

TOURISM AND NEW MEDIA

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Nikos Leandros
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FrancoAngeli

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INTRODUCTION

Internet has been one of the most significant technological developments in the 20th century that has changed the daily basis lives of all people worldwide, mainly in terms of communication. In the 21st century, the new digital era of Web 2.0 has provided broadband Internet for everyone, providing smart technological solution, services and devices, widely accepted in all human life sectors. New Media is a term used to define all that is related to the internet and the interplay between technology combining Internet accessible digital text, images and video with web-links, with focus on the creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users and aiming to formulate a participatory community of stakeholders that are also web-content editors and donors for the benefit of non-community readers.

The new media of social network have created a new context in the implementation of innovative strategies and policies, nevertheless, in sustainability, in entrepreneurship and its combination.

Recently, sustainable development has been in the center-stage of national, international, trans-national and global policies while it is incorporated in decision-making, in strategies and in their policies by all stakeholders, communities, government, Regions, entrepreneurs, NGOs, networks etc. Sustainable development comprises successfully economic development, environmental preservation and social well-being. Our society is now environmentally aware. Environmental protection and environmental impact are key-topics in any project, nevertheless in and funding opportunity in the implementation of principles of sustainable development. The corporate agenda embraces sustainable development goals and the green trend in our society is now more solid than ever.

Consumers are apt to follow the firms that respect sustainability goals and comply with environmental responsibility frameworks. A “green” or “sustainable entrepreneurship would try to protect the environment, to minimize the consumption of resources and energy, to have a low carbon footprint and to have a positive impact on the society and the well-being of citizens. Green procedures and daily-choices, certifications, eco-labels, green awards and green alliances would be the means to validate green entrepreneurship for aware and conscious consumers and employees.

An important economy sector globally is tourism and contributing factors have been the technology boost and socio-economic status of people. Within that framework, Sustainable Tourism has become critical factor in changing regional or local development forms. Sustainable tourism is tourism that respects the environment, which takes into account the requirements of the environment, local people, entrepreneurship, and visitors for the present and for the future. People are encouraged to pursue rural leisure activities in a manner that will benefit, rather than damage, the landscape, is gaining approval and popularity.

In that perspective, new media have become a decisive factor in the boost of sustainable tourism development. Social media, virtual social groups, tourism portals, blogs, wikis, smart digital trip organisation services have become a main information source for potential travelers in tourism products and services. New media have formulated an innovative dialogue framework for interactive information exchange for all to participate online.

In this book, there are 15 chapters aiming to describe and enlighten issues of sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship and the multi disciplinary contribution of new media and social media to sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, case studies and insight from online success stories about sustainable tourism development are presented aiming to inspire readers.

We hope that you enjoy reading it and give the opportunity to start a scientific discuss on the topics involved and a fruitful synergy to be produced by various stakeholders and decision makers.

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1. POLICY ANALYSIS IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM: THE ROLE OF THE NEW MEDIA

by *Immacolata Viola*

1.1. Introduction

The enterprise's communications activities are now new forms and methods through the use of new media. The Medium – term (from latin Medium) indicates the set of media born before the advent of computer technology (TV, Radio, Print), and therefore with the New term refers to a new type of means of communication. Media – called “traditional” (radio, press, television) offer a communication type “One To Many”; New Media, thanks to their wide usability offer the opportunity to share in a simultaneous cognitive experiences, here is that communication becomes a communication – type “Many To Many”. Digital communication allows, in fact, simultaneity inter-cognitive of collective experiences. Considering the important role played today by new media in society and in people's lives, or that virtual space where you can communicate with the world, we can state that all stakeholders must necessarily settle for a cheap leverage “Many To Communication Many “. This study will focus on the stakeholder “enterprise “ that operates in the field of rural tourism, especially in the sense of rural tourism “sustainable.” Rural tourism is a growing segment and able to answer some of the emerging trends in tourism demand which tend to use less rewarding forms of overcrowded and more attentive to the values of nature, culture, gastronomy, the country at large. II Rural tourism “sustainable” is connected, however, the specificity that each site is capable of expressing in terms of environmental diversity, architectural coherence, cultural and social wealth. The way a territory retains its original character or develops in an innovative way his offer, the way in which the spaces are conceived, planned, built and operated, is a fundamental attraction for tourism. Therefore, the enterprise that operates in rural tourism, but in a “sustainable,” requires a communication

