tržištu. To je pre svega omogućeno zahvaljujući savremenoj tehnologiji koja postaje ključna alatka za realizaciju marketinških aktivnosti. Kreiranjem sajtova za prezentovanje turističke ponude Rumunije povećava se vidljivost i interesovanje potencijalnih turista.

#### Ključne reči:

turizam, turističke atrakcije, promocija, online okruženje.

to these motivations, the analyst Plog S., in "Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity" (1972), classifies the tourists as follows:

- ♦ psychocentrics (those looking for destinations close to their home and planning ahead their holiday);
- ♦ near psychocentrics (those influenced by the decision of the group they belong to);
- ♦ mid-centrics (those resorting to the services of a tourist agency);
- ♦ near allocentrics (persons who love freedom but do not take risks);
- ♦ allocentrics (those preferring the underdeveloped tourist regions, the destinations harder to reach).

The decision to choose the holiday destination and the tourist product will always be an important moment of a wilful action.

Different marketing actions are used in order to influence the decision of potential tourists. One of these is the promotion aimed at attracting new tourists and maintaining the existing ones.

The promotion of a tourist attraction or a destination can be made through different traditional actions (participation in specific events, documentation visits of those directly involved, organization of promotion events, promotion road-shows abroad, public relations activities) or through online sites.

Promotion provides information, remembering and persuasion of clients.

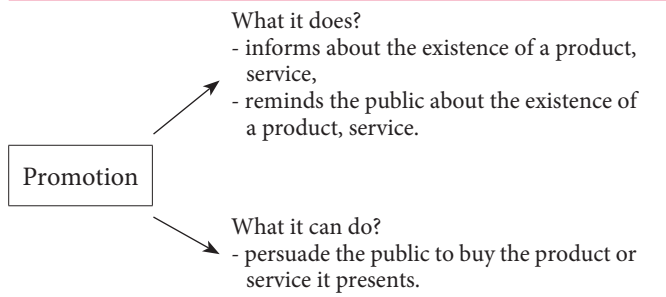


Figure 1. Promotion – its role

Under the existing conditions, promotion is considered a major demand of the selling process of a tourism product.

## 2. ROMANIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Romania is a European country located in the Southeastern part of the continent, stretching over an area of 238.391 km<sup>2</sup> and neighbouring Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The relief forms are evenly represented on its territory, with the mountains accounting for 31% of the territory, the hills and orchards with 36% and plains with 33%. The Carpathian Mountains look like a bow in the middle of the country, bounded to the interior and the exterior by hills and plateaus, while the plains go to the exterior.

The climate is temperate-continental with Mediterranean influences and four distinct seasons. The access ways are diverse: road, rail, air, river and sea.

Romania's tourism resources are numerous and diverse, natural and anthropic, stretching across its territory. This has led to the appearance and development of several types and forms of tourism.



Figure 2. Map of Romania – historical regions

Every historical region of the country presents certain types and forms of tourism according to its tourist resources.

As seen in Table 1, the tourists who arrive at any of the historical regions can choose a tourist destination and the preferred type of tourism.

Some of the most appreciated tourist attractions in Romania are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Romania's historical regions	Representative types of tourism
Maramureș	Cultural, sport (winter sports), mountain, rural;
Bukovina	Religious, culinary, rural, cultural, leisure
Moldavia	Mountain, wellness, religious, cultural, scientific, rural
Dobruja	Seaside, cultural, fishing, ecotourism
Muntenia	Mountain, sport, business, rural, culinary, cultural, scientific, wellness;
Oltenia	Cultural, religious, fishing, leisure
Transylvania	Wellness, mountain, cultural, sport, leisure, rural, religious, scientific, business, culinary, ecotourism
Banat	Wellness, cultural, scientific, mountain, sport, business, fishing
Crișana	Wellness, mountain, hunting

