

# New digital tourism ecosystem: understanding the relationship between information sources and sharing economy platforms

Arminda Almeida-Santana, Tatiana David-Negre and Sergio Moreno-Gil

## Abstract

**Purpose** – *The purpose of this study resides in a better understanding of the relationship between the use of traditional operators, online travel agencies, such as Booking.com and Expedia, comparators, tour operators and traditional travel agencies, airlines, new non-tourist companies like Google and the use of sharing economy platforms to obtain information about a travel destination.*

**Design/methodology/approach** – *Applying an analysis to 13,243 tourists from 19 European countries, a binomial logit analysis was carried out with the latest version of the SPSS statistical analysis program.*

**Findings** – *The use of Expedia and Booking.com has a positive effect on the use of sharing economy platforms to obtain information about travel destinations. However, it can also be observed how the use of Google, Facebook, tour operators and travel agencies, airlines and Twitter can have a negative effect.*

**Practical implications** – *The study provides interesting recommendations for destinations to be able to design better marketing strategies which focus on cognitive components of the destination image in different information sources.*

**Originality/value** – *Tourists search for information that helps them make better decisions when it comes to choosing a travel destination and they do so using different channels that have evolved over time. The proliferation of internet platforms has transformed the way tourists search for information and consequently the way the secondary image of destination is formed. The sharing economy plays an important role in this new tourism ecosystem. These new business models, based on platforms, coexist with other traditional information sources, tour operators and travel agencies and airlines. However, previous studies have not inquired about the relationship between them all.*

**Keywords** *Destination choice, Social media, Sharing economy, Information sources, Tourist behaviour*

**Paper type** *Research paper*

Arminda Almeida-Santana is based at Universidad de León, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Departamento de dirección y economía de la empresa, León, Spain.

Tatiana David-Negre and Sergio Moreno-Gil are both based at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria – University Institute of Tourism and Sustainable Economic Development (TIDES), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain.

## 1. Introduction

The internet has radically transformed the tourists' search for information (Baggio and Del Chiappa, 2014), playing an increasingly important role in destination choice (Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil, 2017; Manap and Adzharudin, 2013). As, user-generated content (UGC) on the internet significantly and quickly influences destination image (Herrero and San Martín, 2017). This new scenario leads to a new digital tourism ecosystem where platforms are struggling to win the battle to capture the attention of tourists. Nowadays, traditional information sources compete with online travel agencies, comparators and search engines, new non-tourism companies and sharing economy platforms (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2010), causing the search for information to become a complex process (David-Negre *et al.*, 2018). Thus, it is evidence of the importance of the internet and new sources of information for the promotion of tourist destinations in this new tourism ecosystem

Received 26 September 2019  
Revised 26 September 2019  
16 December 2019  
Accepted 15 January 2020

© International Tourism Studies Association

This work was supported by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of the Government of Spain [grant number ECO2014-59067-P and ECO2017-82842-R] and the Government of Canary Islands [grant number PROID2017010040].

(Amaro and Duarte, 2017; Hanan and Putit, 2014; Manap and Adzharudin, 2013). Consequently, destinations have had to adapt to be present online (Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015; Sigala, 2017) as noted by McKercher and Lui (2014, p. 402), "entry into touristhood began well before departure".

Recently, the tourism sector has been subject to a significant change because of the emergence of sharing economy platforms. The proliferation of these platforms has transformed the tourism ecosystem. The sharing economy has emerged as an alternative of suppliers of goods and services traditionally provided by long-established industries and driven by the development and proliferation of platforms (Schor, 2016). Since its inception, the tourism industry has presented itself as one of the sectors that has allowed itself to grow more and in which it has had a greater impact. In several tourism areas it is possible to find platforms that are intermediaries in all types of services (Airbnb, Couchsurfing, ToursByLocals, EatWith and SocialCar among many others).

Most previous studies analyze the impact of the internet and social media on travel planning, and destination management and promotion (Leung *et al.*, 2013). The sharing economy has also been analyzed through the consumer behaviour, through legal and financial implications and through how it transforms destinations, business models or platforms in particular (Belk, 2014; Cheng, 2016; Decrop *et al.*, 2018; Guttentag, 2013; Lamberton and Rose, 2012; Möhlmann, 2015; Zervas *et al.*, 2014). However, the influence of the use of different sources of information on the use of the sharing economy has not been studied. Furthermore, few studies analyze the latest generation of information sources and include as many European countries as the present study.

