

MARKETING ON THE INTERNET

A Guide for Tourist Attractions

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MARKETING ON THE INTERNET

A Guide for Tourist Attractions

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Several commentators have suggested that the Internet is the most significant development in communications since the invention of the telephone. The tourism industry, with its intangible products and services, is intrinsically suited to Internet marketing. The growing range of travel markets, products, and destinations, as well as the increasingly difficult task of finding and communicating with distinct market segments indicates that the Internet offers a potentially valuable tool for marketing tourism.

The report develops a detailed overview of the Internet as a marketing medium and investigates its applicability to the tourism industry and to the attraction sector in particular. The report is divided into eight concise sections as outlined below:

- **Chapter 1** – provides a brief overview of the Internet and its origins and identifies some key characteristics and trends. The chapter also examines the role of the Internet as a marketing tool for the tourism industry.
- **Chapter 2** – presents twelve elements of successful Internet sites grouped into four broad categories. The first category explores *planning* elements consisting of attraction marketing objectives and target markets. The second category investigates three web site *design* elements consisting of interactivity, navigation and functionality. *Content* elements such as readability, integrity, value-adding and marketing mix variables are included in the third category. The fourth category evaluates *management* elements consisting of site maintenance, promotion and resources. From these twelve elements an integrated model for successful Internet marketing is developed. The model provides a framework for presenting the remainder of the report and also acts as a guide for attractions planning to establish or revise their sites.
- **Chapter 3** – examines the two site planning elements (objectives and target audience).
- **Chapter 4** – examines the site design elements of interactivity, navigation and functionality.
- **Chapter 5** – examines the site content elements (readability, integrity, value-adding and the marketing mix).
- **Chapter 6** – examines the management elements of maintenance, promotion and resources.
- **Chapter 7** – introduces the concepts of internal marketing and market intelligence and explains how the Internet can be used for these two marketing applications.
- **Chapter 8** - provides a step-by-step guide to building a website for a tourist attraction.
- **Chapter 9** – provides some key recommendations along with some insights into the future of tourism marketing on the Internet.

The report also includes a number of tips related to the main elements discussed in each chapter. These tips are presented in boxes throughout the report. They are designed to act as a summary and guide by providing readers with a easy way to identify key points and Internet marketing strategies.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION 1

1.1 AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

In just under thirty years the **Internet** has evolved into what Brown (1997) describes as the most significant development in communications since the invention of the telephone. From its humble foray into the commercial world in 1992, the Internet has revolutionised the way in which we communicate.

The term 'Internet' is an acronym for **International Network** but it is most commonly described as a **network of networks**.

It is estimated that the Internet may be comprised of over 72 million networked host computers connecting possibly 66 million users (at any one time) out of a potential 304.36 million who have access. (Network Wizards, 2000; Nua, 2000). The number of users connecting to the Internet worldwide is growing at a phenomenal rate. In fact, the Internet is the fastest growing communications medium ever. It's rate of adoption is faster than radio in the '20s, television in the '50s and mobile phones in the '80s (Ballantyne, 1999). *Figure 1-1* shows the growth in the number of users who have access to the Internet world wide. The chart is based on a number of estimates provided by online research institutes. A trend-line provides an indication of estimated levels of use up to the end of 2001.

In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) has reported that 6 million Australians over the age of 18 had accessed the Internet in the twelve months to November 1999. The number of Australians accessing the Internet from home has doubled every year since 1996 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

Figure 1-2 indicates the origin of Internet users worldwide, with the Asia-Pacific Region accounting for 23%. Within the Asia-Pacific region Australia makes up 10% of Internet users, however, Australia has

the **highest proportion** of Internet users per population as *Figure 1-3* indicates. Market research firm IDC Australia has predicted that total Internet commerce revenue in Australia will grow from A\$127.3 million in 1997 to more than A\$16 billion in 2002 (Munro, 1998).

The phenomenal growth of the Internet in the 1990s can be attributed to the development of the **World Wide Web** (WWW). Contrary to prevailing opinion the Internet and the WWW are not interchangeable terms. The Internet is an umbrella term that encompasses a number of online applications such as the WWW, e-mail, chat, Usenet and so forth (Foxworthy, 1997). The WWW was first developed in a Switzerland physics lab in 1986 (Harris, 1996). The WWW provides structure to the Internet by allowing information to be manipulated through a graphical user interface (Harris, 1996).

The emergence of the Internet as a vehicle for economic growth has been recognised by the Australian Commonwealth Government. The Australian Government has established the **National Office for the Information Economy** (NOIE), which operates as a separate agency within the Department of Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts (Alston, 1998).

