Digital Marketing as a Promotional Tourism Strategy in Ecuador. A Systematic Mapping

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Summary

Digital marketing is a tool that allows the tourism sector to be in the public eyeat an international level. It is part of a strategy of visual and interactive promotion worldwide, which is possible through the use of metadata, web pages and social networks. This investigation demonstrates how relevant digital marketing is in the in the industry of hospitality in Ecuador, through the participation of the Ministry of Tourism, as well as the travel agencies, the tourism promotional agencies and other private sector agents. Systematic mapping was used to identify the contribution of the most widely used digital tools that support the strategies of digital marketing, integrated to the promotion of tourism in Ecuador. Likewise, the main opportunities of the strategic alliance digital marketing – tourism were identified with the intention of boosting the available tools for a growing tourism market.

Keywords: digital marketing, tourism, touristic promotion, Ecuador.

I. Introduction.

This study presents a revision of what has been published, up to the moment, about the use of digital marketing in the touristic promotion of Ecuador. It allows to identify the strategies that were used to promote touristic centers in other countries and, use them as reference in the analysis of their feasibility in Ecuador.

The main purpose is to determine if the digital marketing utilization as a tool, helps the Ecuadorian touristic sector to develop in an adequate fashion. Some factors have been identified which influence the touristic marketing, but also, the main actors who generate its development and, the marketing models that apply in Ecuador.

 This investigation was based on bibliographical analysis, by means of Systematic Mapping, which make it possible to order publications related with the subject, on the basis of the following research questions: Which factors from the touristic sector impact on the promotion of Ecuador through digital marketing?, By means of what digital marketing tools do the touristic operators spread information about destinations in Ecuador?, Which are the digital marketing models currently apply in Ecuador?

Once the information was analyzed, the most relevant findings about the issues in this investigation were defined and highlighted.
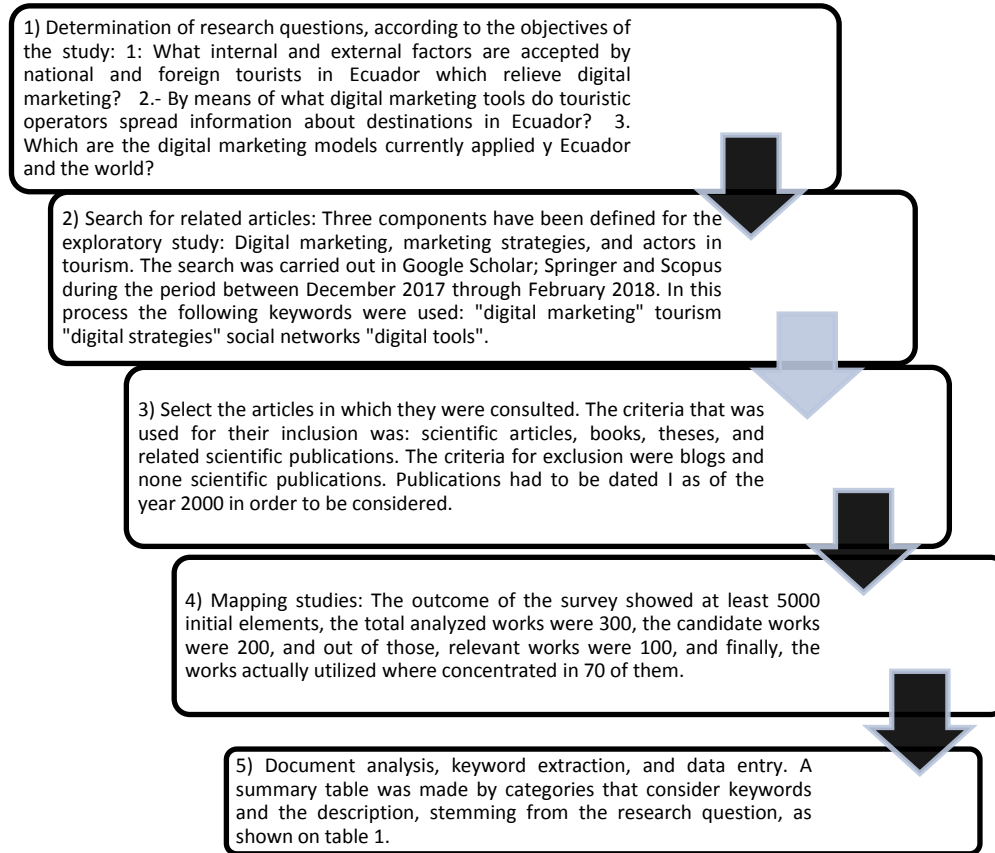
II. Methodology