Bearing in mind the above, the aim of this study is to provide destinations' policymakers with information on how destinations should effectively design their marketing strategies, in the new digital tourism ecosystem, depending on the relationship between tourists' use of traditional operators, online travel agencies (OTAs), such as Booking.com and Expedia, comparators, tour operators and traditional travel agencies, airlines, new non-tourist companies such as Google and the use of sharing economy platforms to obtain information about a travel destination.

To this end, this article unfolds as follows. In Section 2, we explain the main theoretical contributions around the sharing economy. In Sections 3 and 4, we explain the methodology used and the results obtained, ending with a discussion, conclusions in Sections 4 and 5, the main limitations of the present study and some suggestions for future lines of research.

## 2. Literature review

### *2.1 Information sources, formation destination image and destination choice*

Prior to departing on holidays, tourists can decide based on a wide variety of destination choices. If tourists have previously visited the destination, they appeal to their own past experiences (primary images) to choose from. However, if they have not previously visited the destination (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Leung *et al.*, 2013; Schmallegger and Carson, 2008), the first thing they should do is to learn about each of them (secondary image) from external information sources (Phelps, 1986; Xiang *et al.*, 2014). Firstly, they search for information regarding destinations, evaluate and form an image to then finally decide on one. Therefore, the destination decision process is directly related to the image formed before traveling from cognitive, affective and conative components (Gartner, 1994). This study focuses on cognitive elements, which can be created consciously by companies or destinations through controlled marketing campaigns (induced images) or created in an uncontrolled way through news, movies, etc. (organic images) (Gunn, 1972).

According to [Gartner \(1994\)](#), there are different agents that affect the formation of the image and that have different effects on tourists: traditional advertising (radio, TV, advertising posters, brochures and specialized magazines) try to influence directly; information provided by agents with no direct link to the destination, but with great interest in the decision (tour operators, wholesalers); a well-known spokesperson who attracts attention and increases credibility; when the spokesperson has no direct link to the destination but contributes through familiarization visits (articles, reports, stories); information received through documentaries, films, news, etc. and on which the destination usually does not have control; information received by friends, relatives, etc. without having been requested; information requested from friends, relatives, etc.; information acquired through previous trips to the destination. It is therefore patent, the importance of the information sources on image formation and, therefore, on the choice of destinations in justifying the need to go further into this topic. Furthermore, nowadays, destination image can be shaped strongly by the internet ([Herrero and San Martín, 2017](#)).

### ***2.2 Proliferation of the internet: its impact on destination choice***

The internet is part of our day-to-day life, it allows us to share and search for information, transforming the way of communicating between destinations and tourists ([Kietzmann et al., 2011](#)) and giving more power to the tourists as they have ceased to be passive agents ([Li and Wang, 2011](#); [Thevenot, 2007](#)). Now, tourists share photos, videos and comments and they are informed through what others share, feeling identified, which has a direct effect on destination image and consequently on destination choice ([Casaló et al., 2011](#)). Furthermore, this new ecosystem also allows destinations to better understand what tourists are looking for ([Dellarocas, 2003](#)). Thus, the importance of the internet in general as a means to plan trips ([Leung et al., 2013](#)) and social media in particular as the new word of mouth ([Murphy et al., 2007](#)), generating a very extensive network of “friends”, is highlighted.

There is no doubt that more and more the internet is used to search for information ([Pan et al., 2007](#); [Xiang and Gretzel, 2010](#)), acquiring great importance in this stage of the customer's journey ([Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil, 2017](#)). Past research already has highlighted the importance of social media in tourism ([Leung et al., 2013](#); [Litvin et al., 2008](#)) and specifically during the travel planning phase ([Cox et al., 2009](#); [Lo et al., 2011](#); [Tussyadiah et al., 2011](#); [Yoo and Gretzel, 2010](#)). Previously, the behaviour of tourists in relation to the search for information through traditional information sources has been studied, whereas there are fewer studies applying such research to the new sources of information online ([Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil, 2017](#)).