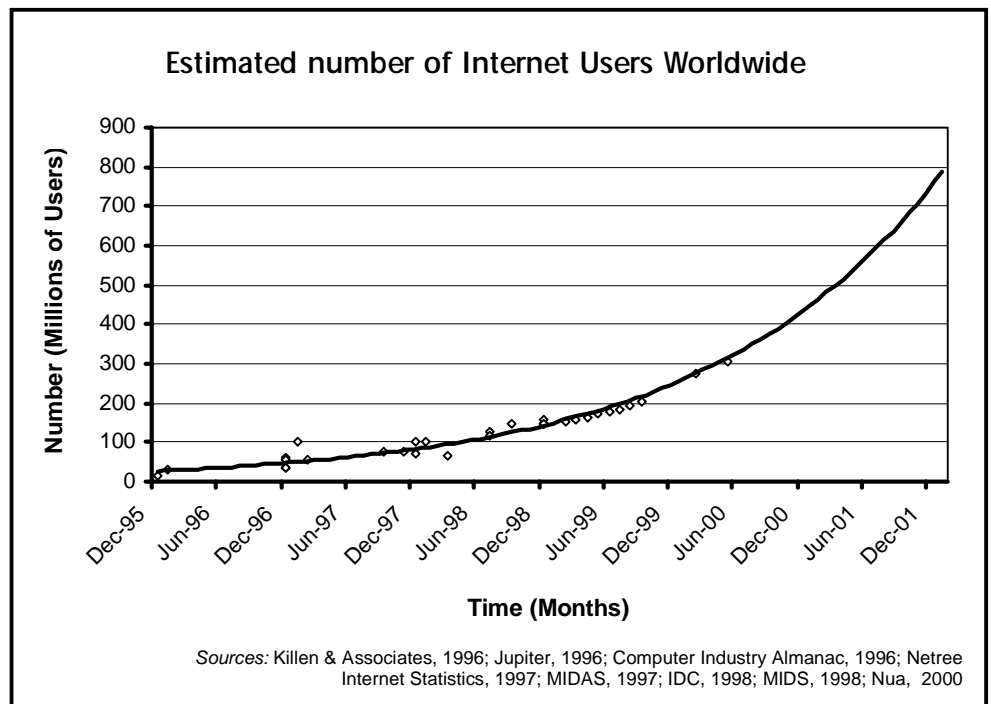


FIGURE 1-1 – Estimated number of Internet users worldwide

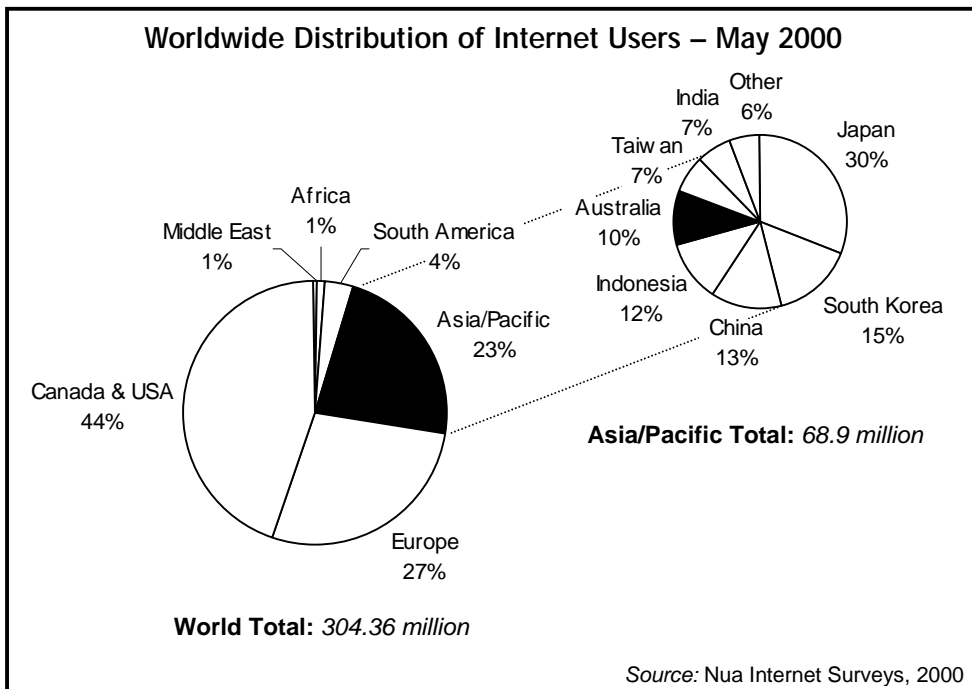


FIGURE 1-2 – Worldwide Distribution of Internet Users

1.2 THE INTERNET AS A MARKETING TOOL

The versatility of the WWW has meant that it has been described by some marketers as the **Holy Grail of marketing** (Foxworthy, 1997). The interactive nature of the WWW provides a much better means of communication with the customer than conventional media because the effort required by the customer to respond is much lower. Unlike television or radio, the WWW allows users to control the delivery of information by selecting only that data which is most valuable to them.

The true marketing potential of the WWW becomes apparent when it is combined with other parts of the Internet, such as **electronic mail** (e-mail). The marriage of the WWW and e-mail creates a system which, for the first time, supports real time **one-to-one** and **one-to-many** communications (Eastman, 1996). The Internet makes it possible to cost-effectively market to as many or as few people as is deemed appropriate.

1.3 THE INTERNET & THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The growing range of travel markets, products, and destinations, as well as the increasingly difficult task of finding and communicating with distinct market segments would suggest that the Internet offers a potentially valuable tool for marketing travel and tourism (Pollock, 1995). In fact, recent research suggests that the Internet is becoming a lucrative tool for marketing and distributing travel-related products. The number of Internet users shopping online for travel and leisure products and services doubled in 1999 to 27 million, up from 13.4 million in 1998, according to findings by online market research firm CyberDialogue (2000). Datamonitor

(1998), suggests that the travel industry will account for 35 percent of all online sales by the year 2002. This will represent the largest single category of products sold over the Internet. The potential of the Internet for marketing and distributing travel-related products is being utilised by the airline sector with 27 major airlines cooperating to launch a key travel portal site in 2000.

The Internet offers a number of benefits that are especially relevant to the marketing of tourism. Travel is a sensory experience, it is sold on images and dreams (Pollock, 1995). Travellers are not simply buying bed spaces, airline seats or food and beverages, they are

fulfilling fantasies (Archdale, 1995). The Internet, with its proliferation of text and multimedia has the power to provide a range of stimuli that encourage consumers to purchase a travel product or service.

Archdale (1995) also notes that the profile of Internet users is characterised by some very desirable demographic characteristics. Pollock (1995; p.76) suggests that Internet users tend to be "affluent, well educated, frequent travellers who spend above average on travel, recreation and entertainment."

As travel continues to become increasingly global, the competitive pressure on individual destinations and attractions will increase. If the Australian tourism industry is to be economically sustainable and internationally competitive then attractions must begin to realise the importance of the Internet and must develop strategies and ideas to harness its marketing potential.

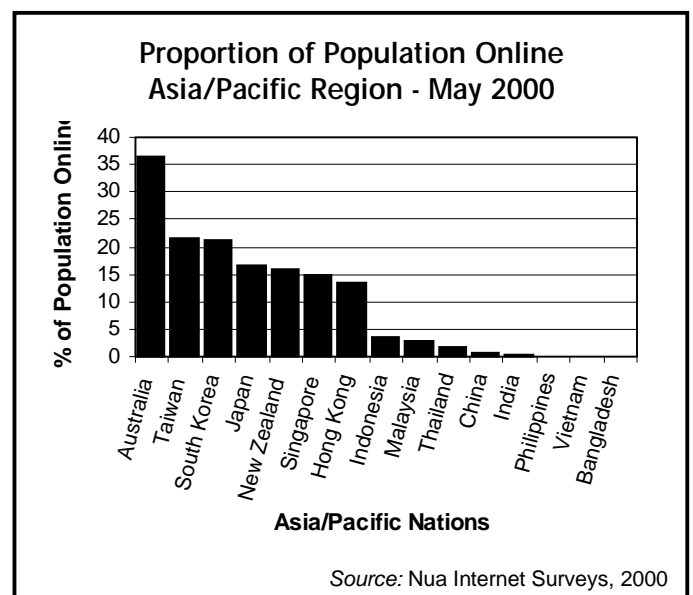


FIGURE 1-3 – Proportion of Population Online

AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERNET MARKETING 2

2.1 ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERNET SITES

A summary of information from a number of practitioners and researchers identified 12 elements that are essential to the development of a successful web site. These elements were grouped according to four broad Internet marketing considerations. For easy reference the elements are summarised in *Table 2-1*.

TABLE 2-1 Elements of Web Site Development

Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Strategies and objectives must be formulated and formalised in a marketing or business plan. ii. The target audience must be identified and the site must meet the needs of market segments.
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. The design of the site must include features that facilitate interaction between the user and the organisation. (eg. e-mail, forms, hyperlinks) iv. The site should have a hierarchical structure which is supported by navigation aids that create a sense of place and allow users to move around in the context of the site (eg: menus, icons, site maps and search engines) v. Other essential features that add functionality and aesthetic appeal must also be included (eg: multimedia, multilingual support, timely information, corporate identity)
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. The textual content on the site must be readable. vii. The site must have integrity in terms of the credibility, relevance and accuracy of the information presented. viii. The site should make use of value-added content to encourage users to explore further and to return to the site. ix. Evidence of the marketing mix variables should be present as a framework for developing site content.
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x. The site needs regular maintenance to add, revise or remove content. xi. Promotion of the site must take place using online resources and an integrated approach that incorporates traditional media. xii. The financial, human and physical resources required for the Internet marketing effort must be considered.

From the twelve elements presented in *Table 2-1* it is possible to develop an integrated model for successful Internet marketing (presented in *Figure 2-1*). The first stage of the model is concerned with the need for a marketing plan that outlines the **Internet marketing objectives and strategies**. The Internet marketing objectives of the attraction will be met by the selection of some or all of the three Internet marketing applications (**external marketing, internal marketing and market intelligence**). Each Internet marketing application is intended for a different audience. External marketing is targeted predominantly at **potential and actual clients**, whilst internal marketing is aimed at **employees, intermediaries or stakeholders** who are associated with the internal operations of the attraction. Market Intelligence provides information for the decision-makers in the organisation, including **managers and employees**.

