

# Web-Tourism and development in Case of Yazd Historical city

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*Abstract*—Tourism Web Services is the link between the entrepreneur and the ICT specialist. Apart from web design, graphical solutions and hosting we offer consulting and project management services to ensure the realization of internet related projects within time and budget. We like to build a bridge between those who are the creators of innovative ideas and formulas and those who implement the necessary technology to ensure the translation into actual products and services. Project descriptions, stipulating the expectations and interpretations of the specialists involved are in our view the foundation of any project. A clear project description reduces ambiguity and free interpretations and thus reduces the chances of delay and corrections. The purpose of the research is to study the position of hotel websites in one of the most important counties in Iran, as it pertains to tourism. Yazd City (located in the center of county), known as the driest major city in Iran, and

also having recognition as the “sister” of Venice, Italy, has great potential for attracting many tourists in Iran and abroad. Therefore, having a hotel website in a county such as this county can be very important. Hence, this article will compare the situation of hotel websites in Yazd County with standard indexes and use the qualitative-quantitative methodology. The data extracted has come from documents of the Organization of Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Iran, while the qualitative data has been achieved with content analysis from the websites. The result of this research shows that in many cases, the existing situation is not very suitable for the attraction of web users or improving the tourism. The result of this research may help the managers and authorities of tourism to come to a better solution

**Key words** : Web-tourism , Tourism potentials , targeted parameters , Economic development , Hotel website.

than 200 million jobs. This growth is expected to continue over the next few years at a rate close to 5% per year (Baggio, 2007: 727). Tourism, as an international industry, and as the major provider of jobs on the planet, boasts a greater array of heterogenous stakeholders than many other industries. The energetic growth and development of the industry is perhaps only mirrored by the growth of ICTs. The accelerating and synergistic interaction

## INTRODUCTION

This document shows that Since the second half of the last century, tourism has probably become the largest, economic section of the private world. In general terms, according to the last estimate of the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism industry is being expected to total 10.6% of GDP, and more

between technology and tourism in recent years has brought fundamental changes in this industry and on our perception of its nature (Buhalis & Law, 2008: 609).

The Informative-intensive nature of the tourism industry suggests an important role for the internet and web technology in the promotion and marketing of the center (tourist center) (Doolin & etal 2002:557). The informative –based nature of this product means that internet, which offers global access and multimedia capability, is an increasingly important means of promoting an tourism services distribution. Interactivity and flexibility of web-based interfaces suggests an allied and important role for World Wide Web technology in destination marketing; there are some indications signaling that tourism web-sites are constantly being made more interactive (Ibid). Today tourism consumes substantial amounts of space within urban destinations: tourist-historic urban cores, special museums of many kinds, urban waterfronts, theme parks and specialized precincts all contribute to this consumption (Gospodini 2001). Major urban areas perform important functions within the workings of the overall tourism system: for example, they are key “gateways” for both international and domestic tourists and, as key nodes in the air transport system, act as staging posts for multi-destination trips. Many of these functions are often taken for granted and, as a consequence, the requirements for profitable and sustainable tourism development in urban areas are not well understood. While urban tourism has been subject to some research attention in recent years, this effort has arguably not reflected its degree of importance relative to tourism in other types of destinations. Simply moving from broadcast information (commercials) to letting customers interact with web sites allows the tourism organization to engage consumers’ interests and participations (increasing the probability that they will return to the site again), to gather information about their interests, and to use that information to provide personal communication and services (Ibid).

On the other hand, since the beginning of commercial internet in the early 1990s, many researchers have noted the potential of the World Wide Web in business, and they have advocated for internet incorporation into the tourism industry (Burger, 1997 & Clyde & Lanfriend, 1995). The rapid development of information, along with internet in particular, has dramatically changed the tourism industry (Ho & Lee, 2007). Tourism is being undergone significant changes and at the same time, is being faced with new challenges that call for new perspectives. At least two dimensions of these change can be identified: New forms of tourism, characterized by the tendency to depart from mass tourism. The diffusion of information and communication technologies, with a pervasive effect on the creation, production and consumption of the tourist product (Stamboulis, 2001: 35). In the last five years, we have witnessed centuries-old business formulas for success being overturned by those who are willing and able to exploit communication capabilities of internet and information storage capacities of the World Wide Web. The internet provides a fundamentally different economical environment for conducting business; with the key differentiator being rapid communication of information, globally accessibility, and being at a good cost (Bacchus & Mulina, 2001: 589)