### ***2.3 New digital ecosystem: the role of the sharing economy***

We are immersed in a digital ecosystem ([Srineck, 2016](#)), in which the role played by digital platforms connecting activity is increasingly important. Thus, digital platforms have been defined as a complete ecosystem which allows users to perform a series of activities, facilitating the creation and value capture ([Kenney and Zysman, 2015](#)). In the new tourist ecosystem, traditional operators compete with OTAs, such as Booking.com and Expedia, comparators, tour operators and traditional travel agencies, airlines, new non-tourist companies like Google and sharing economy platforms ([Edvardsson et al., 2010](#)).

The term “sharing economy” comprises different kinds of relationships and actions by individuals and organizations on the internet. It is not a homogeneous phenomenon but includes different modalities of exchange and interaction between individuals. The sharing economy has been integrated into the internet through platforms, such as Airbnb, Homeaway, Coachsurfing, Wikitravel, Tripadvisor and Wikipedia. Those platforms are experimenting an unstoppable growth ([Drahokoupil and Fabo, 2016](#); [Heo, 2016](#)), and it seems that in the future it will continue to grow ([Heo, 2016](#)). Because of this, there have

been several recent lines of research in the literature. On the one hand, the reasons why customers use this type of services have been explored in the literature (Hamari, Sjöklint and Ukkonen, 2016). On the other hand, there is a group of researches that analyze the impact of the sharing economy in a specific sector (Reinhold and Dolnicar, 2018; Zervas *et al.*, 2014), the global problems of the platform economy (Malhotra and van Alstyne, 2014), possible situations of racial problems (Edelman and Luca, 2014). Finally, the type of job that is being appeared by the development of sharing economy has been the focus of some publications (Aloisi, 2016; Codagnone *et al.*, 2016).

However, academic research about sharing economy is still in its early stages (Drahokoupil and Fabo, 2016; Heinrichs, 2013). The literature has not studied yet the interaction and relationship of the sharing economy in relation with the rest of the traditional tourism intermediaries and the new websites in the digital economy. Otherwise, empirical studies in this context have not taken the new sharing platforms into consideration (Breidbach and Brodie, 2017). Thus, more research about the sharing economy in the tourism sector is needed.

This paper analyses if the use of traditional information sources and digital platforms induces the use of sharing economy platforms to search for information about a travel destination. This is important to better understand how tourists use the sharing economy, depending on their search patterns. Thus, the contribution of this study resides in a better understanding of the relationship between the traditional information sources use of the tourists, the use of different new tourism services platforms and their sharing economy platforms use.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Population

Europe remains the largest outbound region for tourist flows in the world, a region that generates more than half of the annual international arrivals (UNWTO, 2019). Therefore, the target population of this study was tourists, aged 16 and over, who had travelled abroad during the past two years and who had used the internet for planning their holidays. The study includes tourists from the 19 major European countries in tourist terms: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Russia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, The Netherlands, UK, Czech Republic, Sweden and Switzerland.

#### 3.2 Sample selection

A computer-assisted web interview was undertaken, considering a sample of the 19 countries mentioned, chosen from a database of panelists owned by a professional survey company in each country. To maintain the representativeness of the sample with the population of each country, a random selection of the same was made based on the variables of stratification of geographical area and province on the one hand and on the other hand of the criteria of gender and age. Only people who have previously travelled abroad were considered. A more detailed breakdown of the characteristics of the sample is shown in Table I.

The selected sample was sent a personalized e-mail inviting them to participate in the study, embedded in the mail itself was a personalized link that led them to the online survey. To ensure the expected number of completed surveys, during the three months of fieldwork in these countries, two reminders were sent to encourage response. The final sample was 13,243 tourists.

#### 3.3 Questionnaire, quality control and data analysis

To achieve the proposed objectives, the questionnaire asked tourists open questions on the platforms used for planning their holidays and booking their accommodation.