The systematic mapping that is used in this work has strengths such as the adequate identification of sources of information through keywords that guide mapping, as well as the amount of information identified and search engines that make it possible to obtain different perspectives from information.

Among the limitations that it presents, it can be mentioned that, given the vast amount of databases that exist, some relevant articles regarding the subject, can be left out. This methodology is useful for studies of the exploratory type. It defines a process and a report structure in order to categorize the studies that are made up to a moment in a given area; and it is intended for carrying out a thematic analysis on the identification of the main publication forums. (Martínez Y., Cachero C., & Meliá S., 2011).

Figure 1 shows the systematic mapping process used in this work.

Figure 1: Steps for Systematic Mapping

1) Determination of research questions, according to the objectives of the study: 1: What internal and external factors are accepted by national and foreign tourists in Ecuador which relieve digital marketing? 2.- By means of what digital marketing tools do touristic operators spread information about destinations in Ecuador? 3. Which are the digital marketing models currently applied y Ecuador and the world?

2) Search for related articles: Three components have been defined for the exploratory study: Digital marketing, marketing strategies, and actors in tourism. The search was carried out in Google Scholar; Springer and Scopus during the period between December 2017 through February 2018. In this process the following keywords were used: "digital marketing" tourism "digital strategies" social networks "digital tools".

3) Select the articles in which they were consulted. The criteria that was used for their inclusion was: scientific articles, books, theses, and related scientific publications. The criteria for exclusion were blogs and none scientific publications. Publications had to be dated I as of the year 2000 in order to be considered.

4) Mapping studies: The outcome of the survey showed at least 5000 initial elements, the total analyzed works were 300, the candidate works were 200, and out of those, relevant works were 100, and finally, the works actually utilized where concentrated in 70 of them.

5) Document analysis, keyword extraction, and data entry. A summary table was made by categories that consider keywords and the description, stemming from the research question, as shown on table 1.

Source: K. Petersen, R. Feldt, S. Mujtaba, and M. Mattsson, "Systematic Mapping Studies in Software engineering," in *EASE '08: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Evaluation and Assessment in Software Engineering*, 2008.

Research questions were integrated and their respective category filters, considering that keywords contribute to the search systematization, as can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Research Questions related to the category.

Research Question	Category (Keywords)
1. ¿What factors of the touristic sector have an impact on the promotion of Ecuador through digital marketing?	Digital marketing, internet, tourism.
2.- By means of what digital marketing tools do touristic operators spread information about destinations in Ecuador?	digital marketing, technology, enterprises, digital strategies, social networks
3.- Which are the digital marketing models currently applied y Ecuador? Own analysis	Digital marketing, Ecuador enterprises

Defined as inclusion criteria were: scientific articles, books, theses, government documents and related publications indexed in the search engines that were used which define and/or mention: "Ecuador", "tourism", "enterprises", "internet", "technology", "digital marketing" "social networks", "digital tools" in any part of the document or metadata (title, abstract, body). The publication period was selected as of the year 2000. From the results of the analyzed databases, the first 50 documents were considered, and out of each one, the summary was reviewed in order to verify its pertinence and contribution to the study's information. Non-scientific opinions and publications were discarded. Table 2 shows the process of search and discrimination of the sources.