strategy “Many To Many”. It is important at this point to ask whether enterprises that want to leverage new media, are in support of the “sustainable rural tourism policies”, support the adoption of communication strategies “Many To Many”. In this paper we will proceed, therefore, to an analysis of the rural development program 2014 – 2020 of the Campania Region, in order to check for appropriate action to support enterprises that want to leverage new media.

1.2. Revolution in communication: old and new media

The rate of change in the media world has reached incredibly high peaks that, until today, have been unknown. A famous statement by Manuel Castells compares today’s rate of change with past rate of change: “In the US, radio took decades to reach sixty million people. Television reached this level of penetration in fifteen years. Internet did it in only three years, since the birth of the worldwide web” (Castells 1996). While Castells refers specifically to the internet, this observation can be extended to all those technological innovations that generally go under the name of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and define the scope of “new media”¹, which have taken place in a very short period of time, revolutionizing the entire media sector, including the older and more consolidated one².

The whole history of mass media can be read as a transformation, continuous and without significant interruption. In fact, if in the first years of mass communication (first half of the twentieth century), the vehicles and messages in circulation were in small number, with not many sources of communication and with a symbolic universe that was not so crowded with messages like today. Over the years, especially through technological innovation, the number of broadcasters and the number of messages has increased at a dizzying rate. At first, this process was slow and difficult, but later it increased at an accelerated pace.

On this road between scarcity and abundance, we can identify three major “fractures” in the media, at least during most recent years. This relates to specific events (scientific findings), which are more or less definable in time and introduce significant changes in the structure of the system of mass communication and in its function. These three fractures are identified with: the

¹ Classified as New Media are: Blogs, Forums, Chat Rooms, Websites, News Groups, News Letters.

² Classified as Media are: Print, Radio, TV.

commercialization of the television system that takes place across Europe, and not only in Europe, in the decade that goes from 1980 to 1990; the advent of digitalization and satellites; the birth of the internet and ICT. This decreed a principle consequence, detected at different levels of the social structure: from ordinary usage by mass society and so – called “mass” communication, we passed gradually to a highly fragmented media system and one that aimed at increasingly reaching specific “segments” of society. From mass communication, we switched to a condition in which sources and segmented messages prevail.

1.3. New media

New media are new means of mass communication that developed after the birth and development of Information Technology. The term “media” (from Latin: medium) habitually indicates the set of mass communication means that arose before the advent of computer technology (TV, radio, print). This is why the term “new” is used to indicate a new type of means of communication. With so – called traditional media (radio, press, TV) a new type One – To – Many communication is witnessed, commonly known as mass or large – scale communication. The new media, thanks to their wide usability, offer the opportunity to simultaneously share cognitive experiences. Therefore, communication becomes a Many – To – Many type of communication. Another main characteristic of new media is that they allow for greater participation of users who are not passive recipients of information, but active producers of content and information. Think, for instance, of all those who update their blog, their Facebook page, use chats, create websites, use web collaboration tools, podcasts, or simply surf the Internet creating their own connections among existing sets of information.

However, defining what new media are is a difficult task. Setting limitations between old and new is the result of a perspective distortion that tends to reduce the complexity of the old and to underestimate the impact of “future” media as compared to the idealization of those of the “past”. Therefore, the idea should be shelved that innovation causes a fracture and a radical change when, in fact, innovation is very often only the perfecting of old technologies. A restyling of not only their aesthetics, but also their functions. New media, unlike analog ones, are discrete (discontinuous). All new media are comprised of a digital code, therefore, they are numerical representations and have the use of computers or other digital systems in common. New media allow for random access and are also interactive. The digital coding and

their modular design allow for the automation of many tasks, such as manipulation, creation, and access to the media. Another feature that distinguishes new media from old is their variability: a new medium reproduces many different versions, often put together by a computer. Another building block of new media is transcoding, that is, the translation of an object to another format (from www.wikipedia.it).