**Table I** Participants profile

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Total tourists</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>Age</i>		
From 16 to 24	1522	11.50
From 25 to 30	1751	13.20
From 31 to 45	4415	33.30
From 46 to 60	3823	28.90
Older than 60	1732	13.10
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	6233	47.10
Female	7010	52.90
<i>Nationality</i>		
Austria	672	5.10
Belgium	654	4.90
Czech Republic	770	5.80
Denmark	701	5.30
Finland	923	7.00
France	719	5.40
Germany	737	5.60
Netherlands	740	5.60
Ireland	611	4.60
Italy	881	6.70
Luxembourg	161	1.20
Norway	718	5.40
Poland	670	5.10
Portugal	762	5.80
Russia	762	5.80
Spain	711	5.40
Sweden	693	5.20
Switzerland	611	4.60
UK	747	5.60

In particular, they were asked to indicate (open question) the internet websites they had consulted (social media, comparators, OTAs and other tourism services platforms consulted) – “In what platforms or websites did you search for information to choose your last holidays?” In addition, socio-demographic variables were also included.

The questionnaire was translated into the languages of each country analyzed. Once the questionnaire was pre-tested in the language of the potential tourists, and the pertinent corrections made to the questions that raised comprehension difficulties, the interviews were carried out. Once the fieldwork was completed, the corresponding quality controls were applied: the online system, after being programmed, revised the interviews conducted and detected how long the participants took to answer the survey. All surveys answered in less than 3 min were not accepted as valid. Additionally, 10 per cent back-checks and authentication of the respondent interviewed were realized. After completing the fieldwork, a binomial logit analysis was carried out with the latest version of the SPSS statistical analysis program. In this case, a logit model based on the theory of random utility was chosen. This model is especially appropriate when working with endogenous binary qualitative variables in the tourism field, irrespective of the availability of other statistical techniques (Alegre and Cladera, 2006; Barros and Assaf, 2012; Perales, 2002). The use of this model guarantees robustness in the estimated results and the fulfillment of the properties of the conventional utility functions established by the theory of the consumer.

#### 4. Results

We have taken a binomial logit regression model with the used of sharing economy platforms (Airbnb, Homeaway, Coachsurfing, Wikitravel, Tripadvisor and Wikipedia) to choose a travel destination as the dependent variable. As explanatory variables of this model, as well as the sources of information used, including Expedia, Booking.com, tour operators and travel agencies, airlines, traditional information sources, Google, Facebook and Twitter, various socio-demographic variables, such as age, gender, studies and income were added.

Table II summarizes the results obtained in the estimation of the suggested model. The OTAs used by tourists to find information regarding their holiday destination have an influence in the decision of use of a sharing economy platform. More specifically, the regression model determined that the use of Expedia (0.866) and Booking.com (0.698) have a direct and positive effect on the use of sharing economy platforms to obtain information about travel destinations, influencing consequently the destination image. This could be related to the fact that OTAs could be framed by tourists in the same business model as the sharing economy platforms and that they tend to converge and with their differences becoming smaller each time. Those results are in line with the study of David-Negre *et al.* (2018), which demonstrates the relationship between sharing economy platforms, specifically Airbnb and OTAs like Booking.com, through the demand side.

However, it can also be observed how the use of Google (−0.537) and Facebook (−0.500) has a negative effect on the use of sharing economy platforms. This may be because of the fact that this type of sources is frequently used in the inspirational stage (pre-reservation phase). This result reinforces the idea held by David-Negre *et al.* (2018), who affirmed that sharing economy platforms are not highly connected with Google and Facebook.

On the contrary, the model determined that, as happened with Google and Facebook, the use of tour operators and travel agencies (−0.791) and airlines (−0.209), to obtain information about the travel destination, has a negative influence on the use of sharing economy platforms. It can be confirmed that these information sources are direct competitors of sharing economy platforms as they all are frequently used in the reservation stage.