#### **Methodology:**

There is used to the quantitative- qualitative analysis methodology in this research by regarding to the objects that is the valuation of the content of hotel websites in Yazd County. To achieve this, first the international indexes which are being extracted are put to practice in researches and then they are compared with the information in the hotel websites of Yazd. The needed information for these hotel websites in Yazd has been extracted via the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization in Iran. The main objection was the quality evaluation of contents in hotel websites, and comparison of findings from the observations of hotel websites, with indexes.

Finally, each hotel with regard to indexes has a position. Also, we specify the general ranking for all the websites and conditions which will be shown in graphs. The appendix shows the list of hotels that have websites in the city of Yazd.

### Theoretical

This section is related to IT and its effect on tourists' potentiality, their decision-making, and the importance of web space. Nowadays, the importance of web space for marketers and users has been pointed out by scientists and researchers (Gupta, 1995) this indicates the importance of web-based marketing systems (Wang, 2008). On consumer's demands web sites are accessible 24 hours a day. Further, it allows the marketer to obtain relevant information from customers in order to serve them more effectively in the future. (Hoffman, 1995) In relation, hotel websites have used different approaches. Some researchers have studied the content of hotel websites by studying user satisfaction and also by studying questionnaires filled out by users. Rong (2000) has studied the online hotel web service purchasers and browsers that have done analysis on the status of users and some criteria via questionnaires (age, country, education, income, reservation).Keynama (2000) has studied and evaluated consumer's satisfaction about websites (online travel) and by using the E-QUAI model. Morrison and Taylor (1999) have studied this subject as well using the BSc (balance score card) and other criteria, like the speed of downloading. Baloglu and Pekcang (2006) evaluated the website content of 4-5 star hotels in Turkey, with emphasis on designation characters and internet marketing practices. Doolin and Burgess (2002) have evaluated the development of websites in regional tourism organizations in New Zealand. Finally, Beckendorff and Black (2000) have studied the marketing in hotels of Switzerland via websites which have capabilities of four dimensions as: planning, designation, management, and content of sites.

Feng and Morrison (2002) have done a comparison of online destination and marketing between China and the United States. Pan and Maclaurin (2007) in dictating the Travel Blogs and the importance of Destination Marketing have analyzed them by using semantic network analysis and content analysis methods. Therefore, researches have used different approaches on this subject.

**Table 1-list of categories and indexes**

<i>Group</i>	<i>index</i>
<b><i>1-hotel Information</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Photos of hotel features</i></li> <li><i>- Hotel descriptions</i></li> <li><i>- Hotel facilities</i></li> <li><i>-Guest room facilities</i></li> <li><i>- Hotel location maps</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>2-Reservation Information</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Room rates</i></li> <li><i>- Check rates and availability</i></li> <li><i>-Online/Real-time reservations</i></li> <li><i>- Reservation policies</i></li> <li><i>- View or cancel reservations</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>3-Contact Information</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-E-mail address</i></li> <li><i>- Telephone number</i></li> <li><i>- Address</i></li> </ul>

		- Fax number
<b>4-Surrounding Information</b>	<b>Area</b>	-Transportation -Airport information -Main attractions of the city
<b>5-Website Management</b>		-Up-to-date information on the site -Multilingual site -Site map (hyper links to other pages of the site)
<b>6-Hotel Star Category</b>		-star of hotels

Source: Rong, 2009.

## Results

As it has been mentioned in the methodology section, hotel websites in Yazd have been evaluated by their required indexes. One of the issues worth noticing in this research is to consider how much internet space should be given to the users and consumers for services in Yazd hotels. To answer this question, we prepared a list of hotels in Yazd via cultural heritage of Iran and Tourism Organization. Then, it was

specified that among 42 hotels of Yazd, we had only 12 hotels with independent websites for information and services (28/6 % of the hotels had websites. The major subject in this research is pertaining to this problem that to what extent the hotel websites are matched with international indexes. These indexes have been shown in table 1.

