

## Research on Innovative Development of Tourism E-Commerce in Hubei Province of China

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**Abstract:** By using survey data and integrated analysis methods, This paper reveals the bottlenecks exist in the current travel E-commerce development in Hubei Province of China and explores the main strategies of intending tourism E-commerce innovation and development in Hubei Province. The significance of the study is: to provide a useful way of thinking for intending tourism E-commerce in the prominent personality characteristics, economies of scale, etc. in Hubei Province.

**Key words:** Hubei Province of China ; Tourism E-commerce; Innovation; Development research

### 1 Introduction

Tourism E-commerce can not only change the tourism market structure and optimize the structure of the tourism industry, but also can enhance the associated collaboration of tourism industry so as to promote tourism and the entire national economy.

With the development of tourism e-commerce, domestic and international scholars have researched on e-commerce applications in the tourism industry, tourism information technology, tourism websites and other aspects. Feldman, Gilbert, Bush etc. have studied that the tourism enterprises how to maintain a competitive advantage under the network environment. Buhalisa, Tsamakos, Tjostheim etc. have studied a variety of information technology that can be applied in tourism e-commerce. Doolin, Leung etc. have introduced the economics and mathematical model into tourism ecommerce to evaluate the function of the travel sites. Hubei E-commerce Research Center, through field research, online surveys, has completed the “2009 Western Hubei Eco-Cultural Tourism Circle of Tourism Informationization and E-commerce Development Report” in 2009, “2010 Hubei Tourism Informationization and E-commerce Development Report” in 2010, which has conducted a in-depth research on the development of Hubei Tourism Informationization and e-commerce.

As a continuation of the study, this paper, according to the current situation analysis of the Hubei Tourism e-commerce development in the report, summarizes the bottlenecks of Hubei travel e-commerce development, and propose countermeasures. This article has three innovation points: First, it is the systematic, first time and down to date research on Hubei province tourism. Second, it has summarized the results of previous theories. Third, it will help promote a leap-forward development of tourism e-commerce in Hubei province.

### 2 The Current Bottlenecks that Constrain the Hubei Province of China Travel E-commerce Development

After ten years construction, Tourism E-commerce in Hubei Province of China has been formed the joint development of tourism e-commerce in the scenic areas, travel agencies and hotels under the aegis of the administration department, the promotion of online travel business and offline travel services, and has achieved a leapfrog development of tourism e-commerce.

Tourism E-commerce in Hubei Province of China can be divided into four aspects according to the type of participation main body. They are the tourism administration department E-commerce (E-government), scenic E-commerce, travel agency E-commerce and hotel E-commerce.

All of Municipal level above tourism administration departments and most of the county level administration departments have established the tourism E-government websites, and some units also established the tourism information network for the regional tourism companies to offer tourism business services. Most of scenic, travel agencies and hotels have built the E-commerce sites or joined the E-commerce platform to carry out tourism E-commerce. Those companies have achieved a series of E-commerce applications through the tourism E-commerce, such as the enterprise introduction, product promotion, internet marketing, online payment and online services. Parts of regions have formed a tourism destination E-marketing network as the center of tourism E-commerce.

**Table 1 The General Situation [1]**

Type	Total Number of Units	The Number of Units of Carrying out EC or EG	The Number of Units of Building Websites	The Number of Enterprises of Joining EC Platform
Tourism administration departments	119	54	54	—
State-level scenic areas	141	132	28	132
Travel agencies	920	457	189	400
3 stars level above hotels	269	201	60	195

The bottlenecks can be summarized as follows:

### **2.1 The website constructions of tourism administration departments lag behind, and the online management services of the websites are not perfect**

In general, the websites constructions of tourism administrative departments are better. There are 46% of the 119 tourism administration departments built the official website, and 17 of the provincial and municipal tourism administration departments all have constructed the official websites. On the whole, it is better that the situation of the tourism administration departments' portal site construction. But the websites and applications are not perfect; it is reflected in those following aspects:

In the first place, the web site of the county level tourism administration departments is not universal. Some county tourism administration departments have not built portal site, the ratio of the tourism administration departments that have built websites are less than 40%.

Next, the web service function is imperfect. The functions, such as "online work", "exchanges and interaction", "education and training" and "tourism company management", need to be strengthened.

Again, the use of the domain names is non-standard. "gov.cn" is a dedicated government website domain name suffix. Tourism administration departments at all levels should use "gov.cn" suffixed domain names for their portal sites.

### **2.2 The ratio of tourism enterprises have carried out the E-commerce is not high, and the use of the tourism E-commerce platforms is inadequate**

The number of the tourism enterprises that have carried out E-commerce is only about 60% of the total number of the tourism enterprises. Not only are the level of tourism e-commerce lower, but also is the using the functions provided by the platform deficient. It is mainly manifested in the following aspect: Most of tourism enterprises use tourism platform to conduct E-commerce. The type and number of the E-commerce platform that most tourism enterprises joined in are also small. The enterprises only use a little part of the functions offered by the travel E-commerce platform, such as "business sites", "tourism products", "friendly links" and some other functions, and only few tourism enterprises use the "online purchases", "online recruitment", "e-payment" functions provided by the E-commerce platform.

### **2.3 The features of the self-built web sites are not perfect, and the personalized services of the web sites are not prominent**

Most state-level scenic areas, large-scale travel agencies and star hotels carry out tourism E-commerce by building web sites. But the functions of the self-built websites are not perfect; the personalized services of the web sites are not prominent. Tourism enterprises mainly use self-built website on enterprise introducing and product promotion. Only about half of the self-built websites have achieved the online ordering capabilities. And the tourism enterprises that can carry out personalized services, online purchases, electronic payment, and online recruitment become more less.