The use of traditional operators and Instagram is not significant in explaining the use of sharing economy platforms. Additionally, a negative relationship between the use of Twitter

Table II Estimated binomial logit model		
Variables	B	Sharing economy $\varepsilon$
Expedia	0.866***	0.107
Booking.com	0.698***	0.064
Tour operators and travel agencies	−0.791**	0.063
Airlines	−0.209**	0.098
Traditional operators	—	—
Google	−0.537***	0.065
Facebook	−0.500***	0.086
Twitter	−0.409**	0.225
Instagram	—	—
Age	−0.285***	0.022
Gender	0.031***	0.010
Education	0.230***	0.026
Income	0.359***	0.029
Constant	−2.192***	0.127
−2 log likelihood	10,749.059	
Notes: ***: 0.01%; **:0.05%; *0.10%		

(-0.409) and the use of sharing economy platforms can be observed. In the case of traditional operators, they seem to be more general sources that do not encourage the use of sharing economy platforms. In the case of Instagram and Twitter, although they have been quite well named by tourists, they are not the best intermediaries among tourists and platforms (David-Negre *et al.*, 2018). These platforms (leaders in microblogging, photo sharing and travel guides) may have an important role in the inspiration stage, and then again for searching specific information about the destination once the decision has been made. However, it seems their use is not so widespread to connect with other sharing economy platforms.

With regard to the rest of the variables introduced in the model, we came across the following results. Concerning the age of tourists, the younger the tourist (-0.031), the higher the chance of using sharing economy platforms. This may be explained by the fact that younger people, given their unique characteristics (Soares *et al.*, 2017), are more likely to use the internet to search for information. This result reinforces the idea held by Eastman and Iyer (2004), who affirmed that age is an important factor in explaining consumers' attitudes toward internet use. Furthermore, this result is in line with the findings of Bilgihan *et al.* (2014), who confirm that generation Y is heavy user of a wide variety of digital platforms. In the same way, Bilgihan (2016) highlighted the importance of digital marketing for young customers as they are heavy online shoppers.

Furthermore, gender has a positive and direct relationship with the use of sharing economy platforms (0.031) as demonstrated by Beldona *et al.* (2011), who emphasized that gender is a significant differentiator between channels in terms of use of travel information. These findings are in line with the work of Schor *et al.* (2016) who demonstrate how practices of consumption, differ by gender. Those results confirm that compared to males, female internet users are more likely to use sharing economy platforms.

The results showed that the tourists' level of studies influences the use of sharing economy platforms (0.230). This finding is in line with the previous literature, for instance Weber and Roehl (1999), Morrison *et al.* (2001) and Vrechopoulos *et al.* (2001) demonstrate that the higher the study level, the greater the use of online booking. Consumers with higher education tend to spend more money and time online (Card *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, Lieber and Syverson (2012) show that education is a predictive factor for internet use, with advanced educational levels being associated with higher probabilities of going online.

Meanwhile, the higher the tourists' income (0.359), the greater is the chance that they will use sharing economy platforms. This could be because of the higher probability of travelling overall. Indeed, this result conforms with past research studies, such as those of Weber and Roehl (1999), Lohse *et al.* (2000) and Lu *et al.* (2003).

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between tourists' use of information sources, such as Expedia, Booking.com, comparators, search engines and online travel agencies, tour operators and travel agencies, airlines, traditional sources of information, Google, Facebook and Twitter, in the use of sharing economy platforms to search for information to decide the destination to travel to. The main goal is to try to shed light on the relationship between the use of traditional sources of information, social media and other online platforms and those platforms framed within the so-called sharing economy. To meet the research goals, data from 19 European countries were used. The present study contributes to the literature on the sharing economy, where little attention has been paid to its relationship with the other platforms (traditional and non-tourist).

It has been shown that the use of certain platforms, such as Expedia and Booking.com, has a direct and positive effect on the use of the sharing economy platforms. However, the use



of platforms, such as Google, Facebook, travel agencies, tour operators and airlines to obtain information about the travel destination, discourages the use of sharing economy platforms. This shows us that there are travellers who use the sources of information analyzed only in some phases of the decision-making process. In the case of Google and Facebook, it seems that they are used in the inspiration stage. In the case of travel agencies, tour operators and airlines, it can be confirmed that they are direct competitors of the sharing economy platforms.

In the case of traditional operators, they seem to be more general sources that do not encourage the use of sharing economy platforms. With respect to Instagram and Twitter, it can be concluded that they do not have a connecting role with the sharing economy platforms.

