
ELECTRONIC MARKETING ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA.

A

**CASE STUDY OF THE UGANDA WILDLIFE EDUCATION CENTRE (UWEC)
IN ENTEBBE.**

1 Biira Joy Sebeya, 2 Nakibugwe Sophia, 3 Akampurira Sarah

1, 2, 3 Metropolitan International University

ABSTRACT

It is true that before the introduction of internet, marketing was moving in a way that marketers of that time believed was effective and sufficient enough to earn them clients for their businesses. By that time, the person to person, use of brochures and paper leaf lets marketing approaches were the order of the day by very many tourism firms and destinations.

It is still true that even after the invention of internet as the world's best innovation in the 90s, it was not taken as serious as possible to market goods and services produced or served by the different tourism firms all over the world. Taking on online marketing took marketers quite much time to an extent that spending on it (internet marketing) in 1994 nearly amounted to nothing. It took a proper and kin thinking that online marketing was to be very beneficial to the tourism markets. There came a surge of marketers of tourism products and destinations at large panting to create internet-based packages (online marketing tools) for their businesses. This became so intense to an extent that in only 1995, spending on online marketing had risen to over \$300. Now, little more than a decade later, online marketing of tourism-based businesses has exploded to nearly \$200 billion (according to Forrester Research). This came as a result of doubt whether online marketing had any contribution to tourism development which many tour and travel companies didn't know yet understanding of them (contributions) could really motivate them (tourism firms and destinations) to enthusiastically engage in the use of these tools during marketing. So, all the objectives were designed to testify online marketing conviction as a contributor to Uganda's tourism development.

Key words: electronic marketing and tourism development

Background of the Study

In today's world, tourists have become so savvy that they will not make a purchasing decision until they are well informed and satisfied with what they are purchasing. Business must be important today. The rapid development of Internet technology and the Internet bubble have changed many industries (Services et al., 2023). Digital marketing uses electronic media to promote products and services (Yasmin et al., 2015). The digital economy in Africa is recorded based on digital statistics such as the number of internet users and the use of platforms such as Facebook (Digital Statistics South Africa, 2017; Internet World Statistics, 2019). For example, South African statistics show that 28.6 million people (52%) use the internet, 15 million people use social media platforms, and around 70% of weekly jobs are closed on social media platforms. So, this shows the importance of the relationship. media platforms Importance of media marketing (Filstar, 2023). African tourism has grown, with the number of tourists increasing from 62.7 million in 2017 to 67 million in 2018 (UNWTO, 2018, 2019). In a nutshell, e-commerce refers to online and mobile businesses that serve targeted ads based on user data, such as search terms they have recently used on the web or games played. According to Matthew Sweezey, "Customer engagement today is not about listening, it is about understanding their context, their current position in time and space, and the work they will be doing at the time (F. Christopher et al., 2017)., 2022).

Problem Statement

Online business is not an option for business transactions but essential in today's world (F. Christopher & Michael, 2022). Although online commerce has realized the benefits in the business of small, medium and large enterprises involved in the production and services of the world, especially in Uganda, many tourism sectors have not yet adopted online marketing and e-commerce as a promotional tool. tourism. It attracts tourists because they are not aware of its contribution to tourism and economy (T. Christopher, 2022).

ICT is an essential part of all economic activities, but some tourist destinations in Uganda still ignore and do not listen to the online exchange, but the number of visitors controlling and taking advantage of it now and in the future is expected to increase. Online commerce plays and continues to play an important role in the development of the world economy, and some Ugandan tourist destinations are using online business, although many have yet to see it support the growth of their companies. For this reason, the tourism sector should know the value of e-commerce and use it to establish a business quickly.

Research Objectives

- 1. To find out the electronic marketing tools used at the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC).*
- 2. To examine the challenges faced by the tourism sector in Uganda.*
- 3. To examine the relationship between electronic marketing and the tourism development in Uganda*

Research Questions

- 1. What are the commonly used electronic marketing tools used at the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC)?*
- 2. What are the challenges faced by the tourism sector in Uganda?*
- 3. What is the relationship between electronic marketing and the tourism development in Uganda?*

Methodology

Research Design

This research was applied in a descriptive survey because it is the method which is said to be less expensive compared to other strategies such as experiments and it allows the use of various data collection methods such as observation, questionnaires, guided interview and documentation which was used in collecting the data of this study (Kothari, 2004).