The model indicates that the various audiences in the Internet marketing arena can share information with each other by using e-mail or a corporate Intranet. **E-mail** facilitates communications both within and outside the attraction. The **Intranet**, on the other hand, acts solely as a communications medium for those involved in the internal operations of the attraction. In addition, those within the organisation can gather market intelligence from a number of online information sources, including **customer feedback, competitor sites and online resources**.

The most visible and resource intensive part of the Internet marketing effort involves the development of the web site. The model shows the various **design, content and management** elements identified by the research. Broken lines indicate that there may be linkages between these elements and other parts of the model. For example, the presence of e-mail will impact on design and maintenance elements of the web site. The Intranet may be linked to the attraction web site and may be influenced by the design, content and management elements. Conversely, market intelligence will influence the development of the web site by providing data, ideas and inspiration through **online resources, competitor sites and customer feedback**.

The following five chapters apply the model presented in *Figure 2-1* to provide a useful step-by-step guide to establishing and maintaining a successful Internet site.

SITE PLANNING ELEMENTS 3

3.1 INTERNET MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Sargan (1998) suggests that the entire structure and content of the web site will depend on the Internet marketing objectives. These objectives are usually formalised in a marketing strategy or plan. Marketing strategies identify how the organisation will meet its objectives using its strengths while at the same time reducing weaknesses (Adam and Westberg, 1998).

A web site plan should try to answer the following questions:

- **Who?** Who is the intended audience? List the audience background, their interests, skills, values and knowledge.
- **What?** What's the purpose of the site? To educate, entertain, sell, inform, or a combination of these.
- **When?** When should the site be launched? How often will the site be updated - daily, weekly, twice a month, or monthly?
- **Where?** Where is the site going to be hosted?
- **Why?** Why is the site being developed? To create a Web presence for the attraction, etc.?
- **How?** How do you plan to research material for the Website?

3.2 IDENTIFYING THE TARGET AUDIENCE

As with traditional advertising, an effective site must be designed around the needs and motivations of the target market (Web Magnet, 1998; Apple, 1996). Target markets need to be identified in the planning stages of the Internet marketing effort because the information provided by the web site must be tailored to the needs of these users.

As a starting point to identifying potential target markets for external marketing, attraction operators need to have an understanding of the demographics of current WWW users.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the demographics and trends for users who access the WWW for travel information.

Rather than identifying generic target markets such as 'tourists' or 'international', attraction operators can use available demographic data to identify more specific and accurate target markets. Attraction operators must take the time to accurately identify the characteristics of clients who will access information about the attraction on the Internet in order to provide relevant information. It should also be recognised that some attractions will be better suited to online marketing due to a better match between the product base and the inherent demographics of tourists looking for travel information online.



SITE PLANNING TIPS

Objectives

1. Before you embark on an Internet marketing effort make sure that you identify what you wish to achieve (your objectives).
For example, a key objective may be: "to provide 24 hour access to information about the attraction."
2. Formalise your Internet marketing objectives and strategies in an Internet marketing plan.

Target Audience

3. Specify your target market(s) according to age, income, marital status, gender, education and so forth.
4. Match your target markets with the activities available at your attraction.
For example, travellers aged between 18 and 25 may enjoy activities such as bungee jumping, skydiving or hiking.
5. Design the site based on identified target markets to ensure that you offer something for each market segment.
For example, your site may have a special functions section, a family section, an adventure section and so forth.

SITE DESIGN ELEMENTS 4

4.1 BACKGROUND

The design of the site plays an important role in determining whether visitors explore the site beyond the homepage and whether they leave the site satisfied (Apple, 1996). The model presented in *Figure 2-1* identifies three key elements of site design: **interactivity**, **navigation** and **functionality**.

4.2 INTERACTIVITY

Interactivity is the key to encouraging the multilateral flow of information between the organisation and the consumer (Sterne, 1995). It allows the user to respond to stimulus on the web site in order to receive further benefits. Such benefits are most commonly in the form of more information.

Listing a phone number, fax or address on the web site provides the most basic of interactive features. While the listing of contact details is essential, they should not be the only means for visitors to provide feedback. The exclusive use of these techniques renders the web site no different to a brochure or business card carrying the same information and does not provide interaction across the same medium.

E-mail is the most obvious example of increasing interactivity between the organisation and customers, and as such it is an essential component in web site design. In addition to providing e-mail services, organisations must be prepared to respond to incoming messages swiftly.

Forms can add interactivity to a site in the same way as e-mail by allowing the user to easily respond to the content displayed on the WWW site. Examples of forms include online information requests, online comments forms, online guest books, and online surveys.

While **hyperlinks** are often overlooked due to the fact that they are essentially the means for travelling from one page to another, they do provide interactivity (Sun Microsystems, 1995). Hyperlinks allow the user to interact with the site by clicking on a highlighted keyword, icon, image map or navigation bar.

If used innovatively **contests** can attract visitors to a site while adding interactivity. Examples include the concept of a treasure hunt where users move from page to page collecting clues to complete a puzzle, or a quiz that asks questions related to information on the site (Adam and Westberg, 1998). While contests are a good idea in theory they clearly require a commitment of resources for prizes. In addition, prizes may have to be distributed to overseas winners if the competition is not limited only to Australian users.

Online reservations can add a high level of interactivity to a site by allowing the visitor to inspect and purchase a product or service through the same medium. Successful online shopping and reservations sites such as *Amazon.com* and *Microsoft Expedia/Getaway Travel* have recently emerged. While this presently accounts for only 0.8 percent of the market, global online travel is expected to account for 8 percent by 2002. In economic terms this translates into a A\$12.6 billion industry. While many attractions do not traditionally handle reservations, an online reservations service can provide some distinct advantages, particularly to larger attractions. Firstly, it provides a convenient and credible service for people wishing to visit the attraction. Secondly, it adds value to the site, and thirdly, it provides yet another avenue for converting potential visitors to actual visitors. However, online reservations may not be viable at present. Many people



SITE DESIGN TIPS

Interactivity

1. Ensure that your address, phone and fax details are easily accessible from the homepage.
2. Add features such as e-mail, forms, hyperlinks, contests and interactive maps to enhance the interactivity of your site.
3. Give one person the responsibility for checking e-mail at least once a day to ensure a prompt response to queries. This task is best suited to the promotions, marketing or public relations officer/manager.
4. Consider adding an online purchasing or reservations facility.

are still reluctant to purchase products and services over the Internet but continual improvements to data encryption has meant that many Internet users are becoming more comfortable with the practise.

Interactive maps, or **image maps**, are interesting features that could be used creatively by attraction web sites. An image map is a graphic that contains 'hot zones'. When a hot zone is clicked it acts as a hyperlink by taking the user to another area of the site. Interactive maps can allow the user to click on a pictures or feature of the attraction to obtain more detailed information.

4.3 NAVIGATION

The Georgia Tech Research Corporation (1998) claims that one of the most important issues facing the Internet at present is overcoming the problem of the user being 'lost' in the virtual information space provided by the WWW. To combat this problem WWW pages must be arranged in a logical structure or hierarchy that allows the user to develop a mental model of the site and its contents (Sargan, 1998; Apple, 1996). This structure must be supported by navigational aids which allow the user to move from one page to another (Hamill, 1997). There are two aspects of navigation: *site structure* and the use of *navigational aids*.

Navigational aids, such as icons, hyperlinks and menus, are commonly displayed on the homepage of the site. Benjamin (1996) suggests that the optimum number of menu items on the homepage should be between three and seven. More than seven items can confuse or handicap the user's ability to cope with the information. These items can then be broken down into more detailed headings at the next level.

