

# E-tourism in sri lanaka

Sport & Tourism



## About Sri Lanka

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka commonly known as the pearl of the Indian Ocean or as Ceylon is one of the exquisite Island in the world Sri Lanka set in the Indian Ocean in south Asia near to the equator which is a great home to 8 UNESCO world heritage sites. Not only that this great Island has unspoiled beaches, waterfalls, pure rivers, 15 national wildlife parks, lagoons with indigenous aquatic birds, 250 acres of botanical gardens, hot water wells and so many unique things. Because Sri Lanka is a multinational country; Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Moors, Indian Tamil, Sri Lankan Tamil, all these ethnic groups live in this small Island. Sri Lanka is a place where the original soul of Buddhism still flourishes (Buddhist 69. %) but it is not a problem to friendly people in this country because there are Muslims (7. 6%), Hindu (7. 1%), Christian (6. 2%) & some other religions people living happily within area of 65, 610Km. Country has three main geological divisions. In the lowlands, up to an altitude of 100m to 150m, the mean annual temperature varies between 26. 5 0C to 28. 5 0C. In the highlands, the temperature falls quickly as the altitude increases. The mean annual temperature of Nuwara Eliya, at 1800 m sea level, is 15. 9 0C.

The coldest month of the country is January, and the warmest months are April and August. Agriculture plays an important role in Sri Lankan economy. Main agricultural product is rice but Tea, Rubber & coconut brings more foreign currency to the Island not only that but also Spices export brings foreign money as well. Sri Lanka's economy today is mainly based on the service and industrial sector. However Tourism and the related services industries are also growing in Sri Lanka.

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## **What is E-Tourism**

When we consider about manual processes regarding tourism, there are so many things including air ticket or Cruise ticket reservation, hotel reservation not only that every person must need to obtain a permission before entering to a country (Visa). Just think if a tourist or travel agency had to do all those things manually; definitely it will take nearly one month or more. So E-tourism is the best option for all those time taken processes. It's a combination of e-commerce and tourism & it helps to maximizing the efficiency of tourism sector.

Tourism has closely been connected to progress of ICTs for over 30 years. The establishments of the Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs) in the 1970s, Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) in the late 1980s and the Internet in the late 1990s have transformed operational and strategic practices dramatically in tourism (Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008). The tourism industry at first focused on utilizing computerized systems (e. g. , CRS, GDS) to increase efficiency in processing of internal information and managing distribution.

Nowadays, the Internet and ICTs are relevant on all operative, structural, strategic and marketing levels to facilitate global interaction among suppliers, intermediaries and consumers around the world (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Egger & Buhalis, 2008). E-tourism is a really great concept because it includes business management, information systems & management and the tourism. As an example it has main electronic business functions such as e-commerce, e-marketing, e-accounting etc.

## **Key Players In E-tourism**

E-tourism provides great opportunities for numerous key players in tourism industry to expand their businesses. Also because of the E-tourism numbers of new players have come into the tourism industry.

Mainly there are several key players:

### **Airlines**

When we considering about the airlines long time ago reservations were made by using a manual process. It's a really time consuming work because reservations were made on manual display boards, where passengers were listed. Travel agencies had to locate the best routes and fares in manuals and then check availability and make reservation by phone, before issuing a ticket manually. World's first automated reservation system called SABRE (Semi-Automatic Business Research Environment) was introduced by American Airlines and IBM jointly during 1962. It enabled American Airlines to replace the handwritten passenger reservations system of the 1950s with the automated reservations system for the future. Currently SABRE global distribution system is used by more than 400 airlines, 55, 000 travel agencies, 88, 000 hotels, 13 cruise lines & etc.

In Sri Lanka currently Sri Lankan airlines has earned great revenue and won series of international and national awards in fields ranging from passenger transport to marketing and internet technology including Platinum Award from the International Air Transport Association as one of the first airlines in the world to introduce a major innovation to tickets. Sri Lankan Airlines made significant investments in technology during last year, the carrier contracted with Calidris (since acquired by Sabre Airline Solutions) to help ensure seats

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are not occupied by false or spurious bookings. The solution looks at business problems including: Ticket time limits, Fake names, Duplicate bookings and duplicate segments within a booking, Fake or duplicate ticket numbers.