Table 1. Types of tourism in Romania

Name of tourist attraction	Location	GPS Coordinates
Sphinx	Bucegi Mountains	45°24'30" N, 25°28'13"E
Bigăr Waterfall	National Park Nerei - Beușnița Gorges	45°02'44"N, 21°57'42"E
Babele	Bucegi Mountains	45°26.21'N, 25°26.63'E
CazaneleDunării	Danube Gorges	44°37'N, 22°16'E
Danube Delta	UNESCO Heritage	45°0'N, 29°0'E
Scărișoara Ice Cave	Gârda se Sus Village	46°29'23"N, 22°48'35"E
Focurile Vii	Lopătari Village	45°32'N, 26°34'E
VulcaniiNoroioși (Mud Volcanoes)	PâcleleMici	45°21'31"N, 26°42'42"E
PodulluiDumnezeu (God's Bridge)	Ponoare	44°58'30"N, 22°45'40"E
GroapaRuginoasă	ValeaSeacă	46°31'35"N, 22°39'08"E

Table 2. Natural tourist attractions in Romania



Name of tourist attraction	Location	GPS Coordinates
TurdaSaltmine	Turda	46°35'1"N, 23°46'35"E
Gold Museum	Brad	46°12'29"N 22°78'27"E
Bran Castle	Bran	45°30'41"N, 25°21'48"E
Peleş Castle	Sinaia	45°21'34"N, 25°32'30"E
ASTRA Museum	Sibiu	45°47'24"N, 24°8'56"E
Corvinilor or Huniazilor Castle	Hunedoara	45°45'2"N, 22°53'20"E
Monasteries in the North	Moldavia and Bucovina	
Merry Cemetery	Săpânța	47°57'52"N, 23°41'48"E
Parliament Palace	Bucharest	44°25'46"N, 26°5'15"E
Alba Carolina Fortress	Alba Iulia	46°4'5.89"N, 23°34'34.19"E.
Wooden churches	Maramureș	

Table 3 Anthropoc tourist attractions in Romania

The current number of accommodation facilities and the accommodation capacity show that Romania has the possibility to receive tourists.

Indicator	Unit	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
Accommodation facilities	Number	5821	6009	6130
Accommodation capacity	Number of beds	301109	305707	311288

Table 4 The current accommodation facilities and capacity

Source: National Statistics Institute, www.insse.ro, series Tempo online 2015

The accommodation facilities are classified according to the Romanian legislation in force and can range from hotels to cabins on ships.

Romania is one of the European countries with a series of tourist sites, tourist facilities, tourist products and services, as well as the specific technical-material base that could meet the needs of the tourists.

### 3. THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM PROMOTION OF ROMANIA

We live in an age of the Internet being omnipresent in our everyday lives. The online environment has created addiction, known as FOMO (the fear of missing out) and it manifests itself as a fear of losing something important.

At the international level, the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) monitors the number of Internet users. According to its statistics for the year 2014, the highest number of Internet users was registered in China.

In 2014, Romania had 11178477 Internet users, and according to the ITU, it assumed the 41st place. The connection speed is of maximum 58.7 megabytes/second, which places it 6th globally, also due to the recent implementation of the new and greater performance technology.

With so many users around the world (around 3 billion), the Internet has become an information universe. It is used for communication, amusement, marketing purposes. To this end,

people created websites, a collection of pages written in HTML (HyperTextMarkup Language) and other resource files, accessible only through an URL, logically interconnected by a series of links installed on a server, where a browser through a HTTP/HTTPS protocol can access, decode and show them in a readable form on the computer of every user.

Country	Number of users (number of persons)
China	641601070
USA	279834232
India	243198922
Japan	109252912
Brazil	107822831
Russia	84437793
Germany	71727551
Nigeria	67101452
Great Britain	57075826
France	55429382

Table 5 Top countries according to the number of Internet users in 2014

Source: www.internetLiveStats.com

Websites are simpler or more complex and can be classified according to the static (they contain HTML and CSS files) and dynamic (they are based on PHP or MySQL databases) programming.