Among the indexes (with the exception of star-hotel indexes, which have been evaluated separately) HD (Hotel descriptions) and TN (Telephone Number) indexes had the highest frequency in the websites' space, while RP (Reservation policies) and TR (Transportation) indexes had the lowest frequency (Figure(1)). Concerning the highest scores of each hotel, Tehrani hotel obtains the first grade, (score of 16) by having the required standards. Next, are Dad and Laleh hotels (score of 15), Karvan hotel (score of 12), Moshir ol mamalek and Safaiye hotels (score of 11), Mehr hotel (score of 10), Azadi hotel (9), Sonnati (8), Adib (6), and finally, coming in last is Atlas and Fahadan hotel with the same score of (5). (Figure (2)). In order to find the position of each indicator in hotel websites, we have come to such a result: PFH (photos of hotel features) indexes exist in almost every hotel except in Fahadan and Azadi hotels and users can see the pictures of hotel facilities in websites. It is clear that this index can be a better definition, and it can be an emotive issue for vacation and tourism (Figure (3)). The other index is HD (Hotel description). What Safaiye hotel lacks, while the rest do have it (Figure(4)).

In the case of HF (Hotel facilities) index, Azadi and Adib hotels neither have such an index, nor have certain information about the hotels and their facilities in their websites (Figure(5)). In the case of GRF (Guest room facilities) none of Safayie, Mehr, Adib, and Sonnati hotels have any information about the facilities of guest rooms (Figure (6)). It is worth mentioning that inquiring information about hotel guest rooms will persuade hotel managers to use them. Their index is HLTP (Hotel location maps) but, unfortunately only two hotels have it. Nowadays, this Geographical Information is one of the clearest and most necessary information in such websites, even though 83 % of our hotel websites are lacking in it (Figure(7)). RR (Room rates) index is one of the indexes that seem to be necessary for all users and necessary for users' choice too. This is a fact that

Adib, Fahadan, Azadi, Karvan, Karveh and Atlas hotels as well as 50 % of other websites which were studied, didn't have the room rate, which is clearly a basic default for hotel websites (Figure(8)).

CRA (Check rates and availability) doesn't have suitable standards of indexes like those of Safayie, Tehrani, and Laleh hotels (25 %) of hotel websites have this possibly for checking rates and availability (Figure(9)). About OR (Online/Real-time reservations) index, 50 % doesn't have the ability to reserve online required services. While Mehr, Dad, Safayie, Karvan, Tehrani and Laleh hotels have this service in their websites (Figure(10)).RP (Reservation Policies) index neither has service in the hotels nor shows any information about policies and regulations in hotel websites (Figure(11)). V-CR index (View or cancel reservations) only exists in hotel websites of Karvan, Tehrani and Laleh hotels. Only these three offer their users the opportunity for making reservations or canceling their reservations.

As far as tourism is concerned, and as mentioned before, Yazd has been defined as one of the most attractive cities of Iran or even the world. This index(reservations or canceling their reservations.) is for tourist attraction from near or far from Iran or abroad. In continuance, 3 indexes in relation to website management groups have been evaluated, so UIS (Up-to-date information on the site) index, with the exception of 5 hotels (Adib, Mehr, Fahadan, Karvan, and Atlas).