## **Hotels**

One of the most important player in travel & tourism sector which has a long history, nearly 1300 years. World's oldest hotel is " Hoshi Ryokan" which is founded in 717. Sri Lanka's oldest hotel is " Galle Face Hotel" which was founded in 1864 by four British entrepreneurs. Now a day hotels in other words E-Hospitality plays major role in E-Tourism. During 1970s due to the airlines Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs) and ICT developments forced hotel industry to develop hotel CRSs in order to maintain good customer friendly environment with rapid response time to customer. By using CRSs in hotel sector, it's enable travel & tourism trade to access accurate information on availability and to provide easy, inexpensive, efficient and reliable way of making and confirming reservations. Switch companies such as THISCO and WIZCOM emerged also to facilitate interconnectivity between dedicated or internal hotel system and GDSs (Emmer etal. 1993; O'Connor, 1995, 1999) The development of switch companies Switch Companies CRSs/GDSs " Galileo" is one of the well-known CRS in the world which provide Hotel room reservations, Airline bookings etc. Galileo RoomMaster™ is supper solution by " Travelport" company which provides hotel shopping and booking solution. By purchasing Galileo RoomMaster™ it provides Galileo-connected subscribers with direct, real-time access to relevant hotel system for shopping and bookings of hotel's properties. Also it enables to

connect with more than 190, 000 travel agency workstations, as well as corporate and consumer/ecommerce users throughout the world. Most of the Sri Lankan hotels also are now available for online reservations by using those systems & some of them are inbuilt solutions by the hotels.

## **Tour operators & Travel Agencies**

Tour operators organize, arrange leisure packages including flights & accommodation. They pre-book tourism products and distribute them through advertising in travel agencies. Major tour operators use internet based communication systems in order to reduce information handling costs and to increase the speed of information transfer with agencies and the customers. Currently some of the established tour operator's business are made, in other words packages are booked through online. Thomson Holidays is one of the world famous tour operator company which only accept reservation made through Thomson's open-line Program (TOP). In Sri Lanka huge number of tour operators like JF tours, Miracle Sri Lanka, Nalro tours use Ecommerce based techniques to attract travelers & advertise about their packages.

## **Sri Lankan Government**

After 30 years of the civil war, tourism is one of the main considering areas of the Sri Lankan government. As mentioned in previously, country has lot of tourist attractions. So currently government has invested in several areas to develop travel & tourism industry. Sri Lanka Tourism Board (SLTB) former Ceylon Tourist Board which is under the Ministry of Economic Development has the main responsibilities to develop country's travel & tourism. As a country still Sri Lanka couldn't reach up to good place in E-Tourism. but SLTB

doing its best to improve E-tourism. They have an alliance with ICTA (Information and Communication Technology Association of Sri Lanka) to develop E-Tourism. Also SLTB re-launched their web site (<http://www.srilankatourism.org/>) with new look & currently Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau which is under SLTB trying to use the best technologies to promote about the Sri Lanka (<http://www.srilanka.travel/>). Social networking (Facebook icon) on the page Ministry of Economic development has long time tourism development strategy (2011-2016). They have mentioned use of the internet & E-commerce are key objectives to be achieved through the 5 year strategy.

## **E-Tourism Benefits to Key Players**

- Help to understand about the customers & help to build a good customer relationship.
- Make direct communication between customers.
- Ability to respond in quick and efficient way to customer.
- Reduces communication, advertising cost due to eMarketing.
- Help to increase interconnectivity among the key players.
- 24/7 of the business time Less of labors.
- E-Tourism Benefits to Customers
- Can do the business directly without interpreters.
- Reduces time
- Accessible at any time
- Due to competition can obtain good service or great product at low price.
- Can know Up to date information.

- Wide range of selections.
- Ability to customize products or services.
- Online auctions.

## **Future developments in E-Tourism**

E-tourism has reach to great place in the world but when considering with E-commerce there are so many ways which can develop. E-tourism in world or Sri Lanka, still haven't any major developments in field of mobile, mobile advertising. So developing that kind of product will help to earn more revenue than now. When considering other online products travel & tourism sector need to more think about social networking. As a country Sri Lanka should need to develop several telecommunication technologies such as speed of the internet, wireless internet access etc.

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