If the classification criterion is the purpose of the usage, we differentiate the following sites:

- ◆ presentation – presents a trading company, a product, a service;
- ◆ corporate presentation – useful for big companies that present their entire activity;
- ◆ information – presents a series of information on a chosen topic;
- ◆ publicity campaign – developed in Flash animation app in order to promote a product or a service;
- ◆ user-generated content – its content belongs to the visitors;
- ◆ social networks – used for communication between visitors;
- ◆ news – belongs to institutions;



- ♦ blogs – created by a person who writes articles on a certain topic, and that can be commented upon and analysed by the visitors;
- ♦ online shops – developed for online commerce;
- ♦ portals – contain more types of information, news, videos;
- ♦ browsers – they help people search for information on the Internet (World Wide Web)

A good tourist promotion can be made by creating, maintaining and developing such websites according to the purpose.

The tourism resources and the tourism products are not tangible, they are immaterial, and this modern technology offers the possibility to visualize the chosen destination, find out other people's opinions about its resources and services.

The appearance of tourism websites in Romania is a real support for the potential tourists, but also for the companies that operate in this field.

Currently, only part of Romania's tourist sites are known at both national and international level, which has led to a preoccupation in this direction, and the online environment is preferred.

Numerous tourism related websites have been created over the past years trying to provide the visitors with enough real information.

A complex website created by the Romanian Tourism Office – North America in New York (the legal representative of the National Authority for Tourism) presents a series of information regarding Romania and Romanian tourism in order to raise the awareness among foreign tourists and encourage travels to Romania.

The official website of the National Authority for Tourism was created on this website's platform, its address being [www.romania.travel.ro](http://www.romania.travel.ro). Its purpose is to attract as many foreign tourists as possible, but also to inform Romanians about tourist sites and destinations. Those interested can download a brochure „Discover the place you live in” in Romanian, English, German, French and Italian. Unfortunately, they are still working on its improvement.

The first page of both websites presents the logo of Romania's tourist brand that also comprises the slogan „explore the Carpathian garden”.



Figure 3. Romania's tourist brand

An interesting website created to provide the visitors with a map of Romania's most attractive tourist sites was launched in March 2013. The project CeSaVezi.ro provides an online map with tourist attractions and the presentation of the sites, an information filter, and the possibility to create a travel route, live weather forecast, road conditions, accommodation facilities, bars and restaurants. A strong point is the possibility to download for free the application on Android and iOS. A weak point, which will be soon eliminated, is related to the presentation language, which is Romanian for the time being.

The number of unique visitors who have accessed the two best made websites oscillated in 2014, as can be seen in Table 6.

Month	romaniatourism.com	cesavezi.ro
January	92538	-
February	88618	781
March	99746	19181
April	93925	25075
May	106921	31479
June	92001	35694
July	103822	50017
August	98240	54139
September	99853	25525
October	117941	20337
November	97767	16192
December	82912	10555

Table 6. Unique visitors traffic in 2014, detailed monthly overview Number of persons

Source: [www.trafic.ro/vizitatori/top-siteuri-turism](http://www.trafic.ro/vizitatori/top-siteuri-turism)

One can notice that the number of unique visitors was higher in the case of the website launched by the tourism office in New York, and their monthly fluctuations show that the highest number of visitors is recorded during the holiday season, *i.e.*, in May and July in the summer, and in October during the winter.

For the second site, the highest traffic was in summer when most people are on holiday. Taking into account the fact that it is given only in Romanian, the number of visitors is limited to Romania's population. We can say that no website has a high number of visitors, but they provide information regarding numerous tourist attractions in Romania.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Globally, the access to the online environment gets easier each day, and the number of users is increasing. Thus, the barriers caused by the distance, education, culture, language are broken down. The increased visibility provided by websites is ideal for tourism promotion in a country.

Romania has a great tourist potential in all its regions, which is not yet sufficiently known and visited by both Romanian and foreign tourists. Hence, there is the necessity to use online promotion through websites.

The website [romaniatourism.com](http://romaniatourism.com) helps the tourists to become conversant with the Romanian tourist sites and make a decision to spend their free time in Romania.

In the case of the website [cesavezi.ro](http://cesavezi.ro), the visitors have the opportunity to get to know Romania's tourist sites, make the decision to visit, and create their travel route via iPhone and iPad apps, and easily identify the tourist site they want to visit.

The chances for the increase in the number of visitors in Romania and the income from tourism activities are directly linked to the online environment.

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