On the contrary, the practical implications are obvious, because the understanding of the differences raised in the impact of information sources used by tourists, in the use of sharing economy platforms, implies different marketing strategies, allowing the destinations to enhance their competitiveness. Thus, destination organizations and managers of companies operating in the sector could maximize their available resources for tourism promotion and could also establish possible joint marketing strategies to try to influence on the destination image.

Among the limitations of this study we can cite the sampling selection process. With respect to future areas of research, the incorporation of other digital information sources of recent great growth stands out, as well as the incorporation of other variables such as the motivations of tourists when travelling that could also have an influence on the use, or not, of these sharing economy platforms. Differences between nationalities should also be taken into consideration, as it could be a tool that allows designing different strategies for different countries in Europe. In addition, an empirical study that proves the relationship of these new business models in the formation of the image of destinations is proposed.

## References

- Almeida-Santana, A. and Moreno-Gil, S. (2017), "New trends in information search and their influence on destination loyalty: digital destinations and relationship marketing", *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 150-161.
- Alegre, J. and Cladera, M. (2006), "Repeat visitation in mature sun and sand holiday destinations", *Journal of travel research*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 288-297.
- Aloisi, A. (2016), "Commoditized workers: case study research on labor law issues arising from a set of on-demand/gig economy platforms", *Comparative labor law and policy journal*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 620-653.
- Amaro, S. and Duarte, P. (2017), "Social media use for travel purposes: a cross cultural comparison between Portugal and the UK", *Information Technology & Tourism*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 161-181.
- Baggio, R. and Del Chiappa, G. (2014), "Real and virtual relationships in tourism digital ecosystems", *Information Technology & Tourism*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 3-19.
- Barros, C.P. and Assaf, A.G. (2012), "Analyzing tourism return intention to an urban destination", *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 216-231.
- Beldona, S., Racherla, P. and Mundhra, G.D. (2011), "To buy or not to buy: Indian consumers' choice of online versus offline channels for air travel purchase", *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, Vol. 20 No. 8, pp. 831-854.
- Belk, R. (2014), "You are what you can access: sharing and collaborative consumption online", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67 No. 8, pp. 1595-1600.
- Bilgihan, A. (2016), "Gen Y customer loyalty in online shopping: an integrated model of trust, user experience and branding", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 61, pp. 103-113.