Navigation is required on all pages so that users know where they are and where they can go in the context of the site. This can be achieved by displaying a **consistent menu** or collection of icons on all pages (Apple, 1996). Ensuring that page titles reflect the titles presented in menus can further reinforce a sense of place (Sun Microsystems, 1995). The use of these features will ensure that a user can move between the main areas of the site without returning to the homepage.

For complex sites a **site map** or **site index** can be a useful tool for presenting the site in full detail (Sun Microsystems, 1995). A good index page presents every page on the site in a hierarchical structure. Complex sites can also benefit from **search engines** that scan the site for keywords entered by the user (Apple, 1996).

The **structure** of most websites can be classified into four categories: flat, bookmark, single layer

and multi-layer nested. Most sites have either single layer or multi-layer structures. These types of sites require information to be arranged hierarchically, with information flowing from general to more specific. Four types of hierarchies are possible for tourist attractions. The first hierarchy is based on an *attraction features* approach which presents the elements of the attraction at the top of the hierarchy. The second approach displays the *activities* offered by the attraction at the top of the hierarchy. The next level of the hierarchy then provides specific information on attraction features. The third hierarchy provides a *segmented* approach that focuses on the information needs of market segments. Attraction features are again provided at the next level of the hierarchy. The fourth approach involves a *hybrid* hierarchy which incorporates elements of the first three hierarchies.



SITE DESIGN TIPS

Navigation

1. Ensure visitors can find their way around your site by providing *navigational aids* such as menus, icons and a site index.
2. Display a consistent set of menu items on each page so that users do not have to return to the homepage in order to get to other parts of your site.
3. Consider arranging your site in a hierarchy based on attractions features, activities, marketing segments or a combination of all three (see text above).

4.4 FUNCTIONALITY

Additional features which add functionality, aesthetic appeal and diversity to the site are also important (Hamill, 1997). Consequently site features such as multimedia, language support and currency of information will also need to be considered in the design process.

4.4.1 Multimedia

While **pictures** can be very effectively integrated into the design of the site, **photographs** have traditionally been used to entice travellers to visit an attraction.

Effective use of **colour** can often take the place of graphics to provide a vibrant, creative site that entices the user to explore further. Furthermore site colours can be integrated with corporate colours and graphics to achieve a professional, aesthetically pleasing result. Research by the Georgia Tech Research Corporation (1998) also indicates that WWW users show a preference for black against white.

Audio and **video** are an interesting tool for attraction sites in terms of providing 'live' visual and auditory

stimulus of the destination. Sound can be used to provide background narrative on pages describing the various parts of the attraction. Often this sound can be lifted from promotional videos or advertisements. This is a very effective and creative method of adding functionality to the site and has the added benefit of assisting users with visual impairments.

Due to current problems with **low bandwidth** multimedia should be used sparingly. One of the benefits of the Internet is its ability to provide information quickly. This convenience is dampened when a site takes several minutes to download. An optimum download time of 10 seconds is suggested, but research has indicated that many users are prepared to wait up to 30 seconds provided the site is worth the wait! (Web Magnet, 1998). It is also worth noting that Australian sites accessed by North American or European users may experience a much longer download time.

There are some innovative methods to decrease download time. One method is to make use of **thumbnail** graphics. Thumbnails display a smaller version of a graphic which is linked to another page containing a larger version of the image. This provides the user with an option to select any graphic they wish to see in greater detail. Another technique involves repeating the same photographs across a number of pages. Using the same image on multiple pages improves performance because the image has already been downloaded to the user's computer (Apple, 1996).

4.4.2 Cross-cultural support

It has been predicted that the next few years will see the internationalisation of the Internet (Nielsen, 1998). To fully utilise the Internet as an international marketing medium, attractions must develop strategies to deal with cross-cultural differences. This can be most easily achieved by incorporating **multi-lingual capabilities** into the site. With a number of European and Canadian users accessing the Internet it may be beneficial to provide information in languages such as German and French. The rapid growth of the Internet in Latin America and Asia would suggest that Spanish and Asian languages will also become more necessary.

4.4.3 Corporate identity

A corporate identity (logo and/or name of the attraction) provides a consistent link between all pages, and reminds the visitor of the information source. The use of a corporate identity can also assist in brand recognition (Apple, 1996). In some instances the corporate logo can also double as a hyperlink to the home page.

4.4.4 Currency of information

A *'Last Updated'* feature indicates when the information on a web page was last refreshed. This feature is useful in providing visitors with an idea of

the currency of information (Apple, 1996). Ideally pages should be dated individually. A *'What's New'* link to a list of recent changes and additions to the site provides regular visitors with an easy method of receiving the most current information. When this feature is updated regularly it can add an element of 'freshness' to the site (Web Magnet, 1998; Murphy et al., 1996).

4.4.5 Banner advertising

Banner advertisements usually consist of small static or animated graphics. Banner advertisements can be an important source of revenue for maintaining the Internet marketing effort.

4.4.6 Download facilities

Attractions can make their brochures available online in PDF (portable document file) format that can be downloaded, viewed and printed by visitors in their original form. This benefits users by allowing them to download brochures and maps that can be used to plan a vacation. This feature also provides an important strategic advantage. The use of download facilities can reduce the costs associated with producing and mailing brochures to prospective visitors.



SITE DESIGN TIPS

Functionality

1. Utilise multimedia such as colour, graphics, sound and video to enhance your site but be aware that these features can prolong download time.
2. Optimise download time by:
 - reducing the size and colours of images
 - using 'thumbnails' (see text)
 - using the same images on multiple pages
3. Consider adding information in other languages to assist potential international visitors (eg. German, French, Japanese).
4. Enhance brand recognition by displaying a consistent corporate identity (such as a logo) throughout your site.
5. Use features such as a 'last revised' date and a 'what's new' section to give users an idea of the currency of your pages.
6. Consider adding downloadable versions of key brochures in portable document format (PDF).

SITE CONTENT ELEMENTS 5

5.1 BACKGROUND

Ellsworth and Ellsworth (1995) propose that information-rich content is a major characteristic of successful web sites. This is supported by a number of commentators who claim that credible content is the most important trait of a well-designed site (Sun Microsystems, 1995). Wilson (1996a) proposes that web content plays three key roles: attracting users to the site, convincing them that the information is credible, and promoting the organisation's products or services. As the model in *Figure 2-1* shows, content considerations encapsulate four elements that are essential to a successful web site: **readability, integrity, value-added information** and the **marketing mix**.

5.2 READABILITY

A key element of textual content involves the readability of information (Nielsen, 1997b). A recent study by Nielsen and Morkes (1997) suggests that users **scan** web pages rather than reading them. Web sites can take advantage of this behaviour by using highlighted keywords, meaningful subheadings, bulleted lists and simple paragraphs (Nielsen and Morkes, 1997). Furthermore, Nielsen (1996) suggests the use of an **inverted pyramid model**, such as that used by journalists, when writing for the web. Because people do not take the time to read web pages in detail important information should be presented close to the top of the text. This essentially means that the conclusion or summary is presented first, followed by the most important supporting information, and ending with background information.

Nielsen and Morkes (1997) also found that users find web content more acceptable if it is **concise** and **objective**. They suggest that one method of achieving these guidelines is to reduce textual information to half the word count of conventional writing. This suggestion is supported Sun Microsystems (1995), who found that users have low tolerance for scrolling. Research suggests that users can scroll through about four screenfuls of text before being frustrated with the scrolling mechanism, or becoming disorientated within the context of the site. Benjamin (1996) suggests that each web page should contain about 200 to 500 words of text.

A subset of readability is the provision for easy printing of information (Apple 1996). If the site is

arranged in a number of window sized pages the user may end up with a cue-card style printout. It is therefore useful to provide a link to a **printable copy** of relevant information that is designed for off-screen viewing. In the absence of downloadable brochures, as discussed earlier, printable versions the site content may be very beneficial to the visitor.