Study population

The population of the study was the staffs who work at the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre, administrative and technical officials.

Sample size

It has previously been recommended that qualitative studies require a minimum sample size of at least 12 to reach data saturation (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Fugard & Potts, 2014; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The study used a sample size of not more than 12.

Data collection instruments

This deals with the instrument a researcher intend to use in eliciting data from the study participants. There are 2 main data collection instruments.

- *Survey questionnaire*
- *Interview guide questions*

The study was used both as they are able to collect large amount of data. The questionnaire had questions constructed according to variables and distributed to the target population for response and then collected for data analysis. These are questions in written form and may be open or closed ended. While in open ended questionnaires, it allows free responses that should be recorded. Interviews under this study will be used to gather additional information from the respondents.

Data analysis:

This deals with how data collected was processed and analyzed. Quantitative data was analyzed using computer packages such as SPSS while the results are presented using frequencies, percentages, bar charts and graphs etc. (Nelson et al., 2022). Qualitative research was done through thematic analysis or content analysis. This process involves editing the transcript of the interview and presenting them in a clear and logical way.

RESULTS**Table 1 Demography of tourists**

Gender	Gender type	Tourist		Total
		Foreign	Domestic	
	Male	30	36	66
		34.5%	41.4%	75.9%
	Female	11	10	21
		12.6%	11.5%	24.1%
	Total	41	46	87
		47.1%	52.9%	100.0%
of domestic tourists	Age bracket			
		Frequency and percentage		
	18-25	19		
		41.3%		
	26-35	8		
		17.4%		
	36-45	13		
		28.3%		
	46-55	6		
		13.0%		

	Total	46
		100.0%

4.2.1 Online marketing tools used by tourist destinations

Table 2 Marketing tools used

			Percent of
Marketing Tools	Response	Percent	Responses
Website	50	19.9	98.0
Third party website	21	8.4	41.2
Blog	37	14.7	72.5
Trip advisor	25	10.0	49.0
SEO	31	12.4	60.8
Email marketing	23	9.2	45.1
Google ad wards	18	7.2	35.3
Social media	46	18.3	90.2
Total	251		

From the table above, website is used by the majority of service providers (98%) followed by social media with 90.2% responses. They are followed by Blogs, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Trip advisor, email marketing, third party websites and Google Ad wards.

It should also be noted that all those tourist destinations that use Search Engine Optimization, third party websites, and trip advisor use websites as their mother online marketing tool and they are linked to it (main website) although it is not true to believe that every tour and or travel company that has a main website uses third party websites, blogs and trip advisors.

Secondly, a very big percentage shows that on every many companies' website is a company email although this in most cases is not used for marketing but rather a

communication tool (just a response tool for clients not for marketing of the company)

Thirdly, it is true that on many occasions company websites contain company social media platform for example Face book, twitter, Google+ and other social media icons links although it is not definitely true that to every company social media platform is a company website attached.

In relation to the above, many of the tourist destinations which use websites use social media although there are some few tourist destinations which use social media and do not use the website.

Lastly, all companies which use Google ad wards as marketing tools have main company websites.