Table 2.- Breakdown by search engine

	Results of Search	Analyzed Works	Candidate Works	Relevant Works	Utilized Works
Scholar	5000	3000	200	100	62
Springer	8341	2032	287	50	5
Scopus	1492	973	93	66	4
					71

By own compilation

The most utilized search engine is Google Scholar since we found a great amount of articles for the organization of information. Springer and Scopus we're also utilized. For each utilized source, information was compiled referred through the years of publication and keywords. Data was extracted and it is shown in the results section.

III. Results

Information obtained and classified helped to determine the variables, by showing the current situation of Tourism and digital marketing in Ecuador, as well as the current demand conditions of the Ecuadorian market. (Ecuadorian Tourism Ministry, 2014).

The integral tourism marketing plan of Ecuador (2014) poses a force analysis of opportunities, weaknesses, and threats to help sustain the purpose of this investigation, some of which are explained below. As strengths we have aerial connectivity direct from the main cities of Quito and Guayaquil with outbound tourism markets like the United States and Colombia; the recognition of Ecuador as a touristic destination among the key touristic actors of the main outbound markets, as well as Ecuador being a country with great landscape diversity and varied resources. Regarding weaknesses, there is no direct air connection with some of the main markets of America and Europe; poor aerial infrastructure, maritime and land transportation are not quite competitive. It also shows little innovation in touristic products. Opportunities exist in adventure and sports tourism as well as community tourism, likewise, in developing cultural tourism on a higher scale, with a sense of "back to the origins". Identified as a possible threat is the tendency to reduce the cost of incentives and corporate reunions on the part of enterprises, which the majority of the outbound markets have shown since they have entered or are about to enter a recession for which touristic forecasts of growth, according to the Tourism World Organization, present stagnation or even descent in the short and medium terms.

In the above-mentioned plan, Ecuador has classified touristic products by promotional typology, this means the designation of different resources to each type of touristic product. The product with the highest priority are the key or star products, so called because of their potential, adequacy, and because they generate the maximum value to the visitor, since they are particularly attractive to the tourist. The second most important priority for the country, belongs to the consolidation products, less attractive than the previous ones and with a lower value contribution than the Star products. The marketing investment is slightly lower to that of key products. Starproducts are cultural tourism, ecotourism, nature tourism and sports and adventure tourism. Consolidation products are community tourism, convention and conferences tourism and cruise tourism. And, opportunity products are sun and beach tourism, health, agro-tourism and theme parks, with a lower investment than the previous ones (Integral Marketing Plan, Ministry of Tourism, 2014).

In Table 3, 71 publications are registered that are relevant to the keywords, number of publications found, the year, and the type of publication.

Table 3.- Number of publications by keyword, year and type of publication

KEYWORD	NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS	FREQUENCY (%)	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	TYPE OF PUBLICATION
Enterprises-Ecuador	1		2008	scientific article
Enterprises-Ecuador	1		2011	scientific article
Enterprises-Ecuador	1		2012	scientific article
Enterprises-Ecuador	1	9.86%	2014	scientific article
Enterprises-Ecuador	1		2014	government document
Enterprises-Ecuador	1		2017	scientific article
Enterprises-Ecuador	1		2018	government document
Internet	1		2001	scientific article
Internet	1		2002	scientific article
Internet	1		2011	Book
Internet	1	9.86%	2012	scientific article
Internet	2		2015	scientific article
Internet	1		2016	scientific article
Digital Marketing	1		2000	scientific article
Digital Marketing	1		2001	Book
Digital Marketing	1		2002	scientific article
Digital Marketing	2		2008	scientific article
Digital Marketing	2		2009	scientific article
Digital Marketing	3		2011	scientific article
Digital Marketing	3		2012	scientific article
Digital Marketing	2	38.03%	2013	scientific article
Digital Marketing	3		2014	scientific article
Digital Marketing	1		2014	Book
Digital Marketing	1		2014	scientific article
Digital Marketing	1		2016	Book
Digital Marketing	3		2016	scientific article
Digital Marketing	3		2018	scientific article
Technology	1		2010	scientific article
Technology	1		2015	scientific article
Technology	1		2016	scientific article
Technology	1	10%	2018	scientific article
Technology	1		s.f.	scientific article
Technology	2		2017	scientific article
Tourism	1		2006	scientific article
Tourism	1		2007	professional thesis
Tourism	1		2007	government document
Tourism	1	32.39%	2007	Book
Tourism	1		2009	government document
Tourism	1		2011	scientific article