5.3 INTEGRITY

The integrity of the site refers to the credibility, relevance and accuracy of the information. Credibility can be established by identifying the attraction as an **official** source of information on the destination. Web Magnet (1998) advises that the inclusion of an "**About Us**" section on the web site will also enhance the credibility of the organisation. The organisation can use this section to provide information such as the organisation's mission, vision, services, members and contact details. Another section may provide **quotes from satisfied visitors**. In addition, the attraction can enhance its credibility by referring to **awards** or commendations which it may have received. Examples include state and national tourism awards or web site awards. Credibility is further enhanced by ensuring that textual content is free from spelling and grammatical errors (Apple, 1996).

Information will also be more credible if it is relevant to the target audience. In a situation where resources are limited an exploration of competitor sites can provide inspiration for the presentation of relevant information.

5.4 VALUE-ADDED FEATURES

Value-added marketing is essentially based around the principle of offering something of value free to enrich the reputation of the organisation (Sterne, 1995). *Virtual postcards, give-aways* and *links to other sites* can be used as a means of adding value to a site (Briggs, 1997).

Virtual postcards are electronic photographs that can be sent to another Internet user. Like a real postcard, a message is commonly attached to the photograph. Virtual postcards of the attraction have the same benefit as their traditional counterparts – they promote the feature depicted by the photograph.

Give-aways are an alternative to competitions but rather than adding interactivity, they can support other interactive methods such as survey forms. Sites can provide discount coupons, screen savers or wallpaper bitmaps that can be downloaded after completing an online survey or comment form (Briggs, 1997). Bitmaps

and screensavers can include scenes from the attraction.

Links to other sites add value by providing a pathway to relevant information that the organisation may not be able to provide through its own resources. Links to weather information, currency converters and the Australian Tourist Commission's tourism promotional site can provide useful tools for users visiting an attraction's website.

International travellers tend to visit several attractions while in Australia. It is therefore beneficial to provide a link to the sites of neighbouring attractions. Ideally linkages to other sites can lead to online partnerships.

5.5 THE MARKETING MIX

The role of the marketing mix in the presentation of content should also be considered. According to Adam and Westberg (1998, p20) it is the marketing mix that "leads to meeting the needs of the target market consisting of those who want information or online solutions via the Internet." Traditional marketing theory has postulated the existence of four P's in the marketing mix. These are *product*, *promotion*, *placement* and *price*. (Kotler et al., 1998).

Product is concerned with the mix of tangible and intangible goods and services offered by the attraction. Product elements are the basis of the content being presented on attraction web sites.

Promotion relates to the activities that communicate the merits of the attraction and convince consumers to visit it. Opportunities exist for attractions to deliver public relations services through the provision of media statements, regular newsletters, and other information about the organisation.

The **price** element deals with the cost of tourism products and activities at the attraction. Pricing provides some visitors with the opportunity to budget more accurately before they embark on their journey. As with programming information (see below), pricing information needs to be evaluated and updated frequently, so it may not be an option for a low maintenance site.

Placement involves the activities that make the product available to consumers. The place element of the marketing mix is primarily concerned with the distribution of the attraction's product. Attractions can improve the place element of the Internet marketing mix by providing linkages or contact information to tour operators and travel agents that carry their product. Furthermore, distribution can be enhanced by developing an online purchasing system.

Morrison (1996) suggests that the unique characteristics of travel products mean that four

additional marketing mix elements can be introduced. These include *people*, *packaging*, *programming* and *partnership*.

The **people** element is concerned with the ways in which people are involved in the delivery of the product. The Internet offers great opportunities for personalised service. The provision of customised services such as electronic newsletters can provide a personalised service that enhances the long-term relationship with individuals. Another method of personalising the Internet marketing effort is to 'put a face behind the



SITE CONTENT TIPS

Readability

1. Use an inverted pyramid model when writing for the web (see *text*).
2. Present text in small paragraphs broken up by headings or highlighted keywords to make it easy for users to find and read the information they need.
3. Limit the amount of text per page to between 200 – 500 words.
4. Provide printable versions of web pages containing key information such as prices, contact details, events, maps and so forth.

Integrity

5. Enhance the integrity of your site by:
 - identifying the site as the 'official' source
 - adding an 'about us' section
 - including quotes from satisfied visitors
 - listing awards or commendations
6. Consider adding information for non-travel markets such as the media, children, travel writers, school students and film scouts.

Value added features

7. Make use of features such as virtual postcards and giveaways (such as discount coupons, screensavers and wallpaper images) to add value to your site.
8. Include links to relevant information that you cannot provide on your own site.

Examples include the Australian Tourist Commission sites, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and state tourism sites.

Marketing Mix

9. Use the eight P's of tourism marketing (see *text*) as a framework for presenting a more complete range of content.

site'. This can be achieved by providing a page containing photos, names, job titles, e-mail addresses and short descriptions of each staff member.

Packaging involves the assembly of various services into one product that meets the needs of a target market while **programming** is concerned with presenting special activities and events that give added appeal to a package or travel service.

Packaging suggests the consolidation of some of a region's services into a single product that can be offered to visitors. This is often beyond the scope of many attractions. However, attractions do have access to information about packages developed

by tour operators. A 'tours' or 'special offers' section on the WWW site can provide information about such packages while forging partnerships with other local attractions.

The most common way to provide programming on a website is to include a calendar of events for the attraction. These events do not have to be limited to organised functions, but could also include seasonal occurrences.

Partnership involves cooperative promotions and other cooperative marketing efforts with other organisations. The partnership element is more challenging to include on the web site. Attractions can add this element by displaying logos or links to partner sites.

SITE MANAGEMENT ELEMENTS 6

6.1 BACKGROUND

Managerial issues are often overlooked, but are a necessary part of the Internet marketing effort (Nielsen, 1997a). Changes in user demographics and technology means that the web site requires a constant flow of **resources** to facilitate **promotion** and **maintenance**.

6.2 MAINTENANCE

The maintenance of the site involves the **removal** of outdated information and links ('linkrot') and the **addition** of new information. Content concerning prices, products and events must be **revised** regularly (Web Magnet, 1998; Wilson, 1996a). Sites that do not update their content frequently are not taking advantage of the ability for the Internet to provide timely information at a low cost. In the absence of clear benchmarks, it is suggested that the site should be renewed at least once a month with fresh material.

6.3 PROMOTION

One of the most difficult aspects of web site management involves the attraction of visitors once the site has been built. Unlike traditional media the WWW is a 'pull' technology, which means that the organisation must attract visitors to its site. Research suggests that the top three resources used to find Internet sites are other WWW sites, search engines and online directories (Georgia Tech Research Corporation, 1998).

Promotion of the site through **links** on other sites and online directories requires a never-ending commitment. It is important for attractions to continually search for new opportunities that allow them to submit (or resubmit) their site (Web Magnet, 1998). **Search engines** provide an easy, convenient method for finding sites on the Internet. Once the site has been submitted to a search engine, however, the listing must be monitored. According to Fleishman (1998) a number of sites have found that listings periodically get 'dropped' by search engines and may need to be re-submitted.