4.2.2 Social media use.

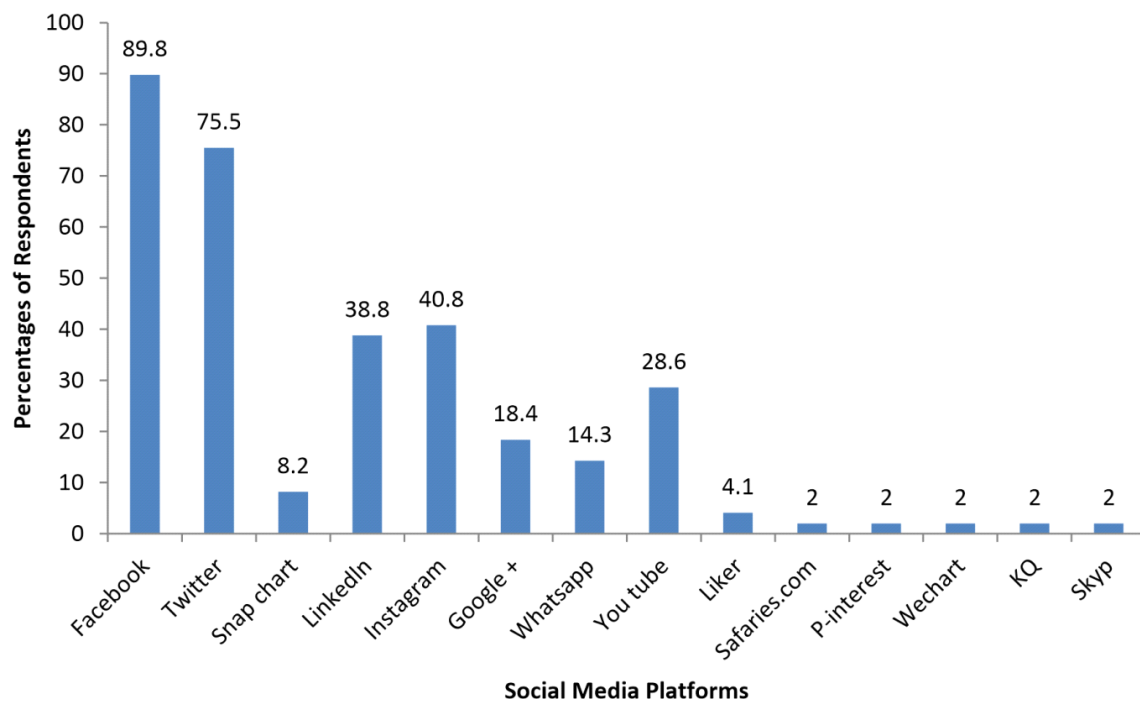


Figure 3: Social media plat foams used

Social media is one of the key factor tools in the online marketing world. Research went determined the different responses over which social media platform do a

given tour and or tourist destination uses. These responses applied for only those (90.2%) in table 2. who had accepted that they use social media as one of their online marketing tools.

From figure 3 above, Face book and twitter are the most widely used social media platforms by tourist destinations in Uganda with Face book having 89.8% responses while twitter has 75.5% responses. These are followed by Instagram, LinkedIn, you tube and Google+.

Other plat foams are limitedly used and they include snap chart, liker, safaris.com, p-interest, We-Chart, KQ and Skype

The following should be noted about the use of social media plat foams by tourist destinations

Facebook and twitter are in most cases used concurrently although there are very many tour and travel companies which have company Facebook accounts and not twitter accounts. It is true to state that 84.09% of the companies which have Facebook accounts also have twitter accounts

Over 98% of those companies which use Facebook use snap chart and Instagram as well.

In relation to the main online marketing tools in table 2,

Many of the companies which use websites, third party websites, blogs, SEO and email marketing use You-tube, google+ and LinkedIn.

Purpose of visit to Uganda by foreign tourists

Table 3 Purpose of visitation by foreign tourists

Purpose of visit	Respondents	Percent
<i>Business and profession</i>	8	19.5
<i>Spiritual and religious</i>	14	34.1
<i>Meeting/Conference</i>	1	2.4
<i>Education</i>	5	12.2
<i>Cultural tourism</i>	1	2.4

<i>Visiting friends</i>	9	22.0
<i>Others</i>	3	7.3
<i>Total</i>	41	100.0

Most foreign tourists in the study were spiritual and religious tourists (34.1%) followed by visiting friends and family, business and professional tourists, educational, cultural, meeting and conferences (2.4%) and other reasons and no one was captured for leisure.

Source of information about Uganda's tourism

Table 4 Source of information about Uganda's tourism

<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Family/friends</i>	25	61.0
<i>Mass media (e.g., TV, radios, newspaper)</i>	3	7.3
<i>National tourist website</i>	1	2.4
<i>Destination tour co website</i>	2	4.9
<i>Social media (Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.)</i>	5	14.2
<i>Uganda agents/co at international exhibitions</i>	2	4.9
<i>travel agents/operators</i>	3	7.3
<i>Total</i>	41	100.0

Most tourists to Uganda consult friends and family (61%) while other means are less used with percentages below 10%. These include Mass media, social media, travel agents, destination tour company websites, Uganda agents/co at international exhibitions and national tourist website. With the use of the table above, although family and friends are the main source of information to foreign tourists, online

marketing tools also have a higher hand with (21.9%) from travel agents, social media, national tourism website and destination website.