Tourism	1		2012	Magazine	
Tourism	1		2012	professional thesis	
Tourism	2		2012	scientific article	
Tourism	2		2012	Magazine	
Tourism	1		2013	scientific article	
Tourism	1		2014	scientific article	
Tourism	1		2015	scientific article	
Tourism	1		2016	professional thesis	
Tourism	1		2016	Book	
Tourism	2		2016	scientific article	
Tourism	2		2016	Magazine	
Tourism	1		2018	scientific article	
Tourism	1		s.f.	Magazine	
Total Publicaciones	71	100%			

Own Analysis

The keyword Digital Marketing encompasses: digital strategies, digital tools, social networks. Regarding the keywords: Technology, Internet, and Enterprises – Ecuador, they are representative because they derive from the research questions and are closely related to the inter-relations that arise from the appearance of each one of them. They contribute from their realm to the process of innovation giving birth to new knowledge and new digital marketing practices in tourism. The term "Internet" filters information and limits the field of search and constitutes the base for the emergence and development of Digital Marketing. The combination of the terms "Tourism" and "Digital Marketing" and "Enterprises-Ecuador", put in context the tracing of specific information of the country and allows us to know the state of the art of this subject matter.

Out of the analyzed publications, the variables are grouped in two dimensions for the construction of the bubble type scatter plot. The classification can be appreciated in Table 4.

Table 4.- Summary of publications by keyword and type of publication

Keywords	Scientific article	Book	Thesis	Government document	Magazines	Total
Technology	7	0	0	0	0	7
Enterprises-Ecuador	5	0	0	2	0	7
Tourism	10	2	3	2	6	23
Internet	6	1	0	0	0	7
Digital marketing	24	3	0	0	0	27
						71

Own Analysis

The majority of the analyzed articles are concentrated in studies related to digital marketing and tourism, as well as some theses, magazines and government documents. (Figure 2). Taking the research questions as a guide and analyzing the information, 20 publications have been found that refer to the factors or elements that determine the development of the touristic promotion through digital marketing shown in table 5.

Figure 2: Distribution of publications by keywords and type of publication

By own analysis

Table 5.- Factors associated to the first and second questions of the problem

	1. What factors of the touristic sector influence the promotion of Ecuador through digital marketing?	
Nº	**Factors**	**Reference**
1	Separation of marketing thinking from economic thinking	(García, 2010). (Pesonen, 2012).
2	Marketing and the media are considered as sources of development for the hospitality industry.	(Miranda, Rubio, Chamorro, & Correia, 2015). (Laso, I.& Iglesias, M., 2002) (Galiana, P. 2016).
3	Internet as media outlets towards the tourist and trip planning	(Beltrán, 2016). (Anato, 2006) (Briz J.& Laso I., 2001) (Doolin et al., 2002) (Rita, 2000). (Díaz-Luque & Jiménez Marín, 2013). (Sellers Rubio, R., Azorín Escolano, A., 2001)
4	The customization of products and services on the part of digital marketing tools	(Flores, 2012).
5	Banking on studies of the socio-economic and cultural environment for doing tourism digital marketing.	(Torres, 2007).
6	Connectivity, sustainability, governance, information systems and innovation, all try to create intelligent destinations	(Ivars Baidal, Solsona Monzonís, & Giner Sánchez, 2016).
7	Shopping becomes a decision factor that interacts with places and anthropology	(Kinley, Forney, & Kim, 2012). (Alvear, 2017).
8	Coordinated work between entities of the public sector that include the Ministry of Science and Technology	(Metodijeski & Temelkov, 2014)
9	The evolution of marketing towards the digital era	(IBM,2012)

10	Innovating Technics that support digital marketing	

Own Analysis

With reference to the second question of the research problem, 31 publications related to factors that define the tools of digital marketing have been found, which are commonly employed by touristic operators for promotion on a global scale as well as in Ecuador (Table 5)

Table 6 depicts those factors that can influence or represent elements of digital marketing models in the country, both, in the public and the private sectors. In total, 20 publications are recorded.