One dilemma faced by organisations when using search engines is the selection of keywords (Wilson, 1996b). The correct **keywords** will differentiate an attraction's site from hundreds or possibly thousands of others. It is suggested that attractions avoid generic keywords such as *travel*,

holiday or *vacation*. Specific keywords need to be used to provide detailed information about the destination. For example, the site can use keywords based on specific product strengths (eg. *rainforest*, *outback*, *reef*, *tropical* and so forth). Keywords can also refer to specific activities offered by the attraction (eg. *adventure*, *bungy jumping*, *white-water rafting* and so forth). Possibly the most specific method for selecting keywords is on a geographic basis (eg. *Australia*, *Northern Territory*, *Alice Springs*, *Ayers Rock* and so forth). A combination of these three methods could also be used to promote the WWW site. If the content of the sites changes, keywords may need to be re-evaluated.

Apple (1996) suggests that many search engines rank sites based on the frequency of keywords in each document they find. Therefore, using the same keyword in different parts of a web page will increase the likelihood of the page being found by visitors searching for that keyword. Many search engines also index web sites according to their use of META tags. META tags allow keywords to be incorporated into the source code of the web page without actually displaying them.

The web site can also be promoted using more traditional means. **Print media** is the fourth most common source for finding Internet sites (Georgia Tech Research Corporation, 1998). The Internet site can be promoted through print media (brochures, business cards, newspapers and magazines) and other traditional sources (television and radio) by adopting an integrated marketing approach.

The site can also be promoted as part of a **public relations** exercise. This would most commonly involve the release of a media statement to relevant newspapers and magazines noting the launch, success or refurbishment of the site and espousing its features. While a local newspaper may be interested in this information, opportunities also exist in national publications such as trade journals (eg. *Travel Trade*); community magazines (eg. *The Bulletin*); and motoring association publications (eg. the RACQ's *Road Ahead*).

6.4 RESOURCES

Bygrave (1997) proposes that before embarking on the Internet marketing effort organisations should evaluate what resources are realistically available. The roles of financial, human and physical resources are often forgotten by organisations when they develop a web site. **Financial resources** must be allocated for both the *development* and *maintenance* of the Internet marketing effort. **Human resources** must be considered in terms of expertise in dealing with various

Internet technologies. It is important for attractions to ensure that individuals in the organisation receive appropriate training to develop skills and knowledge in dealing with the Internet. Clearly the level of expertise is considered to be important to the Internet marketing effort. Expertise can be viewed as a human resources issue. Steps should be taken to ensure that at least one employee

within the organisation has the necessary skills to manage the technology. Furthermore, these skills must be maintained and updated according to changes in technology. The availability of **physical resources** such as computer hardware and software to support the Internet marketing effort is also a key



SITE MANAGEMENT TIPS

Maintenance

1. Revise and update your site at least once a month to provide a feeling of 'freshness' and to remove outdated information and links.

Promotion

2. Use an integrated approach that utilises both traditional and online promotional media to help visitors find your site.
3. When submitting your site to a search engine, use a combination of keywords based on specific:
 - product strengths (eg. *rainforest, reef, outback, tropical*);
 - activities (eg. *white-water rafting, bungee jumping, adventure*); and
 - geographic terms (eg. *Australia, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Ayers Rock*)
4. Generate media releases highlighting the launch, success or refurbishment of your site and promoting its features.

Resources

5. Ensure that you are able to commit sufficient financial resources for both the creation and maintenance of the web site. As a rule of thumb, you should expect annual maintenance costs to be about 1/3 of the initial outlay.
6. Ensure that individuals in your organisation receive appropriate training to develop basic skills and knowledge in dealing with the Internet.
7. Ensure that you have access to appropriate physical resources such as computers and software to maintain your site and to respond to e-mail.

INTERNAL MARKETING AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE 7

7.1 THE INTERNET & INTERNAL MARKETING

Internal marketing suggests that organisations should view employees as consumers and jobs as products (Bell and Winters 1993). When this view is adopted it becomes immediately apparent that marketing can support a number of management functions. If the concept of internal marketing is extended to suppliers and agents then the potential of the web as a communications tool becomes apparent. Internal marketing, in the context of attractions marketing, is intended to provide employees, intermediaries and stakeholders with information about the attraction and the destination. Often this information is not in an appropriate form for viewing by visitors. The Internet provides two useful tools for internal marketing: the **Intranet** and **e-mail**.

7.1.1 The Intranet

The use of an Intranet, a web site with access restricted to a company's employees, agents, suppliers or the news media, has the potential to radically change the way in which organisations communicate (Archdale, 1996). The use of an Intranet can allow employees to access and comment on information such as the attraction's mission, vision, business plan, marketing plan, draft reports, project progress reports, human resource information, product information, financial records, proposals, contacts, newsletters and other detailed information.

7.1.2 E-mail

E-mail has much the same purpose as the Intranet. It is intended to provide a medium through which management and employees can communicate with each other and with intermediaries and other stakeholders. Unlike the Intranet, e-mail facilitates a faster, more convenient method of response. For this purpose it is essential that all employees in the organisation have an e-mail account, and that they use it.

7.2 MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Market intelligence provides management with accurate and timely information concerning the marketing environment (Kotler et al., 1998). Sound marketing decisions cannot be made unless all relevant information about the market, the needs of consumers and the approaches used by competitors are assessed.

Specifically the Internet can be used to gather market intelligence by:

- obtaining customer feedback through electronic means,
- analysing the online marketing efforts of competitors, and
- using online resources.

A good Internet site should invite the customer to provide **feedback**. Services such as e-mail or a guestbook, comments area or information request form can provide feedback about the site or its product offerings. Attractions can also gather market intelligence by noting what types of information is most commonly requested by users. The use of online surveys provides an even better opportunity for the organisation to gather information about its customers. Such information will assist in more accurately identifying the needs of market segments using the Internet and modifying the site accordingly.

An example of an information request form is presented in *Appendix 2*. The use of an information request form allows the attraction to acquire information such as a name, address and e-mail of the customer. The request form may also have an option asking the visitor whether they wish to receive other information in the future. This information can be provided in the shape of an electronic newsletter that is sent periodically to the user's e-mail address.

The use of feedback facilities such as an online comments area, survey and guest book can provide the attraction with direct feedback about the holiday destination or the Internet site. Visitor comments can be examined in the same way as an operator may examine a physical guest book signed by visitors at an attraction.

Survey forms can be used on the Internet in the same way as traditional visitor surveys. Survey forms can clearly be a formidable tool for gathering detailed information, but users may need an incentive to complete the survey. As discussed previously, examples of incentives may include give-aways such as a screensaver depicting scenes from the attraction, or entry into an online sweepstakes.

The **online marketing efforts of competitors** can be easily examined simply by visiting their sites. An analysis of competitor sites will identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities on which the attraction can capitalise (Wilson, 1996a).

Online resources can also be a valuable source of information for organisations. Sources of relevant marketing information on the Internet include online newspapers and periodicals, country and industry market research reports, Internet market statistics, directories and listings, and government contacts and resources (Hamill, 1997).



INTERNAL MARKETING AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE TIPS

Internal marketing

1. Encourage the use of e-mail as a communications tool amongst employees and between organisations.
2. Consider establishing an Intranet to share internal information such as draft reports, project progress reports, human resource information, financial records, destination database information, proposals, contacts and newsletters.

Market Intelligence

3. Use the Internet to gather marketing information by:
 - obtaining customer feedback through electronic means,
 - analysing the online marketing efforts of competitors, and
 - using online resources

DEVELOPING A WEBSITE 8

8.1 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE

Many businesses view the web with some uncertainty and the prospect of building their own site as downright daunting, but this attitude is changing. New web authoring software use WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) interfaces to make web site building as easy as word processing. The following chapter has been developed to set you on your way towards establishing a web site for your own attraction. *Figure 8-1* provides a flow chart of some of the major decisions you will have to make. Each of the steps presented in the figure are discussed in more detail below.