Purpose of travel by domestic tourists

Table 5 Purpose of travel by domestic tourist

<i>Purpose of visit</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>leisure, recreation and holiday</i>	41	89.1
<i>business and profession</i>	2	4.3
<i>spiritual and religious</i>	3	6.5
<i>Total</i>	46	100.0

Relationship between electronic marketing and the tourism development in Uganda

Tourist numbers

Figure 4 Response to tourist numbers after installation of online marketing by tourist destinations,

88.2% of the respondents believe that installation of online marketing tools by tourist destinations increases the number of tourists or clients they get. No tourist destination thinks that installation of online marketing will decrease clients and only 11.8% believe that even If you install online marketing tools, the number of clients you get as a tourist destination will remain the same. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between electronic marketing and tourism development.

Expenditure Responses

Figure 5 Relationship between installation of online marketing and expenditure on marketing

49% of tourist destinations believe that installation of online marketing increases their expenditure on marketing while 45.1% believe the costs reduce and yet some

think marketing costs remain the same. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between electronic marketing and tourism development.

Communication responses

Figure 6 Relationship between online marketing and communication

92.2% of tourist destinations think installation of online marketing tools increases interaction between them as service providers and their clients, 5.9% think interactivity remains the same and only 2.0% think it reduces. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between electronic marketing and tourism development.

Figure 7 Tourist destinations thinking if online marketing is of more advantage than disadvantages

90.2% believe, online marketing is more advantageous than disadvantageous while 9.8% believe it is the vice versa.

Advantages of online marketing tool

Table 6 Advantages of online marketing tools

Advantages of online marketing tools	No. of Responses	Percent Respondents	of
<i>Communication is increasingly mobile</i>	46	92.0	
<i>Consumers conduct conversations 24/7</i>	33	66.0	
<i>Consumers are offered increasing quantities of information</i>	9	18.0	
<i>Visual information reigns supreme</i>	29	58.0	
<i>Consumers trust other online consumers</i>	14	28.0	
<i>Consumers are assisted by search engines</i>	34	68.0	
<i>Authentic</i>	1	02.0	
<i>Wide coverage/ Exposure</i>	11	22.0	
<i>Saves time/ Fast</i>	4	08.0	
<i>Cheap</i>	4	08.0	

92% of tourist destinations believe that communication is increasingly becoming mobile followed by Consumers are assisted by search engine.

The least list ranked advantages where it is authentic, cheap, saves time and others as shown by the table Note, the following about the advantages of online marketing in relation to the different tools.

Almost every tourist destination that said consumers are assisted by search engines, have main websites, use SEO, many have blogs as well as third party websites. Those that said communication is increasingly mobile and consumers conduct conversations 24/7 are mainly those who said they use social media although even other tools have a recognizable proportion.

Disadvantages

Table 7 Disadvantages of online marketing tools

Disadvantages of online marketing tools	Responses	Percent of Respondents
<i>It's expensive</i>	19	38.0
<i>It is easily copped</i>	19	38.0
<i>Fraud</i>	31	62.0
<i>Easily tarnished</i>	3	06.0
<i>Requires a lot of content</i>	3	06.0
<i>Not healthy for eyes</i>	2	04.0
<i>Competitive</i>	1	02.0
<i>Hackers</i>	2	04.0
<i>Not all use it</i>	2	04.0
<i>Tiresome</i>	1	02.0

Most tourist destination were highly uncomfortable with the fraud associated with online marketing, its being expensive and its being easily copped Note;

Key things to note about internet or online marketing in the Tourism Industry in the world at large and Uganda in particular. The Internet is the most important innovation since the development of the printing press. It facilitates global interaction among suppliers, intermediaries and consumers around the world. Since the emergence of the Internet, travel planning (e.g., travel information search and booking has always been one of the main reasons that people use the Internet.

Conclusion

- 1. Many tourist destinations have tried to ambles the use of online marketing tools with website being used mostly although many do not know the appropriate tools to use while targeting different markets.*
- 2. Social media especially Facebook and twitter has been rampantly applied by many of the companies although things like Facebook ads have not been used because of their expenses yet they can yield firms good customers*

Recommendations

- 1. Tourism destinations in Uganda should greatly mind about the viral loop.*
- 2. Tourism destinations s as well as other tourism fraternities must understand the changing behavior of technology use and change and so they must adopt to the ever-changing technologies*
- 3. Tourist destinations should understand the internet usage behavior of their target customers first deciding over which online marketing tool to use because not every client group is attracted by similar tools*

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