## **3 The Strategies of Tourism E-commerce Innovative Development in Hubei Province of China**

### **3.1 Popularize portal site of all levels tourism administration departments, and enhance the functions of portal site management services**

Further popularize the county tourism administration departments' portal sites; rapidly change the current situation that half of the county tourism administration departments have no portal site. We can actively promote tourism administration departments at all levels to improve E-government and

E-commerce web sites' services and functions from the following aspects:

For one thing, further improve the functions of E-government portal sites of the tourism administration departments. To match the localization management trends of tourism E-government, tourism administration departments need improve the management of travel agencies, hotels, scenic areas and tour guide occupation, gradually form the architecture, which has a unified provincial database and hierarchical authority management information system, and basically realize territorial management of electronic records and the national network query. Tourism administration departments must improve the timeliness, accuracy and consistency of the tourism information management transmittance to improve efficiency of travel government administration. So it necessary to initially establish the electronic record management and dynamic query system of the tourism information and the source region travel team members' information. Increase the ability to monitor non-standard tourism services and security event [2]. Timely disclose all level tourism administration departments' information and the quality information related to tourism enterprises to actively enhance the quality of tourism service.

For another thing, accelerate the achievement of the E-commerce service functions of tourism administration departments' portal website. Relying on the credibility of the tourism administration departments, promote the business E-commerce services based on E-government platform; Closing with the service process of the tourism administration departments and application of informatization, promote efficient use of public resources and enhance the level of enterprise e-business. Establish business service platform for tourism enterprises to provide corporate introduction, product descriptions, online services and other functions in all levels tourism administration departments' portal web [3]. By scoring the update speed, traffic, service levels and other indicators of use the platform, Promote the tourism enterprises to make full use of government E-commerce service platform.

### **3.2 Actively guide tourism enterprises to rationally join and effectively use travel E-commerce platform, and achieve economies of scale effect under the travel e-commerce platform**

Tourism enterprises should rapidly deploy E-commerce through joining the tourism E-commerce platform. On the one hand, it requires a substantial investment through self-built sites to carry out E-commerce. The effect is slow, and the results will not necessarily good. On the other hand, the majority of tourism enterprises are small and medium scale companies in Hubei Province, who are difficult to build or manage the self-built websites in terms of finance or technology. But the tourism E-commerce platform has some characteristics that are high profile, high traffic, low investment, fast convergence. Therefore, tourism enterprises conduct E-commerce through joining the E-commerce platform is an effective choice [4].

Tourism administration departments should actively guide the scenic areas, hotels, travel agencies and other tourism enterprises to rationally and effectively join the tourism E-commerce platform. The first is to reasonable join travel E-commerce platform. Tourism enterprises should focus on joining part of the tourism E-commerce platforms, instead of joining the entire travel E-commerce platforms. It needs to pay joining costs and management costs to use tourism E-commerce platform. Tourism enterprises should join one or a few, a class or some classes of tourism E-commerce platforms by using a reasonable investment to maximally enhance brand image and meet the cross-regional marketing. The second is the effective use of E-commerce platform. Tourism enterprises should put each of the functions provided by tourism E-commerce platform as the booth for displaying company's image. Tourism enterprises should make full use of the various functions of tourism E-commerce platform to enhance the ability of online services.

### **3.3 Improve the existing websites of tourism enterprises with full functionalities, and strengthen its personalization of the service features**

It is necessary to promote conditional tourism enterprises to establish their own corporate website. On the one hand, the government should strengthen efforts to encourage tourism enterprises to build tourism sites. Through fully using their resources of tourism enterprises, tourism enterprises construct characteristic website for online users to provide travel information, multi-product, mixed and personalized reservation services. The other hand, the government regulates and guides the websites of tourism enterprises through the development of appropriate standards and implementation of management rules. By promoting the full integration of online and offline resources, the tourism enterprises will build the value chain of services that coverage prior to travel, traveling and travel-after for tourists to provide "one-step" service [5].

Currently, some necessary E-commerce features have not been implemented in the major self-built websites of tourism enterprises. The tourism administration departments need to help tourism businesses to improve the site's E-commerce functions. This mainly includes three aspects of the function:

The first is consulting services. Travel sites should establish online tourism advice, information service system, and open network SMS platform so that the customer's questions can be answered in time regardless of where the network administrators are, and customers who need relevant information can get help here.

The second is forum services. Travel sites should open up a community forum. It can let internet users exchange tourism ideas and insights, or recommend the services and products to each other, that is the best publicity and promotion regardless of the travel site or tourism businesses. The forum allows site owners to establish a number of fixed customer groups; the forum also can increase consumers' brand loyalty. In addition, the forum moderators can always call and organize the community travel enthusiasts to participate in some tourist activities. This not only publicizes the tourism sites, but also promotes the travel routes [6].

The third is the electronic payment function. Tourism sites should strengthen the cooperation with banks, telecommunications companies and other similar companies to develop online payment, mobile payment and other means of payment [7]. And the sites need to strengthen cooperation with third-party payment platform, such as Zhifubao, Caifutong and so on. Tourism companies improve the payment links in order to fundamentally facilitate visitors and play the advantage of the travel site that is different from the traditional travel agencies.

#### 4 Conclusions

Tourism, with low energy consumption and little pollution, is the industry that is most suitable for developing E-commerce. This paper, by the research of recent development status of Hubei Province tourism e-commerce, development bottlenecks and other aspects, put forward some countermeasures for the innovative development of tourism e-commerce in Hubei Province, such as enhancing the functions of portal site management services, guiding Tourism enterprises to join travel E-commerce platform to achieve economies of scale effect and improving the websites of tourism enterprises to strengthen its personalization of the service features. These measures will help clear away the obstacles to tourism development of electronic commerce, and can promote the rapid development of tourism in Hubei Province.

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