8.2 WHO WILL BUILD MY WEB SITE?

Before you start you will need to decide whether you or your staff have the necessary expertise and resources to build and maintain a web site for the attraction. A number of very user-friendly web-authoring programs make it easy for you to build a website yourself but if it all sounds too much there is always the option of out sourcing the development and/or maintenance of your website to a web designer.

8.2.1 Do it Yourself (DIY)

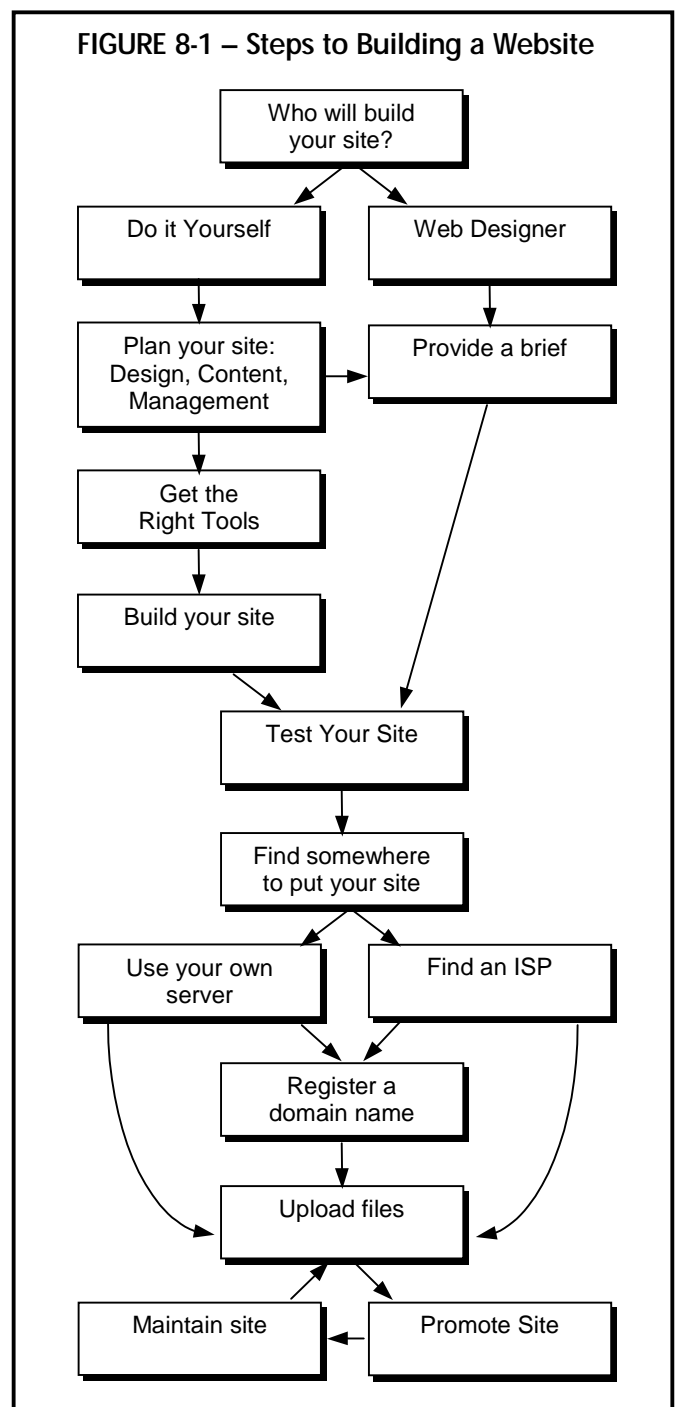
There are a number of issues to consider if you decide to build a website for your attraction yourself. It is important to ensure that you have the expertise, time and resources to develop and maintain a website. It may be necessary to participate in a web design course and to purchase software and reference materials that will make the task easier.

8.2.2 Use a Web Designer

If you have sufficient funds you may consider employing the services of a web author or designer. Web designers will usually charge over \$100 per page. You will have to work with the web design team to make sure that the website is what you want - a good web designer or consultant will ask for other promotional materials and will inquire about your marketing plan to make sure that the website is integrated with the rest of your marketing efforts. It is suggested that you prepare a formal brief for the designer of your website. The brief should include information such as your target markets, what features should be included and what you wish to achieve with the website.

8.3 PLAN YOUR WEBSITE

Whether you build your own web site or outsource to a designer, it is important to plan your website. This is where the planning, design, content and management considerations discussed in earlier chapters fit in. Start by setting objectives and identifying your target audience as outlined in *Chapter 3*. Then work through the design, content and management tips in the chapters that follow.



Having a look at what your competitors have done is often useful during the planning stage. Map out the information that you would like put on the web on paper, draw hierarchies, or trees of how the pages on your site will be linked together. Don't be concerned if your diagram starts to look a little like a web – that's what the Internet is all about! Think about ways to make it easy for your customers to access the information they may be looking for.

8.4 GET THE RIGHT TOOLS

If you decide to build your own web site you will need to buy software and reference materials to help you write HTML pages. HTML is an acronym for Hypertext Mark up Language. HTML is the language used to tag various parts of a web document so browser software will know how to display a document's text, links, graphics and other media. You will need:

- A computer less than 3 years old with a connection to the Internet
- Web building software: recommended programs include Microsoft Frontpage 2000, Dreamweaver or Adobe Pagemill. These programs are user-friendly and don't require you to know much about HTML.
- Desktop Publishing Software: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Paintshop, Microsoft Image Composer etc.
- Wordprocessing software such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect is still the best for compiling and checking the spelling and grammar for textual information.
- A HTML Guide such as 'HTML for Dummies' can be purchased from most book stores and is strongly recommended. There are also a number of free HTML guides online.

8.5 BUILD YOUR WEBSITE

You should focus your design on achieving the results stated in your Website plan. Follow the planning, design, content and management principles you have outlined in your plan. Always keep your target audience in mind - ensure your design is based on their knowledge, needs and values.

8.6 TEST YOUR WEBSITE

Once you have built your website you should take some time to test it. Things you should give special attention to are:

- **Spelling and Grammar** – Spelling and grammatical errors lowers the credibility and professionalism of your website.
- **Links** – Make sure that all of the links on your site have been entered correctly and lead somewhere.
- **Browsers/computer compatibility** – If possible, testing should also be done with a variety of browsers (Explorer, Netscape) using various computers (PC, Mac).
- **Download time.** At worst, each of your pages should download in under 30 seconds, using a 28.8k modem. However, there are many factors outside your control that may affect download time, such as your ISPs hardware and configuration, Internet traffic and time of day. Factors you can control include the size of each page, number of images on each page, and the size of each image as discussed in *Chapter 4*.

8.7 FIND SOMEWHERE TO PUT YOUR SITE

You have two choices to present your page to the world. You can create your own server or you can host your website with an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

If you are proficient with computers and have a powerful computer you can create your own server. Microsoft Frontpage and Microsoft Personal Web Server are useful tools for establishing a server for a small web site. Be aware that if you use your own hardware to host your website it should be accessible 24 hours a day and should be able to support the visitor traffic you are expecting.

If you feel that having your own server sounds too technical you can host your web site with an ISP. While there are a number of national ISPs it may be easier to host your site with a local ISP in case any problems arise. Checkout the Yellow Pages to find ISPs in your area. Most ISPs will have their own website – have a look at these to help you decide where you should host your website. Pay particular attention to the download speed of other web sites hosted by each ISP.