Table 6.- Factors associated to the third question of the problem

2 .- Through what digital marketing tools do touristic operators spread information about destinations in Ecuador?		
No	Factors	References
11	Use of devices and mobile advertising as a digital strategy	(Andrade, 2016) (Wang, Xiang, & Fesenmaier, 2016). (Gan, 2017). (Osorio, Restrepo, & Muñoz, 2016) (Florido, L., Del Alcázar, B., González, E., 2015)
12	Use of recommendation systems, social network and virtual communication management	(Caicedo, 2017). (Apolo, 2015). (Nguyen, 2017). (Schegg, 2018). (Buhalis & Licata, 2002) (Guzmán, E., Salazar, M., 2011) (Martínez, 2012) (Moschini, 2012) (DaCruz, 2011) (Valerio, 2012) (Miranda et al., 2015). (Santillán y Medrano, 2015) (Perdomo, L., Rincón, R., Sánchez, M., 2014)
13	The use of software for touristic decision making	(Delic, 2018). (Sambhanthan & Good, 2014). (Maurer, 2015)
14	The web as a tool of efficiency, low cost and loyalty	(Espinosa, 2015). (Matellanes, 2012). (DeCamargo, 2008) (Lara, P, Martínez, J. 2002) (Selman, D., 2017)
15	The user as protagonist in the utilization of technologies 2.0	(Bellón A. & García J. 2011). (Celdrán, M. et al., 2018)
16	The use of tactics and technologies in digital marketing	(Torres 2009, citado por Mendes, 2013).
17	The use of digital marketing	(Fernández, 2016).

3.- Which are the digital marketing models that currently apply in Ecuador?		
Nº	Factors	Reference
18	Participation of key participants from the public, private sectors and community in general empowered through direct and alternative marketing in digital media	(Turism&Leisure, 2009) (Caiza, 2012) (García, 2016) (Ballesteros, E. R., & Carrion, D. S. ,2007). (Küster, Vila, & Canales, 2008). (Turism&Leisure,2007) (TIC Observatorio, 2018). (Rodríguez, 2017). (Cabanilla, 2014)
19	Technological innovation for the development of touristic marketing	(Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, & Koo, 2015). (Martínez, J., 2011)
20	Inclusive technological touristic programs (handicapped persons)	(Doolin et al., 2002) (Bazazo & Alananzeh, 2016)
21	Permission marketing in e-mail and affiliation marketing.	(Laudon, 2014) (Rodríguez, C., 2009)
22	The use of technology for innovating customer's experience	(Fredes Lucas F., 2008) (Kalakota, R.& Robinson, M., 2001)
23	The use of social media as a tool for the generation of expectations	(Altamirano, 2014). (Ministerio de Turismo, 2014) (Altamirano, V., Marín, I., , Ordoñez, K., 2018)

IV. Discussion

Amongst revised literature, some factors are evident in which various authors coincide regarding the definition of tools that contribute to the touristic promotion in Ecuador. Thus, García (2010) and Personen (2012), mention that its necessary two separate the marketing approach from the economic approach, in the evolution that marketing has experienced up until now, as much as in the change of paradigm that the economic thought has experienced from its beginnings; as well as in the focus that each one of them currently applies in front of the customer as in the business processes inside the organizations.

Media and marketing have become sources of development for the hospitality industry (Lass, I.&Iglesia, M., 2002), (Galiana, P. 2016), knowing the needs of the customer through interactive communication. Internet simplifies travel planning, purchase and product personalization as well as touristic services through the various digital marketing tools.