1.4. Sustainable rural tourism and the stakeholder model

The definition of sustainability is at the origin of an important consideration that has as its focal point the concept of sustainable development (Davico L., 2004). Within the debate on sustainable development, so – called *sustainable rural tourism*³ occupies a defined position that is of some relevance, in particular with regard to the economic activities that effectively pursue sustainability.

The importance of sustainability in tourism activities is well explained by the positioning nature of most goods/services used by tourists (Hirsch, 1981). In fact, in order to maintain an adequate quality, and to continue to exist over time, tourism resources should “always” be employed in the most sustainable way possible; otherwise, the result would be a progressive deterioration in quality or even their disappearance. Due to this, the idea of sustainability in the tourism sector is now an established concept, since it aims at keeping tourist locations in business and at the ability of offering a product that is able to meet the expectations of tourists/consumers who are increasingly sensitive to the natural and genuine characteristics of products (Fabris, 2003).

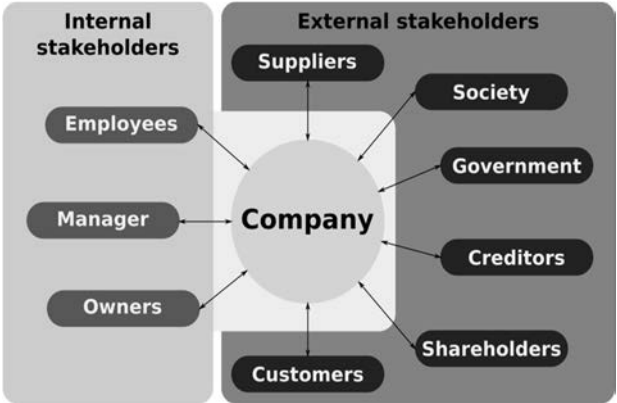
The term, *stakeholder*, indicates a person or group of persons interested in the business activities or the activities in which the enterprise, or company, itself is interested: *this expresses the dual nature of the interior/exterior relationship between the company and the context of reference.*

The *enterprise* – or *company* – can be deemed a system that involves all stakeholders and, therefore, it focuses its attention on the *network of relationships* among the various parties, both.

³ This concept, however, refers to the most recent and important “Charters for Sustainable Tourism”, which contains definitions and general principles: *Lanzarote Charter, Tourism: Basic principles for Sustainable Development* – WTO 96, Agenda 21, *Berlin Declaration 97* – to which must be added the *5th European Action Program* for the environment, particularly with regard to tourism.

Internal and external, which may have an impact on the dynamics of the entire organization. Managing stakeholders requires the identification of efficient methods aimed at coordinating relations with the many subjects involved that interact with the company. In the stakeholder model, the company is not a simple market operator, but assumes the role of coordinator for everyone's interests and for the energies that everyone employs towards achieving them. In this model, a cooperative scheme of the economic action is implicit. A scheme that is based on obligations of a moral nature, both for the company towards the stakeholders, as well as the stakeholders towards the company.

Fig. 1 – The Stakeholder Model



Source: T. Donaldson, L.E. Preston, 1995

In the last decade, companies have proved to be increasingly attentive towards issues of corporate social responsibility, of well – being, and of sustainability. In fact, increased attention has matured, over time, regarding rural development issues and a tendency towards recovering rural areas according to a logic of *enhancement and the sustainable use of resources capable of generating other resources*. The main tourist experience achieved so far in rural areas is represented by Agritourisms that, in turn, represent the pioneering method in which the farming community has started to recognize its full potential and present itself to the emerging demands of society and of tourism in the countryside and in nature, which is still growing.

The concept of “*sustainable*” rural tourism means a form of utilization of the rural territory that is based on environmental characteristics, both natural and cultural, which are normally synthesized through the expression “local heritage”.