- Bilgihan, A., Peng, C. and Kandampully, J. (2014), "Generation Y's dining information seeking and sharing behavior on social networking sites: an exploratory study", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 349-366.
- Breidbach, C.F. and Brodie, R.J. (2017), "Engagement platforms in the sharing economy", *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*.
- Card, J.A., Chen, C.Y. and Cole, S.T. (2003), "Online travel products shopping: differences between shoppers and non-shoppers", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 133-139.
- Casaló, L., Flavián, C. and Guinalíu, M. (2011), "Understanding the intention to follow the advice obtained in an online travel community", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 622-633.
- Cheng, M. (2016), "Sharing economy: a review and agenda for future research", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 57, pp. 60-70.
- Codagnone, C., Biagi, F. and Abadie, F. (2016), "The passions and the interests: Unpacking the 'sharing economy'", *Institute for Prospective Technological Studies*, JRC Science for Policy Report.
- Cox, C., Burgess, S., Sellitto, C. and Buultjens, J. (2009), "The role of user-generated content in tourists' travel planning behaviour", *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, Vol. 18 No. 8, pp. 743-764.
- David-Negre, T., Almeida-Santana, A., Hernández, J.M. and Moreno-Gil, S. (2018), "Understanding European tourists' use of e-tourism platforms. Analysis of networks", *Information Technology & Tourism*, Vol. 20 Nos 1/4, pp. 131-152.
- Decrop, A., Del Chiappa, G., Mallargé, J. and Zidda, P. (2018), "Couchsurfing has made me a better person and the world a better place: the transformative power of collaborative tourism experiences", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 57-72.
- Dellarocas, C. (2003), "The digitization of word of mouth: promise and challenges of online feedback mechanisms", *Management Science*, Vol. 29 No. 10, pp. 1407-1424.
- Drahokoupil, J. and Fabo, B. (2016), "The platform economy and the disruption of the employment relationship", *ETUI Research Paper-Policy Brief*, Vol. 5.
- Eastman, J. and Iyer, R. (2004), "The elderly's uses and attitudes towards the internet", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 21 No. 3, pp. 208-220.
- Edelman, B.G. and Luca, M. (2014), "Digital discrimination: the case of Airbnb.com", *Harvard Business School NOM Unit Working Paper*, pp. 14-54.
- Edvardsson, B., Gustafsson, A., Kristensson, P. and Witell, L. (2010), "Service innovation and customer co-development", in Maglio, P.P., Kieliszewski, C.A. and Spohrer, J. (Eds), *Handbook of Service Science*, Springer, New York, NY, pp. 561-577.
- Fatanti, M.N. and Suyadnya, I.W. (2015), "Beyond user gaze: how Instagram creates tourism destination Brand?", *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 211, pp. 1089-1095.
- Gartner, W.C. (1994), "Image formation process", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 2 Nos 2/3, pp. 191-216.
- Gunn, C. (1972), *Vacationscape: Designing Tourist Regions*, Austin: Bureau of Business Research, University of TX.
- Guttentag, D. (2013), "Airbnb: destructive innovation and the rise of an informal tourism accommodation section in tourism", *Current Issues in Tourism*, pp. 1-26.
- Hanan, H. and Putit, N. (2014), "Express marketing of tourism destination using Instagram in social media networking", in: Sumarjan N., Mohd Z.M.S., Mohd R.S., Zurinawati M., Mohd H.M.H., Mohd F.S.B., Atinah Z. (Eds) *Hospitality and Tourism: synergizing Creativity and Innovation in Research*, Taylor & Francis Group, Croydon, pp. 471-474.
- Heo, C.Y. (2016), "Sharing economy and prospects in tourism research", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 58, pp. 166-170.
- Heinrichs, H. (2013), "Sharing economy: a potential new pathway to sustainability", *GAIA-Ecological Perspectives for Science and Society*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 228-231.
- Herrero, Á. and San Martín, H. (2017), "Explaining the adoption of social networks sites for sharing user-generated content: a revision of the UTAUT2", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 71, pp. 209-217.

- Kenney, M. and Zysman, J. (2015), "Choosing a future in the platform economy: the implications and consequences of digital platforms", in *Kauffman Foundation New Entrepreneurial Growth Conference*, Vol. 156160.
- Kietzmann, J.H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P. and Silvestre, B.S. (2011), "Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 241-251.
- Kim, D.Y., Lehto, X.Y. and Morrison, A.M. (2007), "Gender differences in online travel information search: implications for marketing communications on the internet", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 423-433.
- Lamberton, C.P. and Rose, R.L. (2012), "When is ours better than mine? A framework for understanding and altering participation in commercial sharing systems", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 76 No. 4, pp. 109-125.
- Leung, D., Law, R., Van Hoof, H. and Buhalis, D. (2013), "Social media in tourism and hospitality: a literature review", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 30 Nos 1/2, pp. 3-22.
- Li, X. and Wang, Y.C. (2011), "China in the eyes of Western travelers as represented in travel blogs", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 28 No. 7, pp. 689-719.
- Lieber, E. and Syverson, C. (2012), "Online versus offline competition", *The Oxford Handbook of the Digital Economy*, Vol. 189.
- Litvin, S.W., Goldsmith, R.E. and Pan, B. (2008), "Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 458-468.
- Lo, I.S., McKercher, B., Lo, A., Cheung, C. and Law, R. (2011), "Tourism and online photography", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 725-731.
- Lohse, G.L., Bellman, S. and Johnson, E.J. (2000), "Consumer buying behavior on the internet: findings from panel data", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 15-29.
- Lu, J., Yu, C.S., Liu, C. and Yao, J. (2003), "Technology acceptance model for wireless internet", *Internet Research*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 206-222.
- McKercher, B. and Lui, S.L. (2014), "Becoming a tourist", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 399-406.
- Manap, K.A. and Adzharudin, N.A. (2013), "The role of user generated content (UGC) in social media for tourism sector", *The 2013 WEI International Academic Conference Proceedings*, pp. 52-58.
- Malhotra, A. and Van Alstyne, M. (2014), "The dark side of the sharing economy... and how to lighten it", *Communications of the ACM*, Vol. 57 No. 11, pp. 24-27.
- Möhlmann, M. (2015), "Collaborative consumption: determinants of satisfaction and the likelihood of using a sharing economy option again", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 193-207.
- Morrison, A.M., Jing, S., O'Leary, J.T. and Cai, L.A. (2001), "Predicting usage of the internet for travel bookings: an exploratory study", *Information Technology & Tourism*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 15-30.
- Murphy, L., Moscardo, G. and Benckendorff, P. (2007), "Using Brand personality to differentiate regional tourism destinations", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 5-14.
- Pan, B., MacLaurin, T. and Crofts, J.C. (2007), "Travel blogs and the implications for destination marketing", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 35-45.
- Phelps, A. (1986), "Holiday destination image: the problem of assessment: an example developed in Menorca", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 168-180.
- Reinhold, S. and Dolnicar, S. (2018), "2 The sharing economy", *Peer-to-Peer Accommodation Networks*, Goodfellow Publishers Limited, Wolvercote, Oxford, p. 15.
- Schmallegger, D. and Carson, D. (2008), "Blogs in tourism: changing approaches to information exchange", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 99-110.
- Schor, J. (2016), "Debating the sharing economy", *Journal of Self-Governance and Management Economics*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 7-22.
- Schor, J.B., Fitzmaurice, C., Carfagna, L.B., Attwood-Charles, W. and Poteat, E.D. (2016), "Paradoxes of openness and distinction in the sharing economy", *Poetics*, Vol. 54, pp. 66-81.