Figure 1- frequency of indexes

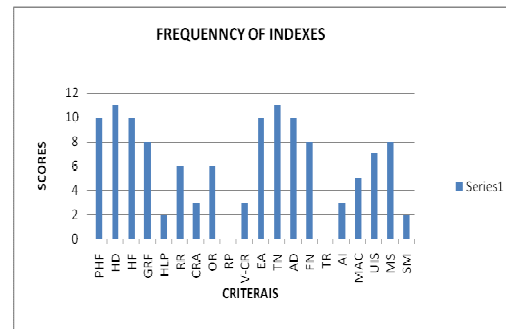


Figure 2- sum scores

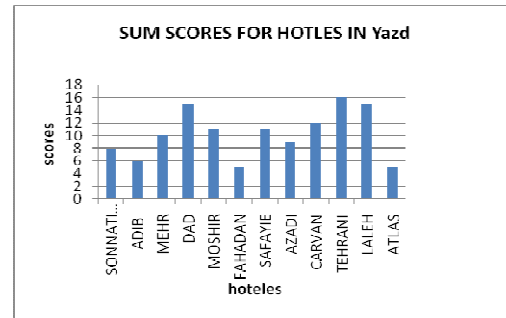
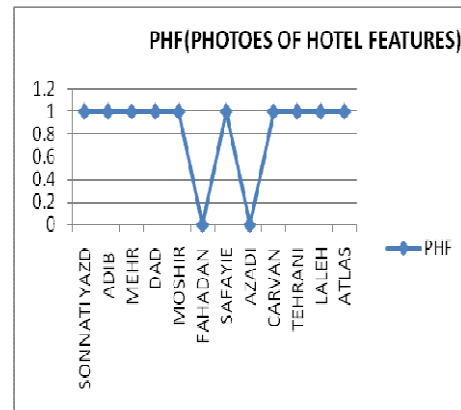
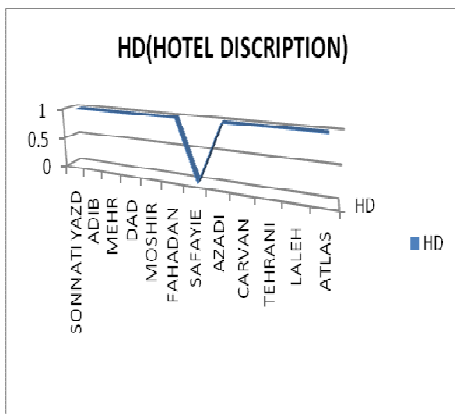