Successful promotion of Tourism depends greatly on an adequate study of the surroundings and reality of a country (Torres, 2007), as well as banking on an inventory of attractions, the potential that a territory has, allows for the projection of the most adequate actions, boosting them with the various tools that digital marketing offers, which can be applied through the use of digital marketing plans. (Fernández, 2016). The networks and communities online, group the market in specific segments, thanks to conductivity, sustainability and governance of the information systems (Ivars, 2016), transforming purchasing in the most important decision factor that generates the interaction with touristic places, diversifying the objective of the market, and improving consumption habits. (Kinley, Forney, & Kim, 2012; Alvear, 2017).

Technologies that promote the growth of digital marketing, such as social networks, offer distinct experiences for the consumer. Gimeno (2016) establishes that evolution is improving the capacity of attracting the desired objective market. Mobile devices have made it possible to carry out strategies of mobile publicity, with fast access two information by the consumer, improving effectiveness in the process of offering touristic products and services. The use of Technology 2.0, the web, planning and recommendation systems, network operators and virtual communities, turn the traditional consumer into a digital consumer, a strategic ally of the touristic sector, promoting the loyalty of the customer (Bellón A. & García J. 2011), (Celdrán, M. et al., 2018).

Through digital marketing the user turns into the protagonist in order to facilitate decision making of future clients according to (Delic, 2018), (Sambhanthan & Good, 2014), (Maurer, 2015), (Espinosa, 2015), (Matellanes, 2012), (DeCamargo, 2008), (Lara, P. Martínez, J. 2002), (Selman, D., 2017), (Bellón A. & García J. 2011), (Celdrán, M. et al., 2018).

Technological programs for touristic development, increase the capacity of response and generate a growth in demand, including programs for handicapped people, where it can be observed that tourism operators invest efforts and empower these characteristics in order to increase the market. (Doolin et al., 2002), (Bazazo & Alananzeh, 2006).

In Ecuador, the Ministry of Tourism, through PLANDETUR, seeks to empower the support of embassies and external actors. It also considers that there are private enterprises which are part of the fundamental technological infrastructure for innovating the customer's experience. (Altamirano, 2014), (ministry of Tourism, 2014).

If it is true that digital marketing has globally reached considerable development, in Ecuador touristic communication 2.0 is incipient. The use of social networks is still low in comparison with developed nations. (Altamirano, V., Marín, I., Ordoñez, K., 2018).

V. Conclusions

Through research it has been identified that amongst the factors that have a bearing on touristic promotion, the first thing to be considered is a change of thought from the strictly economic, towards a marketing focus, on the part of the actors that participate in the hospitality industry, in the public sector as much as the private sector.

An evolution of Marketing has been observed, through the influence of technology, manifested in this case by the use of internet, which creates new concepts, strategies and tools that bring about Digital Marketing, which in tourism, encourages the active participation of the users. Tools such as social network and virtual communications operators, the use of software for touristic decision making, as well as the use of Technologies to promote touristic products and services.

The hospitality sector of Ecuador uses models created outside of the national territory, due to these and other processes of communication, they have evolved, nevertheless, the touristic promotional platforms are still traditional and one way and oriented.

The digital tools have proved to be a link with the individuals that visit foreign countries, since they allow the optimization of the search time, the money, as part of their investment, and the comfort of the tourist; with the purpose of forming a long-lasting relationship that guarantees his well-being.

It is suggested to investigate the combination of digital marketing and tourism, as a binomial, to promote those places in Ecuador whose characteristics make them important to be visited. Through digital marketing it would be possible to reach more users through tools such as a web page, e-mailing, blogs and social networks, in order to get new customers as well as existing customers.

Personalization of products and services is customized to the needs of each tourist, offering them the possibility to select among various alternatives at the moment of planning their trip.

In Ecuador, social networks and web pages are strategies applied by the Ministry of Tourism, travel agencies and terroristic promoters who have their own digital tools that are used by national and foreign tourists. E-mail in Ecuador is frequently used; which has allowed to maintain a communication Channel with tourists in order to offer them trouble free travel. The ministry of Tourism and the private sector I working close together in order to turn Ecuador into a unique touristic destination, with which it will be possible to create a new model touristic promotion.

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