- Sigala, M. (2017), "Collaborative commerce in tourism: implications for research and industry", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 346-355.
- Srineck, N. (2016), *Platform Capitalism*, Polity Press, Malden, MA.
- Soares, R.R., Zhang, T.T., Proença, J.F. and Kandampully, J. (2017), "Why are generation Y consumers the most likely to complain and repurchase?", *Journal of Service Management*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 520-540.
- Thevenot, G. (2007), "Blogging as a social media", *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 7 Nos 3/4, pp. 287-289.
- Tussyadiah, I., Park, S. and Fesenmaier, D.R. (2011), "Assessing the effectiveness of consumer narratives for destination marketing", *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 64-78.
- Vrechopoulos, A.P., Siomkos, G.F. and Doukidis, G.I. (2001), "Internet shopping adoption by Greek consumers", *European Journal of Innovation Management*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 142-152.
- Weber, K. and Roehl, W.S. (1999), "Profiling people searching for and purchasing travel products on the world wide web", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 291-298.
- World Tourism Organization (2019), *International Tourism Highlights*, 2019 Edition, UNWTO, Madrid, doi: [10.18111/9789284421152](https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284421152).
- Xiang, Z. and Gretzel, U. (2010), "Role of social media in online travel information search", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 179-188.
- Xiang, Z., Wang, D., O'Leary, J.T. and Fesenmaier, D.R. (2014), "Adapting to the internet: trends in travelers' use of the web for trip planning", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 54 No. 4, pp. 511-527.
- Yoo, K.H. and Gretzel, U. (2010), "Antecedents and impacts of trust in travel-related consumer-generated media", *Information Technology & Tourism*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 139-152.
- Zervas, G., Proserpio, D. and Byers, J.W. (2014), "The rise of the sharing economy: estimating the impact of Airbnb on the hotel industry", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 54 No. 5, pp. 687-705.

## Further readings

- Edelman, B.G. and Geradin, D. (2015), "Efficiencies and regulatory shortcuts: how should we regulate companies like Airbnb and Uber?", Harvard Business School Working Paper, 16-26.
- Guttentag, D. (2015), "Airbnb: disruptive innovation and the rise of an informal tourism accommodation sector", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 18 No. 12, pp. 1192-1217.
- Kislali, H., Kavartzis, M. and Saren, M. (2016), "Rethinking destination image formation", *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 70-80.

## Corresponding author

Arminda Almeida-Santana can be contacted at: [aalms@unileon.es](mailto:aalms@unileon.es)

---

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

[www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm](http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm)

Or contact us for further details: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)