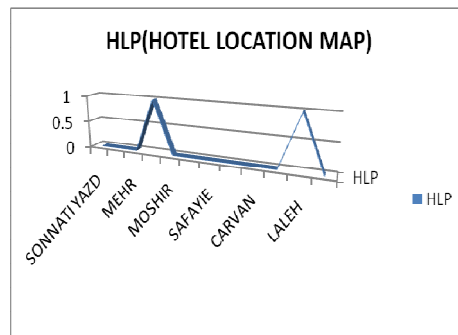
Figure 3



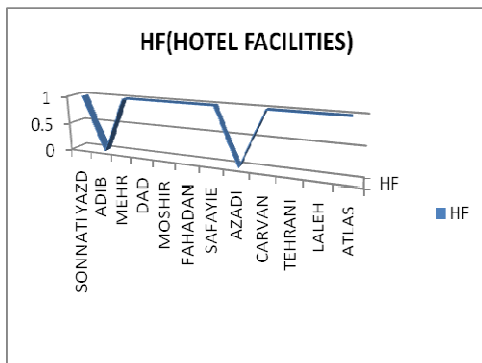
**Figure 4**



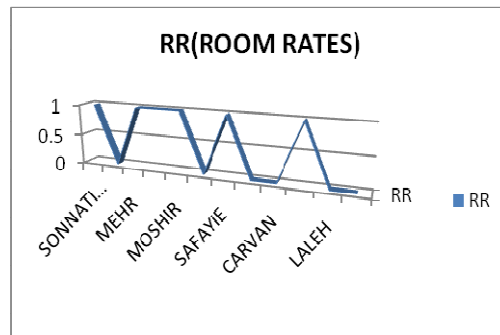
**Figure 7**



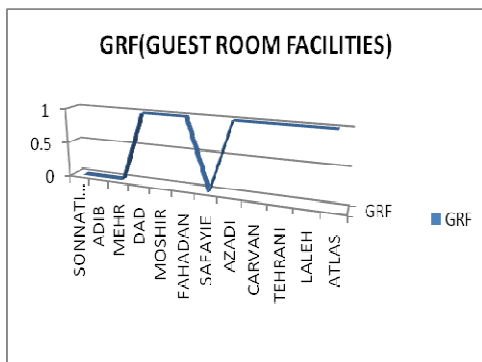
**Figure 5**



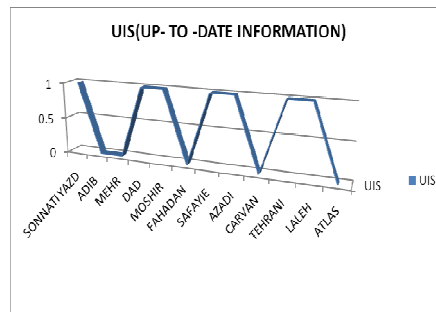
**Figure 8**

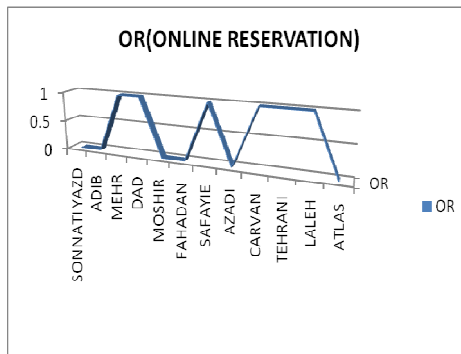


**Figure 6**



**Figure 9**



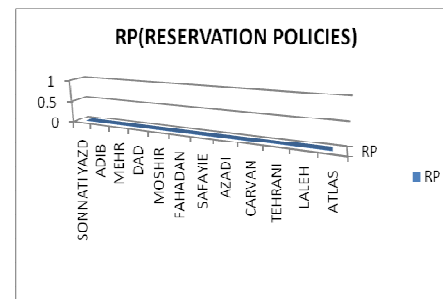
**Figure 10**

The RP (Reservation Policies) index did not have service in any of the hotels nor did it show any

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**Figure 11**

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Safayie, Karvan, Tehrani and Laleh hotels have this service in their websites (Figure(10)).As far as tourism is concerned, and as mentioned before, Yazd has been defined as one of the most attractive cities of Iran or even the world. This index(reservations or canceling their reservations.) is for tourist attraction from near or far from Iran or abroad. In continuance, 3 indexes in relation to website management groups have been evaluated, so UIS (Up-to-date information on the site) index, with the exception of 5 hotels (Adib, Mehr, Fahadan, Karvan, and Atlas) has been provided in the rest of the hotels.

### Conclusion

After the results of the analysis, and comparing the contents of the hotel websites' indexes, the final result is that still few hotels have the proper materials that will be needed to give adequate services to people.

By mentioning this issue, I find it very important because the issue with the hotel websites suits the county's needs for attraction of more tourists; and even there is the possibility that this City may become a fantastic tourist center. If hotel managers want to promote their position, I'd say it is necessary to improve the management and condition of websites and services that they offer. In these conditions It is clear that we provide an opportunity for decision-making and we make use of our full potential for attracting more tourists into the city of Yazd.

By considering the strengths and weaknesses of each hotel in its services, we can only extend the productivity and offerr a better product to users.

Using websites in traditional hotels in Yazd historic city since 2002 has caused growth in foreign tourism; the number of tourists entering into the city, has

increased from 11000 tourists in 2002 to about 20000 tourists at the end of 2010.

### Appendix:

Number	Name	Website
1	SONNATI	<a href="http://WWW.hotelsonnati.com">WWW.hotelsonnati.com</a>
	YAZD	
2	TEHRANI	<a href="http://www.tehranihotel.com">www.tehranihotel.com</a>
3	ADIB	<a href="http://www.hoteladib.com">www.hoteladib.com</a>
		<a href="http://www.hoteladib.com">www.hoteladib.com</a>
4	MEHR	
		<a href="http://www.hotledadint.com">www.hotledadint.com</a>
5	DAD	
		<a href="http://www.hotelgardenmoshir.com">www.hotelgardenmoshir.com</a>
6	MOSHIR	
		<a href="http://www.hotelgardenmoshir.com">www.hotelgardenmoshir.com</a>
7	FAHADAN	<a href="http://Fahadangreathotel.blogfa.com">Fahadangreathotel.blogfa.com</a>
8	SAFAYIE	<a href="http://www.safaiyehhotel.com">www.safaiyehhotel.com</a>
9	AZADI	<a href="http://www.azadiyazd.persianhotels.com">www.azadiyazd.persianhotels.com</a>
		<a href="http://www.corvanhotel.com">www.corvanhotel.com</a>
10	CARVAN	
		<a href="http://www.yazdlehhotel.com">www.yazdlehhotel.com</a>
11	LALEH	<a href="http://www.yazdlehhotel.com">www.yazdlehhotel.com</a>
		<a href="http://www.yazdatlashotel.com">www.yazdatlashotel.com</a>
12	ATLAS	

Source: <http://www.Yazdchto.ir>

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