8.8 REGISTER A DOMAIN NAME

Once you have your server you should think about registering a domain name for your page. While this is not necessary it is highly recommended because domain names are the addresses visitors will type in to get to a website. If you do not have a domain name your website address will look something like this:

- <http://www.yourisp.com.au/~yourattraction>

However, a registered domain name will allow you to have a website address that is easier for visitors to remember, such as the following:

- <http://www.yourattraction.com.au>

Common domain extensions and their classifications include:

- com - company
- org - organisation
- net - network
- edu - education
- gov – government
- au – Australia

For example, www.jcu.edu.au means that JCU it is an educational institution in Australia. You can register a domain name by going to any number of domain registration sites on the web. If you have decided to host your site with an ISP they should be able to register a domain name on your behalf. Current domain name registrations cost between \$100-200 per domain, depending on the extension you select.

8.9 UPLOAD YOUR SITE

Once you have built and tested your website you will have to upload your files to the host computer. Files are transferred from your computer to the host computer using an FTP software program. FTP is an acronym for File Transfer Protocol. Several free FTP programs can be downloaded from the Internet. Your ISP should also provide details and assistance to get your site from your computer to the host computer using FTP. If your website is small enough you can also transfer you website from one computer to another using a floppy disk but this becomes tedious if you have to update the website regularly.

It is highly recommended that you check your file names before you upload them. Make sure they are all in lower case letters. Otherwise, they will not work on some hosts. Always retain an up-to-date copy of your website on your own computer.

8.10 PROMOTE YOUR SITE

The importance of promotion was discussed in detail in *Chapter 6*. To promote your Website you need to advertise both on-line and off-line as often as possible.

Your first step in promoting your Website is to learn how search engines work and about Internet promotion. The best place to find this information is online. You also need to create the META data that will be used by search engines to locate your site, index it and display a description of it on their web pages. It is recommended that you refer to an HTML guide or online resources to assist with the generation of META tags.

There are a number of search engine registration sites on the Internet. Some are free and some charge a fee for submitting and resubmitting your site to the top search engines.

Promoting your Website through the Internet is only part of the job. You should also promote your site off-line by:

- Telling all your associates/colleagues and asking them to link to your site.
- Including your URL in all your correspondence.
- Adding an e-mail signature file. Your signature file should contain your attraction's name, URL and address.
- Include your URL on anything that leaves the attraction: stationary, business cards, invoices, return address labels, business cheques, telephone answering machine messages, news releases, all advertising (brochures and other sales literature), admission tickets, billboards, Yellow Pages, and even on the sign in front of your attraction. Make sure you inform all employees of your URL address and encourage employees to mention the address to customers.

8.11 MAINTAIN YOUR SITE

Once the site is up and running you have the choice of continuing to outsource site maintenance, or updating the web pages yourself - depending on how technical the website is and on how much training you have.

The flowchart in *Figure 8-1* shows that uploading, promoting and maintaining your site requires ongoing commitment, as indicated by the circular flow of the arrows.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS 9

9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

As already indicated, a number of steps can be taken to improve the various elements for successful Internet marketing. There are key actions, however, that will have a holistic impact on the success of the Internet marketing effort. The following key recommendations are most important in the context of the tourism industry as a whole.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. the model for successful Internet marketing be used as a framework for developing or revising Internet marketing efforts;
2. specific Internet marketing objectives and target markets and their needs be identified by attractions through the collection and/or interpretation of demographic and psychographic data;
3. research be continually updated and disseminated to attractions to ensure that they receive timely, pertinent information about market changes and technological developments;
4. the benefits, current developments, operational issues and elements for successful Internet marketing be integrated into existing and future education and training programs for attractions personnel;
5. Attractions develop partnerships with regional tourism industry members, stakeholders and government agencies to facilitate the sharing of physical and intellectual resources; and
6. an incentive or award be offered as a part of the existing local, state and national tourism awards to encourage tourism businesses to develop high quality web sites.

9.2 THE FUTURE

The development of an Internet site is subject to changes in demographics and technological developments in the marketing environment. Changing Internet user demographics may provide new opportunities not identified in this study. Similarly, a more detailed analysis of the demographics of travel seekers on the Internet may uncover more specific information needs. The introduction of new technology such as an 'Internet appliance' which is connected to a television in much the same way as a VCR will make the Internet more accessible to a number of new markets (Hof, 1997). Changes in technology may introduce an array of new multimedia features which can be successfully incorporated on destination marketing sites. Advancements in technology may also eliminate current constraints in bandwidth, which could see the introduction of more active 'live' components on the web site.

The many contentious issues, developments and phenomenal growth surrounding the emergence of the Internet as a marketing medium are dominated by one certainty: the Internet is no longer just a novelty, it is developing as a marketing medium in its own right. To be successful in the future attractions must use the Internet to deliver world class information services. Because the Internet inherently operates at a global level, Australian attractions will find themselves in direct competition with destinations in other countries. Australian attractions have the potential to lead the world in tourism marketing on the Internet. A failure to harness this potential may decrease the competitiveness or appeal of certain attractions. Dissatisfaction and frustration will result from the absence of site features and facilities that will be expected by Internet users. Similarly, a lack of relevant information may cause information gatherers to explore other sites that are better suited to their needs.

The tourism industry, with its intangible products and services, is intrinsically suited to Internet marketing. Tourism organisations which do not capitalise on this new opportunity will find themselves at a disadvantage in the very near future.

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APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF WWW DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FOR 'TRAVEL SEEKERS'

	Most prominent groups	Comparison to Internet users world-wide	Trends for travel seekers
Age	21-30 (30.7%) 31-40(24.9%) 41-50(22.9%)	Travel seekers are older. Average age for travel seekers was 37.48, while mean for world users was 35.12	The 51-60 age bracket shows an increase while the 31-40 bracket shows a decrease. This indicates that travel seekers are getting older.
Gender	Males (58.1%) Females (41.8%)	Travel seekers were more gender neutral than Internet users world wide.	The distribution of gender is becoming more neutral. Trends suggest that the number of males and females will be equal by the end of 1999.
Education Attainment	University (33.9%) Some university (28.9%) Masters degree (18.4%)	Travel seekers were better educated than users world-wide. The proportion of travel seekers who have at least one university qualification was 59.9% versus 50.1% for users world-wide.	Increases in proportion who have completed some university, while there were decreases in the proportion of those attaining masters and doctoral degrees. This suggests that the level of education attainment is decreasing.
Occupation	Computer related (31.4%) Professionals (22.2%) Others (18.4%)	More computer related and less educational occupations than world wide users.	A decrease in computer related occupations and an increase in the 'other' category suggests the emergence of a more diverse market.
Household Income (\$US '000)	50-74 (25.1%) Over 100 (18.1%) 75-99 (13.9%)	Generally higher than world-wide users. 57.1% of travel seekers earned more than 50 000, while only 48.4% of users world wide earn over this amount.	Trends may suggest a decrease in lower income brackets and an increase in upper income brackets, but the distinction is subtle.
Marital status	Married (47.8%) Single (31.3%)	Higher proportion of travel seekers were married while a lower proportion are single in comparison to World figures.	No distinct trends
Years on the Internet	1-3 years (40.2%) 4-6 years (33.1%) Over 6 years (18.8%)	Higher proportion of travel seekers over four years, less under 12 months.	Trends show a marked decrease in new users looking for travel information.

Source: Georgia Tech Research Corporation, 1998

APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE OF AN INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

If you have not found the information you were seeking, or if perhaps you require more detailed information please [email](#) us or register below. You can choose to receive regular tourism news if you wish.

Name

Email

Address/Country

Comments/Questions

Please

email

send hardcopy

sell me a copy of Australia's Heart of Golden Video

Holiday Planner

Calendar of events

More information about:

Source: Kalgoorlie-Boulder Tourism, 1998